

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

Council: 21 December 2011

Subject: Possible Venues for Council Meetings being held in Clydebank from 1 January to 30 April 2012

1. Purpose

1.1 To allow Council to consider venues for Council meetings scheduled to be held in Clydebank during the period 1 January to 30 April 2012.

2. Background

2.1 It is the practice for meetings of West Dunbartonshire Council and its Committees to alternate monthly between Clydebank and Dumbarton. The venue used in Clydebank, namely Clydebank Town Hall, closed for refurbishment in December 2010 and was expected to reopen late 2011. However, the project has been extended and consideration must now be given to where these meetings will be held in Clydebank from 1 January to 30 April 2012.

2.2 In September 2010 Council agreed to use the following premises in Clydebank during 2011:-

- Committee meetings to be held in the Education Centre, St. Margaret's Hospice, Clydebank at a cost of £120 per meeting; and
- Council meetings to be held in the Abbotsford Church Hall, Clydebank at a cost of £120 per meeting or £180 if the meeting ran beyond 9.30 p.m.

2.3 At its meeting on 28 September 2011, Council agreed to continue using the aforementioned venues until such time as a report on suitable, alternative venues in Clydebank could be submitted for consideration. Officers were also asked to investigate the availability of a PA system at the Abbotsford Church Hall and St. Margaret's Hospice and the use of the Hospice's Lecture Theatre.

3. Main Issues

3.1 There are 2 meetings of full Council and 8 service committee meetings scheduled to be held in Clydebank from 1 January to 30 April 2012.

3.2 Some Elected Members have complained about the poor acoustics in St. Margaret's Hospice and the difficulty they have hearing discussions.

3.3 The Abbotsford Church Hall has a wooden floor and wooden legged furniture which causes considerable background noise during discussions and has also caused difficulty to some Members.

3.4 It is important to note that accommodation used for Council/Committee meetings must be accessible to all members of the public. In addition, the venue should have good lighting, suitable furniture and adequate parking facilities for both able bodied and disabled persons.

3.5 Alternative Venues

3.5.1 The list of Council and privately owned premises which were inspected for suitability is attached as an Appendix to the report. The following venues are considered suitable in terms of floor covering, furniture, lighting and accessibility. Parking may be a problem at Glenhead C.E. Centre:-

Clydebank High School
St. Peter the Apostle High School
Dalmuir C.E. Centre
Glenhead C.E. Centre

3.5.2 Both High Schools have PA systems on site and portable wireless systems can be provided in the C.E. Centres by Educational Services' Technicians Service at no cost.

3.6 St Margaret's Hospice

3.6.1 There is no PA system available in the Education Centre at St. Margaret's Hospice; however the Technicians Service can provide a portable system for meetings held there.

3.6.2 The Lecture Theatre at St. Margaret's Hospice was inspected but considered too small to accommodate the preferred table layout used at Committee meetings. Tiered theatre-style seating would need to be used by Members if meetings were to be held in this room.

3.8 Abbotsford Church Hall

3.8.1 There is no PA system available in the Church Hall; however the Technicians Service can set up a portable system for meetings held there.

3.8.2 A suggestion was made to make use of carpet runners in the Church Hall to help reduce noise. Early estimates are around £2500 for the runners plus £200 if the carpets need to be transported to and from the venue for the remaining 2 Council meetings.

3.8.3 It had been suggested that more suitable chairs be taken to the Church Hall for Council meetings. However, it has not been possible to source a sufficient number of chairs from Council departments that would improve on those already in the Church Hall.

3.8.4 Making use of the large carpet normally used in Clydebank Town Hall may also be an option. It has been estimated that it would cost £200 in total to have the carpet moved to and from the Church Hall for the remaining 2 Council meetings. Due to its size it is unlikely that the carpet could remain in the Hall until April 2012 without causing inconvenience to other Hall users.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no people implications.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 The cost to hire the Abbotsford Church Hall for meetings of Council will be £240 or £360 if the meetings ran beyond 9.30 p.m. If carpet runners were to be purchased the total cost would increase to £2940 or £3060.

5.2 The cost to continue using the Education Centre, St. Margaret's Hospice for the remaining 8 service committee meetings will be £960.

5.3 There is no cost to the Council in using Dalmuir or Glenhead C.E. Centres.

5.4 A cost of £32 per hour would be incurred if using Clydebank or St. Peter the Apostle High Schools for meetings of Council that ran beyond 10.00 p.m.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 It is important to note that all accommodation used to host Council/Committee meetings must be accessible to all members of public and therefore this should be a key consideration in the choice of venue.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Dalmuir C.E. Centre is suitable and currently available for daytime committee meetings, without displacing existing users.

8.2 Glenhead C.E. Centre is suitable for Committee and Council meetings but would only be available by displacing a number of regular users. Parking may be an issue.

8.3 Both High Schools in Clydebank are suitable and available for evening meetings of full Council. Day-time meetings cannot be accommodated.

8.4 The Education Centre, St. Margaret's Hospice is suitably sized but some Members have problems with the acoustics. A portable PA system could be

provided which may alleviate the problem. The Lecture Theatre cannot accommodate the preferred table layout used at committee meetings.

- 8.5** Abbotsford Church Hall is a good venue but some Members have problems with the acoustics. A portable PA system could be provided which may assist some Members. However, it is possible that the use of a PA system may amplify the noise when Members stand up to address the meeting. Members may wish to consider relaxing this protocol for the 2 remaining Council meetings due to be held here.
- 8.6** It should be noted that if none of the above options are considered suitable, adequate Council Chambers and meeting rooms are available in the Council Offices, Garshake, Dumbarton at no extra cost. To address the balance of meeting location, Members may wish to consider moving some Dumbarton meetings to the Town Hall for an equivalent period.
- 8.11** Council is asked to consider the venues considered suitable for meetings scheduled to be held in Clydebank from 1 January to 25 April 2012, and instruct officers accordingly.

David Amos
Interim Executive Director of Corporate Services

Wards Affected: All Clydebank Wards

Background Papers: Report to West Dunbartonshire Council on 29 September 2010 – Timetable of Meetings January to December 2011 and
Report to West Dunbartonshire Council on 28 September 2011 – Timetable of Meetings January to April 2012.

Officer to Contact: Christine McCaffary – Senior Democratic Services Officer, Legal, Democratic & Regulatory Services, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton. Tel: 01389 737186 or e-mail: christine.mccaffary@west-dunbarton.gov.uk