

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, on Wednesday, 16 December 2009 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Provost Denis Agnew and Councillors George Black, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, Jim Finn, William Hendrie, Douglas McAllister, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Ronnie McColl, Patrick McGlinchey, Craig McLaughlin, Willie McLaughlin, Marie McNair, John Millar, Iain Robertson, Martin Rooney and May Smillie.

Attending: David McMillan, Chief Executive; Joyce White, Executive Director of Corporate Services; Terry Lanagan, Executive Director of Educational Services; Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; Stephen West, Interim Executive Director of Social Work and Health; David Connell, Head of Finance and ICT; David Clarke, Head of Service (Resources), Educational Services; Craig Jardine, Manager of Educational Estates; David Webster, Manager, Improvement and Performance; Anne Laird, Manager of Administrative Services; Angela Terry, Manager of Organisational Development; Andrew Fraser, Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services; and George Hawthorn, Senior Administrative Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Margaret Bootland, James Bollan and James McElhill.

Provost Denis Agnew in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Provost Agnew declared a financial interest in the agenda item headed "Consultation on Modifications to the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Designation Order" (as he was a member of the National Park Board) and intimated that having had advice for the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services, he would remain within the meeting and take part in the debate.

Councillor C. McLaughlin declared a financial interest in the agenda item headed "Consultation on Modifications to the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Designation Order" (as he was a member of the National Park Board) and intimated that having had advice for the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services, he would remain within the meeting and take part in the debate.

Councillor C McLaughlin declared a financial interest in the agenda item headed “Motion by Councillor David McBride – Council Tax Discount on second homes and Long Term Empty Properties” (as he had a second home) and intimated that he would leave the meeting and would not take part in the debate.

Councillor C. McLaughlin declared a financial interest in the agenda item headed “Motion by Councillor Ronnie McColl – Minimum Pricing of Alcohol” (as he was a public house licence holder) and intimated that he would leave the meeting and would not take part in the debate.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 25 November 2009 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

In response to a point raised by Councillor Rooney, the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services informed the Council that the key purpose of the minutes was to record decisions, which was why the comments made by Councillor Rooney at the previous meeting of Council had not been recorded.

OPEN FORUM

The Council noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 25 November 2009 (Page XXX refers), a report was submitted by the Chief Executive on the new Best Value Improvement Plan.

Councillor Robertson moved:-

Council agrees the recommendations and agrees that elected members will sit on workstreams as follows:-

Strategic Leadership	– 1 SNP (Leader of the Council) & 1 Lab
Competitiveness	– 1 SNP (Craig McLaughlin) & 1 Lab
Community Engagement	– 1 SNP (Jim Brown) & 1 Ind
Organisational Culture	– 1 Ind & 1 Lab

At this point Provost Agnew informed the Council that the suspension of Standing Orders was required prior to consideration of the above motion as a period of six months had not passed since the Council had agreed to establish the above workstreams and their membership arrangements.

Thereafter, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Order No 19 (a) for this item.

After discussion, the Council agreed to approve the above motion.

SUPPORT FOR VALE OF LEVEN COMMUNITY FORUM AND RELATED ISSUES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 30 September 2009 (Page XXX refers), a report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing the Council with an update on the position with support to the Vale of Leven Community Forum and related matters.

Councillor R. McColl, seconded by Councillor J. McColl, moved:-

That the recommendations of the report be approved (as follows):-

That officers would make further contact with the Vale of Leven Community Forum to request an update on progress with these issues.

As an amendment Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McBride, moved:-

This Council notes the report from the Chief Executive and the lack of response from the Vale of Leven Community Forum.

As lead partner in the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) this Council agrees that the Chief Executive investigates the possibility of bringing into use the unused part of Alexandria Community Centre which had previously been used by the Careers Service.

This is an existing Council facility which is at the heart of the Vale of Leven Community. The space is currently not utilised and there is a possibility that this part of the existing accommodation could be brought back into use for the benefit of the whole of the Vale of Leven Community and specifically as a venue for the Vale of Leven Community Forum meetings and a place for them to store articles necessary for the administration of the Vale of Leven Community Forum.

The CPP would be able to utilise existing funding and resources to bring the existing facilities back into use.

The Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services was heard in response to Members' questions.

On a vote being taken, 9 Members voted for the amendment and 9 for the motion. There being an equality of votes, Provost Agnew used his casting vote in favour of the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON SPECIFIC EQUALITY DUTIES

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting a Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on the specific duties to be imposed on Scottish public authorities to support their general equality duties under the forthcoming Equality Act.

The Council agreed to approve the response to the consultation, as detailed in the Appendix to the report.

RESULTS OF FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF ST. MARTIN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Educational Services:-

- (a) reporting on the outcomes of the formal consultation for the proposed closure of St. Martin's Primary School in June 2010 to Council; and
- (b) reporting the outcomes of the formal consultation for the proposed amalgamation of Renton, Ferryfield and Vale of Leven Early Education & Childcare Centres into St. Martin's school building to Council.

Councillor Smillie, seconded by Councillor R. McColl, moved:-

That the Council approves the recommendations of the report (as shown below):-

- (1) to instruct officers to conduct statutory consultations immediately on the closure of St. Martin's Primary School in June 2010 with St. Martin's pupils transferring to St. Mary's, Alexandria; and
- (2) to approve the merger of Renton and Vale of Leven Early Education Childcare Centres into the St. Martin's Primary School building at the earliest opportunity thereafter.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor McGlinchey, moved:-

This Council agrees:-

- (1) that the Renton & Early Education Childcare Centre is to relocate to St Martin's Primary School and be amalgamated with the Vale of Leven Early Education & Childcare Centre in accordance with the wishes of the community as expressed after consultation; and
- (2) that no action is to be taken regarding the proposal to close St Martin's Primary School and it is to remain on the existing site.

The Executive Director of Educational Services and the Head of Service (Resources) were heard in answer to Members' questions.

Following debate Councillor Calvert requested that there should be a roll call vote. On a vote being taken, 8 Members voted in favour of the roll call vote and 10 against. The vote was accordingly conducted by a show of hands.

On a vote being taken, 9 Members voted for the amendment and 9 for the motion. There being an equality of votes, Provost Agnew used his casting vote in favour of the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

CONSULTATION ON MODIFICATIONS TO THE LOCH LOMOND AND THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK DESIGNATION ORDER

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking the Council's views on a proposal to modify the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Designation, Transitional and Consequential Provisions (Scotland) Order 2002.

Councillor R. McColl, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

That the Council should challenge the proposal to change the membership of the National Park Board on the basis that the previous response did not have Council support and that West Dunbartonshire Council's representation at Board level should remain at 2, in order to recognise the economic contribution of the West Dunbartonshire area of the park. Therefore, this Council agrees that officers, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition, should prepare a robust response to the Minister supporting the case for this Council to have 2 Members on the Board.

It was noted that Provost Agnew and Councillor C. McLaughlin had previously declared a financial interest in this item and that both Members had decided to remain in the Chambers and take part in the deliberations thereon. In response to a question by Councillor Rooney, the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services confirmed that the Standards Commission had granted special dispensation to local authority elected members who served on outside bodies which allowed those Members to vote on such matters at Council meetings.

As an amendment, Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor Casey, moved:-

Council notes that the current membership of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park (LL&TNPA) Board of 25 members comprises Ministerial appointees; Local Authority nominees; and directly elected members.

Council accepts that the current size of the LL&TNPA Board is hugely excessive and must be reduced both to improve decision making and to reduce the unnecessary financial burden on the public purse.

Council would encourage the Minister to go further and would welcome a reduction to one Local Authority nominee per local authority. Council is concerned by the claim in the report that a reduction in West Dunbartonshire Council's representation could increase the risk of decisions being taken by the Board which are contrary to the Council's interest. The Council nominees on LL&TNPA Board are there solely to serve the interests of the National Park Board. The Non-Executive Directors must take decisions objectively in the interests of the National Park and any Non-Executive Director taking decisions on behalf of other organisations would be acting against the principles of good governance.

Council notes that the current requirement that one of the Local Authority nominees should be a local member was agreed as part of West Dunbartonshire Council Standing Orders and this requirement should be removed when the review of Standing Orders takes place in the New Year. This would mean that the Local Authority nominee could come from any part of West Dunbartonshire and need not necessarily be an Elected Member of West Dunbartonshire Council. All appointments should be on merit and not on a grace and favour basis.

Council notes the proposal relative to the delegation of planning functions.

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the amendment and 12 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing Councillor R. McColl, the Council agreed to adjourn for a short period of time.

The meeting reconvened at 8.25 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance with the exception of Councillors Brown, Finn, Smillie and W. McLaughlin.

SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES REMUNERATION COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REVIEW OF REMUNERATION FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY COUNCILLORS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking the Council's views on the 2009 report from the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee (SLARC) on Councillors Remuneration and on the subject matter of the 2010 Review to be carried out by SLARC.

The Council agreed with the proposals in the 2009 SLARC report and the suggested scope of the 2010 review and agreed to note the proposed requirements on publication of information regarding conference costs and chauffer driven cars, albeit these recommendations would still require to be considered by the Cabinet Secretary.

Note: Councillors Brown, Finn, Smillie and W. McLaughlin returned to the meeting at this point.

The Council noted that the following two agenda items had been reversed on the agenda and thereafter agreed to consider the items in the order as recorded in these minutes.

GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – PERIOD 7 (2009/10)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing the Council with an update on the General Services Capital Plan 2009/2010 for the period to 15 November 2009.

After hearing the Executive Director of Educational Services and the Chief Executive in answer to Members' questions, the Council approved the updated Capital Plan (including virement requests) and agreed to note the position to date as outlined in Appendices I and II to the report (as shown in Appendices I – III of these minutes).

GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – PERIOD 7 (2009/10)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services advising the Council of the performance of the General Services Revenue Budget for the period to 15 November 2009.

After hearing officers in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the report.

It was noted that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development would provide Councillor McNair with information on the number of empty properties, outwith the meeting.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNTS 2009/2010 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENTS TO 15 NOVEMBER 2009 (PERIOD 7)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing the Council with an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) up to the period ending 15 November 2009.

Having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the report.

**HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/2010 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO
15 NOVEMBER 2009 (PERIOD 7)**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising the Council of progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2009/2010.

The Council agreed to note the terms of the report.

**QUESTION BY COUNCILLOR RONNIE MCCOLL TO THE LEADER OF THE
OPPOSITION**

Given that both David Cameron and Gordon Brown have publicly apologised for having photos taken during Remembrance Day services at cenotaphs, will Councillor Rooney apologise to the people of West Dunbartonshire for personally photographing Labour politicians in the same manner?

Councillor Rooney responded in the following terms:-

Thank you Provost and thank you to Depute Provost McColl for his question.

Firstly I would like to make it clear that I have nothing to apologise for.

During the 20th and 21st Century hundreds of thousands of British citizens gave the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of their nation. Many hundreds of thousands more were injured during the many conflicts that Britain has been involved in.

The sacrifices of the First World War and the Second World War should always be at the forefront of our memory, but we should never forget the other conflicts:

<i>Palestine 1945-48</i>	<i>747</i>
<i>Malaya 1948-1960</i>	<i>1443</i>
<i>Yangtze 1949</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Korea 1950-53</i>	<i>1086</i>
<i>Suez Canal 1951-1954</i>	<i>403</i>
<i>Kenya 1950-56</i>	<i>94</i>
<i>Cyprus 1955-59</i>	<i>357</i>
<i>Near East Suez 1956</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Muscat and Oman 1957-60</i>	<i>60</i>

<i>Brunei 1961-62</i>	7
<i>Borneo 1962-1966</i>	131
<i>Malay Peninsula 1964-1967</i>	38
<i>Aden 1964-67</i>	167
<i>Northern Ireland 1969-</i>	1380
<i>Dhofar 1969-76</i>	25
<i>Falklands 1982</i>	255
<i>Kosovo 2007</i>	79
<i>Iraq 2009</i>	179

Afghanistan – ongoing

I served 15 years with the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards and saw active service in Northern Ireland, the first Gulf War and served as part of the British Protective Forces in support of Belize, then a fledgling democracy formally known as British Honduras.

Remembrance Day has a particular importance to me. It is a time to remember the fallen from past conflicts but also a time for personal memories of lost colleagues during my military service.

I also take time to remember other fallen comrades, in particular Lance Corporal William Brown from Dumbarton, an Argyll & Sutherland Highlander, who died while on active service in Northern Ireland. I was his Detachment Commander when he was in the Dumbarton Detachment of the Army Cadet Force and I attended his funeral in Bonhill Church. I also take time to think of Private Craig O'Donnell, born in the Vale, brought up in Clydebank and died on active service in Iraq. He joined as an Argyll & Sutherland Highlander and was the first member of the newly formed Royal Regiment of Scotland to die on active service.

I believe that it is a part of my civic role to acknowledge the sacrifices of all the brave young men and women who gave their lives for our freedoms.

I have demonstrated this as a local Councillor by forming the Vale of Leven Remembrance Association and supporting the recently formed Armed Forces Veterans Association. The Armed Forces Veterans Association, an Alexandria based organisation, is currently in the process of developing a proposal for a National War Cemetery in Stirling and I will lend them whatever support I can for this.

Finally Provost, I would like to put on record my support and appreciation of the work carried out by West Dunbartonshire Council on the Clydebank Blitz War Memorial and the rededication service; for the recent improvements to the Clydebank War Memorial in Hall Street, honouring a 70 year old pledge to produce a roll of honour of the fallen; and the new Memorial Room within the Town Hall.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Education Department in ensuring that the Vale of Leven Academy War Memorial was placed in an area of high prominence so that it was accessible to pupils, staff and visitors to the new school.

As I stated at the beginning of my response, I have nothing to apologise for and I will continue to carry out my public and civic duties to promote remembrance of the fallen.

Note: Having declared an interest in the following item of business earlier in the meeting, Councillor C. McLaughlin left the meeting and took no part in the deliberation thereon.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

After hearing Provost Agnew, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Order 19 (a) in order to consider the undernoted item of business, as six months had not passed since the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee made a decision on this issue.

(a) Motion by Councillor David McBride - Council Tax Discount on Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties

This Council notes the recent decision by the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee in relation to Council Tax Discount on Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties.

However, Council is concerned that the decision making process in relation to this was flawed due to the failure of the Chair of the Committee, Councillor McLaughlin, to declare his interest in this item.

Council agrees that the decision be rescinded and calls on the Chief Executive to bring forward the report to the full Council to re-consider this issue as a matter of priority.

After hearing Councillor McBride, the Council agreed to approve the motion.

It was noted that the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services on Council Tax Discount on Second Homes and Long-Term Empty Properties, dated 4 November 2009, which had been previously submitted to the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee on 25 November 2009, had been circulated with the agenda.

After hearing Councillor Robertson, the Council agreed to approve the recommendations of the report as follows:-

- (1) to implement reducing the level of council tax discount awarded to second homes and long term empty properties to 10% with effect from 1 April 2010;
- (2) that this money be retained within the Housing Revenue Account to fund approved projects; and
- (3) that officers should contact the owners of second homes and long-term properties to communicate the change in policy.

(b) Motion by Councillor Ronnie McColl – Community Planning Partnership: Publication of Papers

Council agrees that in the interests of good governance and democratic accountability to the communities of West Dunbartonshire, the Chief Executive is instructed to write to the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) urging them to incorporate an adapted version of Council's own Standing Order No. 4 into their own rules for the calling of Strategic Board and Thematic Group meetings.

Further to this, the Chief Executive should ask the CPP to include all elected members of West Dunbartonshire Council in the distribution of Strategic Board papers by e-mail.

After hearing Councillor R. McColl, the Council agreed to approve the above motion.

(c) Motion by Councillor Ronnie McColl – Minimum Pricing of Alcohol

This Council is disappointed that some national politicians have chosen to play party politics with the very serious issue of alcohol abuse.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to all our constituency and regional list MSPs and all Scottish party leaders to urge them to consider all options including minimum pricing.

West Dunbartonshire has one of the highest levels of alcohol abuse in Scotland and this Council believes that none of the proposals in the Bill should be ruled out before medical and other evidence is given proper consideration.

Councillor R. McColl was heard in support of the above motion which was seconded by Councillor Robertson.

As an amendment, Councillor McGlinchey, seconded by Councillor Calvert, moved:-

Council recognises that there is a link between alcohol price and over-consumption, and that radical measures are required to tackle Scotland's heavy drinking culture.

Council notes that the SNP's Alcohol Bill does not enjoy the support of the Scottish Parliament and believes that in order to move forward a genuine consensus across the chamber must be delivered.

Council therefore calls on MSPs to put aside political differences and work together on legislation that Parliament can support and which best reforms Scotland's heavy drinking culture for the benefit of the Scottish public.

At this point in the meeting the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services informed the Council that the Council had received correspondence from the Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee seeking views on the general principles of the Alcohol Etc. (Scotland) Bill. Given that a response was required prior to the next meetings of the Council and the Licensing Board, it was agreed that officers would draft a response on behalf of the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and Chair of the Licensing Board.

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the amendment and 12 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

Note: Councillor C. McLaughlin returned to the meeting at this point.

(d) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin – A82

The A82 is without doubt an absolute lifeline for the communities of West Dunbartonshire. There are a number of parts of the A82 which require upgrading and while this Council will continue to strive for improvements to the relevant problems that affect West Dunbartonshire commuters, we should forge a partnership of likeminded organisations with the same common goal. By joining forces with other partners and agencies, such as other local authorities, public bodies and community groups we can join in a coordinated campaign to demand that the A82 be improved and upgraded.

Recent work on the A82 has highlighted more than ever the need for major improvements to this essential road network as the disruptions caused to commuters has been considerable.

Therefore this Council agrees to instruct the Chief Executive to write to his counterparts in all relevant local authorities and the Chief Executive Officer of the National Park authority seeking their views on a joint campaign. The Council asks that officers from the relevant authorities work on drawing together a plan of each respective authority's areas of concern on the A82. Once the plan has been completed all relevant partners should unite and make a joint representation to the Scottish Government.

The Council approved the above motion.

(e) Motion by Jonathan McColl – Community Planning Partnership Membership

Council agrees the following changes in the SNP nominations to the Community Planning Partnership Strategic Board:

Cllr Jim McElhill will become the Vice-Chair substitute and Cllr Ronnie McColl will become a full member as shown in the table below:-

Body	Nomination	Substitute
Strategic Board	Iain Robertson (Vice Chair)	Jim McElhill (Vice Chair Sub)
	Ronnie McColl	George Black
	Gail Casey	Martin Rooney
Safe & Strong	May Smillie	Douglas McAllister
Health & Wellbeing	Jonathan McColl	Geoff Calvert
Environment & Sustainable Development	Marie McNair	Jim McElhill
Education & Lifelong Learning	Patrick McGlinchey	Jim Brown
Employment & Business Growth	Margaret Bootland	Jim Finn
Housing	Bill Hendrie	Willie McLaughlin

The Council approved the above motion.

(f) Motion by Councillor Patrick McGlinchey – Removal of Incompetent Cabinet Secretary

This Council congratulates the First Minister, Alex Salmond, for acting decisively to remove the ex-Cabinet Secretary for Education, Fiona Hyslop, from office due to her incompetence.

Councillor McGlinchey was heard in support of the above motion which was seconded by Councillor Rooney.

As an amendment, Councillor R. McColl, seconded by Councillor Robertson, moved:-

This Council congratulates Mike Russell MSP on his appointment as Cabinet Secretary for Education.

Council calls on the Leader of the Council and the Convener of Education & Lifelong Learning to arrange an early meeting with him to discuss West Dunbartonshire's ongoing educational needs and Dumbarton Academy in particular.

Council also notes that it is only a few short weeks since Labour leader Iain Gray appointed Jackie Baillie MSP as Labour's Spokesperson for Health.

Council would like to congratulate her on her appointment but cannot because since her appointment she has, amongst other concerning actions:-

1. dismissed minimum pricing as an option for helping to address West Dunbartonshire's serious alcohol misuse problems;
2. publicly supported London Labour's policy of scrapping attendance allowance and disability living allowance; and
3. called for a nationally set rate for homecare charges, which would be set to take into account increased delivery costs in rural authorities. This would impose charges far in excess of the current charges in SNP controlled West Dunbartonshire.

These policy positions of Jackie Baillie are a direct attack on the most vulnerable and poorest people in the communities of West Dunbartonshire.

This Council therefore calls on Iain Gray to sack his failing Health Spokesperson before her policies can do any harm to the vulnerable people of West Dunbartonshire.

As a second amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor McBride, moved:-

This Council recognises the difficult decision that the First Minister, Alex Salmond, was obliged to take concerning the position of Education Secretary following the disappointing announcement of the fall in teacher numbers in Scotland.

This Council acknowledges that the First Minister is loyal to his colleagues and therefore would not act in replacing Ms Fiona Hyslop as Education Secretary as a knee-jerk reaction and without due thought and consideration.

Having given due consideration, it is clear that, in having lost confidence in Ms Hyslop, the First Minister was obliged to act decisively and without delay.

Given that the First Minister's loss of confidence would not have been based on a single issue, it was to be expected that the new Education Secretary, Mr Mike Russell, would wish to review recent statements and decisions taken by Ms Hyslop with a view to either endorsing them or changing them. Indeed, Mr Russell in stating his wish to 'reset' the relationship with Councils, has already shown his flexibility with regard to the previous Scottish Government policies of Class Size Reduction and Free School Meals for Primaries 1 – 3.

Against this backdrop, it is incumbent upon this Council to question the recent decision taken by Ms Hyslop to make no funding available to build new primary schools in West Dunbartonshire. This Council has rightly identified Aitkenbar Primary School and St Peter's Primary School in Bellsmyre as having the greatest need within West Dunbartonshire.

Therefore, this Council in welcoming the new Education Secretary, Mr Mike Russell, into post and, in looking forward to establishing a positive working relationship with him, instructs the Leader of the Council and the Education Convenor to request a meeting with Mr Russell in order to request him to support West Dunbartonshire Council's bid for funding in support of the Bellsmyre community.

As a third amendment Councillor Black, seconded by Councillor McNair, moved:-

Mr Russell, in stating his wish to 'reset' the relationship with Councils, has already shown his flexibility with regard to the previous Scottish Government policies of Class Size Reduction and Free School Meals for Primaries 1 – 3.

Against this backdrop, it is incumbent upon this Council to question the recent decision taken by Ms Hyslop to make no funding available to build new primary schools in West Dunbartonshire. This Council has rightly identified Aitkenbar Primary School and St. Peter's Primary School in Bellsmyre as having the greatest need within West Dunbartonshire.

Therefore, this Council in welcoming the new Education Secretary, Mr Mike Russell, into post and, in looking forward to establishing a positive working relationship with him, instructs the Leader of the Council and the Education Convenor to request a meeting with Mr Russell in order to request him to support West Dunbartonshire Council's bid for funding in support of the Bellsmyre community.

As a fourth amendment, Councillor C. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor J. McColl, moved:-

That a delegation from this Council meets with the Minister to argue for the educational needs of all children in West Dunbartonshire.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Rooney asked the Council to suspend Standing Order 6 (c) in order to allow the meeting to continue to 10.30 p.m. to enable all items of business on the agenda to be dealt with and prevent the need for the Council to adjourn to the following day.

On a vote being taken, 9 Members voted for the suspension of Standing Orders and 10 against. As the motion had failed to receive the support of two thirds of those present and voting, Standing Orders were not suspended. Thereafter all movers of the amendments and the motion were invited to sum up.

On a vote being taken between the fourth amendment (Councillor C. McLaughlin and the third amendment (Councillor Black), 8 Members voted for fourth amendment and 2 for the third amendment.

On a vote being taken between the fourth amendment (Councillor C. McLaughlin) and the second amendment (Councillor Calvert), 11 Members voted for fourth amendment and 7 for the second amendment.

On a vote being taken between the fourth amendment (Councillor C. McLaughlin) and the amendment (Councillor R. McColl), 10 Members voted for fourth amendment and 2 for the second amendment.

On a vote being taken between the fourth amendment (Councillor C. McLaughlin) and the motion (Councillor McGlinchey), 11 Members voted for fourth amendment and 7 for the motion.

Councillor C. McLaughlin's amendment was accordingly declared carried.

ADJOURNMENT

In accordance with Standing Order 6 (c), the Council agreed to adjourn until 10.00 a.m. the following morning to consider the remaining item of business on the agenda.

The meeting reconvened at 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 17 December 2009 with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance with the exception of Councillors Jim Brown, Marie McNair, Douglas McAllister and May Smillie.

(g) Motion by Councillor Geoff Calvert - Consultation

This Council is aware that it must do better with regard to Community Engagement and consultation as noted in the Accounts Commission report of Best Value. Council notes that it has agreed this criticism and has promised to improve.

Against this background, this Council agrees that the SNP decision to arbitrarily impose swingeing increases to charges of Council services and the introduction of new charges, all to take effect from 1 January 2010 and all

without any attempt to consult with the community it serves, makes a mockery of its commitment to improvement and undermines the integrity of this Council.

This Council agrees that both an explanation and an apology are due from the Leader of the Council to the community of West Dunbartonshire, to the Accounts Commission and to the Improvement Service as to why he has set aside the Council's commitment to engage with the community and consult effectively prior to imposing these increases which will impact on the most vulnerable members of our society.

Councillor Calvert was heard in support of the above motion which was seconded by Councillor McBride.

As an amendment, Councillor Robertson, seconded by Councillor R. McColl, moved:-

Council notes that the decision taken by the SNP at its last meeting to increase and introduce some new charges will help protect vital services and jobs in West Dunbartonshire.

At this point Councillor Rooney moved a second amendment which required the suspension of Standing Order 19 (a) as a period of six months had not passed since a decision had been taken on the matter referred to within his amendment.

On a vote being taken, 6 Members voted in favour of the suspension of standing orders and 7 against. As the motion had failed to receive the support of two thirds of those present and voting, Standing Orders were not suspended and Councillor Rooney's amendment fell. Councillor Rooney requested that his dissent be recorded in these minutes.

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR WISHES

Provost Agnew wished all Members of the Council and officers a happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

The meeting closed at 11.00 a.m.