

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Civic Space, Council Offices, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 27 November 2019 at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie, Bailie Denis Agnew and Councillors Jim Bolla, Jim Brown, Gail Casey, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Daniel Lennie, Caroline McAllister, Douglas McAllister, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, Marie McNair, John Millar*, John Mooney, Lawrence O'Neill, Sally Page, Martin Rooney and Brian Walker.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Angela Wilson, Strategic Director – Transformation & Public Service Reform; Beth Culshaw, Chief Officer, Health & Social Care Partnership, Peter Hesse, Strategic Lead – Regulatory (Legal Officer); Stephen West, Strategic Lead – Resources; Laura Mason, Chief Education Officer; Malcolm Bennie, Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities & Facilities; Peter Barry, Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability; Gail Macfarlane, Strategic Lead – Roads & Transportation; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Jim Finn.

Provost William Hendrie in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

The Provost advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of Special Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 29 October 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record, subject to the following correction:-

That page 3 of the minutes be changed in the first paragraph after the two redacted paragraphs to read: "Furthermore, the Council is disappointed to learn that despite a letter, Council officers could not agree the commercial terms with Clydeside Regeneration".

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 30 October 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 25 September 2019 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

OPEN FORUM

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

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

A report was submitted by the Chief Social Work Officer providing the Council with the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Annual Report for 2018-19 which provided information on statutory work undertaken on the Council's behalf, including a summary of performance, partnership working and performance.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Social Work Officer and the Chief Officer, Health & Social Care Partnership, in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the content of the Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2018-19 and approved its submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor of the Scottish Government.

UK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION: 12 DECEMBER 2019 – ADVERSE WEATHER PLANNING

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Roads & Transportation providing an update on the supplementary actions proposed to assist in facilitating safe access in and around polling stations and the additional costs further to the motion considered by Council at its meeting on 30 October 2019.

The Strategic Lead – Roads & Transportation was heard in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions.

ADJOURNMENT

Having heard Provost Hendrie, Chair, the meeting was adjourned for a short recess. The meeting was reconvened at 7.18 p.m. with the same Members present, as listed in the sederunt.

After discussion, the Council agreed:-

The recommendations at 2.1 of the report, and welcomes the additional resource allocated to dealing with adverse weather on 12th December 2019.

Council also acknowledges that many falls occur throughout the winter months, resulting in attendances at the emergency department, and, in some cases, admission to hospital.

Disabled and elderly people are more likely to have a fall resulting in emergency room attendance or hospital admission. During December 2018 to February 2019, there were 227 falls by over-65s resulting in 51 hospital admissions. HSCP staff estimate that 16% of these falls occurred outdoors.

A fall by an elderly person, as well as being traumatic to the individual, costs the HSCP £3,452 per hospital admission. This does not include surgery or the costs of social work etc.

Therefore, this Council, using its power of wellbeing, further agrees that a report should be brought to the next Council meeting detailing how treatment of pavements and footpaths can be extended to reduce falls by elderly and disabled citizens.

In the interim, Council agrees to make a further contingency fund of £100k, from general reserves, available to Roads & Greenspace to scale up treatment of pavements and footpaths throughout the winter months.

To asks officers to include within the next issue of Housing News some advice for tenants on how they can avoid falls within the home.

LONG TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY REFRESH AND GENERAL SERVICES AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE ESTIMATES UPDATE 2020/21 TO 2022/23

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing an update of the Council's Long Term Finance Strategy, together with information on the estimates process for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

After discussion and having heard officers in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the updated strategy had developed estimates of the Council's funding position to 2022/23 and identified cumulative anticipated revenue funding gaps within General Services of £5.644m for 2020/21; £10.621m for 2021/22; and £16.871m for 2022/23;
- (2) to note the position regarding the HRA projections to 2022/23;
- (3) to note the projection to a 10 year estimate to 2029/30;
- (4) to approve the long term financial strategy, as attached as Appendix 1 to the report, including:-
 - inflationary uplifts for 2020/21 onwards as described in 4.12 of the report; and
 - the 10 year plan within the strategy as described at 4.36 of the report;
- (5) to note the projected year-end position regarding reserves and provisions;
- (6) to note that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) are in the process of generating efficiencies for consideration at a future Council meeting;
- (7) to note the current position regarding the long term capital plan;
- (8) to note the information provided in relation to Brexit, the General Election, and the review of loan charges;
- (9) to note that, as a result in the delay in the UK Government budget announcement, the scheduled report to December 2019 Council would no longer be provided and Members may wish to consider setting a further Council meeting between December 2019 and next scheduled meeting on 26 February 2020 for further updates; and
- (10) to note that this projected position was subject to amendment as assumptions continue to be clarified and revised between now and the Council meeting scheduled for March 2020.

GENERAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO PERIOD 7

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources advising on the General Services revenue budget and the approved capital programme to 31 October 2019 (Period 7).

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive and relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue account currently showed a projected annual favourable variance of £0.650m (0.29% of the total budget); and
- (2) to note that the capital account showed that planned expenditure and resource for 2019/20 was lower than budgeted by £11.447m (15.43% of the budget), made up of £11.897m (16.04% of the budget) relating to project slippage, partially offset by £0.450m relating to an in-year overspend (as noted within Appendices 5 to 8 of the report).

Note: Councillor Millar entered the meeting during consideration of the above item.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 OCTOBER 2019 (PERIOD 7)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 31 October 2019 (Period 7) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to underspend against budget by £0.020m (0.05%) at the year-end; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which highlighted a variance of £11.964m (19.6%) due to projected net slippage of £12.207m (19.2%) and an overspend of £0.243m (-0.4%).

BUDGET PRIORITISATION – ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities & Facilities providing an overview of the key results and feedback from the recent budget prioritisation engagement as agreed by Council at its meeting on 28 June 2019.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead and relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the results and feedback from early citizen consultation on broad service area and delivery priorities as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process.

DUMBARTON COMMON GOOD FUND GRANT APPLICATION

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing information on one grant application and making a recommendation regarding a grant award for the Dumbarton Common Good Fund (DCGF). The report also provided an update on a further grant award, as considered by the Corporate Services Committee on 19 June 2019. The Strategic Lead advised the Committee of a minor clarification in the recommendation of the report.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead and relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) that an award of £46,520 be made to Tulloch Trust regarding the application, following a letter of comfort from Tulloch confirming the benefit to Dumbarton residents; and
- (2) to provide for an annual payment of £36,000 to Bellsmyre Development Trust to be built into the DCGF budget from 2020/21 onwards and for a Service Level Agreement to be progressed based upon this budget provision.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Housing & Employability presenting the West Dunbartonshire Community Empowerment Strategy for approval. It was noted that the Strategy had also been presented to the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Management Board at its meeting on 21 November 2019.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to approve the draft Community Empowerment Strategy and action plan; and
- (2) to approve the development of a detailed delivery plan and launch of the Strategy in January 2020.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL – 18 DECEMBER 2019

Given the delay in the UK Government budget announcement with a consequent delay to the settlement figures for 2020/21, it was noted that there would no longer be a budget preparation report to Council on 18 December 2019.

Accordingly, Council agreed to reschedule the December meeting to 29 January 2020 at the same time and location.

NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan – Firework displays

Councillor Bollan moved:-

This Council notes that there is a requirement within West Dunbartonshire for any commercial firework display to be advertised prior to getting a licence, in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people and resolves:-

- through the multi-agency firework task group to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for sale

Councillor McNair asked if Councillor Bollan would be willing to accept the following as an addendum to his motion:-

- that Council will write to the UK Government asking them to amend the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations (2005), to give Local Authorities more control and discretion on the issuing of licenses

Councillor Bollan confirmed his acceptance of the addendum. Thereafter, the motion was agreed, with addendum.

(b) Motion by Councillor Jonathan McColl – Community Council Wreaths

Councillor McColl moved:-

Council notes that the current local rules for spending of the Community Council administrative grant from the Council specifically prohibit the purchasing of wreaths.

Council notes that these rules have been in place for decades, and since then new national guidance has been issued in the form of a model Constitution.

The model constitution states:

“All monies raised by or on behalf of the Community Council or provided by the local authority and other sources shall be applied to further the objectives of the Community Council and for no other purpose.”

The objectives specified in the Model Constitution include:

*“to take such action in the interests of the community as appears to it to be desirable and practicable”; and
“to promote the well-being of the community and to foster community spirit”.*

West Dunbartonshire Council believes the purchasing of wreaths for Remembrance Sunday falls within these two objectives and asks officers to update local rules to permit Community Councils to use administrative grant funds for this purpose.

Council agrees that this change is retrospective, allowing individuals who have purchased wreaths on behalf of Community Councils for this year’s commemorations, to be reimbursed by their Community Council in the normal way.

Furthermore, Council agrees that a report will be brought to the next Corporate Services Committee with recommendations to amend any other local rules that do not reflect the guidance in the model constitution.

The motion was then seconded by Councillor Page and thereafter, the Council agreed the motion.

(c) Motion by Councillor Sally Page – Community Council Wreaths

Given the decision in the previous item of business, it was noted that this motion was withdrawn.

(d) Motion by Councillor Sally Page – Robotic Lawnmowers

Councillor Page, seconded by Councillor Walker, moved:-

Council is supportive of trialling the use of robotic lawnmowers and agrees that a report be brought back to the next Council meeting detailing proposals for such a trial in parks during the 2020 grass cutting season. The report should specify the costs associated with the proposals including whether the costs can be met from existing budgets.

As an amendment, Councillor McColl, seconded by Councillor Lennie, moved:-

Council notes that from time to time we have used remote controlled robotic lawnmowers to cut areas that are harder to do so safely with large equipment.

Council is concerned at the impact autonomous robotic lawnmowers could have on local jobs and the Council's ability to provide gardening and landscaping apprenticeships. We already have experience with remotely controlled equipment and can see no justification to consider a trial of autonomous systems at this time.

As such, Council agrees to take no action.

On a vote being taken, 19 Members voted for the amendment and 2 for the motion. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

The meeting closed at 9.07 p.m.