

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held within the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 17th December 1997.

Present: Provost Patrick O'Neill (LAB), James McElhill (SNP), Mary Campbell (LAB), Daniel McCafferty (LAB), John Syme (LAB), Andrew White (LAB), Anthony Devine (LAB), Alistair Macdonald (LAB), James Doherty (LAB), Patricia Rice (LAB), George Cairney (LAB), John McCutcheon (SNP), James McCallum (LAB & CO-OP), Geoffrey Calvert (LAB & CO-OP), William Mackechnie (SNP), Duncan Mills (LAB), Craig McLaughlin (SNP), Ronald McColl (SNP), Margaret McGregor (SNP), James

Attending: Flynn (LAB) and James Chirrey (SNP).
Michael Watters, Chief Executive, Ian Leitch, Depute Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council, Eric Walker, Director of Finance, Ian McMurdo, Director of Education and Leisure Services, Tim Huntingford, Director of Social Work and Housing, Ian Fernie, Director of Economic;

Apologies for Absence: Planning and Environmental Services, Allan Findlay, Director of Contract Services, Patrick Cleary, Director of Roads and Technical Services, John Bak, Head of Personnel and Training, Mary Cullen, Head of Corporate Policy and Public Relations and Angela Clements, Head of Information Services.

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor John Wailes (SNP).

Provost Patrick O'Neill in the Chair

PRESENTATION TO KYLIE SMYTH

Provost O'Neill welcomed Kylie Smyth, her family and her coaches to the meeting. He congratulated Kylie on her achievement in winning a silver medal in the 1997 Special Olympics National Games in Portsmouth and presented her on behalf of the Council with a shield and gift voucher. He also congratulated Kylie's coaches and her family for the help and

support they had given her and which had contributed to her success.

URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Provost O'Neill, in terms of Section 50B(4) (b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as inserted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 advised that he had agreed to the following item and a later item in relation to Dumbarton Football Club being taken as a matter of urgency on the grounds that they required early consideration.

WATER CONTAMINATION INCIDENT - CLYDEBANK

There was submitted report by the Chief Executive on the water crisis in Clydebank, giving a limited overview of the Council's procedures during the contamination incident and the implementation of those procedures. After discussion, Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Mackechnie, moved the following, which was unanimously agreed:

- (1) to approve the terms of the report;
- (2) to invite the Chief Executive to prepare a detailed report on all of the issues arising from the emergency;
- (3) to submit a report to any Inquiry established into the circumstances of this matter;
- (4) to receive individual comments from members as to issues in their own areas for inclusion in any such report;
- (5) to liaise with East Dunbartonshire Council and Strathclyde Police and such other bodies as are deemed appropriate in the consideration of any of the above matters; and
- (6) to authorise the Chief Executive to make overtime payments to staff on NJC conditions in terms of paragraphs 6.1 and 6.2 of his report.

It was noted that the cost of the emergency to the Council could not yet be quantified and that although the Council would make application to the Scottish Office for financial assistance under the Bellwin Scheme, the qualifying level of expenditure was $\text{£}198,000$.

Councillor White and Councillor Mackechnie paid tribute to the exceptional commitment demonstrated during the emergency by the employees of the Council in all departments and at all levels who worked tirelessly and without whose efforts the effects of the crisis would have been even more keenly felt by the people of Clydebank, particularly by its most vulnerable citizens.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 26th November 1997 were submitted and approved on the motion of Provost O'Neill, seconded by Councillor Macdonald, subject to the deletion of the word "further" in the second line of the second paragraph of the item on the Code of Conduct for the guidance of Members considering planning applications (Volume page 2801 refers).

MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES

The following Committee Minutes were submitted for information:

Appeals Committee: 20th November 1997

Social Work Committee: 26th November 1997

Housing Committee: 26th November 1997

Planning and Economic Development Committee: 26th November 1997

Tendering Committee: 3rd December 1997

Roads and Technical Services Committee: 3rd December 1997

Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee: 3rd December 1997

MATTERS ARISING OUTWITH DELEGATED POWERS FOR RATIFICATION OF COUNCIL

Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee -
Balloch Castle Country Parks, Urban Parks Lottery Application.

There were submitted and approved on the motion of Councillor Campbell, seconded by Councillor White, the following recommendations, being outwith the delegated powers of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee (Volume pages 2865-2866 refer):-

- (a) that the lease with Glasgow City Council for Balloch Castle Country Park be extended for 30 years;
- (b) that funding options to make up the 25% of the capital project which will release the Lottery grant of £1.66 million are actively pursued; and

(c) that the sum of œ62,000 per annum for 3 years commencing in 1998/1999 be included as a capital expenditure option as part of the Council's capital programme considerations, it being noted that this amount would facilitate the release of œ2.02 million of external partnership funding for the development of Balloch Castle Country Park in accordance with the approved Management Plan.

OTHER ITEMS FOR RATIFICATION BY COUNCIL

Finance Committee: 17th December 1997: Financial Settlement 1998/99 and consequences for 1998/99 Revenue Estimates

With reference to the meeting of the Finance Committee held earlier that day, an excerpt minute, which forms Appendix I to this Minute, was submitted for approval. After discussion, Councillor Cairney, seconded by Councillor White, moved the Minute. As an amendment, Councillor Mackechnie, seconded by Councillor McGregor moved as follows:

"West Dunbartonshire Council notes with regret the determination of New Labour to adhere to Tory spending plans and acknowledges that this means a cut in real terms. Accordingly, West Dunbartonshire Council invites the Trade Unions and the local community to join it in a campaign to ensure that the New Labour government provides the resources to match the needs of West Dunbartonshire.

While accepting the need to assess the effectiveness of existing management structures and the necessity of protecting front-line services the SNP group considers it essential that a remit of the review is prepared which defines "front-line" services and includes an examination of the appropriateness of the existing committee structure, if necessary. The SNP believes that the Trade Unions should be involved from the outset in drawing up this remit and their comments sought on the use of the COSLA consultancy.

In conjunction with this the SNP group believes that a consultation exercise, similar to that carried out by Stirling Council last year, should be undertaken to establish the priorities of local communities in order that informed strategic spending decisions can be made.

The SNP group offers to assist the Labour Administration with any of the above proposals."

On a vote being taken, 7 Members voted for the Amendment and 14 for the Motion, which was accordingly carried.

MILLENNIUM CANAL LINK - MINUTES OF AGREEMENT

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of Council held on 25th June 1997 (Volume pages 2391-2392 refer), there was submitted report by the Director of Planning and Economic Development on the Minute of Agreement for the Millennium Canal Link. After discussion, the Council approved the recommendations contained within the report as follows:

- (a) to proceed with the sale of the bed of the canal as it runs through the Clydebank Shopping Centre to British Waterways Board with the proceeds of this receipt being transferred to the Board by way of the Council's contribution to the Millennium Link project;
- (b) to resolve formally to support the Millennium Link joint venture project through the mechanism outlined in (a) above; and
- (c) that the final details of the terms and conditions of the conveyance be required to be reported to Members for approval.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GUIDANCE OF MEMBERS CONSIDERING PLANNING APPLICATIONS

With reference to the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26th November 1997 (Volume page 2801 refers), there was re-submitted report by the Director of Economic; Planning and Environmental Services proposing the adoption of a Code of Conduct for the development control process. After discussion and having heard Councillor Macdonald, it was agreed to continue the item until the next meeting of Council.

LOMOND AND CLYDE FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

With reference to the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26th November 1997 (Volume pages 2803-2804 refer), there was submitted report by the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council on matters concerning the Lomond and Clyde Festival Association and providing a number of options for the Council's consideration. After discussion and having thanked the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council for his report, Councillor White, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved approval of the third option, namely to constitute an alternative Festival organisation and seek the dissolution of the existing Festival with the funds held in credit being transferred to the new. This was unanimously agreed.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Mackechnie, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved the following Notice of Motion:-

"The SNP Group notes the anxiety of the Leader of the Council to minimise damaging press. At this season of goodwill the SNP group is distressed to see the extent of the unease felt by the Leader of the Council about the policies of New Labour. The SNP group suggests that, rather than employ a spuriousness of spin doctors and waste Council tax money, the Leader of the Council should relax and have a merry Christmas. Slainte, sith agus sonas."

As an amendment, Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Devine, moved as follows:

"This Council congratulates the SNP for not adding to the anxiety of the Leader of the Council. As far as the issue of cost for the media seminar is concerned, this was to be carried out by an external speaker free of charge. We had the SNP in mind when we organised the seminar in media training, especially in view of the Christmas spirit, humbug etc. This was in line with the New Labour Policy of "Education, Education and Education!" Nothing the SNP have done has given me any cause for concern and I wish Councillor Mackechnie and his colleagues a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

On a vote being taken, 14 Members voted for the Amendment and 7 for the Motion. The Amendment was accordingly carried.

"OPENING UP QUANGOS": A CONSULTATION PAPER

There were submitted letter and consultation paper from the Cabinet Office setting out a range of policies which the Government already has in hand to address the main criticisms made about quangos and its proposals for making them more open, accountable and effective.

After discussion and having heard Councillor McCafferty, the Council agreed to respond in the following terms:

- (1) That while the proposed changes are a worthwhile start, the Council, noting that €18 billion was spent on quangos in 1995-96, with possibly even more being spent in 1996-97, would wish to see a real start made by directing that money to local authorities instead of to quangos;
- (2) Paragraph 8 on Page 13 of the document makes reference to the Scottish Parliament and this Council would, in the Millennium, like to see the Scottish Parliament with its

own arrangements to review the future of quangos;

- (3) Paragraph 11 on page 14 of the document refers to a Freedom of Information Act and this Council would certainly wish to see this applied to quangos and to every organisation involved in public expenditure in the interests of public accountability. Up until the present time, quangos have operated like secret societies;
- (4) Paragraph 16 on page 16 refers to the intention to carry out a rigorous review of quangos every five years. In the Council's view, this timescale is insufficient and there should be ongoing democratic review of the quangos; and
- (5) Finally, while the Council would have wished to reply in detail to the questions contained in chapter 4 of the report, the timescale allowed was completely unrealistic and the Council would accordingly urge the Cabinet Office to extend the deadline to allow consultees more time to analyse the proposals and prepare a detailed response.

CAIRD PRINTING REPLACEMENT - STAGE 1

There was submitted report by the Chief Executive outlining the current position for printing replacement requirements, offering two options for consideration and recommending Option 1 for approval. After questions, Councillor McCallum, seconded by Councillor White, moved as follows:

"That the Council does not accept that what is described as Option 2 is a true option. The Council agrees that the Chief Executive be instructed to implement what is currently described as Option 1 at Paragraph 5.1."

As an amendment, Councillor Mackechnie, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin, moved that the Council accept the recommendation contained in paragraph 6.1 of the report.

On a vote, 7 Members voted for the Amendment and 14 for the Motion which was accordingly carried.

ANTONINE SPORTS CENTRE, ROMAN ROAD, DUNTOCHER, CLYDEBANK

There was submitted report by the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council on the request by the Antonine Sports Centre Company Limited to amend the terms of its lease of the Sports Centre from the Council.

After discussion, Councillor Cairney, seconded by Councillor Macdonald, moved as follows:

that;

"This Council recognising:-

- (a) the value of the present sporting and leisure facilities provided by the Antonine Centre;
- (b) the potential additional benefits to Clydebank of the proposed extension to the facilities; and
- (c) the economic benefits to be gained from securing additional lottery funding for the area;

agrees:-

1. in principle, to provide a guarantee of the loan required of up to £240,000 by the Antonine Centre from the Royal Bank of Scotland plc;
2. that terms acceptable to Council be negotiated in relation to this loan, ideally payment of the loan continuing on an annual basis by the Council in the event of default by the Antonine Centre;
3. to advise the Antonine Centre Company of the proposal and to secure the continued offer of all funds from the lottery fund, to notify the fund prior to 31st December 1997 in suitable terms; and
4. invite officers to report further on items 1 and 2 above as soon as practicable."

The Motion was approved unanimously.

AREA REGISTRATION OFFICE

There was submitted report by the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council advising that the Clydebank Area Registration Office would relocate from 57 Kilbowie Road to the Council Offices in Rosebery Place in February 1998.

The Council noted that no department of the Council had expressed an interest in the property at 57 Kilbowie Road and accordingly agreed that it be declared surplus to requirements and that the Director of Economic; Planning and Environmental Services consider options for disposal of the property.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE DISTRICT COURT

There was submitted report by the Depute Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council on the proposed acquisition of a computerised District Court Administration System/Fine Collection System (DCAS-FCS).

The Council noted that the implementation of the system was anticipated to generate considerable outstanding fine income and agreed to its introduction at a cost of œ20,000 plus VAT together with the annual software licence and support charge of œ3,600 plus VAT. It was agreed that the costs be met from any slippage in the Capital Budget, failing which from revenue savings.

COUNCIL TAX SETTING DAY

There was submitted letter from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) recommending that all member councils set their council tax level on Thursday 5th March 1998 as part of local government's co-ordinated public relations strategy. The Council so agreed.

ACCOUNTS COMMISSION - CLYDEBANK DISTRICT COUNCIL - AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 1995-1996

There was submitted report by the Director of Finance seeking approval of the 1995/96 Clydebank District Council Annual Accounts.

After discussion, and having heard the Director of Finance in answer to Members' questions, the Council, on the motion of Councillor Cairney, seconded by Councillor White, approved the Annual Accounts and noted the Chief Auditor's report.

ANNUAL PLAN/BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLANS 1998/99

There was submitted report by the Head of Corporate Policy and Public Relations proposing a timetable of Best Value performance plans and the Council's annual plan for 1998/99. The Council approved the report and agreed the following timetable for the development of the annual plan 1998/99 in which the Council's Best Value performance plans for 1998/99 will be published:

April 1998 Members consider options for development of Best Value in 1998/99.

May/June 1998 Draft performance plans for each service are agreed and published in the Annual Plan for

1998/99.

Detailed service plans are considered by service committees.

End Sept. 1998 Summary accounts and performance indicators for 1997/98 are published.

NEW HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

There was submitted report by the Director of Social Work and Housing proposing an accelerated tendering procedure for New Housing Partnership work. The Council noted that the Scottish Office is expected to announce the issuing of additional borrowing consent in mid-December for approved projects and that the work would require to be completed by 31st March 1998.

It was further noted that one of the proposed projects is to carry out feasibility studies on the future use of long term vacant houses in six defined areas at a cost of œ60,000. In view of the tight timescale involved, the Council approved the tendering procedure detailed in the report subject to Scottish Office approval of the project and agreed that contracts be awarded for a maximum of œ10,000 for six areas and that authority be given to the Director of Social Work and Housing to accept the contracts.

NOTE OF MEETING HELD BETWEEN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL, SCOTTISH POWER AND POST OFFICE COUNTERS LTD

there was submitted for information the note of a meeting held on 18th November 1997 between Provost O'Neill, Councillor McLaughlin, representatives of Scottish Power and of Post Office Counters Limited to discuss the implications of the recent closure of the Scottish Power shop in Alexandria, the fee charged by Post Office Counters Ltd. to customers paying Scottish Power bills and the removal of the service whereby Power Cards were sold at local Post Offices.

The Council noted the successful outcome of the meeting. Members were advised that if their local area is not adequately serviced by the Power Card Scheme and has a shop other than a sub-post office, they should advise the Committee Section of Legal and Administrative Services who would make contact with Scottish Power on their behalf.

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

There were submitted details of the following conferences/seminars:

- (a) The Future of Local Government in Scotland - A series of seminars 16th January to 19th June 1997.
- (b) Political Leadership of Best Value - London, 22nd January 1997

Councillor White, seconded by Councillor McCallum, moved that the Provost or substitute be authorised to attend the first seminar of (a) and the Leader of the Council or substitute be authorised to attend (b).

As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Mackechnie, moved that no action be taken on either conference.

On a vote, 7 Members voted for the Amendment and 14 for the Motion which was accordingly carried.

DUMBARTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Provost O'Neill advised that he had agreed to raise this item at the request of Councillor Mackechnie. The Council noted that Dumbarton Football Club would be celebrating its 125th anniversary in the coming week and agreed to present an appropriate gift to the Club to recognise this important anniversary.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON

The Provost expressed his best wishes to Members, employees, press and public for Christmas and the New Year. Excerpt from the Minutes of the Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council on 17th December, 1997

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