

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU

20 October 2006

REQUISITIONED MEETING: WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2006
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
CLYDEBANK TOWN HALL
DUMBARTON ROAD
CLYDEBANK

Dear Member,

Please attend a Requisitioned Meeting of **West Dunbartonshire Council** to be held in the **Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank** on Wednesday, 25 October 2006 at 9.00 a.m. to consider motions which have been submitted in respect of the Best Value Audit Report by Audit Scotland.

The business is as shown on the attached agenda.

Yours faithfully

TIM HUNTINGFORD

Chief Executive

Distribution:-

All Members of West Dunbartonshire Council.

Chief Executive

Director of Education and Cultural Services

Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Acting Director of Social Work Services

For information on the following agenda please contact George Hawthorn, Legal and Administrative Services, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU on Tel: (01389) 737204 or e-mail: george.hawthorn@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2006

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. NOTICES OF MOTION

The Council is asked to consider the undernoted notices of motion:-

**(a) Motion by Councillor George Black
Bullying**

Given the gravity of the statements contained in the Best Value report concerning the culture of bullying within the Council and the comments expressed by the Unions:

The Council agrees to instruct the monitoring officer to seek establish an external independent inquiry to investigate the allegations of bullying made during the Audit, in particular within the HRES department.

The independent inquiry should have no affiliations with any political party or union. The Council will extend all necessary resources to the person and ask that all staff and members co-operate fully with the investigation.

The inquiry should also be permitted to take private and public evidence from all quarters of the Council and the public when conducting their investigation.

**(b) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin
Financial Expenditure**

NOTE: The Council is asked to note that the suspension of Standing Order No 16 is required in respect of the undernoted motion, as a period of six months has not passed since the current Standing Orders, which contain the procedures and limits for the approval of tenders, were approved by this Council on 30 August 2006.

Members agree that breaches of Council policy cannot be tolerated or allowed to go unchallenged. Any decisions of the Council must adhere to policy laid down by the Council or its committees.

The Council agrees that in light of this weakness identified by the Auditor that it agrees to consider lowering the delegated financial threshold to officers to £25,000 and further agrees to revise the extent of officer's delegated authority.

In addition tender documents should no longer be opened by the departments involved and all sealed bids should be submitted directly to the legal department.

**(c) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan
Renton Community and Leven Cottage**

This Council expresses concern over the Best Value Audit's findings in relation to decisions affecting the people of Renton and the sale of Community Assets.

The Auditor has highlighted that there were no strategic approaches in arriving at the decisions over the closure of Renton Library and Community Education Centre as well as the sale of Levenford house.

Given these concerns, where able, the Council agrees to suspend the decisions highlighted.

The Council instructs the monitoring officer and internal audit to conduct an audit and investigation into the decision making processes, associated costs and consequences resulting from the decisions taken.

**(d) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan
Community Planning Partnership**

The Council expresses deep concern over the Best Value audit reports determination that there are shortfalls in the community planning partnership process.

Furthermore the Council recognises that as a leading partner in the CPP that we must accept a major share of the responsibility for its failures.

Therefore this Council agrees to instruct the monitoring officer to seek an independent review of the CPP by an external accountancy/scrutiny organisation.

**(e) Motion by Councillor Iain Robertson
Decision Making Processes**

In recent years it has become evident that the current Labour administration and its leadership have made decisions that do not always stand up to public scrutiny.

It is clear that there are some Councillors who are of the impression that it is their responsibility to run the department and to micro manage staff.

In light of concerns from the Auditor this Council instructs the monitoring officer to draft a Councillors and Convenors responsibilities protocol and that all members undertake compulsory training on the protocol.

Furthermore this Council agrees to develop stronger reporting mechanisms for officers who feel pressurised by Councillors and Senior Management.

The Council also instructs the Monitoring Officer to scrutinise all Committee reports and to ensure a professional officer recommendation is contained within each report.

**(f) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin
Schools' Estate & Improvement Fund**

The Council expresses deep concern over the decision making processes that led to the allocation of the Schools Improvement fund.

Education should always remain above political interference and resources should be distributed on the basis of identified need, rather than a political agenda.

Therefore this Council agrees to instruct the monitoring officer to investigate the processes that led to the expenditure decision of the fund and to recommend any procedural changes that may be necessary to avoid a similar situation.

**(g) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin
Leadership**

In any large organisation the effective Leadership is key to ensuring effective success. It is clear that the present Leadership does not carry the full support of the staff or external community partners.

While the Audit report highlights that the Leadership has a clear commitment and vision it has not been able to convey that vision to others, despite being in the post for some time.

Only through a shared vision approach will any organisation be able to move forward to achieve continuous improvement.

This Council agrees that there is sufficient evidence contained within the report to prove that the Leadership, both politically and managerially has at times been grossly ineffective.

It is clear that of those staff responding to the survey, 59.3% said that the members did not provide good leadership and a staggering 48.6% said the same of managers.

Therefore this Council agrees to call on the Labour Party to remove Councillor Andrew White and his Depute, Councillor Jim Flynn from their posts.

In addition the Council agrees to establish an Investigation Committee to take evidence on areas of managerial weaknesses and report back to the Council after 3 months.

**(h) Motion by Iain Robertson
Culture**

This Council expresses deep concern over the issues raised concerning the working culture and continuous improvement agenda.

Therefore the Council agrees that to address these deficiencies by establishing a short term working group – involving the unions, members, community reps and external culture management advisors.

The working group should report back with recommendations to the Council no later than 3 months from its inception on how to improve the culture and working environment of this council.

**(i) Motion by Councillor Craig McLaughlin
Potential Misuse of Resources**

Large organisations are by their very nature open to potential fraudulent activities and misuse of resources.

All Councillors agree that we must all stand united and expose any such improprieties. Furthermore all Councillors must ensure effective scrutiny of procedures.

The Best Value Audit report highlighted weaknesses and potential misuse of resources as well as concerns over the procurement of contracts and goods.

Therefore to restore public confidence in the Council we instruct the monitoring officer to request that Internal Audit, Audit Scotland and Strathclyde Police are invited into the Council to provide advice and to investigate any alleged breaches of the financial regulations.

The agencies should also be requested to investigate all committee decisions, in particular the recruitment panel, the community planning partnership and the Children's Services Committee decisions on school closures.

(j) Motion by Councillor Iain Robertson - Praise to the staff

This Council agrees that the Best Value Audit report has been a painful and public exercise for the Council and its workforce.

It is clear that while the report painted a dark picture of the operation of West Dunbartonshire Council, it did however highlight and praise the efforts of our workforce for their joint working and initiatives, despite the inadequacies of Leadership and senior management.

The Council agrees that the Monitoring Officer relay to ALL staff the Council's thanks for their dedication to this Council. The letter should also state that Councillors take the findings of the report seriously and are committed to improving the Council, for the betterment of its staff and residents.