

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Hybrid Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council on Wednesday, 29 September 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie, Bailie Denis Agnew and Councillors Jim Bollan, Jim Brown, Gail Casey, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, 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.

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Peter Hissett, Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration (Legal Officer); Stephen West, Chief Officer – Resources and Section 95 Officer; Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution & Property; Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People & Technology; Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing and Employability; Malcolm Bennie, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; Richard Cairns, Strategic Adviser; Laura Mason, Chief Officer – Education; Beth Culshaw, Chief Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership; Sylvia Chatfield, Interim Chief Social Work Officer and Head of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Addictions; Gail MacFarlane, Chief Officer – Shared Services Roads and Neighbourhood; George Hawthorn, Manager – Democratic and Registration Services and Christine McCaffary, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

Also attending: Christopher Gardner, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland.

Provost William Hendrie in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR

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

Councillor Bollan declared a non-financial interest in Item 11 – Leamy Foundation and advised that he would leave the meeting during consideration thereof.

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Council agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of Meetings of West Dunbartonshire Council held on (a) 26 August 2021 (Special); and (b) 26 August 2021 (Ordinary) were submitted and approved as correct records.

MINUTES OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 June 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

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

CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

A report by was submitted the Chief Social Work Officer providing information on the statutory work undertaken on the Council's behalf, including a summary of governance arrangements, service delivery, resources and workforce.

After discussion and having heard the Interim Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Officer – Health & Social Care Partnership in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the content of the Annual Report 2020-21 and approved its submission to the Office of the Chief Social Work Advisor to the Scottish Government.

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE – NOVEMBER 2021 TO JUNE 2022

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration seeking approval of a committee timetable for the period November 2021 to June 2022.

Councillor McColl moved a timetable of meetings shown as the appendix to these minutes.

Councillor Conaghan asked if Councillor McColl would accept as an addendum to his motion that meetings of the Appeals Committee would not be held in hybrid form.

Councillor McColl confirmed his acceptance to the addendum and his amended motion was then seconded by Councillor Dickson.

Having heard the Legal Officer, the Council agreed to suspend Standing Order 20 to allow Councillor Conaghan's addendum to be considered.

As an amendment Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor O'Neill moved:-

This Council agrees the recommendations at 2.1 of the report subject to the following changes.

Council does not agree a 10 a.m. start time for future Council meetings and agrees that these should change to a 2 p.m. start.

- Council Meeting 22nd December should change to 14:00.
- Council Meeting 9th February should change to 14:00.
- Council Meeting 9th March should change to 14:00.
- Council Meeting 25th May should change to 14:00.
- Council Meeting 22nd June should change to 14:00.

In addition, the Council is not opposed to Council meetings being scheduled after 2 p.m. and recognises that evening meetings may be more accessible to public.

Council agrees that its meetings should be set to suit the needs of the Council not to suit the needs of the MSP for Clydebank.

Council agrees that meetings of the Appeals Committee not be held as hybrid meetings.

On a roll call vote being taken 11 Members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors Bollan, Casey, Lennie, Douglas McAllister, McBride, Millar, Mooney, O'Neill, Page, Rooney and Walker and 11 Members voted for the motion, namely Provost Hendrie, Bailie Agnew and Councillors Brown, Conaghan, Dickson, Docherty, Finn, Caroline McAllister, McColl, McLaren and McNair.

There being an equality of votes Provost Hendrie, Chair, used his casting vote in favour of the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

COVID-19 UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update in relation to COVID-19 in West Dunbartonshire since the previous update report to Council in August 2021.

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

- (1) to note the information provided on COVID-19 in West Dunbartonshire since the update provided to the August 2021 Council;
- (2) to note the information provided in relation to the additional support and advice that the Council was providing to communities and businesses across West Dunbartonshire to help alleviate the impact of COVID-19; and
- (3) that the 2021 firework events be cancelled due to planning challenges linked to new COVID-19 restrictions, and the supply of fireworks.

LEAMY FOUNDATION

A report was submitted by the Chief Education Officer providing an update on the continued discussions with the Leamy Foundation to establish how we can best work together.

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

- (1) to note that officers will continue to engage with the Leamy Foundation with a view to reaching shared goals; and
- (2) to note that there is potential for the Council to enter a partnership agreement with the Leamy Foundation for 2 years from October 2021 to October 2023.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture and Facilities presenting the West Dunbartonshire Council Annual Performance Report 2020/21 and supporting performance information.

The Provost advised the Council that an incorrect version of the covering report had been issued and accordingly the Council agreed that the item be continued to the next meeting of Council on 27 October 2021.

GENERAL SERVICES BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2021 – PERIOD 5

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources advising on the General Services revenue budget and the approved capital programme to 31 August 2021.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue account currently showed a projected annual favourable variance of £0.031m (0.01% of the total budget), excluding any variance projected for COVID-19 which was expected to be fully funded by Scottish Government funding carried forward from 2020/21 and that to be received in-year 2021/22; and
- (2) to note that the capital account showed that expenditure and resource use for 2021/22 was lower than budget by £9.182m (17% of budget), made up of £9.040m (16.74% of budget) relating to project slippage, and an in year underspend of £0.142m.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2021 – PERIOD 5

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 31 August 2021 (Period 5) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22.

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

To note the recommendations at paragraph 2.1 of the report.

Unfortunately, there remain a number of unanswered questions regarding the Multi-storey Flats Fire Risk Assessment works. Fire Safety in multi-storey flats is of vital importance and all Elected Members must be given an opportunity to properly scrutinise the issue and its implications for tenants in terms of both safety and cost.

It would be a dereliction of our public duty if we did not give this matter the level of public scrutiny it requires.

Therefore, this Council agrees to bring forward a report to the October Council meeting setting out the issues, concerns and any options and a clear recommendation to Councillors.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council agreed to adjourn the meeting for a period of 15 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 2.03 p.m. with all those listed in the sederunt present, except for Councillors McNair, Page and Walker.

CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN – WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL RESPONSE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the progress of the Afghan Locally Employed Staff (ALES) scheme within the West Dunbartonshire Council area and seeking approval to extend the Council's participation in the scheme in the light of recent developments.

After discussion, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the update on the ALES scheme and related issues; and
- (2) to authorise the Chief Officer Housing and Employability to engage with the UK Home Office through COSLA to progress implementation of the Council's proposed offer of ongoing assistance outlined in paragraph 4.5 of the report.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Motion by Councillor David McBride – Anti-social Behaviour

Councillor McBride moved:-

This Council is concerned that although the anti-social behaviour budget has been cut the number of cases continue to increase.

The Council notes that in 2017/18 the anti-social behaviour budget was £719,000 and there were 312 anti-social behaviour cases during the year.

However by 2020/21 the budget reduced to £398,000 and the number of anti-social behaviour cases had increased to 978.

The 2021/22 budget increased slightly to £446,000 but before the mid-year point, the number of anti-social behaviour cases had reached 511 which suggests that the total instances could exceed 1,000 by the end of the financial year.

Council also notes that staff reductions now means the Council only operates with a maximum of 3 anti-social behaviour officers on duty each day and the service ends at 02:00.

In addition the number of mediation referrals has also steadily reduced from 93 in 2017, 71 in 2018, 41 in 2019, and to 13 in 2020/21 when the service was suspended due to COVID. There have been no referrals during the current financial year 2021/22.

Given the above, the Council calls on the Chief Executive to bring forward a report to a future Council meeting setting out the details of the anti-social behaviour service including staffing levels, case work and operational arrangements across the our Council area.

Councillor Docherty asked if Councillor McBride would accept the following addendum to his motion:-

Council asks officers to arrange an Elected Member Seminar to allow Councillors to ask detailed questions about this service area and to help officers determine areas of particular interest or concern to Councillors in advance of preparing their report.

Councillor McBride confirmed his acceptance to the addendum, and the amended motion was then agreed by the Council.

Motion by Councillor Martin Rooney – Abandoned Calls

Councillor Rooney moved:-

This Council notes that there has been significant concern from residents about abandoned calls to the Council helpdesk.

Although the Council is not able to measure or record the average time to answer a telephone call, it does have information on abandoned calls. Page 5.

- In 2020 a total of 19,590 calls were abandoned which represented 17% of the total calls abandoned.
- As at August 2021 7,411 calls have been abandoned which represents 15% of the total calls.

Council notes that unlike previous years, during the pandemic local residents who didn't complete their call, could attend council offices in person.

Given the above, this Council calls for the Chief Executive to bring forward a report on the how the council can improve its customer helpdesk function for the public.

The report should consider how we could measure, record and improve the average time to answer a call.

In addition, it should consider what other options may be available to ensure that the number of abandoned calls can be reduced in future years.

Councillor Dickson asked if Councillor Rooney would accept the following addendum to his motion:-

Third last paragraph, insert after 'Given the above' –

And while Council recognises and appreciates the actions already taken as detailed in the recent elected member briefings.

Councillor Rooney confirmed his acceptance to the addendum, and the amended motion was then agreed by the Council.

The meeting closed at 2.26 p.m.

Council:-

- Agrees the appended timetable from November 2021 to June 2022 inclusive.
- Notes that the Planning Committee is scheduled to meet each month.

2021

Tues 2nd Nov	-	2pm Licensing Board
Wed 3rd Nov -	-	10am Housing and Communities Committee
Wed 10th Nov	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 10am Planning Committee
Wed 17th Nov	-	10am Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee 2pm Audit Committee
Thurs 18th Nov	-	10am Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Management Board
Mon 22nd Nov	-	10am Cultural Committee
Wed 24th Nov	-	10am Corporate Services Committee
Thurs 25th Nov	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 1pm HSCP Board Audit & Performance Committee 2pm HSCP Board
Wed 1st Dec	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 10am Licensing Committee 2pm Educational Services Committee
Thurs 2nd Dec	-	2pm Joint Consultative Forum (provisional)
Tue 7th Dec	-	10am Licensing Board
Wed 8th Dec	-	2pm Planning Committee
Wed 22nd Dec	-	10am West Dunbartonshire Council

2022

Wed 12th Jan	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 10am Planning Committee
Mon 24th Jan	-	10am Cultural Committee
Thurs 27th Jan	-	9:30am Appeals Committee
Wed 2nd Feb	-	10am Licensing Committee 2pm Housing & Communities Committee
Thurs 3rd Feb	-	10am Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Management Board
Wed 9th Feb	-	10am West Dunbartonshire Council
Tues 15th Feb	-	10am Licensing Board
Wed 16th Feb	-	10am Planning Committee 2pm Infrastructure, Regeneration & Economic Development Committee
Thurs 17th Feb	-	9:30am Appeals Committee
Wed 23rd Feb	-	9.30am Tendering Committee 10am Corporate Services Committee
Thurs 24th Feb	-	1pm HSCP Board Audit and Performance Committee 2pm HSCP Board

Wed 2nd Mar	-	10am Planning Committee 2pm Audit Committee
Wed 9th Mar	-	10am West Dunbartonshire Council (Budget and Statutory reports)
Wed 16th Mar	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 10am Educational Services Committee
Wed 23rd Mar	-	10am West Dunbartonshire Council
Thurs 24th Mar	-	9:30am Appeals Committee 2pm HSCP Board
Mon 28th Mar	-	10am Cultural Committee
Tues 19th Apr	-	10am Licensing Board
Wed 20th Apr	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 10am Planning Committee
Wed 27th Apr	-	10am Licensing Committee
Thurs 28th Apr	-	9:30am Appeals Committee
Thurs 5th May	-	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS
Wed 18th May	-	2pm West Dunbartonshire Council (Statutory Meeting) (provisional)
Wed 8th June	-	9:30am Tendering Committee 10am Planning Committee 2pm Licensing Committee
Tue 14 th June	-	10am Licensing Board
Wed 15th June	-	10am Audit Committee 2 pm Educational Services Committee
Wed 22nd June	-	10am West Dunbartonshire Council
Thurs 23rd June	-	9:30am Appeals Committee 1pm HSCP Board Audit and Performance Committee 2pm HSCP Board

Exceptions:

At the discretion of the Convener, the Tendering Committee may start earlier (but not earlier than 9am) to avoid clashing with the start of other committees.

The Licensing Board, as a separate legal entity, sets its own timetable. Any dates shown here for Licensing Board meetings are subject to the Board's decision. Council asks that the Chair of the Board considers raising these proposals with the Clerk to the Board, with a view to presenting the proposals for discussion and decision as soon as practicable.

The Health and Social Care Partnership Board and its Audit & Performance Committee and the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire Management Board also set their own meeting timetable. The meetings shown here are suggestions only based on previous meeting patterns.