

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

At a Hybrid Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 28 August 2024 at 4.00 p.m.

Present: Depute Provost John Millar and Councillors Jim Bollan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Fiona Hennebry, Gurpreet Singh Johal, Daniel Lennie, Douglas McAllister David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Michelle McGinty, June McKay, James McElhill, Karen Murray Conaghan, Lawrence O'Neill, Lauren Oxley, Chris Pollock, Martin Rooney, Gordon Scanlan, Hazel Sorrell, Clare Steel and Sophie Traynor.

Attending: Peter Hessett, Chief Executive; Alan Douglas, Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration (Legal Officer); Laurence Slavin, Chief Officer – Resources, and Section 95 Officer; Beth Culshaw, Chief Officer – Health & Social Care Partnership; Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing and Employability; Amanda Graham, Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture and Facilities; Gail Macfarlane, Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood; Victoria Rogers, Chief Officer – People and Technology; Carol Alderson, Finance Manager; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; George Hawthorn, Manager of Democratic Services; Carol-Ann Burns, Senior Democratic Services Officer; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Depute Provost John Millar in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR

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

ELECTION OF PROVOST

The Chief Officer Regulatory and Regeneration invited the Council to consider the election of the Provost of West Dunbartonshire Council.

Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor McGinty, moved that Councillor Millar be elected to the post.

Councillor Dickson, seconded by Councillor Scanlan, moved that Councillor Murray Conaghan be elected to the post.

On a roll call vote being taken, 12 Members voted for the nomination of Councillor Murray Conaghan, namely Councillors Bollan, Dickson, Docherty, Lennie, McColl, McEhill, McKay, Murray Conaghan, Oxley, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor, and 10 Members voted for the nomination of Councillor Millar namely Councillors Hennebry, Singh Johal, McAllister, McBride, McGinty, Millar, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel.

The election of Councillor Murray Conaghan was accordingly declared carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Depute Provost adjourned the meeting for a period of 10 minutes and Provost Murray Conaghan left the meeting and returned bearing the Provost's Chain of Office.

Provost Murray Conaghan in the Chair

The meeting resumed at 4.18 p.m. with all Members and officers listed in the sederunt present.

Provost Murray Conaghan thanked everyone who had voted for her to become Provost, stating that she looked forward to working in a fair manner with the administration.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

RECORDING OF VOTES

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

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 19 June 2024 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Minutes of Meeting of Audit Committee held on 21 February 2024 were submitted and all decisions contained therein were approved.

OPEN FORUM

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

GLASGOW CITY REGION CITY DEAL – UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration advising of the progress with the implementation of the Exxon Infrastructure Project, and providing an update on Glasgow City Region City Deal Programme.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the update on the Exxon Infrastructure Project;
- (2) to approve a Change Control Request to vary the construction programme dates be submitted to Glasgow City Region for approval; and
- (3) to note the progress of the Glasgow City Region programme

AUDITED 2022/23 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Having heard the Chief Officer – Resources the Council noted that it had not been possible for a report on the Audited 2022/23 Annual Accounts to be provided to due delays with the external auditor.

DRAFT 2023/24 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 19 June 2024, a report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing a copy of the draft 2023/24 Annual Accounts and information regarding the 2023/24 outturn as set out in the draft accounts.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Resources in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the unaudited 2023/24 Annual Accounts;
- (2) to note the information provided in relation to the financial performance of the Council's services and capital plan for 2023/24;
- (3) to note the current position regarding the Council's reserves; and
- (4) to delegate authority to the Audit Committee to formally approve the audited accounts.

GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2024/25 TO PERIOD 3 (30 JUNE 2024)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the General Services capital financial performance to 30 June 2024.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Resources in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the current position of the 2024/25 General Services capital budget;
- (2) to approve £0.04m of additional capital budget for the Agresso Development project;
- (3) to approve the revised completion dates detailed in Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (4) to note an in-year variance of £15.786m due to reprofiling of projects.

GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2024 (PERIOD 3)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the 2024/25 Revenue Budget position at 30 June 2024 and the forecast position of the General Fund Reserve as at 31 March 2025.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer – Resources in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note a current projected annual underlying adverse variance on the revenue account of £2.542m (0.88% of total budget).

ADJOURNMENT

Following a request from Councillor McBride, the Provost agreed to a short adjournment to allow Councillor McBride to confirm information relevant to the item of business 'Festive Closure and Public Holiday Variation'. The meeting reconvened at 5.08 p.m. with all those Members and officers listed in the sederunt in attendance.

POLICY FOR ELECTION POSTERS

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood providing a proposed revision to the Arrangements in Force at the Poll prohibiting the use of election posters.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the negative environmental impact from the use of election posters resulting in unnecessary waste and litter;
- (2) to note the safety concerns in relation to the installation and removal of election posters and potential driver distraction; and
- (3) to approve the proposed revision to the Returning Officer's Arrangements in Force at the Poll policy to prohibit election posters (paragraph 4.8 of the report).

FESTIVE CLOSURE AND PUBLIC HOLIDAY VARIATIONS

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – People and Technology setting out the proposed changes to public holiday allocation for local government and craft/quasi-craft employees, and proposed variation of the festive closure arrangements agreed by Council in December 2023.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – People and Technology in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McBride, seconded by Councillor O'Neill moved:-

That Council agrees:-

- to negotiate replacement of the additional 4 public holidays for craft employees as per paragraph 4.9 with additional days transferred to annual leave entitlement.
- to negotiate replacement of 1 further public holiday (last Monday in September) for all employee groups, transferring the day to annual leave entitlement.
- to replace the 6-day festive closure with a 3/4-day closure (paragraph 4.14 of the report).
- to authorise the Chief Officer, People and Technology to implement public holiday variations from April 2025 subject to consultation, and
- to authorise the Chief Officer, Resources to implement festive closure variation from December 2024.

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

That Council agrees to note the report today and continue it.

On a roll call vote being taken 12 Members voted for the amendment, namely Provost Murray Conaghan and Councillors Bollan, Dickson, Docherty, Lennie, McColl, McEhill, McKay, Oxley, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor, and 10 members voted for the motion, namely Councillors Hennebry, Singh Johal, McAllister, McBride, McGinty, Millar, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel. The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(a) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan – Proposal to close services during the holiday period, 2024/2025.

Councillor Bollan moved:-

Council agrees to withdraw the proposal to close WDC services for two weeks across the Xmas/New Year holiday period, 2024/2025.

Within the context of the flexible working, many employees will have to use well over twenty and in some cases 25 percent of their annual leave, which is not proportionate and unfair.

Council further agrees to use £8,000 from reserves to fund the resulting gap in the budget for 2024/2025.

Councillor McColl seconded the motion.

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

That the Council agree to take no action. We are concerned that we have not addressed the issue of the public holidays on the previous one therefore no action on this.

On a roll call vote being taken 10 Members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors Hennebry, Singh Johal, McAllister, McBride, McGinty, Millar, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel and 12 Members voted for the motion namely Provost Murray Conaghan and Councillors Bollan, Dickson, Docherty, Lennie, McColl, McEhill, McKay, Oxley, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor. The motion was accordingly declared carried.

(b) Motion by Councillor Gordon Scanlan – Child Poverty

Councillor Scanlan moved:-

This Council recognises that tackling child poverty must be a priority for all elected members and that the 2 child cap policy imposed by the UK Government is contributing to the stark levels of poverty we are witnessing within our community and our nation.

Council notes with disappointment that our newly elected Labour MP Douglas McAllister voted against the SNP's amendment to the King's Speech, which would remove this archaic policy and immediately lift 300,000 children across the UK out of poverty.

Council calls on the UK Labour government with its huge majority and total power and control of the UK Parliament to immediately remove this policy

from its programme of government and lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty.

As an amendment, Councillor McAllister moved:-

This Council recognises that on the 4th of July 2024 West Dunbartonshire elected Douglas McAllister, the Scottish Labour Party candidate to serve as Member of Parliament for West Dunbartonshire.

Council notes the scale of that victory, with a 20% increase in Labour's vote share from 2019.

Across West Dunbartonshire, Scotland and the United Kingdom, people voted for Labour's manifesto for change and in doing so delivered a historic landslide victory and a Labour Government.

The King's Speech set out Labour's programme and legislative agenda for government reflecting Labour's manifesto for change. Tackling child poverty is central not just to this Labour Government but to every Labour Government.

Council recognises that this will be a government of service for all people with a clear mandate to deliver the change our country desperately needs. That work has already started.

Councillor Oxley then seconded Councillor Scanlan's motion and Councillor O'Neill seconded Councillor McAllister amendment.

On a roll call vote being taken 12 Members voted for the amendment, namely Councillors Hennebry, Johal, Lennie, McAllister, McBride, McGinty, McKay, Millar, O'Neill, Rooney, Sorrell and Steel, and 10 Members voted for the motion namely Provost Murray Conaghan and Councillors Bollan, Dickson, Docherty, McColl, McEhill, Oxley, Pollock, Scanlan and Traynor.

The amendment was accordingly declared carried.

COUNCILLOR ROONEY'S REMARKS

Councillor Rooney requested to address Council. Provost Murray Conaghan requested that Councillor Rooney indicate the subject the matter he wished to raise.

Councillor Rooney stated.

'It is clear that the Labour Administration no longer has a sufficient number of votes to be able to get a budget through. As a result, the Labour Group of Councillors will resign leadership and senior councillor positions with immediate effect. It will now be for the 12 Opposition Councillors to form an Administration'.

Provost Murray Conaghan paid tribute to outgoing Provost Douglas McAllister.

The meeting closed at 5.55 p.m.

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