

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a Hybrid Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 30 October 2024 at 4.02 p.m.

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

\*Arrived later in the meeting.

**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; Margaret-Jane Cardno, Head of Strategy and Transformation; Lauren Crooks, Strategic Communication, Culture and Performance Manager; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; Gillian McNamara, Economic Development Manager; and Carol-Ann Burns, Senior Democratic Services Officer.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Diane Docherty and John Millar.

**Provost Karen Murray Conaghan in the Chair**

### **STATEMENT BY CHAIR**

Provost Karen Murray Conaghan 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.

## **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.

\*Note: Councillor McGinty entered the meeting at this point.

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Minutes of Meetings of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 28 August 2024 (Ordinary) and 25 September 2024 (Requisitioned) were submitted and approved as correct records, subject to the undernoted sentence under the heading 'Councillor Rooney's Remarks', in the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting, being deleted:-

'Provost Murray Conaghan paid tribute to outgoing Provost Douglas McAllister.'

Provost Murray Conaghan then paid tribute to the outgoing Provost, Douglas McAllister

## **MINUTES OF MEETING OF AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of Meeting of Audit Committee held on 12 June 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.

## **COMMUNITY ALARM UPGRADE**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Health & Social Care Partnership seeking approval to progress the Community Alarm Upgrade through a procurement exercise using the Scotland Excel Digital Telecare Goods framework and approval for the award of a contract following the completion of the procurement exercise.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Strategy and Transformation in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the capital budget for the Community Alarm Upgrade agreed at the West Dunbartonshire Council meeting on 9 March 2022 of £924,000 over a period of 10 years;

- (2) to approve the HSCP to work with Procurement and Legal Services colleagues on a procurement exercise using the Digital Telecare Goods Framework; and
- (3) to approve the award of a contract, up to the budgeted value of £924,000, following the successful completion of the procurement exercise and identification of a preferred supplier.

### **EXXON INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Regulatory and Regeneration:-

- (a) advising of the recent cost pressures that have impacted on the Exxon Infrastructure Project;
- (b) seeking agreement of a revised scope for the Project and to increase the budget by £0.8m so that the Project's outcomes can continue to be delivered; and
- (c) seeking agreement to seek approval from City Region for these changes.

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

- (1) to note the inflationary and utility price increases that have impacted on the Project costs since 2023;
- (2) to note that an additional contribution is expected from Glasgow City Region to offset some of the additional capital costs;
- (3) to approve the revised scope, at a cost of an additional £0.8m capital funding which has an additional borrowing requirement of £21,000 per annum;
- (4) to submit a Change Control Request to Glasgow City Region;
- (5) to proceed with the finalisation and signing of the construction contracts;
- (6) to note that the marketing of the site will commence;
- (7) to note the anticipated future income from sales and leasing of the development platforms;
- (8) to note the potential future availability of the £1m payment from Esso to contribute towards the project; and
- (9) to approve the continuation of discussions on future funding from Glasgow City Region, and any other external funding source.

Councillor Bollan, having failed to find a seconder for a proposed amendment asked for his dissent to be recorded in respect of this item.

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities presenting West Dunbartonshire Council's Annual Performance Report 2023/24 and supporting performance information.

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

- (1) to note the annual report and performance information provided; and
- (2) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of Council outlining the issues on performance in relation to:-
  - the percentage of adults supported at home who agree that they are supported to live as independently as possible (Core Integration Indicator); and
  - the percentage of Council employees who feel valued in the workplace.

## **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial challenges facing the Council and the estimated 2025/26 to 2029/30 revenue budget gaps.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Resources and the Chief Executive in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Council agreed to note the updated estimates for the Council's revenue budget gaps in 2025/26-2029/30, and in particular the updated mid-range 2025/26 budget gap of £10.273m as summarised in paragraph 4.19 of the report.

## **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2024 (PERIOD 5)**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources advising of the 2024/2025 HRA revenue budget position on 31 August 2024 and the forecast position of the HRA reserves as of 31 March 2025.

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

- (1) to note the HRA revenue account was currently forecasting an adverse variance of £2.174m and that, if required, the adverse variance would be offset by using HRA reserves of £0.968m and a General Fund reserve contribution of £1.205m;
- (2) to note that the HRA would be expected to repay the General Fund reserve contribution of £1.205m from future HRA surpluses;
- (3) to note that work would continue to identify efficiencies across all areas of the HRA revenue account budget to minimise the adverse variance including reviewing loan charges as highlighted in paragraph 4.4 of this report; and
- (4) to note that there was limited scope to further reduce spend in 2024/2025 beyond the significant actions set out in the report.

### **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2024 (PERIOD 5)**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the HRA capital programme to 31 August 2024.

The Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the current position of the 2024/2025 HRA capital budget and the HRA capital plan;
- (2) to note that in-year financial performance was monitored against a 2024/2025 capital expenditure budget of £73.664m and a 2024/2025 capital income budget of £10.003m, and a one-year borrowing requirement of £63.661m;
- (3) to note that project life performance was monitored against a five-year project life expenditure budget of £319.738m and a project life income budget of £54.577m, and a five-year borrowing requirement of £265.161m;
- (4) to note that there were six projects reporting off track with an anticipated over / under spend against their 2024/2025 budgets, with a forecast net overspend of £0.334m in 2024/2025; and
- (5) to note that all projects were currently on track to achieve their planned completion dates and to deliver within their respective five-year project life budgets.

### **GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 AUGUST 2024 (PERIOD 5)**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources advising of the 2024/25 Revenue Budget position at 31 August 2024 and the forecast position of the General Fund Reserve as at 31 March 2025.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Resources in further explanation and in answer to a Member’s question, the Council agreed to note a current projected annual underlying adverse variance on the revenue account of £2.066m (0.71% of total budget).

### **GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2024/25 TO PERIOD 5 (31 AUGUST 2024)**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the General Services capital financial performance to 31 August 2024.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Resources and the Chief Officer – Roads and Neighbourhood in further explanation to a Member’s question, the Council agreed:-

- (1) to note the current position of the 2024/25 General Services capital budget;
- (2) to approve £0.231m of additional capital budget for the Posties Park project;
- (3) to approve the revised completion dates detailed in appendix 3; and
- (4) to note an in-year variance of (£0.644m) due to £1.625m reprofiling and £0.231m additional budget.

### **BUDGET CONVERSATION 2025/26 – ENGAGEMENT RESULTS**

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities providing an overview of the key results and feedback from the recent Budget Conversation 2025/26 engagement.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities in further explanation, the Council agreed to notes the results and feedback from early citizen consultation on broad service areas and delivery priorities as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.

### **NOTICE OF MOTION**

#### **(a) Motion by Councillor Jim Bollan – IT Procurement**

With the HP contract entering its final possible extension with the Scottish Government we should be looking at options, therefore Council agrees to explore alternative procurement options/platforms open to the Council when we purchase our IT hardware/software.

HP currently provide all the hardware/software for the Israeli Defence Force in Palestine, where to date 40,000 Palestinians have been killed by the IDF.

Officers should report back to the Council on the feasibility of this move with any potential costs/savings included.

The motion was agreed by the Council.

The meeting closed at 5.40 p.m.