

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2008 AT
1000 HRS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Provost Stephanie Young and Councillors Rose-Ann Cuninghame, John MacKay, John McGhee, Helen Coffey, Willie Coffey, Maureen McKay, Tom Cook, Robert Keohone, Iain Linton, Douglas Reid, Jim Buchanan, Depute Provost John Campbell, Councillors Gordon Cree, Drew McIntyre, John Knapp, Hugh Ross, Jim Todd, Alan Brown, Stuart Finlayson, Robert McDill, Eric Jackson, Jimmy Kelly, Neil McGhee, Jim Roberts, William Crawford, Barney Menzies, Kathy Morrice, Eric Ross, Elaine Dinwoodie, Drew Filson and Jim Sutherland.

ATTENDING: Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Alex McPhee, Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management; John Clayton, Head of Corporate Development and Communication; Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services; David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services; Julie Jamieson, Chief Accountant; Joe McLachlan, Corporate Accounting Manager; Robin Baker, Financial Controller; Julie Haig, Public Relations Officer; and Julie McGarry, Administration Manager.

CHAIR: Provost Stephanie Young, Chair.

ORDER OF DEBATE AND TIME LIMIT FOR SPEECHES

1. It was noted that, in accordance with Standing Orders, a mover of a motion or amendment should speak for no longer than 10 minutes with succeeding speakers entitled to speak for no more than 5 minutes with the original mover then having the right to speak for no more than 5 minutes in reply.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT -
PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS (Item 1, Page 256, 07/11)**

2. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Meeting of Cabinet of 13 February 2008 (excerpt circulated) together with the relevant report for background information (circulated under separate cover as Agenda Item No 1 of the Special Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2008).

It was agreed to approve the recommendations, namely:

- (i) that the Prudential Indicators as set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.7 of the report be approved; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

**REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09 - 2010/11 - COUNCIL TAX AND
RENT LEVELS (Item 2, Page 256, 07/11)**

3. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Cabinet meeting of 13 February 2008 (excerpt circulated) together with the relevant report for background information (circulated under separate cover as Agenda Item No 2 of the Special Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2008).

Councillor Eric Ross joined the meeting at this point.

Councillor Reid gave details of a series of additional innovative measures, namely:

- (i) landscape works being carried out in Kilmarnock to improve the visual aspect of areas approaching Kilmarnock Town Centre including Titchfield Street, Glencairn Street and West Langlands Street;
- (ii) the provision of a drop-down façade erected at the opera house site at John Finnie Street, to be developed in partnership with Klin Developments;
- (iii) the provision of a new floral clock with associated landscaping works at Kilmarnock Railway Station in partnership with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport;
- (iv) the installation of floodlighting to highlight key landmark structures including the viaduct, and suitable church buildings;
- (v) the feasibility of using the old ABC Cinema site in Kilmarnock in a cultural capacity as part of a theatre project in association with Centrestage and other private sector partners;
- (vi) the development of options for future use of the Co-op building in Darvel;
- (vii) the refurbishment of the Council-owned shops in Ayr Road, Cumnock;
- (viii) the extension of the summer floral baskets to cover all of the historical centres of Kilmarnock and Cumnock;
- (ix) a range of actions to tackle litter including the purchase of an additional mechanical sweeper;
- (x) changes to the Shopmobility scheme to make it available on a Saturday;
- (xi) the availability of a public convenience provision in Kilmarnock seven days a week; and
- (xii) the provision of new toilet facilities in Mauchline.

Councillor Reid intimated that the total additional cost of these new initiatives would be worked up in detail as the schemes were developed more fully but confirmed that the cost was estimated at less than £1m in 2008/09 and would be met from the Council's existing revenue balances.

Councillor Douglas Reid, seconded by Councillor Iain Linton, thereafter moved approval of the above initiatives and the following recommendations, namely:-

(i) that the budget and Service Review Allocations be approved as follows:-

Service	Allocation 2007/08 £m	Allocation 2008/09 £m	Change over Previous Year	Indicative Allocation 2009/10	Indicative Allocation 2010/11
Educational and Social Services	151.174	160.382	9.208	162.144	162.645
Neighbourhood Services	35.641	37.716	2.075	37.669	37.603
Police, Fire, Valuation Board & SPT	33.448	32.774	(0.674)	34.514	35.252
Corporate Support	12.010	12.601	0.591	12.526	16.908
Finance & Asset Management Service	49.861	50.431	0.570	52.902	55.487
Other Non-Departmental Items	18.589	23.116	4.527	27.802	31.721
Net Expenditure	300.723	317.020	16.297	327.557	339.616
Net Income	300.723	317.020	16.297	327.557	339.616

- (ii) that the Band D Council Tax level for 2008/09 should be set at £1,188.99;
- (iii) that £1.000m be appropriated from Capital Grants to the Capital Fund and that £1.000m from the Capital Fund be applied to repay debt in 2008/09; and
- (iv) a rent increase of £1.83 per week over a 52 week period; an increase of £0.20p per week for Lock-ups and £1.43 per year for Garage Site charges.

Councillor Eric Jackson, seconded by Councillor John Knapp, moved as an amendment:

(i) a three year programme to tackle "Grime and Crime" as follows:-

In respect of tackling Grime:

- (a) to set up an operational team who will "Motivate Our Pride" in communities and to set aside £70,000 for each of the next three years and, alongside this invest in a marketing campaign over the same period with £30,000 in Year 1 and £20,000 each for the following two years;
- (b) to accept the efficiency savings offered by the Senior Management Team of £200,000 over four years on both waste collection and street cleaning and charge to the Governance and Scrutiny Committee to ensure that the savings are genuine and then reinvest this amount back into the streets, for both increased street cleaning and pot hole repair. To accept the increase of £200,000 into a new Hit Squad and ensure the Hit Squad work closely with the "Motivate Our Pride" Team;
- (c) to build two blocks of conventional toilets in financial year 2008/09 at a cost of £300,000, with a revenue implication of £60,000. To build another block each in Years 2 and 3 with the consequential increase in revenue of £30,000 in each of those years. With the Homecoming

2009, one of these blocks to be built in Mauchline, the home of Robert Burns, and the second one built at Newmilns in 2008;

- (d) to establish a dedicated Enforcement Team to increase the use of on-the-spot fines at a cost of £70,000 per annum over the three years;

In respect of tackling Crime:

- (a) to set up a three year programme in conjunction with Apex Scotland to build on the work that they are doing to reduce repeat offending, both within the prison and on release and to set aside £100,000 for each of the next three years for this programme;
- (b) to set up a detached youth work team who would interface with young people on the street and set aside £105,000 for each of the next three years with a further £70,000 for part-time youth and sports development workers;
- (c) to set aside a further £100,000 per year for a roll-out of the Community Wardens programme;
- (d) to invest £105,000 per year for the next three years working with third sector providers in order to reinforce effective community sentences as opposed to short term imprisonment;

(ii) in respect of schools, to

- (a) increase the revenue budget with regards to the Witchhill/Woodstock school proposal which would recognise the bigger picture for those with special needs and include greater community and Council involvement and to set aside up to £75,000 for each of the next three years and to open discussions with colleagues in Health for shared contribution. In New Cumnock, to increase the Capital spend by £1m spread over 2009/10;
- (b) to an increase in Capital funding for 2008/09 of £350,000 rising to £1.4m spread over the following two years for the viability of the other rural schools under consideration in the current consultation on school rationalisation; and
- (c) to reduce the cuts in the PPP Unit putting back £200,000 in 2009/10 and £200,000 in 2010/11 in order to retain the valuable experience accrued within the Unit.

(iii) with regard to the savings and spending proposals outlined in the paper by Professor Midwinter, while accepting the total spending package, in having some reservations on the implications of some of the savings targets to set up a Member/Officer Working Group chaired by an Elected Member to look at the spending package especially with regard to pre-school education, burial charges and the cuts in finance and to therefore hold back £80,000 of the proposed savings until the Member/Officer Working Group had completed its work;

(iv) to accept the Council Tax proposal with no increase;

(v) to welcome the additional investment in the housing stock and accept the proposed associated rent increases;

- (vi) apart from those issues already highlighted, accept the proposals for the £2.7m flexibility together with the proposed allocations to Service Departments outlined in the motion;
- (vii) to note that these new spending commitments total over £915,000 in revenue this current year, £1,185,000 in the year 2009/10 and £1,265,000 in the year 2010/11. Given the reduction in ring fencing, the reduction in bureaucracy, evaluation and monitoring, taken together with the drive to save money on absenteeism and procurement, to increase the efficiency target of 2.25% to 2.5% raising a further £500,000 in this year alone. The General Fund balance is projected to be in the region of £8.8m at the end of 2007/08. With this spend the Council would still be more than £2m above Audit Scotland's lower recommendation this year and therefore has the flexibility to fund this imaginative programme; and
- (viii) to note that with the insurance fund projected to sit just below £6m, a further degree of cushion is available.

Councillor Cook, seconded by Councillor Cuninghame, moved as a second amendment to support the general budget provisions and the proposed freeze on Council Tax along with the rent rises but to seek assurances:

- (i) that the street cleansing service be examined with a view to making efficiency savings which could be directed to improving the cleanliness of our streets and, allied to this, to make greater use of legislative powers by having Wardens impose more on-the-spot fines for littering;
- (ii) that a review of burial charges also be carried out with a view to ensuring that by the end of a three year period the costs incurred are fully met by the charges applied; and
- (iii) that a more rigorous approach be taken to pot hole repair with a view to more effective and speedy patching and a consequent reduction on major repairs and that any cost savings identified within the Departmental budget should be redirected towards the same.

Councillor Reid in response gave assurances to Councillor Cook to look at the feasibility of increasing on-the-spot fines, to review burial charges, to look at pot hole repairs and that reports, where necessary, would be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor Cook, having received assurances from Councillor Reid, agreed to withdraw his amendment and endorse the budget proposed by him.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 18 votes to 14.

The meeting terminated at 1040 hrs.