

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2004
AT 1100 HRS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Provost Jane Darnbrough and Councillors Maureen McKay, Jim O'Neill, John McGhee, Stephanie Young, Brian Reeves, Daniel Coffey, Willie Coffey, Douglas Reid, Gordon Cree, Drew McIntyre, Isabel Macrae, Harry Wilson, Iain Linton, John Campbell, Ray Murray, John Knapp, Stuart Finlayson, Robert McDill, Eric Jackson, George Smith, Jimmy Kelly, Depute Provost Tommy Farrell and Councillors William Menzies, Neil McGhee, William Crawford, Eric Ross, Elaine Dinwoodie, Elaine Stewart and Jimmy Carmichael.

ATTENDING: David Montgomery, Chief Executive; Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources; William Stafford, Director of Community Services; John Mulgrew, Director of Educational and Social Services; Alex McPhee, Director of Finance; James Lavery, Director of Homes and Technical Services; David Mitchell, Head of Administrative and Legal Services; Chris McAleavey, Head of Homes; Jackie Donnelly, Head of Social Work; Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager; Ian Arnott, Corporate Accounting Manager; Julie Haig, Public Relations Assistant; and Julie Armstrong, Assistant Administration Manager.

APOLOGY: Councillor John Weir.

CHAIR: Provost Jane Darnbrough, Chair.

ORDER OF DEBATE AND TIME LIMIT FOR SPEECHES

1. The Provost stated that, in respect of the budget, each item would be debated separately.

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

**GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE ESTIMATES 2004/05 AND 2005/06 -
SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX (Item 1, Page 566, 03/07)**

2. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 (excerpt circulated) together with a report for background information (circulated under separate cover of Agenda Item No 1 for the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 February 2004).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Knapp, moved approval of the recommendations of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 namely:

- (i) that the budget be approved as follows;

Service	Proposed Allocation 2004/05 £m	Allocation for Local Priorities £m	Revised Proposed Allocation 2004/05 £m	Proposed Allocation 2005/06 £m
Education	87.265	0.400	87.665	90.288
Social Work	38.259	0.400	38.659	39.482
Community Services	45.205	0.025	45.230	47.099
Development Services	12.820		12.820	13.044
Central and Corporate Services	12.269		12.269	12.443
Other Non-Departmental Items	69.908	0.150	70.058	72.974
Contingency	0.550	0.100	0.650	0.650
Unallocated	1.075	-1.075	0.000	0.688
Net Expenditure	267.351		267.351	276.668
Net Income	267.351		267.351	276.668

- (ii) that the Band 'D' Council Tax level for 2004/05 be set at £1,064.07;
- (iii) that the indicative Band 'D' Council Tax level for 2005/06 be £1,116.27; and
- (iv) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor D Coffey, moved as an amendment:

- (i) to make efficiency savings as follows -
 1. to look to reduce the number of Committees and Committee chairs on the basis that a modest reduction of two Committees would save £43,350 in terms of reduced Councillor remuneration;
 2. 25% savings in the Public Relations Department and one less annual run of Headlines Magazine, with a saving of £65,210;
 3. pooling of resources and joint working with other neighbouring authorities, with a view to achieving economies of scale in areas such as procurement of goods and services, as exists with other authorities, giving rise to a modest saving of £100,000;
 4. A reduction in the number of conferences in external premises, more joint working with neighbouring authorities as well as better use of our own facilities would save £50,000; and
 5. Council Tax collection could be increased with more accessible methods of payment, and assistance with benefit maximisation which, coupled with further support, would lead to improved performance and therefore bad debt provision could be reduced from 5% to 4%, which would release a further £350,000;
- (ii) to direct these savings as follows:
 1. commit £60,000 on further improving Council Tax collection, including Saturday morning opening of the main collection halls in Kilmarnock and Cumnock; also employing additional staff for the Benefit Maximisation Team to hold Benefit Surgeries in outlying communities;

2. rather than reduce the opening hours of our museums and other tourist attractions, direct £40,000 to improve accessibility for the Baird Institute, the Dick Institute and the Dean Castle;
 3. encourage the restoration of the Burns Monuments in both Mauchline and Kay Park, Kilmarnock by contributing £30,000 towards two Trusts to attract funding for both these local heritage sites; and
 4. direct £60,000 to the Kilmarnock Town Centre Management Initiative to attract external funding, improve visibility and establish itself into an active Kilmarnock Town Centre Partnership; and
- (iii) to utilise the remaining savings to limit a Council Tax increase to 3.8%, which represents a Band 'D' equivalent of £1,052.

On a division by a show of hands, the motion was carried by 22 votes to 8.

**GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/05 - 2006/07
(Item 2, Page 567, 03/07)**

3. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 (excerpt circulated) together with report for background information (circulated under separate cover of Agenda Item No 2 for the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 February 2004).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Knapp, moved approval of the recommendations of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 as follows:

- (i) that the proposed Service allocations detailed in paragraph 5.1 of the report to the Special Policy and Resources Committee be approved;
- (ii) that the proposed arrangements for expenditure controls on construction and related work be approved and to ask the Director of Development Services to make the appropriate arrangements in this regard;
- (iii) to instruct Directors to submit detailed Capital Programmes for the utilisation of capital allocations to their Service Committees for consideration; and
- (iv) that the overall proposed capital expenditure outlined in the report to the Special Policy and Resources Committee and summarised in paragraph 6.1 of the report be approved with a review in Autumn 2004, to take account of any new circumstances or information.

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor D Coffey, moved as an amendment to note the recommendations, including comments made earlier at the Special Policy and Resources Committee.

On a division by a show of hands, the motion was carried by 23 votes to 7.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT ESTIMATES AND
ASSOCIATED RENT LEVELS FOR 2004/05 (Item 3, Page 567, 03/07)**

4. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 (excerpt circulated) together with report for background information (circulated under separate cover of Agenda Item No 3 for the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 February 2004).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Kelly, moved approval of the recommendations of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 as follows:

- (i) to approve the draft Estimates for the Housing Revenue Account submitted to the Housing Committee of 28 January 2004;
- (ii) to a rent increase of £3.99 per week over a 48 week period in order to balance the Housing Revenue Account; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor W Coffey, moved as an amendment:

- (i) to propose an increased rent level of £1.99, on the basis that the lower rent of £43.52 would help to bring this authority closer to the current Scottish average of £42.36; and
- (ii) this would be achieved by saving £250,000 with a modest 4% efficiency saving on the central and housing administration costs, setting a £250,000 saving target on reducing voids and re-allocating £900,000 from the Housing Repairs and Renewals fund.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 22 votes to 7.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL STRATEGY REPORT FOR 2004/05 (Item 4, Page 568, 03/07)

5. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 12 February 2004 (excerpt circulated) together with report for background information (circulated under separate cover of Agenda Item No 4 of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Knapp, moved approval of the recommendations of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 12 February 2004 as follows:

- (i) that the Prudential Indicators set out in paragraphs 4.5, 5.1, 5.4, 6.2, 6.3 and 7.8 of the report submitted to the Special Policy and Resources Committee be approved; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor D Coffey, moved as an amendment to note the recommendations along with comments made earlier at the Special Policy and Resources Committee.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 22 votes to 7.

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE (Item, 5 Page 568, 03/07)

6. Following remit from the Special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee on 12 February 2004, it was agreed to appoint four Members to the Member/Officer Working Group (three Members from the Administration and one from the Opposition), being Councillor Jackson (Chair), Murray, O'Neill and McDill.

The meeting terminated at 1155 hrs.