

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2007  
AT 1000 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, Helen Coffey, Willie Coffey, Douglas Reid, Gordon Cree, Drew McIntyre, Isabella Macrae, Harry Wilson, Iain Linton, John Campbell, John Knapp, Jim Raymond, Stuart Finlayson, Robert McDill, Eric Jackson, George Smith, Jimmy Kelly, Depute Provost Tommy Farrell and Councillors William Menzies, Neil McGhee, Eric Ross, Elaine Dinwoodie, Elaine Stewart and Jimmy Carmichael.

**ATTENDING:** Fiona Lees, Chief Executive; Elizabeth Morton, Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Corporate Support; Graham Short, Executive Director of Educational and Social Services; Jim Kane, Acting Executive Director of Development and Property Services; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; Alex McPhee, Executive Head of Finance; Jackie Donnelly, Executive Head of Social Work; David Mitchell, Head of Administrative and Legal Services; Chris McAleavey, Head of Housing; Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager; Julie Jamieson, Chief Accountant; Joe McLachlan, Corporate Accounting Manager; Robin Baker, Financial Controller; David Morgan, Public Relations Officer; Stephanie Wilson, Public Relations Assistant; and Julie McGarry, Assistant Administration Manager.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Brian Reeves, Ray Murray and William Crawford.

**CHAIR:** Provost 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 longer than 10 minutes with succeeding speakers entitled to speak for no more than 5 minutes and with the original mover then having the right to speak for no more than 5 minutes in reply.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT -  
PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS (Item 9, Page 2686, 03/07)**

2. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 7 February 2007 (excerpt circulated) together with the relevant report for background information (circulated under separate cover as Agenda item No 9 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 7 February 2007).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Knapp, moved approval of the recommendations, namely:-

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

Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor Wilson, moved as an amendment to note and continue consideration of this matter to Item 2 of the Agenda.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 20 votes to 8.

**GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET 2007/08 - 2009/10 -  
COUNCIL TAX AND RENT LEVELS (Item 11, Page 2687, 03/07)**

3. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 7 February 2007 (excerpt circulated) together with the relevant report for background information (circulated under separate cover as Agenda Item No 11 of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 7 February 2007).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Knapp, moved approval of the recommendations namely:

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

<b>Service</b>	<b>Total Allocation 2007/08 £m</b>	<b>Indicative Allocation 2008/09</b>	<b>Indicative Allocation 2009/10</b>
Educational Services	101.588	104.1	106.7
Social Services	47.901	49.1	50.3
Department of Neighbourhood Services	35.862	36.7	37.7
Police, Fire, Valuation Board & SPT	33.417	34.3	35.1
Department of Corporate Support	12.040	12.3	12.6
Finance & Asset Management Services	54.066	55.5	56.8
Other Non-Departmental Items	15.849	16.2	16.7
Net Expenditure	300.723	308.2	315.9
Net Income	300.723	308.2	315.9

- (ii) that the Band D Council Tax level for 2007/08 be set at £1,188.99;
- (iii) that Service Committees determine Service budgets within the allocations indicated taking account of Service Plans and priorities;
- (iv) a rent increase of £1.98 per week over a 52 week period (equating to £2.14 per week over the 48 week payment cycle); an increase of £0.18 per week (52 weeks) for lock-ups and £1.19 for garage site charges, these increases being in accordance with the Rent Strategy approved by Council on 28 April 2005; and
- (v) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

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

- (i) to fully fund Service pressures of £3.353m identified at the Policy and Resources Committee of 7 February 2007 and therefore not ask Departments to make further cuts to meet these demands in full;
- (ii) to earmark a further £1.5m non-recurring investment towards new community initiatives, many of which had been highlighted by Senior Officers during the budget consultation process;

- (iii) the new Community Initiatives would be (1) Community Regeneration, (2) Improving Local Environment, (3) Tackling Crime and Promoting Safety and (4) Access to Services.

In respect of Community Regeneration:

- (a) match-fund for Townscape Heritage Initiative at John Finnie Street, Kilmarnock at a cost of £50,000;
- (b) restore private sector Housing Repairs Grants and encourage Scottish Executive for further support at a cost of £150,000;
- (c) to fund a Robert Burns Music and Cultural Event for Kilmarnock Homecoming at a cost of £50,000; and
- (d) to support the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme, including expansion of CPO usage at a cost of £500,000;

In respect of Improving Local Environment:

- (a) extend Environmental Hit Squad from Pathfinder areas to other towns and villages at a cost of £150,000;
- (b) to the reinstatement of street washing for one year at a cost of £40,000;
- (c) to introduce a pilot for Litter Wardens at a cost of £60,000;
- (d) to introduce a pilot for Park Wardens at a cost of £60,000; and
- (e) the provision of dog bins at a cost of £20,000;

In respect of Tackling Crime and Community Safety:

- (a) to extend areas of operation of Community Wardens and encourage the Scottish Executive to commit to longer term funding at a cost of £150,000; and
- (b) the continuation for Road Traffic Safety Officer and Kerbcraft Officer at a cost of £52,000.

In respect of Access to Services:

- (a) to the extension of concessionary hall lets including schools to more community groups to improve usage at a cost of £48,000;
- (b) to enhance spending on community building maintenance at a cost of £100,000; and
- (c) to the opening on Sundays of public toilets at Burns Mall and Tanyard at a cost of £40,000.

- (iv) these measures would be achieved by maintaining balances of £6m which was within the limits of the Council's reserve strategy and would also see a bad debt provision of 4.5%;

- (v) therefore, the proposal would be a Council Tax freeze and that the Band D Council Tax level for 2007/08 be set at £1,170.99.

- (vi) in respect of the rent levels, it was proposed:

- (a) in terms of setting Performance Improvement Targets, (1) set a target to reduce by 25% the average time taken to turn around the low demand stock and to reduce to 4 weeks from 6 weeks the average time

taken for routine void turnaround. The benefits to the HRA would be £160,000 and £145,000 respectively; (2) to set a target to reduce sales of Council stock by 100 by promoting a vigorous campaign which sells the many benefits to tenants of renting as opposed to buying which would yield a gain of £121,680 to the Account (£51,325 corresponding cost of repairs as a result);

- (b) to use a proportion of the Repairs and Renewals Fund now standing at £1.9m and (1) allocate £500,000 of this to abate the cost of existing CFR programme and (2) to allocate £250,000 towards a pilot Void Scheme whereby void houses would be thoroughly cleaned, stripped of old wallpaper, replastered where necessary and would be in "move-in condition";
- (c) to introduce a pilot Tenant Loyalty Scheme whereby £250,000 be set aside from the Repairs and Renewals Fund to promote a scheme aimed at promoting tenant loyalty and that the Head of Service report back with options to implement the scheme;
- (d) to offer tenants a choice in the Upgrade Programmes that they receive from a new Housing Service and introduce a more flexible approach to Capital Programming which seeks to meet the demands of tenants. Tenants would be able to choose from the existing suite of upgrades but the popular double glazing option would be re-introduced as part of the approved programme; and
- (e) these measures would mean an average rent increase of just £0.72 over 52 weeks or £0.78 over 48 weeks with increased charges for lock-up garages and garage sites being £0.18 per week and £1.19 per year respectively.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 20 votes to 8.

The meeting terminated at 1045 hrs.