

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2001
AT 1000 HRS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Provost Jimmy Boyd and Councillors Brian McNeil, Ann Hay, Brian Reeves, Daniel Coffey, Willie Coffey, Douglas Reid, Lilian MacLean, Drew McIntyre, David Macrae, Harry Wilson, Iain Linton, Alex Walsh, Depute Provost Jane Darnbrough, Councillors John Knapp, Jim Raymond, Finlay MacLean, Robert McDill, Eric Jackson, Jimmy Kelly, Tommy Farrell, Julie Faulds, William Menzies, Eric Ross, Elaine Dinwoodie, Robert Taylor and Jimmy Carmichael.

ATTENDING: David Montgomery, Chief Executive; Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources; William Stafford, Director of Community Services; Steven Chorley, Director of Development Services; John Mulgrew, Director of Educational and Social Services; Alex McPhee, Director of Finance; James Lavery, Director of Homes and Technical Services; Barbara Haughan, Head of Administrative and Legal Services; Douglas Campbell, Head of Corporate Development and Communication; Stephen Moore, Head of Social Work; Ian Arnott, Acting Head of Accounting; Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager; and Julie Armstrong, Principal Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Katie Hall, Stephanie Young, John Weir, Alan Campbell and George Smith.

CHAIR: Provost Jimmy Boyd, Chair.

ORDER OF DEBATE AND TIME LIMIT FOR SPEECHES

1. It was agreed, in respect of the budget, that each item would be debated separately. It was noted that in accordance with Standing Orders the 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 AND
COUNCIL TAX 2001/02 (Item 2, Page 1592, 99/02)**

2. There was submitted excerpt from Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 14 February 2001 (excerpt circulated) together with a report for background information (circulated under separate cover with the Agenda Item No 2 for Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 14 February 2001).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Jackson, moved approval of the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee of 14 February 2001 as follows:-

- (i) to approve the service resource allocations for 2001/02 shown as follows:

DEPARTMENT	RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS £M
Education	67.553
Social Work	26.089
Community Services	38.038
Development Services	9.251
Homes & Technical Services	1.406
Policy and Resources	13.933
Housing/Council Tax Benefit	2.068
Trading Services Surplus	(0.502)
Other Specific Budget Items	0.612
Council Funded Social Inclusion	0.065
Debt Charges	13.622
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	172.135

- (ii) that the Band 'D' Council Tax level for 2001/02 should be set at £921.60; and
- (iii) that the Band 'D' Council Tax for 2002/03 and 2003/04 be set at £966.60 and £1,014.30 respectively.

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

- (i) to approve the Departmental resource allocations for 2001/02 as detailed above subject to the amendments and additions detailed in paragraphs (ii) to (vii) below;
- (ii) reduce the number of Local committees, and accordingly the number of Local Committee Chairs from seven to three; reflecting the same geographical split as the Local Planning Committees. There would be no reduction in local community representation, but with administrative efficiencies combined with the reduction in special responsibility allowances a saving of £20,000 would be achieved;
- (iii) that there be a reduction of expenditure on public relations, with a 20% cut in the Corporate Development and Communications budget, including the cessation of the publication of Headlines and that a best value review of the service be carried out providing anticipated savings of £108,000;
- (iv) that in accordance with a series of new measures intimated recently by the Executive's Finance Minister to increase Council Tax collection, it was anticipated that the Council Tax collection rate would modestly increase, therefore bad debt provision be reduced from 5% to 4%, releasing additional funds of £350,000;
- (v) that as it was considered that CoSLA had failed East Ayrshire, had failed to secure an adequate Local Government settlement, and had failed to deliver a fair pay settlement for Local Government workers that this Council withdraw from membership of CoSLA, saving £70,000: the withdrawal of membership would not affect the Council's position regarding the Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee and the SNP Group remained committed to the retention of national agreements on pay and conditions

- (vi) that the above savings of £548,000 be spent to improve the quality of life of people across East Ayrshire and protect front line services as follows:-
 - (a) that the garden care scheme be restored to last year's level of service at a cost of £35,000;
 - (b) that there be improvements to street litter collection, maintenance of verges and an increase in the frequency of grass cutting in public areas at a cost of £100,000;
 - (c) that the current pilot project for recycling in Fenwick and Mauchline be expanded to include the villages of Ochiltree and Crosshouse at a cost of £35,000;
 - (d) that a community learning facility be provided in North West Kilmarnock, in one of this Authority's most socially deprived areas at a cost of £50,000;
 - (e) that in recognition of the importance of local heritage and the cultural contribution of the Dick Institute, in this its Centenary year, a pilot local heritage project be established at a cost of £23,000 to the Council, with further external funding being sought; and
 - (f) that there be a reduction in the current backlog of aids and adaptations for the vulnerable and elderly in existing identified work at a cost of £140,000;
- (vii) that the Council limit the Council Tax increase to 4.4% which was below the rate proposed by the Administration and that the Band 'D' Council Tax for 2001/02 be set at £917; and.
- (viii) that the band 'D' Council Tax for 2002/03 and 2003/04 be set at £957 and £999 respectively.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 16 votes to 11.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND ASSOCIATED POSSIBLE RENT LEVELS FOR 2001/2002 (Item 3, page 1592, 99/02)

3. There was submitted an excerpt from the Minutes of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 14 February 2001 (excerpt circulated) together with reports for background information (circulated under separate cover of Agenda Item No 3 of the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 14 February 2001).

Councillor McIntyre, seconded by Councillor Kelly, moved acceptance of the recommendations contained in the excerpt as follows:

- (i) approval of the draft estimates for the Housing Revenue Account 2001/02 as submitted to the Special Housing Committee of 18 January 2001; and
- (ii) approval for 2001/02 of a flat rate increase in all house rents of £1.50 per week over a 48 week period, in order to balance the Housing Revenue Account.

Councillor Willie Coffey, seconded by Councillor Wilson, moved as an amendment:

- (i) A total expenditure level of £31,099,930, representing a reduction of £880,000 in expenditure that had been intended to be funded by Council tenants and

which related to costs arising from the Labour Administration's mismanagement of the service

- (ii) that as part of a plan of action to reduce losses and secure the targeted expenditure level the Director of Homes and Technical Services bring forward a range of measures including:
- An appointments system for repairs.
 - A tenant satisfaction "sign-off" approval.
 - Letting initiatives that exploit the changing demographics within our communities.
 - A commitment from the Council to quality check each house before it's offered to tenants. This would include state of repair, and its cleanliness.
 - To investigate the setting up of a Housing Service Call Centre to deal with complaints direct and to relieve some of the stress from our front line counter staff.
- (iii) A total income level of £30,723,460 leaving an excess of expenditure over income, to be funded from rent of £310,520; and
- (iv) that the sum of £310,520 be funded by a flat rate increase of 0.38p per week over a 48 week period, this sum being equivalent to the cost of funding the growth for the kitchen programme and bathroom replacements and not towards any deficit.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 16 votes to 11.

**EAST AYRSHIRE LOCAL PLAN:
ADDITIONAL MODIFICATIONS (Item 3, Page 1453, 99/02)**

4. There was submitted (a) an excerpt from the Minutes of the Development Services Committee held on 19 December 2000 (circulated); and (b) a report dated 29 January 2001 (circulated) by the Director of Development Services which presented to Council for approval, a series of further modifications to the East Ayrshire Local Plan requested by the Development Services Committee at its meeting on 19 December 2000, and two amended responses to objections received in respect of the Plan.

It was agreed:

- (i) to approve the recommendations contained in the excerpt from the Minutes of the Development Services Committee held on 19 December 2000; and
- (ii) to approve the further amendments proposed for the East Ayrshire Local Plan as detailed in Annexation 1 of the report, and the suggested modified response to the objections as detailed in Annexation 2 of the report.

The meeting terminated at 1050 hrs.

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