

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 26 February 2020

Chair:

Provost Ian McAllan

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor John Bradley, Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Jackie Burns, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan, Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Peter Craig, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Isobel Dorman, Councillor Fiona Dryburgh, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Ian Harrow, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Martin Grant Hose, Councillor Ann Le Blond, Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Joe Lowe, Councillor Hugh Macdonald, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Catherine McClymont, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Gladys Miller, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor Carol Nugent, Councillor Mo Razzaq, Councillor John Ross, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Collette Stevenson (Depute), Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor Jim Wardhaugh, Councillor Jared Wark, Councillor David Watson, Councillor Josh Wilson

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Monique McAdams

Attending:

Chief Executive's Service

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

Community and Enterprise Resources

M McGlynn, Executive Director

Education Resources

T McDaid, Executive Director

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; G Bow, Administration Manager; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; S Somerville, Administration Manager

Housing and Technical Resources

D Lowe, Executive Director

Social Work Resources/Health and Social Care

V de Souza, Director

Opening Remarks

The Provost advised that this would be the last Council meeting that Gordon Bow would attend prior to his retirement and thanked him for his contribution and commitment over the years.

Councillor Nelson, on behalf of the Council, wished to congratulate Councillor Hose on the birth of his son.

1 Declaration of Interests

Prior to inviting declaration of interests, G McCann, as Monitoring Officer, reminded elected members on restrictions on voting in setting the level of Council Tax in the event that any member present was at least 2 months in arrears with payment of Council Tax or had outstanding bills for Community Charge/Poll Tax.

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the South Lanarkshire Council held on 4 December 2019 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Council decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Minutes of Special Meeting

The minutes of the special meeting of the South Lanarkshire Council held on 13 February 2020 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Council decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4 Minutes of Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 18 September 2019 were submitted for noting.

The Council decided: that the minutes be noted.

5 Grant Settlement and Overall Position of Revenue Budget, Savings Proposals and Level of Local Taxation 2020/2021

A report dated 17 February 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ capital and revenue grant funding allocated to the Council for 2020/2021
- ◆ proposed savings for 2020/2021
- ◆ proposed increase in Council Tax for 2020/2021
- ◆ proposed Revenue Budget 2020/2021, including the base budget allocations to Resources

The Finance Circular, issued by the Scottish Government on 6 February 2020, advised of a 2020/2021 General Capital Grant for South Lanarkshire of £21.224 million. In addition, £5.921 million of Specific Grant had been allocated for Early Learning, vacant and derelict land, as well as Cycling, Walking and Safer Streets, the breakdown of which was detailed in the report.

It was noted that arrangements would be made for a special meeting of the Council to be held in March 2020 to consider the overall Capital Programme for 2020/2021, both General and Specific.

At its meeting on 4 December 2019, the Executive Committee was advised of the updated Revenue Budget Strategy for 2020/2021 which stated a savings requirement of £13.651 million. Savings proposals of £10.006 million, including the £1.100 million of savings approved by the Integration Joint Board (IJB) on 3 December 2019, were presented to that meeting. The Strategy showed that, after taking account of those savings, there was a budget gap of £3.645 million and it was proposed that this be funded on a one-off basis from the Council's Reserves. This position included an increase in Council Tax of 3% for 2020/2021.

Revenue Grant for 2020/2021 now totalled £605.508 million and consisted of the following:-

	£m
Specific Grants	40.141
Non-Domestic Rate Income	337.810
General Revenue Grant	227.557
Total General Revenue Funding	605.508

Details were provided on the movement in grant year on year on a like for like basis, the assumed level of grant cut within the Council's Budget Strategy and how the level of grant affected the Budget Strategy.

A summary was given, within Table 2 of the report, on the impact of the Grant Settlement and the Budget Adjustments. This showed an improved position of £2.814 million compared to the Budget Strategy assumptions. Details were provided on the options available on how this sum of money could be used and it was proposed that the £2.814 million be used to reduce the reliance on temporary solutions.

A proposed savings package, totalling £10.006 million, was attached as Appendix 3 to the report. This included the £1.100 million of savings that were approved by the IJB in December 2019.

The Council had been advised that the cap on Council Tax would remain on the same basis as 2019/2020 which meant that councils would be allowed the flexibility to increase Council Tax by 4.84%. The Strategy included the assumption that Council Tax would increase by 3% in 2020/2021, which would generate income of £3.900 million and set the Council Tax for Band D properties at £1,203. It was, therefore, proposed that a 3% increase in Council Tax be implemented.

The proposed overall budget for financial year 2020/2021, including income and expenditure, was summarised in Table 5 of the report. The proposed base budget allocations to Resources were attached as Appendix 4 to the report.

Should there be an increase to the final Grant Settlement, proposals would be brought to elected members for their consideration at a future date.

Councillor Ross advised that he was proposing the following as an alternative, consensus budget which had been agreed by all the political/independent groups and would be in the best interests of the citizens of South Lanarkshire:-

- "1. In relation to recommendations 1,2,3 and 6 as detailed below – it is proposed these would be as detailed in the published paper.

(1) that the capital grant settlement for 2020/2021 (section 4) be noted;

(2) that the revisions to the approved budget strategy as detailed in section 5.2/5.3 are approved;

(3) *that the Revenue Budget grant settlement for 2020/2021 (section 6.2), and that the improved position to the budget strategy of £2.814 million (section 6.14) compared to the assumed level, be noted;*

(6) *that the proposed increase in Council Tax of 3% (section 8), which would set the Council Tax for Band D properties at £1,203, be approved;*

2. In relation to recommendation 5, it is proposed that savings in the published paper are accepted subject to the following savings being **removed**. These removed savings total **£3.039m**

Savings reference	Savings Description	FTE	£m
CER02	Roads Ad-Hoc Works Budget	0.0	0.450
CER10	Rationalisation of Grass Cutting Machinery	2.0	0.140
CER11	Grounds Services	6.0	0.180
CER14	Janitorial Provision	4.0	0.100
CER22	Community Managed Halls	1.4	0.029
CER24	Parking Permit Charge	0.0	0.025
CER25	Park and Ride Charging	0.0	0.075
CER29	Flood Risk Management	0.0	0.195
CER30	Trading Standards Inspections	2.0	0.100
CER31	Grass Bankings	2.5	0.080
CER32	Hedge Maintenance	4.0	0.090
CER33	Leisure Centres - Opening Hours	5.3	0.135
CER34	Duncanrig and Uddingston Dual Use Facilities - Term Time Opening	0.7	0.025
EDR03	Classroom Materials Budget in Schools	0.0	0.180
EDR04	Teachers in Early Learning and Childcare	0.0	0.130
EDR05	Secondary School Staffing	9.0	0.310
EDR06	Learning Community Staffing	2.0	0.070
EDR07	Hamilton School for the Deaf Staffing	1.0	0.070
EDR09	Area Cover Scheme	3.5	0.115
EDR14	Targeted Class Sizes Support - Primary 1	13.0	0.440
EDR15	Additional Behaviour Support in Secondary Schools	3.0	0.100
	TOTAL	59.4	3.039

3. It is recommended that saving CER26 (Activage) is changed to restrict the increase in charge to 3%. The charge will therefore be £59.70.

Given that this represents a reduction in the proposed charge in comparison to that included in the published savings, the savings are therefore reduced by **£0.045m**.

Approval of sections 2 and 3 will result in an overall savings package of **£6.922m** (75.9 fte) which is **£3.084m** less than the current proposed package of savings.

4. It is proposed that, to balance the budget position, recommendation 4 (*that the £2.814m improved position be used to reduce temporary solutions*) is removed.

It is proposed that the £2.814m will now bridge the shortfall in the budget as a result of the savings in sections 2 and 3 being changed.

The remaining shortfall of **£0.270m** will be met from reserves on a one year basis.

Should the final offer of grant approved by the Scottish Parliament exceed the currently notified level, then the £0.270m drawn from reserves will be replaced by grant funding.

5. That Recommendation 7 (*that the revenue budget 20/21 including base budget allocations to Resources as shown in Appendix 4*) be approved subject to the adjustments detailed at 2 to 4 above."

In moving the alternative budget, Councillor Ross commended all councillors for their hard work to achieve the best possible deal which would provide value for money. The proposals, while seeking efficiencies, would put the money available to good use and protect frontline services. He spoke on key aspects of the proposals and concluded by thanking all Group leaders, in particular, Councillor Cooper as Chair of the cross-party group, for the constructive way agreement had been reached. He also wanted to record his thanks to officers for their assistance with the process.

Councillor Fagan, in seconding the proposals for an alternative budget, advised that he would echo the sentiments of Councillor Ross in that it was a priority to protect both frontline services and frontline workers, with no compulsory redundancies. He highlighted that public services were overstretched and difficult decisions had to be taken, however, the alternative budget proposed set out as fair and reasonable a position as was possible. He welcomed the contribution from all political/independent groups and called upon both the UK and Scottish Governments to deliver fair funding for public services.

Councillor Allison highlighted that all political/independent groups had made concessions for the benefit of South Lanarkshire residents. He referred to COSLA's confirmation that there had been a 1% reduction in block grant funding from the UK Government to the Scottish Government, however, local authorities then, in turn, had a 17% reduction in funding which had led to the need to increase Council Tax. He considered that the First Minister and Scottish Government should be lobbied on this matter otherwise there would be a requirement year on year for increases in Council Tax and a reduction in services. While his Group was content to support the alternative budget, he wanted its concerns in relation to the 3% Council Tax increase to be noted.

Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor Dryburgh, put the following forward as an addendum to the alternative budget:-

"In doing so, Council expresses its concern that decisions over the future of the Day Care service have been made by the IJB before receipt of the current Review into Day Care and requests that the IJB consults further with the Council over the outcome of the review.

Council further –

1. notes with approval the collaborative approach initiated by the Independent Group which led to an agreed budget;

2. notes the potential pressures on social work budgets from the Hamilton and Rutherglen home care services and the Day Service review and the Director of Finance's view that this can be contained within current resources including the projected 2019/2020 underspend of £2.658 million."

Councillor Brown spoke on what he considered were the key issues, including climate change and health and social care, and welcomed the major achievement of cross-party consensus.

Councillor Cooper intimated that her Group was very focused on issues relating to Roads, Leisure and Culture, Land and Social Work services. She thanked the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and his wider team for their prompt and detailed responses to questions raised. As chair of the cross-party working group, she wanted, in particular, to thank Councillor Chalmers for her role in supporting the group and she welcomed the fact that the meetings had been solution focused to reach a balanced budget.

The Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) responded to members' questions in relation to the IJB.

It was agreed that the addendum by Councillor Brown be accepted subject to the word 'contained', within the second point, being replaced by 'utilised to manage these pressures'.

The Council decided:

- (1) that the capital grant settlement for 2020/2021 be noted;
- (2) that the revisions to the approved budget strategy, as detailed in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the report, be approved;
- (3) that the Revenue Budget grant settlement for 2020/2021 and improved position to the budget strategy of £2.814 million compared to the assumed level be noted;
- (4) that the increase to Council Tax of 3%, which would set the Council Tax for Band D properties at £1,203, be approved;
- (5) that the savings detailed in Appendix 3 to the report be accepted subject to the removal of those detailed at point 2 of the alternative budget outlined above totalling £3.039 million;
- (6) that saving CER26 (Activage) be changed to restrict the increase in charge to 3%;
- (7) that the £2.814 million improved position be used to bridge the shortfall in the budget as a result of the changes to the savings as detailed above, with the remaining shortfall of £0.270 million to be met from reserves on a one year basis unless the final offer of grant approved by the Scottish Parliament exceeded the currently notified level, at which the £0.270 million would be replaced by grant funding;
- (8) that the Revenue Budget for 2020/2021, including the base budget allocations to Resources, as detailed in Appendix 4, be approved subject to the adjustments detailed within Recommendations (5) to (7);
- (9) that concerns be noted in respect of decisions in relation to the future of the Day Care Service having been made by the IJB before receipt of its current Review and a request be made that the IJB consults further with the Council over the outcome of the Review;
- (10) that the collaborative approach initiated by the Independent Group, which had led to an agreed budget, be commended; and

- (11) that the potential pressures on Social Work budgets from the Hamilton and Rutherglen Home Care Services and the Day Service Review be noted as well as the view of the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) that the projected 2019/2020 underspend of £2.658 million could be utilised to manage those pressures within current resources.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 4 December 2019 (Paragraph 7)]

6 Recommendation Referred by Executive Committee – Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2020/2021

A report dated 26 February 2020 by the Chief Executive was tabled on recommendations referred to the Council by the Executive Committee of 26 February 2020. The recommendations were as follows:-

- ◆ **Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2020/2021**
 - ◆ that the Revenue Estimate proposals for the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2019/2020 be approved
 - ◆ that the rent increase of 3.95% for Council houses, travelling persons' sites, lockups and garage sites be approved
 - ◆ that the proposal to progress the next stage of rent harmonisation be approved
 - ◆ that, based on the proposed rent increase of 3.95% and taking account of the recommendation from the special Housing and Technical Resources Committee of 5 February 2020, the updated 2020/2021 Housing Capital Programme, totalling £97.303 million, be approved.

The Council decided: that the recommendations of the Executive Committee of 26 February 2020 in relation to the Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget 2020/2021 be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 26 February 2020 (Paragraph 8)]

7 Recommendation Referred by Executive Committee – Family Leave Guidance for Elected Members

A report dated 6 January 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on a recommendation referred to the Council by the Executive Committee of 4 December 2019. The recommendation was as follows:-

- ◆ **Family Leave Guidance for Elected Members**
 - ◆ that the new Elected Member Family Leave Guidance, produced by COSLA, be approved and implemented

The Head of Administration and Legal Services advised that, since the Executive Committee met on 4 December 2019, an update had been received from COSLA to advise that the proposals included the removal of the cap on the number of Senior Councillors that each council was permitted to have to allow for the interpretation of the new guidance. The new regulations had been lodged with Parliament for the committee process to be undertaken and it was expected they would come into force later in the year.

Councillor Hamilton welcomed the guidance, intimating that it would encourage young people to become elected members.

The Head of Administration and Legal Services responded to members' questions and advised that the new regulations were not limited to leave for family reasons but for any issue that the Council considered it appropriate to grant leave of absence.

The Council decided: that the recommendation of the Executive Committee of 4 December 2019 in relation to the new Elected Member Family Leave Guidance by COSLA be approved and implemented.

[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 4 December 2019 (Paragraph 10)]

Councillor Le Blond left the meeting following this item of business

8 Climate Change and Sustainability Committee – Draft Terms of Reference

A report dated 6 January 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the draft Terms of Reference for the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.

At its meeting held on 25 September 2019, the Council agreed that a new committee on climate change and sustainability be established. At the Council meeting held on 4 December 2019, it was agreed that a draft Terms of Reference for the committee would be submitted to the Standards and Procedures Advisory Forum (SPAF) in the first instance prior to being brought to a future meeting of the Council for approval.

It was proposed that the Terms of Reference, attached as an appendix to the report, which had been endorsed by the SPAF, be approved. The membership was the same as for the Executive Committee to reflect the high level status of the committee.

The Council decided: that the Terms of Reference for the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

[Reference: Minutes of 4 December 2019 (Paragraph 5)]

9 Notice of Motion – Child Refugees

In terms of Standing Order No 19, a motion proposed by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Devlin, was submitted as follows:-

“This Council resolves to support the STUC/Dumfries TUC/Safe Passage Kindergarten Association “Our Turn” initiative.

The Our Turn Campaign is asking the UK Government to support 10,000 at risk refugees from Europe and other conflict regions over the next 10 years as part of a new Child Refugee Resettlement scheme.

To this end the Council agrees to use its resources to help find places in volunteer households for at least 3 unaccompanied child refugees per year for each of the next 10 years provided that the UK Government underwrites support for these refugees in line with current legislation.”

In moving her motion, Councillor Walker acknowledged that the Council had already put in place arrangements to accept and support child refugees. She, therefore, accepted a proposal by Councillor Chalmers to amend the motion and this was agreed by the Council to read as follows:-

“This Council resolves to support the STUC/Dumfries TUC/Safe Passage Kindergarten Association “Our Turn” initiative.

The Our Turn Campaign is asking the UK Government to support 10,000 at risk refugees from Europe and other conflict regions over the next 10 years as part of a new Child Refugee Resettlement scheme.

This Council has had a strong track record in resettling and providing support to refugees and the recent report to the Executive Committee highlights the success of our work.

We note that the Council has also established successful arrangements for the support of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) who have been accommodated in South Lanarkshire.

We recognise that all children accommodated, whether UASC or not, can only be placed following appropriate compliance with Social Work and Social Care Regulations. These children would all also be entitled to Continuing Care and Throughcare Regulations post 18 years so costs will increase year on year.

We as a council recognise the humanitarian crisis faced by many such children who seek sanctuary in Scotland and are pleased to endorse the Motion.

We also endorse the call for the UK Government to extend the financial support arrangements to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to match the arrangements in place for the Global Refugee Programme.”

The Council decided: that the terms of the motion, as amended, be supported.

10 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.