

**DRAFT****FALKIRK COUNCIL****MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of FALKIRK COUNCIL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on WEDNESDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2008 at 10.30 AM.**

**PRESENT:** Provost Reid; Depute Provost Black; Councillors Alexander, Blackwood, Buchanan, Carleschi, Coleman, H Constable, J Constable, Goldie, Gow, Hughes, Jackson, Kenna, Lemetti, A MacDonald, C MacDonald, Mahoney, C Martin, CR Martin, McLuckie, McNally, McNeill, Meiklejohn, Nicol, Nimmo, Oliver, Patrick, Spears, Thomson and Waddell.

**CONVENER:** Provost Reid

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Fry

**ATTENDING:** Chief Executive; Directors of Community Services, of Corporate and Commercial Services, of Development Services, of Education Services, of Finance Services and of Housing and Social Work Services; Acting Director of Law and Administration Services; Heads of Accountancy, of Treasury and Investment and of Service (Strategic Support); Accounting Managers (D Cairney, J Flannigan and B Heron) and Democratic Services Manager.

**FC62. MINUTE**

There was submitted (tabled) and **NOTED** Minute of Special Meeting of Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 February 2008.

**FC63. REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09 – 2010/11**

With reference to Minute of Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 February 2008 (Paragraph PR108 refers), there was submitted joint report (circulated) dated 6 February 2008 by the Chief Executive and Director of Finance (a) providing details of the Local Government Finance Settlement for the financial years 2008/09 to 2010/11; (b) detailing draft Service Revenue Budgets for 2008/09 and proposed Council Tax levels for 2008/09, and (c) summarising Falkirk Council's position in relation to Band D Council Tax levels throughout Scotland.

Councillor Gow, seconded by Councillor C MacDonald moved acceptance of the recommendations detailed in the Report with an additional recommendation that the budget to enhance rural bus services be used to finance the reintroduction of an evening bus service to Slamannan.

By way of an amendment, Councillor Alexander, seconded by Councillor Coleman, moved the following:-

1. The proposed £150,000 for increased youth provision should be added to any Scottish Government Criminal Justice money for the provision of new youth activities. **Cost neutral**
2. Residents parking permits for properties within the vicinity of the Meeks Road and Kemper Avenue car parks should be valid for both car parks. **Cost neutral**
3. The proposals for providing community access to Braes and Larbert High Schools should be extended to also include Bo'ness and Graeme High Schools to ensure all communities are treated equally. **Cost £290,000**
4. Officers from Community Services bring forward proposals for the development of regeneration strategies for medium centres of population. **Cost £100,000**
5. A high profile freeze on admission charges at sports centres to encourage increased attendance with a target of 3% increase in usage to offset associated cost implications. However, based on current usage rates, the notional cost to the authority would be £34,000. **Cost £34,000**
6. An additional allocation of £150,000 to meet the backlog of vulnerable under 3s awaiting nursery places. **Cost £150,000**
7. The restoration of the bus concession ticket for disabled residents who lost this facility after one year of the national scheme. **Cost £82,000**
8. The allocation of £30,000 to support the MOD fringe activities. **Cost £30,000**
9. The allocation of resources for the development of flood prevention schemes and policies. **Cost £45,000**
10. The establishment of a fund for the purpose of using it to pump prime bids from local amateur sports clubs for additional external funding with Officers being requested to bring forward a report on the mechanism for establishing and managing such a fund. **Cost £70,000**
11. In respect of Homecare services, the abolition of charges for Meals on Wheels and Lunch Clubs. The cost of collection would result in approximately 50% of income received going towards collection with the budgeted gross charges being removed from the budget. **Cost £74,000**

**Total cost      £875,000**

**To be met from:-**

Improved year-end financial position 25% of the average underspend estimated at £2.2m	<b>£550,000</b>
Increased income target for Commercial Services Trading Accounts	<b>£200,000</b>
Reduction in advertising budget	<b>£25,000</b>
Efficiency savings and improvements in procurement	<b>£100,000</b>

Council agreed to a short adjournment at this point to allow members to consider the terms of the amendment.

On reconvening, and in terms of Standing Order 21.4(i), a vote was taken by way of a roll call, there being 31 Members present with Members voting as undernoted:-

For the Motion (17) – Provost Reid; Depute Provost Black; Councillor Blackwood, Buchanan, Goldie, Gow, Lemetti, C MacDonald, Mahoney, C Martin, CR Martin, McLuckie, McNeill, Nicol, Nimmo, Patrick and Waddell.

For the Amendment (14) – Councillors Alexander, Carleschi, Coleman, H Constable, J Constable, Hughes, Jackson, Kenna, A MacDonald, McNally, Meiklejohn, Oliver, Spears and Thomson.

Accordingly, **AGREED:-**

- (1) that Council accepts the Draft 2008/09 Budget as detailed in the Report;
- (2) that estimated Expenditure for the financial year 2008/09 be set at £329.3m, before specific Grants of £17.1m, leaving net expenditure of £312.2m;
- (3) that Council levies the following Council Tax for the year 2008/09;
  - (a) A Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in Band D of £1,070, representing a nil increase in Council Tax;
  - (b) A Council Tax to be paid in respect of a chargeable dwelling in each of the other valuation bands in accordance with Section 74 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as set out in Paragraph 9.2 of the Report)
- (4) that Council accepts the Indicative Council Tax levels for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 at Band D of £1,070 a nil increase as detailed in the Report, representing the best information available at this time,
- (5) that Chief Officers be instructed to deliver Services within the Revenue Budget allocated to each Service, and
- (6) to the reintroduction of a bus service to Slamannan.

#### **FC64. THREE YEAR GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 – 2010/11**

With reference to Minute of Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 February 2008 (Paragraph PR109 refers), there was submitted Report (circulated) dated 6 February 2008 by the by Director of Finance setting out the Council's proposed capital investment plans for the next 3 financial years on all areas of service delivery, with the exception of Council Housing which was reported separately to this meeting of Council.

**AGREED** to approve the General Services Capital programme for 2008/09 to 2010/11, and the Prudential Indicators, as appended to the Report.

In terms of Standing Order 31.1, it was agreed to continue the meeting beyond the three hour limit.

# **FC65. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND COUNCIL HOUSE RENTS 2008/09 – 2010/11**

With reference to Minute of Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 February 2008 (Paragraph PR110 refers), there was submitted joint Report (circulated) dated 6 February 2008 by the Directors of Finance and of Corporate and Commercial Services (a) presenting a draft Housing Revenue Account for the financial year 2009/10; (b) making recommendations on the level of council house and garage rents for 2008/09, and (c) showing indicative rent levels for the years 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

## **AGREED:-**

- (1) that an average house rent increase of £72.72 per annum be applied from 1 April, 2008 (equivalent to £1.40 per week or £3.03 per fortnightly rent charge period). The new average fortnightly charge, based on the 24 fortnightly periods with no rent being charged during the fortnightly periods commencing 30 June 2008 and 15 December 2008 would therefore be £104.71;
- (2) that no tenant face an increase of more than £103.92 per annum (equivalent to £2.00 per week or £4.33 per fortnightly rent period);
- (3) to utilise £1.4m from the Housing Revenue Account reserves;
- (4) that lock-up garage rentals be increased by an average of 12 pence per week with effect from 1 April 2008;
- (5) that garage site rentals be increased by £1 to £40 per annum with effect from 1 April 2008;
- (6) that Castings Hostel rentals be increased to a charge of £124.55 per room per week;
- (7) that Homeless property rentals be increased to an average of £144.39 per week; and
- (8) that the indicative Budgets and Rent Increases for 2009/10 and 2010/11 as outlined in the Report be noted, as representing the best information available at this time.

# **FC66. HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2008/2011**

With reference to Minute of Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 13 February 2008 (Paragraph PR111 refers), there was submitted Report (circulated) dated 30 January 2008 by Director of Corporate and Commercial Services outlining expenditure proposals for the 2008 to 2011 HRA Investment programme.

**AGREED** to approve the expenditure proposals outlined in the report as the HRA Investment programme for 2008/2009 to 2010/2011.