

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL (SPECIAL).

Minutes of special meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 22nd October 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

- Present: Councillors Helen Moonie (Provost), John Allan, Andy Campbell, Douglas Campbell, Ian Cavana, Alec Clark, Ian Cochrane, Kirsty Darwent, Allan Dorans, Ian Douglas, Ann Galbraith, Sandra Goldie, Bill Grant, William J. Grant, John Hampton, Mary Kilpatrick, John McDowall, Nan McFarlane, Brian McGinley, Bill McIntosh, Alec Oattes, Robin Reid, Philip Saxton, Margaret Toner and Corri Wilson.
- Attending: E. Howat, Chief Executive; H. Garland, Executive Director – Care, Learning and Wellbeing; L. Bloomer, Executive Director – Economy, Neighbourhood and Environment; V. Andrews, Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation; D. Hutchison, Head of Education; and D. Knight, Democratic Services Administrator.
- Apologies: Councillors Brian Connolly, Peter Convery, Hywel Davies, Hugh Hunter and Rita Miller.

1. Provost.

The Provost welcomed everyone to the meeting;

2. Declarations of Interest.

There were no declarations of interest by Members of the Council in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. Sederunt.

The Chief Executive called the Sederunt for the meeting.

4. Notice of Motion.

Councillor Douglas Campbell, seconded by Councillor Nan McFarlane, moved that

“this Council restates its opposition to the Bedroom Tax (Single Room Supplement) that is causing widespread worry and financial hardship in our communities and the Council supports the campaigns across Scotland to abolish the Bedroom Tax.

The Council notes the proposal by Shelter to alleviate the impact of the Bedroom Tax through means including:-

- (i) The UK Government should ensure that the Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget for Scotland is proportionately funded.
- (ii) The Scottish Government should make an additional fund of up to £20 million available to support all Councils to top up DHP in 2013/14 and a fund equivalent to the 150% top up of the DHP budget fully for 2014/15.
- (iii) Local Authorities should use the power to top up DHP to the full amount and publish a transparent policy on how the money will be spent to help as many affected tenants as possible before the end of the financial year.

The Council welcomes the decision by the Scottish Government to provide the additional £20 million requested by Shelter for 2013/14 through which South Ayrshire Council will receive additional funding of between £350,000 and £393,000 to support DHP up to the maximum level permitted by the Westminster Government.

The Council notes that the additional funding will require a review of current policies due to the additional funding being available but also notes that the Scottish Government funding will replace £113,000 Council funding made available during the budget process 2013/14.

The Council agrees to maintain the financial commitment of up to £113,000 to vulnerable families affected by Westminster Government cuts and as part of the policy review report to the Leadership Panel, it shall include additional measures such as including extra funding for Welfare Rights activity to support clients having to attend Statutory Appeals held on Saturdays, the potential for financial assistance for individuals and families moving to smaller accommodation as a result of the Bedroom Tax and active measures to ensure that all those affected by the Bedroom Tax have been interviewed and assessed for DHP.”

By way of Amendment, Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor McDowall, moved that

“South Ayrshire Council again notes that the Government’s austerity measures are to continue until 2017.

South Ayrshire Council notes proposals from Shelter to alleviate the impact of the “Bedroom Tax” through a variety of proposals.

South Ayrshire Council welcomes the provision of an additional £20 million nationally which will enable additional funding to South Ayrshire Council: this will support the provision of Discretionary Housing Payments within the limits prescribed by the UK government.

South Ayrshire Council notes that this additional funding can replace the £113,000 of South Ayrshire Council funding made available during the 2013/14 budget process.

South Ayrshire Council reiterates its budget commitment of £113,000 to assist vulnerable families affected by welfare reform and will continue to provide assistance to all affected tenants.

A full discussion took place regarding the terms of the Motion and the Amendment.

Point of order.

Councillor Douglas Campbell at this point in the meeting sought clarification regarding the competency of the Amendment and whether funding that was proposed to be allocated from Council Tax could be used to support HRA activity.

The Acting Executive Director – Resources, Governance and Organisation advised that this funding was already being used towards some elements of support, however, the Amendment did not set out any details of how this funding should be spent.

On a vote being taken by a show of hands, fifteen Members voted for the Amendment and nine for the Motion. The Amendment was accordingly declared to be carried.

Decided: to approve the terms of the Amendment.

5. Notice of Motion.

Council Corri Wilson, seconded by Councillor Ian Douglas moved

“this Council recognises that the provision of a nutritional breakfast for children can lead to enhanced concentration, improved pupil attendance, reduces the frequency of arriving late for school and has a positive impact on behaviour. Breakfast Clubs are supported by Scottish Government policy and the NHS. Council also notes that where provision of Breakfast Clubs in schools is structured and available for all, uptake rates can exceed 10%.

Current provision of Breakfast Clubs in South Ayrshire is ad hoc with six out of eight secondary schools providing clubs but notes that the secondary school with the highest percentage of pupils from disadvantaged communities (Ayr Academy) has no Breakfast Club.

Provision in primary schools is less frequent and where information has been provided eight out of 30 schools provide a club but again where deprivation is highest, primary schools serving those communities tend not to have Breakfast Clubs.

Council agrees that a structured system of Breakfast Clubs shall be established across South Ayrshire and requests that officers report to the Leadership Panel on proposals to establish the system.”

By way of Amendment, Councillor Toner, seconded by Councillor Saxton, moved that

“South Ayrshire Council is committed to tackling deprivation in our communities and notes the significant funding provided through our Community Planning Partnership and to third sector organisations delivering additional support to area of multiple deprivation.

South Ayrshire Council appreciates the advantages conferred on children through the provision of Breakfast Clubs.

Around 13% of schools in Scotland provide pre-school breakfast provision. South Ayrshire Council is currently higher than the national average. Current provision within South Ayrshire at secondary school level is good; provision at primary school level is less comprehensive.

South Ayrshire Council will encourage the development of Breakfast clubs in those schools which currently do not have them where there is unmet demand and funding is available. The Council calls for a report on the current provision of Breakfast Clubs and for an indication of the resource implications of enhanced provision prior to the end of the current financial year”.

A full discussion took place regarding the terms of the Motion and the Amendment.

On a vote being taken by a show of hands, fifteen Members voted for the Amendment and nine for the Motion. The Amendment was accordingly declared to be carried.

Decided: to approve the terms of the Amendment.

The meeting ended at 10.35 a.m.