

## **SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL (SPECIAL).**

Minutes of special meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,  
on 26th January 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillors Winifred Sloan (Provost), John Allan, Eddie Bulik, Andy Campbell, Douglas Campbell, Ian Cavana, Peter Convery, Hywel Davies, Ian Douglas, Stan Fisher, Ian Fitzsimmons, Ann Galbraith, Sandra Goldie, Bill Grant, John Hampton, Hugh Hunter, Mary Kilpatrick, Elaine Little, Mairi Low, John McDowall, Nan McFarlane, Bill McIntosh, Helen Moonie, Alec Oattes, Mike Peddie, Robin Reid, Philip Saxton, Tom Slider and Margaret Toner.

**Apology:** Councillor Brian Connolly.

**Attending:** D. Anderson, Chief Executive; J.G. Peterkin, Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment; E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; H. Garland, Executive Director – Children and Community; K. Leinster, Head of Community Care and Housing; R. MacDonald, Head of Community Development; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; J. McQuillan, Head of Property and Neighbourhood Services; A. Wilson, Head of HR and Organisational Development; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; W. Gray, Property and Asset Manager; J. Cronin, Policy and Strategy Manager; M. Alexander, Housing Operations Manager; E. Currie, Principal Accountant; D. Robertson, Public Communications Manager; C. Bradshaw, Assistant Public Communications Officer; and D. Knight, Committee Services Officer.

### **1. Provost.**

The Provost

- (1) welcomed Members and representatives from the Girvan Strategic Partnership Bid and interested parties in connection with Girvan Swimming Pool to this special meeting;
- (2) advised that she had written to Norman Robertson, lately Curriculum Leader in hospitality, Ayr College expressing the Council's warmest congratulations on receiving a M.B.E. for services to Further Education in the New Year Honours' List;
- (3) intimated that Councillors Moonie, Saxton, Cavana, Goldie, Andy Campbell and McDowall had submitted to the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment a number of formal questions, and that this matter would be taken after item 6 on the agenda; and
- (4) reminded Members that a Special Meeting of the Scrutiny and Governance Management Panel would be held approximately 15 minutes after the conclusion of this meeting to consider the consultation document by the Scottish Government on "The Councillors' Code of Conduct" to which all Elected Members had been invited to share their views on the proposed revisions to this Code prior to the consultation deadline of 18th February 2010.

### **2. Sederunt.**

The Chief Executive called the Sederunt for the meeting.

### 3. Setting of Council Rents 2010/11.

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 20th January 2010 by the Executive Director – Children and Community and the Executive Director – Corporate Services

(1) advising

- (a) that the Council's HRA 30 Year Business Plan encompassed both capital and revenue spending plans and contained various key assumptions regarding repairs costs, pay awards, general inflation, Council house sales etc. and that it also demonstrated the levels of rent increases and capital borrowing required to fund the planned expenditure;
- (b) that the Business Plan and its underlying assumptions required to be reviewed and updated, where appropriate, on an annual basis;
- (c) that the formula setting out that rent levels should increase annually in line with inflation (based on the Retail Price Index at September of the preceding year) plus 1% had been in place for the last four years and had been agreed with tenant organisations and their representatives;
- (d) that the advice from the rent setting working group was for a small increase to rents of between 1% and 1.5% and that despite this advice the recommendation was to have a rent freeze for the following reasons:-
  - there had been a substantial rent increase in 2009/10 of 6%;
  - there was an existing agreed methodology for setting rents which had been agreed with the tenants; and
  - there would be a full review of the Business Plan and rent setting policy over the next twelve months; and
- (e) that the RPI as at September 2009 was -1.4% which would mean a rent reduction of 0.4% for 2010/11 and that various rent levels for 2010/11 had been applied to the Business Plan for 2010/11 only (it then reverted back to RPI+1% for all remaining years) with the summary of the impact of these increases being shown in Appendix 3 of the report which would maintain a rent freeze compared to a 1.5% rent increase, for example, and would mean the following over the next 30 years:
  - a reduction in rental income of £15m;
  - a reduction in Capital Funded from Current Revenue of £13m; and
  - increased borrowing to fund capital investment of £13.1m; and

under all scenarios, the uncommitted HRA surplus would be depleted by 2011/12 and borrowing would be required (£52.8m if there was a rent freeze) with the level of borrowing depending on the level of rent increase for 2010/11;

- (2) intimating that the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan had been updated to include revised estimates for 2010/11 payroll costs, debt charges, housing stock numbers and anticipated sales, maintenance costs, the level of revenue contribution required to fund the Capital Programme and a 5% reserves policy and that the 2010/11 budget therefore had included provision for pay award of 1.5%, interest on outstanding debt at 5.8% and a contribution to the Housing Capital Programme of Capital Financed from Current Revenue of £3.312m as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;

- (3) indicating that other key changes to the assumptions underlying the Business Plan and budget from 2009/10 were:-
- house sales – were assumed to be 30 units rising to a maximum of 80 over the following five years and that this was a significant reduction from the original assumptions which would have seen sales of 240 in 2010/11 and the loss of capital receipts due to less sales impacts on the funding of future capital investment;
  - house price inflation – had been reduced to the average receipt per property in 2009/10 plus 5% which was still less than that anticipated previously as the average receipt per property had reduced and that this was due to the impact of the current financial climate and mortgage availability;
  - rate of interest receivable – had been reduced to 0.5% and would rise to a maximum of 3% over the next 3 years to reflect the current market conditions and that this loss of income would also impact on the ability to invest in stock; and
  - capital expenditure – had been increased by £6m over the next five years to ensure the Scottish Housing Quality Standard could be met by 2015;
- (4) outlining that the anticipated HRA Capital Programme for 2010/11 of £9.876m would be funded from Capital Financed from Current Revenue, (£3.312m), right to buy sales income (£1.062m), other capital income (£0.338m) and a draw on the accumulated surplus (£5.164m), with no requirement for new borrowing in 2010/11 and that in addition to the main Capital Programme, there would be net expenditure of £1.279m on projects previously agreed to be funded by the HRA surplus (Lochside repayment, the maisonettes and Ayr housing office);
- (5) detailing the use of the Projected Surplus as at 31st March 2010 and Projected Borrowing Requirements, the position beyond 2010/11, investment strategy for the HRA Surplus, and the impact on tenants; and
- (6) proposing an appropriate level for Council house rents, lock-up rents, garage site rents, garden maintenance charges, communal heating and amenity charges in the relevant sheltered housing units for 2010/2011.

A full discussion took place and a number of questions were raised by Elected Members in relation to the reduction in rental income, borrowing requirements, the formula setting out rent levels of the Retail Price Index plus 1% and the costs of commissioning a consultant to undertake a review of the HRA Business Plan and the relevant Officers responded accordingly.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Head of Community Care and Housing and his staff,

- (I) to agree that the rent levels for 2010/11 remain at the same level as 2009/10 charges as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (II) to increase the weekly charges for lock-up rents from £5.76 (£276.48 per annum) to £5.82 (£279.36 per annum), excluding VAT, which represented a 1% increase on 2009/10 rent levels;
- (III) to increase the annual charge for garage site rents from £45.61 to £46.07, excluding VAT, which represented a 1% increase on 2009/10 rent levels;

- (IV) to increase garden maintenance charges from £139.34 per annum to £140.73 per annum, excluding VAT which represented an increase of 1% on 2009/10 levels and in cases where the owners garden area exceeded the standard size allowed for within the cost, consultation would take place with the service provider on the actual cost of undertaking the work, and an individual cost would be notified to the owner;
- (V) to increase communal heating and amenity charges in the relevant sheltered housing units by 1%;
- (VI) to approve the commissioning of a consultant to carry out a review of the HRA Business Plan; and
- (VII) otherwise, to approve the contents of the report.

#### **4. Housing Capital Investment Programme for 20010/11.**

There was submitted a joint report (issued) of 11th January 2010 by the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment, Executive Director - Corporate Services and Executive Director – Children and Community

- (1) advising that the Council were currently committed to delivering the following improvements in the period to 2015: -
  - tolerable standard issues (including dampness, etc.) – eradicating problems in 41 houses per annum;
  - primary business elements – dealing with problems as they arose;
  - secondary building elements – renewing components to 148 houses per annum;
  - upgrading 215 partial heating systems at a rate of at least 53 per annum;
  - seeking to ensure that all houses had an NHER rating of at least 5 by 2015, where technically feasible and affordable;
  - fully internally upgrading 215 houses per annum over the Plan period;
  - replacing 493 kitchens per annum and where necessary upgrading heating systems during the Plan period;
  - fitting new smoke detector heads at ten yearly intervals, commencing 2011;
  - electrically testing and certifying every house on a five yearly cycle;
  - all oil, electric and solid fuel heating systems to be tested and certified on an annual basis, commencing in 2005/06;
  - where possible, fitting entry door systems to common close areas where these have not been fitted; and
  - other than in properties served by a common entrance, replacing all external doors with maintenance free units;

- (2) advising that the funding Plan set out in Appendix 1 of the report had been designed to deliver the commitments identified at (1) above and that those items relating to the testing of systems and appliances would be funded through the Revenue Programme with all other items being funded through the Housing Capital Investment Programme;
- (3) seeking approval of a draft Housing Capital Investment Plan for 2009/10 as follows:-
  - (a) the sum of £350,000 identified against the Programme heading of "Addressing Dampness and Condensation Issues" would be used to remove wet cavity wall insulation, fitting positive input ventilation systems and following the necessary remedial work to the external fabric of the houses concerned, to refill cavities to maintain good energy performance;
  - (b) it was estimated that fitting new kitchens, heating systems, bathroom suites, additional loft insulation and smoke detectors and rewiring houses, as necessary, would cost in the order of £6,100,000 at current prices;
  - (c) £600,000 was being budgeted in 2010/11, to continue work in the period to 2015, to renew partial heating systems, comply with a minimum NHER energy rating of 5 per the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, and to continue to improve insulation levels in houses which would not have been part of the internal modernisation programme by 2015 and which would otherwise have failed the Quality Standard;
  - (d) particularly within mixed-tenure estates, there was a need to renew fabric in common areas and that a number of areas including Wallacetown in Ayr had been identified as a priority in this regard and that it was intended that £350,000 included in the draft Programme would be utilised to replace glass screens to staircases, fit new security doors, upgrade lighting to common areas, improve bin storage and renew external paths and to generally improve the external fabric of properties within these areas and that progress in many cases would be dependent on the willingness of owner-occupiers to participate and, in some cases, on the availability of housing grants to assist them to meet their share of the costs;
  - (e) it was intended to utilise £1,213,000 for upgrading external fabric on projects to re-roof, re-render, overclad and generally upgrade the fabric of the Council's housing stock and that priorities would be determined from the information gathered through the ongoing stock conditions survey;
  - (f) up to a further £500,000 would be spent fitting the remaining low maintenance uPVC doors to the Council's Housing stock;
  - (g) a budget of £100,000 had been included for the replacement of smoke detectors within the Council's Housing stock and that smoke detectors having been fitted to properties over a ten year period would be replaced after a ten year lifespan and that this funding allowed the establishment of a rolling programme for replacement detectors;
  - (h) it had been established that the retaining walls around Dunne Burn in Girvan were in poor condition and would require to be replaced and that provision was being made through the Environmental Impacts Budget of £100,000 to undertake the next phase of this work;

- (i) £200,000 budgeted for “Other Payments and Contributions” would be spent on programme management costs and meeting any legal costs that arose during the course of the year;
  - (j) work to the twelve Maisonette blocks in North Ayr was ongoing and that £1,438,000 allocated would be used to complete this work in 2010/11; and
  - (k) £204,000 was budgeted in 2010/11 for component renewal at Riverside House in Ayr to ensure that the asset remained safe and secure and in good condition and additionally, was developed in accordance with the strategy set out in the Council’s Interim Property Asset Management Plan; and
- (4) reporting
- (a) that the level of resources identified to fund the Investment Programme in the report ‘Setting of Council Rents 2010/11’, based on the Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan, was £9,876,000;
  - (b) that in addition to this, £1,279,000 was available as a previously agreed draw on the accumulated Housing Revenue Account surplus, comprising a £1,438,000 contribution towards the Ayr North Maisonettes project, less a £363,000 repayment for the Lochside project which although physically completed in one year, was funded over three years (as previously agreed by the Housing Panels of 27th November 2007 and 9th September 2008) and also included was £204,000 to be used for the upgrade of the Housing Office at River Terrace, Ayr; and
  - (c) that this had resulted in available funding of £11,155,000 for 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix 1.

A question was raised by an Elected Member in relation to the progress being made with mixed-tenure estates and the Property and Asset Manager responded accordingly.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Head of Community Care and Housing and the Property and Asset Manager and their staff, to approve the proposed Housing Capital Investment Plan for 2009/10 as detailed at (3)(a) to (k) above and as outlined in the report.

## **5. Partnership Bid to Operate Girvan Swimming Pool.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of

- (1) 14th January 2009 (Page 11, paragraph 10) when it had been agreed to approve the early closure of Girvan Swimming Pool because of the poor condition of the building services and a number of the key physical components within the building;
- (2) the Leadership Panel (Special) of 6th July 2009 (Page 389, paragraph 1) when it had been agreed to approve the Action Plan and recommendations contained within Section 9 of the Interim Property Asset Management Plan, including the list of proposed demolitions as detailed in Section 3.10, subject to confirmation that the demolition of Girvan Beach Pavilion, pool, shops and toilets would not be carried out prior to 31st December 2009 and that any business case being prepared for retention would require to be submitted to the Council by 2nd November 2009, ahead of the Leadership Panel on 24th November 2009; and

- (3) 17th December 2009 (Page 10, paragraph 10) when it had been noted that a community bid had been received on 2nd November 2009 and that recommendations would be forthcoming to the Special Council on 26th January 2010, and

there was submitted a report (issued) of 21st January 2010 by the Corporate Management Team

- (a) advising
- (i) that the proposal from the local partnership was to reopen the Girvan swimming pool with additional steam room, sauna and beauty treatment facilities on the ground floor and a gym located on the first floor and that a Company Limited by Guarantee had been established with a Board of Directors drawn from the local community and that subject to the availability of funding, they envisaged that the pool could potentially be re-opened approximately one year from commissioning; and
  - (ii) that Officers had undertaken an analysis of the proposal and had highlighted the main issues; and
- (b) detailing Officers' considerable concerns about the income and expenditure assumptions within the financial model in that expenditure was underestimated and income overestimated.

Councillor Moonie enquired whether a Motion could be proposed at this point in the meeting. The Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment confirmed that the Provost had the powers to decide on all matters of competency and relevancy and advised that it would not be competent to move a Motion until the report had been fully presented to the Council.

The Provost so concurred.

A full discussion then took place regarding the terms of the report and its recommendations, effectively that for the reasons given, the Corporate Management Team could not recommend the partnership bid to the Council.

Councillor Hunter, seconded by Councillor McFarlane, moved that the Council should agree

- “(A) that the local partnership bid to operate Girvan Swimming Pool has significant technical, financial and operational difficulties which when considered collectively mean that Officers are unable to recommend it to Council;
- (B) that the regeneration of Girvan and surrounding areas merits comprehensive consideration extending to assessment of requirements with respect to economic development, tourism, leisure facilities including a swimming pool, and social policy;
- (C) that building on the work undertaken in the last year with the Girvan Strategic Group and informed by local consultation, detailed proposals should now be produced for a new multi-faceted facility which addresses the health, economic, environmental and social needs of Girvan and surrounding area and considers toilet requirements and facilities associated with a Marina development;
- (D) that partnership opportunities should be explored and maximised as part of the detailed development work including with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Sportscotland and ‘Sail West’;

- (E) that the foregoing further development work be progressed in partnership with the Girvan Strategic Group and that up to £250,000 is identified in the Change Fund to support this development work;
- (F) that a report on detailed proposals is brought to the Council within this calendar year with recommendations and setting out the implications for the Capital Programme;
- (G) that the dredging of Girvan Harbour and approach be undertaken early in the 2010/11 financial year to protect and support the economy and development of the harbour; and
- (H) to enhance the general environment of the harbour and beachfront area, the demolition of the existing swimming pool and attached buildings should now proceed with reinstatement of parking facilities and associated site restoration with costs estimated to be in the order of £270,000 to be funded from existing resources.”

By way of an Amendment, Councillor McDowall, seconded by Councillor Moonie, moved that the Council should resolve

- “(I) that ownership of Girvan Swimming Pool be transferred to Girvan Community Swimming Pool Ltd. at nil cost to enable that Company to raise the necessary capital funding to refurbish and reopen Girvan Swimming Pool. Such transfer of ownership to be as soon as reasonably practicable;
- (II) that subject to the necessary capital funding being raised and following the reopening of the Pool, the Council will provide revenue funding of £120,000 per annum, pro rata to that year, and in subsequent financial years, such revenue funding being subject to review at three yearly intervals; and
- (III) that a longer term strategy for the regeneration of Girvan be developed in conjunction with the Girvan Strategy Group and other partnership as may be appropriate.”

The Council agreed that the vote be taken by calling the roll.

The Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director – Development and Environment then took the vote by calling the roll as follows:-

Winifred Sloan (Provost)	Motion
John Allan	Motion
Eddie Bulik	Motion
Andy Campbell	Amendment
Douglas Campbell	Motion
Ian Cavana	Amendment
Peter Convery	Motion
Hywel Davies	Motion
Ian Douglas	Motion
Stan Fisher	Motion
Ian Fitzsimmons	Amendment
Ann Galbraith	Motion
Sandra Goldie	Amendment
Bill Grant	Motion
John Hampton	Motion
Hugh Hunter	Motion
Mary Kilpatrick	Motion
Elaine Little	Motion
Mairi Low	Motion
John McDowall	Amendment



Nan McFarlane	Motion
Bill McIntosh	Motion
Helen Moonie	Amendment
Alec Oattes	Amendment
Mike Peddie	Motion
Robin Reid	Motion
Philip Saxton	Amendment
Tom Slider	Motion
Margaret Toner	Motion

Eight members voted for the Amendment and twenty one members for the Motion. The Motion was accordingly declared to be carried.

**Decided:** having recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken to develop the bid by Girvan Strategic Partnership Bid,

- (aa) that the local partnership bid to operate Girvan Swimming Pool has significant technical, financial and operational difficulties which when considered collectively mean that officers are unable to recommend it to Council;
- (bb) that the regeneration of Girvan and surrounding areas merits comprehensive consideration extending to assessment of requirements with respect to economic development, tourism, leisure facilities including a swimming pool, and social policy;
- (cc) that building on the work undertaken in the last year with the Girvan Strategic Group and informed by local consultation, detailed proposals should now be produced for a new multi-faceted facility which addresses the health, economic, environmental and social needs of Girvan and surrounding area and considers toilet requirements and facilities associated with Marina development;
- (dd) that partnership opportunities should be explored and maximised as part of the detailed development work including with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, SportsScotland and 'Sail West';
- (ee) that the foregoing further development work be progressed in partnership with the Girvan Strategic Group and that up to £250,000 is identified in the Change Fund to support this development work;
- (ff) that a report on detailed proposals is brought to Council within this calendar year with recommendations and setting out the implications for the Capital Programme;
- (gg) that the dredging of Girvan Harbour and approach be undertaken early in the 2010/11 financial year to protect and support the economy and development of the harbour; and
- (hh) to enhance the general environment of the harbour and beachfront area, the demolition of the existing swimming pool and attached buildings should now proceed with reinstatement of parking facilities and associated site restoration with costs estimated to be in the order of £270,000 to be funded from existing resources.

**Councillor Fisher joined the meeting at 11.20 a.m. during consideration of the foregoing item.**

## 6. **Local Licensing Forum Membership.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 20th January 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) advising that one of the members nominated onto the Forum by the Leadership Panel at its meeting on 2nd December 2008 had failed to attend meetings and had therefore forfeited the position; and
- (2) suggesting that the membership should be augmented by Gemma McIntosh, a member of the Executive Committee of the South Ayrshire Youth Forum, as representative of young people, maintaining the balance of the Local Licensing Forum.

**Decided:** to agree that the membership of the Local Licensing Forum be augmented by the appointment of Gemma McIntosh.

## 7. **Formal Questions.**

In terms of Council Standing Order No. 16(b), there were submitted (tabled) Formal Questions details of which, together with the Answers, are outlined below:-

### **Question 1 from Councillor Moonie**

To which destinations were foreign visits made by Council officers on behalf of the Council during 2008/09 and 2009/10 and what was the duration of any such visits?

#### **Answer 1**

4 officers from the Development and Environment - Enterprise Services Team attended the Dubai Desert Classic Golf Tournament in 2009. The duration of the visit was 6 days.

The Head of Curriculum and Service Improvement visited Ontario, Canada in November 2009. The duration of the visit was 8 days.

The Head of Community Development visited New York in December 2009. The duration of the visit was 4 days.

Foreign trips can on occasion be undertaken by Schools and Teaching staff.

### **Question 2 from Councillor Saxton**

Which Elected Members undertook foreign visits on behalf of the Council during 2008/09 and 2009/10, and to which destinations?

#### **Answer 2**

Councillor Ann Galbraith visited Iceland as a COSLA representative. The visit took place from 3rd to 6th May 2008.

Councillor Hugh Hunter – Dubai Desert Classic as a guest of Leisurecorp, the event organisers.

**Question 3 from Councillor Cavana**

What were the purposes and costs of any such visits?

**Answer 3**

- (a) Visit to Dubai – the purpose of the visit was to promote Come Back to Ayrshire/Homecoming Scotland 2009 and the South Ayrshire tourism product. The total cost to the Council was £16,930.50 which was met from within the Enterprise Services Revenue Budget 2008/09.
- (b) Visit to Ontario, Canada – the Head of Curriculum and Service Improvement visited Canada in November 2009 to give a presentation to the Quest International Conference. The bulk of the costs associated with this trip were paid for by the Canadian Government, but the Council did pay for 2 nights accommodation at a total cost of £245.44 which allowed her to accompany the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland's representatives on visits to five schools in the Ontario area.
- (c) Visit to New York – this was a fact finding visit in relation to the running of community theatres to help inform the progress of the re-opening of the Gaiety Theatre. The cost of the return flight was approximately £500 and subsistence will be payable in accordance with the Council's approved Scheme.
- (d) Visit to Iceland - the cost to the Council for flights and accommodation in respect of this COSLA arranged visit was £746.75.

**Question 4 from Councillor Goldie**

By whom were any such trips requested and by whom authorised.

**Answer 4**

- (a) Dubai – the invitation to the Council to be represented at this event came from Leisurecorp, organisers of the event.
- (b) Ontario, Canada – this visit was at the behest of the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland.
- (c) New York – this invitation was extended by the Executive Producer of the 59E59 Community Theatre Company.

Attendance of Officers at these visits was authorised by the Chief Executive in accordance with the Council's approved Business Travel Scheme.

**Question 5 from Councillor Goldie**

Which Elected Members were aware of such trips?

**Answer 5**

- (a) Dubai – All Elected Members were advised of this visit in advance through the circulation of a Briefing Note from the Depute Chief Executive and Executive Director - Development and Environment on 13th January 2010.
- (b) New York – Councillor Margaret Toner, as Portfolio Holder, was aware of the visit.

**Question 6 from Councillor Andy Campbell**

What is the extent of (actual or assumed) damaged caused to roads in South Ayrshire as a consequence of the recent cold weather?

**Answer 6**

The estimated extent of damage to the road network as a consequence of the recent severe weather event is likely to be in the region of £300,000 between now and the end of the financial year on 31st March 2010. It is very difficult to confirm an accurate cost of the expected damage as there will be many areas of the public road network yet to show the effects of frost heave. It is anticipated that it may be April of this year before the full extent of the anticipated damage will become known.

**Question 7 from Councillor Cavana**

Can the estimated repair costs be found from the existing roads budget?

**Answer 7**

The estimated repair cost for the damage attributed to the extreme weather event cannot be found from within the existing Roads Service budget for financial year 2009/2010.

**Question 8 from Councillor Moonie**

If not, what is the intention of the Council in relation to addressing any such repairs?

**Answer 8**

The Roads Service will continue to manage the road network to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the network remains as safe and fit for purpose as resources permit. This may require the introduction of traffic management techniques in circumstances where the condition of the network has been deemed to have become unsafe. A process of risk assessments will determine network defect prioritisation to ensure that available resources are being utilised in those areas of greatest need. Furthermore, alternative reinstatement techniques will also be adopted in an effort to minimise repeat repairs to defects.

**Question 9 from Councillor McDowall**

In relation to the preparation of 2010/11 budget, and following the paper of 7th October 2009 "Revenue Budget 2010/11" to the full Council on how many occasions has budgetary information been requested by Elected Members and/or political groups other than the Labour Group/member(s) from Officers, and on which dates, and by which member(s)/groups?

**Answer 9**

Regular requests for budgetary information are made by Elected Members and replies provided by Officers as and when required. It is not possible to provide the specific details requested. Following receipt of the Finance Settlement, updates on the 2010/11 budget have been provided to portfolio holders on a fortnightly basis.

Councillor McDowall raised a supplementary question enquiring when he would receive a reply to his letter dated 14th January 2010 and the Executive Director – Children and Community advised that he was still gathering the information and would respond to him later that week.

**Question 10 from Councillor McDowall**

How many meetings have Officers held with Elected Member(s), and/or political groups other than the Labour Group/member(s) in relation to the provision of budgetary information?

**Answer 10**

As individual, regular requests for budgetary information are made by Elected Members and replies provided by officers as and when required, it is not possible to provide the specific details requested.

Executive Directors and Heads of Service also hold regular briefing meetings with Portfolio Holders. Current and future budgets can be a topic of discussion at these meetings although not necessarily at all of them.

**Question 11 from Councillor Moonie**

Will all the budgetary information necessary for Elected Members to evaluate and take an informed view of the impact of the budget on services be available to Members prior to the budget meeting on 10th February 2010?

**Answer 11**

Prior to the budget meeting on 10th February 2010, all Elected Members will receive details of the resource demands on the Council in respect of pay awards, requisitions, concordat commitments, contractual increases, service pressures and service aspirations. This information will allow Elected Members to prepare proposals for the 2010/11 budget.

Councillor Moonie raised a supplementary question enquiring whether all budgetary information would be available to Elected Members prior to the budget meeting on 10th February 2010 and the Executive Director – Corporate Services confirmed that she would provide the relevant information to Elected Members prior to the budget meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.