

Report

Report to: **Executive Committee**
Date of Meeting: **28 February 2018**
Report by: **Chief Executive**

Subject: **Consultation Paper on Electoral Reform**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ provide an update on the Consultation Paper on Electoral Reform which was launched on 19 December 2017.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendations:-

- (1) that confirmation that the Scottish Government published its consultation on Electoral Reform on 19 December 2017 be noted;
- (2) that the consultation paper and access to the online response system for individual or party feedback can be made at the following link: <https://consult.gov.scot/elections/electoral-reform>, be noted;
- (3) that the invitation to provide any comments no later than 12 March 2018 which is the end of the public consultation period, be noted;
- (4) that no corporate response will be provided to the Scottish Government, be noted;
- (5) that the Chief Executive, as Returning Officer, has been invited to provide comments on the consultation to the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and the fact that he also has the right to do this as an individual be noted; and
- (6) that the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer will provide comments on the consultation to the Scottish Assessors Association, be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Scottish Government's consultation on Electoral Reform was launched on 19 December 2017.
- 3.2. Under the Scotland Act 2016, the Scottish Parliament and Government have new powers and responsibilities relating to elections to the Scottish Parliament. These complement their existing responsibilities for local government elections. Control over both sets of elections opens up new possibilities for democratic renewal and putting the voter first.
- 3.3. Many organisations, including the Electoral Commission, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland, elected members, political parties, and local authorities have important roles to play in realising this aim of full engagement. The consultation is directed at the whole electorate so it covers a wide range of topics and a number of suggestions as to how the new powers could be used.
- 3.5. The Scottish Government and Parliament have a specific role to play to ensure that electoral law supports increased participation and removes barriers to voter

empowerment and will use the results of this consultation process to develop policy proposals that may be taken forward in future legislation.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. The Electoral Reform Public Consultation was received on Tuesday 19 December 2017 and the deadline for responses is due by Monday 12 March 2018. An online questionnaire template has been set up for responses and can be found at <https://consult.gov.scot/elections/electoral-reform>
- 4.2. The Chief Executive advised elected members on 21 December 2017 of the consultation and provided them with the above link to the online responses system. Elected Members were also advised that a report would go to Executive Committee on Wednesday 28 February 2018.
- 4.3. The Electoral Management Board (EMB) for Scotland has invited comments from Returning Officers to form part of their response and recognised Returning Officers may also wish to make their own responses.
- 4.4. The SOLAR Elections Working Group will meet on Wednesday 21 February 2017 to discuss the consultation and provide feedback to the EMB/Scottish Government.
- 4.5. The Scottish Assessors Association is in the process of co-ordinating a response on behalf of the Assessors in Scotland.
- 4.6. Due to the diverse nature of the consultation a corporate response will not be submitted to the Scottish Government from South Lanarkshire Council, and instead elected members, political parties are encouraged to respond direct.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. None.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. None.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. There are no implications in relation to risk or sustainability.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 8.2. The consultation invites a wide range of stakeholders to comment.

Lindsay Freeland
Chief Executive/Returning Officer

14 February 2018

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values

- ◆ People Focused
- ◆ Fair and Open
- ◆ Working with and Respecting Others
- ◆ Accountable, Effective and Efficient
- ◆ Governance and accountability

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Consultation Paper on Electoral Reform
- ◆ Email of 21 December 2017 to Elected Members

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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