

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	25 August 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	End of Current Council and Preparations for the New Council
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- ◆ Advise members of a number of key operational preparations required for the end of this Council and the establishment of the new Council following the Local Government Election on 5 May 2022
- ◆ Request approval for decision-making arrangements in the period leading up to and immediately following the Local Government Election on 5 May 2022

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s): -

- (1) that the final cycle of meetings in the current Council term, as detailed in the attached Appendix to the report, covering the period up to the final meeting of the Council on 2 March 2022 be noted;
- (2) that, in line with normal practice, the Chief Executive be authorised to deal with any issues during the period from 2 March 2022 until the establishment of the new Council, with a report on the issues dealt with being submitted to the first meeting of the new Council for noting; and
- (3) that preparations for the new Council, as detailed in sections 5 to 9 of this report, be noted.

3. Background

3.1. The Local Government Elections will be held on 5 May 2022. The first meeting of the new Council requires to be held within 21 days of the date of the election.

4. Arrangements to Deal with Council Business in the Period Leading up to the Election

4.1. In previous years in which local government elections have been held, the Council's committees and forums have ceased to operate for a period of time ahead of the elections. One of the main reasons for raising this issue with Committee at this early stage is to allow Executive Directors to plan the business they need to have considered by members prior to and including the last meeting of the Council.

4.2 The last cycle of meetings in the current Council term is due to conclude with the meeting of the Council on 2 March 2022. The final cycle of meetings is attached as an appendix to the report. There may be a requirement to hold meetings to deal with specific matters such as planning or licensing issues, hearings or appeals. Appropriate arrangements will be made for any meetings considered necessary.

4.3 In line with the practice previously adopted by South Lanarkshire Council it is proposed that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to deal with issues that would normally be subject to committee approval from the last meeting of the Council on 2 March 2022 until the Statutory Meeting of the new Council. A report on the matters dealt with by the Chief Executive will be submitted to the first meeting of the new Council for noting.

5. Preparations for the New Council

5.1 There are a number of other operational issues which require to be progressed in the lead up to the end of this term of the Council including: -

- ◆ a review of procedural documentation and the decision-making process
- ◆ arrangements for members' induction and training
- ◆ members' ICT provision
- ◆ the first statutory meeting of the new Council

5.2 A summary of the key tasks is given in sections 6 to 9 below.

6. Review of Supporting Procedural Documentation/Decision-Making Process

6.1. A review of the Council's procedural documentation will be carried out in advance of the new Council term, which will include a review of the following political management documentation: -

- ◆ Standing Orders on Procedures
- ◆ Scheme of Delegation
- ◆ Terms of Reference for Committees, etc
- ◆ Standing Orders on Contracts
- ◆ Financial Regulations

6.2. While a comprehensive review of the above documentation was undertaken as part of the mid-term review that concluded with a report to the Council in February 2020, it is proposed to, once again, consult with officers, the Corporate Management Team, as well as members via the Standards and Procedures Advisory Forum (SPAF). In addition to the procedural management documentation, consultation will be undertaken on whether changes are required to the Role Profiles for Elected Members and Multi Member Ward Protocol. Consultation with officers will be undertaken in August/September 2021 and a meeting arranged of the SPAF in September to consult with members. The outcomes following the consultation will be presented to members at a meeting of the SPAF to be arranged in November 2021. Further meetings of the SPAF will be arranged as required.

6.3. The revised documents will be presented for approval to the new Council at its Statutory meeting in May 2022 (this meeting has to be held no later than 21 days following the date of the Local Government Elections).

6.4. It is further proposed that the views of elected members are invited via a survey as part of the end of Council consultation process. The previous end of term survey focused on the following main areas: -

- ◆ Policy, Priorities and Direction
- ◆ Engagement
- ◆ Decision-making and Delegation
- ◆ Respective Roles of Officers and Elected Members
- ◆ Delivering Services

- ◆ Support for Members
- ◆ ICT Equipment
- ◆ Moving Forward

Members were also asked for comments on what the Council does particularly well and where they considered it could do better.

- 6.5. It is proposed that the survey is submitted to the SPAF in September 2021 for endorsement and then issued to members, with a deadline date for return in October. The outcomes could be reported to the next meeting of the SPAF which will be scheduled for November 2021.

7. Member Induction and Training Programme

- 7.1. A member induction and training programme will be put in place for the new Council. In the initial period, training will be prioritised to cover mandatory/regulatory requirements. Although both the format and method of delivery have still to be agreed as part of the programme and dependent on any restrictions in place due to COVID-19, Resources will have the opportunity to provide briefings to elected members which are summarised below.

- 7.2. In the week following the Local Government Elections (week commencing 9 May 2022), it is proposed that drop-in sessions will be arranged for all members. In the event of restrictions due to COVID-19, sessions will be operated on either an appointment basis or by virtual means. In the past, those sessions covered: -

- ◆ 'Welcome and General Overview' by the Chief Executive
- ◆ 'The First Few Weeks in Office' by the Head of Administration and Legal Services: -
 - ◆ Declaration of Acceptance of Office
 - ◆ Members' Services Team and support for councillors
 - ◆ Members' induction arrangements
 - ◆ Members' remuneration and expenses
 - ◆ IT provision
- ◆ 'Strathclyde Pension Fund' - information on the scheme given by a representative of SPF

- 7.3. A number of sessions will be held in the second week following the elections (week commencing 16 May 2022) on The Councillors' Code of Conduct and How the Council Works. It will be mandatory for all members to attend one of those sessions which will be delivered by the Chief Executive, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) and the Head of Administration and Legal Services. IT training sessions will be planned in the same week as the Code of Conduct sessions. This will cover the use of the smartphone, laptop devices, MS Teams and downloading committee papers.

- 7.4. Further induction training will be programmed to be held prior to the summer recess in 2022 and will include: -

- ◆ Resource briefings
- ◆ The Council Plan 2022 to 2027
- ◆ Data Protection and Freedom of Information
- ◆ Licensing Division training (*mandatory for all Board members*)
- ◆ Planning and Planning Local Review Body overview

- ◆ Overview of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- ◆ Appeals Panel Training
- ◆ Education Appeals Panel Training
- ◆ Recruitment Panel Training
- ◆ Local Government Finance, including Risk and Audit
- ◆ Elected Members Enquiries
- ◆ Personal Safety for Elected Members

7.5. It should be highlighted that members will also be given access to Learn online and Improvement Service materials and webinars.

7.6. A further programme of training will be scheduled following the 2022 summer recess and, in liaison with Personnel Services, an individual Training Needs Analysis will be developed for each elected member, at an appropriate time, to inform further training requirements.

8. Members' ICT Provision

8.1. In accordance with previous years, members will have the option to retain their equipment until the election date. However, arrangements will be put in place to allow any non-returning members who might wish to return their equipment early, in the period from the last scheduled meeting of the Council to the date of the election on 5 May 2022, to do so.

8.2. Arrangements will be made to ensure that ICT equipment is rolled out to newly elected councillors in week commencing 9 May 2022. An appointment system may require to be introduced, should COVID restrictions remain.

9. First Statutory Council Meeting

9.1. As previously stated, the first Statutory meeting of the Council must be held no later than 21 days after the election and at that meeting, the new Council will consider its decision-making structure, committee/decision making timetable and issues relating to Committee cycles and recess periods.

10. Employee Implications

10.1. There are additional tasks/duties that required to be managed within the associated timeframe. These will be managed within existing employee resources.

11. Financial Implications

11.1. All costs will be met within existing budgets.

12. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

12.1. There are no climate change, sustainability, or environmental implications in terms of this report.

13. Other Implications

13.1. There is a risk that appropriate decision-making arrangements are not in place to deal with Council business both in the lead up to an election and immediately following it and this might reflect on the reputation of the Council. Planning in advance for such a major event helps to mitigate any risk.

14. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

14.1. There was no requirement to undertake an equality impact assessment or consultation in relation to the proposals contained within this report. Consultation will be undertaken as part of the processes involved in preparing for the new Council.

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

1 August 2021

Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient, and transparent

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

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

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