

Report

Report to:	South Lanarkshire Council
Date of Meeting:	27 June 2018
Report by:	Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Establishment of a Petitions Committee as Part of the Council's Decision Making Framework
----------	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Council on the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group set up by the Executive Committee to consider the establishment of a Petitions Committee as part of the Council's Decision Making Framework
- ◆ advise the Council on the recommendations resulting from the work of the Group

2. Recommendation(s)

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

- (1) that the establishment of a Petitions Committee as part of the Council's decision making framework be approved; and
- (2) that membership of the Petitions Committee be finalised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the political and independent group Leaders in line with the proposed Terms of Reference.

3. Background

3.1. At its meeting held on 28 June 2017, the Executive Committee approved proposals to set up a Task and Finish Group to consider the merits and potential benefits of the Council establishing a Petitions Committee within its Decision Making Framework.

3.2. Chaired by Councillor Robert Brown, the Task and Finish Group held its first meeting on 12 October 2017 and met on 4 occasions, holding its final meeting on 15 March 2018.

3.3. As well as the chair, the Group included Councillors Chalmers, Horsham, and McGuigan from the SNP Group, Councillors Logan and McLachlan from the Labour Group, Councillor McGeever from the Conservative Group and Councillor Burns from the Independent Group.

3.4. The Group considered the following areas in detail:-

- to what extent the establishment of a Petitions Committee would improve the ability of local communities/residents to engage with the Council
- the development of a set of guidance and criteria for the public on how to submit a Petition and how the process of validating and considering a petition would work in practice within the Council when a Petition was submitted (a copy of the guidance/criteria document is attached as appendix 1)
- a Terms of Reference for the Petitions Committee (attached as appendix 2)

- the development of a communications plan via the Council's website, local newspapers other digital mediums e.g. facebook and twitter to raise public awareness that the Council has established a Petitions Committee.

3.5 As stated above, the Group has produced a "Guidance on sending a Petition" document which is attached at appendix 1. The key sections covered in the document are:-

- issues we will consider
- issues we will not consider
- action you should take before submitting your petition
- the ways you can submit a petition, eg post, electronic and online
- how the Council will validate a petition
- privacy policy and content of petitions
- how to access support and help with submitting a petition
- the process for considering your petition including guidance on attending and addressing the Petitions Committee
- how to get further information

3.6 It should be noted that the Group have recommended that the minimum number of signatories be set at 50 and that the principal petitioner should be a South Lanarkshire resident or be directly affected by the issue that the petition is raising.

4. Next Steps

4.1. The overarching recommendation coming from the Group is that there was unanimous cross-party support for the establishment of a Petitions Committee and that this be put in place for the first cycle of meetings following the Council's summer recess. This report is, therefore, submitted to the Council for approval.

4.2 If approved, work will be undertaken to raise public awareness of the establishment of a Petitions Committee through the Council's website, local newspapers, other digital platforms such as facebook and twitter.

5. Employee Implications

5.1. There will be the requirement to service another Committee within the Council and this can be accommodated within existing resources.

6. Financial Implications

6.1. There would be no significant financial implications resulting from the report.

7. Other Implications

7.1. There are no significant implications in terms of risk or sustainability arising from this report.

7.2 There might be other implications in terms of Members' time if there are significant numbers of petitions submitted.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

8.1. There was no requirement to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment or carry out a consultation exercise in terms of the recommendation in this report.

Paul Manning
Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)

11 June 2018

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

Fair, open and sustainable

Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent

Previous References

Executive Committee of 28 June 2017

List of Background Papers

None

Contact for Further Information

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

Gordon Bow

Administration Manager

Ext: 4719 (Tel: 01698 454719)

E-mail: gordon.bow@southlanarkshire.gov.uk