

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2001 AT
1157 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON
ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Drew McIntyre, Stephanie Young, Daniel Coffey, Willie Coffey, Douglas Reid, John Weir, David Macrae, John Knapp, Finlay MacLean, Eric Jackson, Jimmy Kelly, Tommy Farrell, Provost Jimmy Boyd, Councillor Elaine Dinwoodie and Robert Taylor.

ATTENDING: David Montgomery, Chief Executive; Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources; James Lavery, Director of Homes and Technical Services; Barbara Haughan, Head of Administrative and Legal Services and Julie Armstrong, Principal Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Harry Wilson, Iain Linton, Jane Darnbrough, Robert McDill and Eric Ross.

CHAIR: Councillor Drew McIntyre, Chair.

CoSLA REVIEW

1. There was submitted a report dated 14 May 2001 (circulated) by the Chief Executive which advised Members of the establishment of a Review Group to look at CoSLA's core activities, priorities and related matters and which sought the views of Members on the response to a questionnaire received from the Review Group.

The draft response shown at Appendix I to the report had been prepared from an Officer perspective and had not commented on Section 5 (political management arrangements).

Councillor McIntyre commented on political management arrangements. Councillor McIntyre seconded by Councillor Jackson moved agreement to the draft response, with his comments being reflected in Section 5, as the Council's response as follows: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the current political management arrangements within CoSLA; satisfied with the Convention and Leaders' Meeting; and dissatisfied with the Spokesperson model and the General Purposes Group.

Councillor Reid seconded by Councillor Danny Coffey moved simply to note the draft response contained within Appendix 1 with a view to the SNP Group submitting its own comments direct to the Review Group by the due date.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 8 votes to 5.

Provost Boyd left the meeting during discussion of this item.

**CONSULTATION BY SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
(SCOTLAND) BILL**

2. There was submitted a report dated 14 May 2001 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources which advised on the terms of proposed legislation on freedom of information for public authorities in Scotland and which proposed interim actions in preparation for its introduction.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the potential problems in respect of the need to correspond with vexatious applicants and that this be drawn to the attention of the Scottish Executive; and
- (ii) that Officers be authorised to pursue an audit of existing records management practices within the Council in conjunction with the current development of the records storage facility and drawing upon advice from the archivist and also to ensure that arrangements will be in place to make the future requirements of the Act.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (TIMING OF ELECTIONS) (SCOTLAND) BILL

3. There was submitted a report dated 14 May 2001 (circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive/Director of Corporate Resources which presented for consideration the proposed arrangements for synchronising future Scottish Parliament and Local Government Elections and which proposed a response to current consultation by the Scottish Executive.

Councillor McIntyre seconded by Councillor Jackson moved that a response be sent to the Scottish Executive and to CoSLA in the following terms:-

- (i) to reiterate this Council's support for a four year term of office in Local Government and, in principle, for simultaneous elections for the Scottish Parliament and Local Government;
- (ii) to indicate that disruption and additional elections for Local Government should be avoided wherever possible in the interests of the electorate, the democratic integrity of Local Government and of economy; and
- (iii) that, consequently, the dates of ordinary Local Government Elections should only be changed to correspond with ordinary General Elections and not with any extraordinary General Elections, of the Scottish Parliament.

Councillor Reid seconded by Councillor Danny Coffey moved as an amendment that a response be sent to the Scottish Executive and CoSLA on the following terms:-

- (i) not to support the principle of simultaneous Scottish Parliamentary and Local Government Elections as this would contradict the findings of the Mackintosh Report which would mean that national issues would dominate Local Elections and the result would be to weaken the democratic mandate of Local Government;
- (ii) that the scheduled 2002 Election should proceed and thereafter support be given for a four year term of office for Local Government in principle; and
- (iii) that otherwise the proposed delay would mean proportional representation still not being introduced by 2003 and would put the introduction of fair voting back to at least 2007 and in these terms to support that proportional representation be introduced at the earliest possible date.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 9 votes to 5.

The meeting terminated at 1227 hours.

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