

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COSLA CONVENTION

Friday 28th October 2022, 11am

Via MS Teams

Present:

COSLA President	Cllr Shona Morrison
COSLA Vice President	Cllr Steven Heddle
Aberdeen City Council	Cllr Ian Yuill
Aberdeen City Council	Cllr Miranda Radley
Aberdeen City Council	Cllr Sandra Macdonald
Aberdeenshire Council	Cllr Anne Stirling
Aberdeenshire Council	Cllr Jim Gifford*
Aberdeenshire Council	Cllr Stewart Adams*
Aberdeenshire Council	Cllr Ross Cassie
Aberdeenshire Council	Jim Savege
Angus Council	Cllr Beth Whiteside
Angus Council	Cllr Bill Duff
Angus Council	Cllr Derek Wann
Angus Council	Cllr Kenny Braes
Argyll and Bute Council	Cllr Daniel Hampsey
Argyll and Bute Council	Cllr Jim Lynch
Argyll and Bute Council	Cllr Gary Mulvaney*
City of Edinburgh Council	Andrew Kerr
City of Edinburgh Council	Cllr Adam McVey
City of Edinburgh Council	Cllr Lezley Cameron*
City of Edinburgh Council	Cllr Iain Whyte
City of Edinburgh Council	Cllr Kevin Lang
Clackmannanshire Council	Cllr Kenneth Earle
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Cllr Duncan MacInnes
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Cllr Paul Steele
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Cllr Gail Macgregor
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Cllr Katie Hagmann
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Cllr Carlyne Wilson*
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Cllr Richard Brodie
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Paul Garrett*
Dundee City Council	Cllr Craig Duncan
Dundee City Council	Cllr Heather Anderson
Dundee City Council	Cllr Ken Lynn
Dundee City Council	Cllr Kevin Keenan
Dundee City Council	Cllr Steven Rome
East Ayrshire Council	Cllr Douglas Reid
East Ayrshire Council	Cllr Jim McMahon
East Ayrshire Council	Cllr Maureen McKay
East Dunbartonshire Council	Cllr Vaughan Moody
East Dunbartonshire Council	Cllr Gordan Low
East Dunbartonshire Council	Gerry Cornes
East Lothian Council	Cllr Lachlan Bruce
East Lothian Council	Cllr Lyn Jardine
East Lothian Council	Cllr Norman Hampshire

East Renfrewshire Council
East Renfrewshire Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Falkirk Council
Falkirk Council
Falkirk Council
Falkirk Council
Fife Council
Fife Council
Fife Council
Fife Council
Fife Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow City Council
Highland Council
Highland Council
Highland Council
Inverclyde Council
Inverclyde Council
Inverclyde Council
Inverclyde Council
Midlothian Council
Moray Council
Moray Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Orkney Islands Council
Orkney Islands Council
Orkney Islands Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Scottish Borders Council
Scottish Borders Council
Scottish Borders Council
Shetland Islands Council
Shetland Islands Council
Shetland Islands Council
Shetland Islands Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council

Cllr Gordon Wallace
Cllr Owen O'Donnell
Cllr Tony Buchanan
Cllr Anne Hannah
Cllr Cecil Meiklejohn
Cllr James Bundy
Cllr Paul Garner
Cllr Alan Knox
Cllr Brian Goodall
Cllr David Ross
Cllr Lesley Backhouse
Eileen Rowand*
Cllr Blair Anderson
Cllr Fyeza Ikhlaq
Cllr George Redmond
Cllr Jon Molyneux
Cllr Kieran Turner
Cllr Roza Salih
Cllr Soryia Siddique
Cllr Susan Aitken
Cllr Alasdair Christie
Cllr Derek Louden*
Cllr Raymond Bremmer
Cllr Elizabeth Robertson
Cllr Stephen McCabe
Louise Long
Cllr David Virgo
Cllr Russell Imrie
Cllr Graham Leadbitter
Roderick Burns
Cllr Shaun Macaulay
Cllr Alan Stubbs
Cllr Andrew Duffy-Lawson
Cllr Angela Campbell
Cllr Kirsten Larson
Cllr Lorraine Nolan
Cllr Paul Kelly
Des Murray
Cllr Heather Woodbridge
Cllr James Stockan
John Mundell
Cllr Eric Drysdale
Cllr Stewart Donaldson*
Cllr John Duff
Cllr Peter Barrett
Cllr Iain McMillan
Cllr Iain Nicholson
Cllr Jacqueline Cameron
Cllr John Shaw
Cllr Elaine Thornton-Nicol
Cllr Euan Jardine
Cllr Scott Hamilton
Cllr Andrea Manson
Cllr Davie Sandison
Cllr Emma Macdonald
Maggie Sandison
Cllr Martin Dowe
Cleland Sneddon
Cllr Alex Alison
Cllr Maureen Devlin*
Cllr Joe Fagan
Cllr John Anderson*
Cllr Katy Loudon

South Lanarkshire Council
Stirling Council
Stirling Council
Stirling Council
Stirling Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Lothian Council
West Lothian Council
West Lothian Council
West Lothian Council

Cllr Maureen Chalmers
Carol Beattie
Cllr Chris Kane
Cllr Rachel Nunn*
Cllr Scott Farmer
Cllr Clare Steel
Cllr Karen Conaghan
Cllr Lawrence O'Neill
Peter Hessel
Robert de Bold *
Cllr Kirsteen Sullivan
Cllr Lawrence Fitzpatrick
Graham Hope

Apologies

Aberdeen City Council
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Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Aberdeenshire Council
Angus Council
Argyll and Bute Council
Argyll and Bute Council
City of Edinburgh Council
City of Edinburgh Council
City of Edinburgh Council
Clackmannanshire Council
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Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
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Dumfries and Galloway Council
Dumfries and Galloway Council
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Dundee City Council
East Ayrshire Council
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East Dunbartonshire Council
East Lothian Council
East Renfrewshire Council
Falkirk Council
Fife Council
Fife Council
Fife Council
Glasgow City Council
Highland Council
Highland Council
Highland Council
Highland Council
Inverclyde Council
Midlothian Council
Midlothian Council
Moray Council
Moray Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Ayrshire Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council

Cllr Alex Nicoll
Cllr Ryan Houghton
Cllr Gwyneth Petrie
Cllr John Cox
Cllr Mark Findlater
Margo Williamson
Cllr Robin Currie
Pippa Milne
Cllr Alys Mumford
Cllr Cammy Day
Cllr Lesley MacInnes
Cllr Ellen Forson
Cllr Martha Benny
Nikki Bridle
Cllr Kenneth Macleod
Malcolm Burr
Cllr Linda Dorward
Cllr Stephen Thompson
Dawn Roberts
Gregory Colgan
Cllr John McFadzean
Eddie Fraser
Cllr Alan Moir
Monica Patterson
Lorraine McMillan
Kenneth Lawrie
Cllr Kathleen Leslie
Cllr Rosemary Liewald
Steve Grimmond
Annemarie O'Donnell
Cllr Bill Lobban
Cllr John Finlayson
Cllr Ken Gowans
Donna Manson
Cllr Natasha McGuire
Cllr Kelly Parry
Dr Grace Vickers
Cllr Donald Gatt
Cllr Kathleen Robertson
Cllr Joe Cullinane
Cllr Marie Burns
Cllr Tom Marshall
Craig Hatton
Cllr Tracy Carragher
Cllr Grant Laing
Thomas Glen

Renfrewshire Council
Renfrewshire Council
Scottish Borders Council
Scottish Borders Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Ayrshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
South Lanarkshire Council
Stirling Council
West Lothian Council
West Lothian Council

Alan Russell
Cllr Neill Graham
Cllr David Parker
David Robertson
Cllr Brian Connolly
Cllr Brian McGinley
Cllr Peter Henderson
Eileen Howat
Cllr Gerry Convery
Cllr John Ross
Cllr Neil Benny
Cllr Damian Doran-Timson
Cllr Janet Campbell

**Denotes substitutes provided*

Public Session

1. Introduction from COSLA President

Councillor Morrison welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all members for attending.

Apologies and substitutions were noted.

2. Draft Minute Convention Meeting 17th June 2022

The minute was agreed as an accurate record.

3. Appointments to Outside Bodies

This paper sought Convention's approval of COSLA's appointments to a range of outside bodies.

Convention:

- i. Agreed formally that Cllr Macgregor continue in her role as COSLA representative on the LAMIT Council for this Local Government term;
- ii. Agreed that the outstanding vacancy on the Children in Scotland Board of Directors be filled by Cllr Clare Steel;
- iii. Agreed that the outstanding vacancies on the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) Council be filled from the membership of COSLA's Children and Young People Board, and that the final decision regarding these appointments be delegated to COSLA's Spokesperson for Children and Young People; and
- iv. Noted the update provided in paragraphs 13 - 15 regarding COSLA's representation on the Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board, Teachers Pension Board, and Teachers' Scheme Advisory Board.

Following this meeting of Convention successful appointments have been made to the previously noted outside bodies.

Two positions have been filled on the Teachers' Scheme Advisory Board by Cllr Frances Murray (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) and Cllr David Richardson (East Ayrshire Council). Members will note work is ongoing to fill remaining positions across both the Teachers' Pension Board and Teachers' Scheme Advisory Board.

Cllr John Finlayson (Highland Council) and Cllr Paul Finnegan (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar) have also been nominated for the GTCS Council, with Laurence Findlay (Aberdeenshire Council) representing Directors of Education.

4. COSLA's Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 March 2022-FINAL

Councillor Doggart from City of Edinburgh Council introduced himself as the new chair of COSLA's Audit Group.

He confirmed that the Financial Statements had been scrutinised by the Audit Group at the September meeting, as well as by external auditors.

Convention Members welcomed the paper and appendices.

Convention:

- i. Approved and adopted the Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 March 2022;
- ii. Approved the associated Letter of Representation;
- iii. Confirmed the Chief Executive should sign both documents on behalf of Convention; and
- iv. Noted the composition of COSLA's new Audit Group, following the Local Government elections in May 2022.

5. COSLA Plan 2022-2027

This paper presented a new COSLA Plan up to 2027 following the Local Government elections, based on the six themes set out in 'Blueprint for Local Government' (as previously agreed in June by Convention).

Members welcomed the paper, however, raised concerns that potential opportunities for Local Government were not fully captured and that Local Government's role in innovating and transformation needed to be emphasised more explicitly. Some other concerns around lack of emphasis in relation to financial sustainability were raised.

Members suggested that re-establishing a better working relationship between Local Government and the Scottish Government could be beneficial in realising the aims of the Plan.

Amendment

An amendment in the following terms was proposed by Councillor Aitken, moved by Councillor Reid.

Insert additional priority.

Innovate for Sustainable Transformation

Local Government builds on its record of delivering transformational change to recognise and respond to the financial crisis facing local economies, households and public services.

Why:

The combined impact of recovery from a global pandemic, Brexit, rising interest rates, and soaring inflation in energy, food and other essential costs, are placing pressures of a huge scale on local communities and businesses and creating a cost-of-living emergency for hundreds of thousands of households. All these factors also severely affect Local Government resources, even as the need for ever greater mitigations and new types of services emerge. The need for innovation and collaboration within and between local government and our partners in response to this crisis has therefore taken on new urgency and importance in extraordinary times.

We will:

- *Work with the Scottish Government to map the role, function and interaction of existing statutory services and new and emerging vital areas of operational delivery for local government, such as significantly expanded food provision*
- *Demonstrate leadership with partners in other public services, the third sector and elsewhere to break down the barriers caused by organisational silos and facilitate deployment of our shared existing resources, assets and services in a way that maximises their combined impact in supporting households and communities in need*
- *Work with the Scottish and UK Governments to ensure that investment into and by local government supports swift and bold local action in response to changing circumstances and removes potential constraints on local innovation.*

Members discussed the terms of the amendment and related issues, noting that there was much detail for Convention simply to agree. Some members suggested that the matter be delegated to Leaders' meeting to allow officers the opportunity to consider the implications of the suggested priority and the accompanying discussion, and whether this proposed amendment was the best means to represent that within the finalised Plan. The mover and seconder agreed to this action and withdrew the motion.

Convention:

- i delegated reconsideration of the COSLA Plan to the next ordinary Leaders' meeting, asking that, in preparing a revised draft of the Plan for that meeting, officers consider the points made in the amendment and by others during the course of the discussion; and
- ii agreed that the final Plan be submitted to the next Convention meeting for formal endorsement.

6. European Charter of Local Self Government

This paper highlighted concern and regret regarding the lack of urgency with how this and the related UNCRC Bill processes had progressed.

It was highlighted that the Scottish Government remain committed to supporting a revised Bill and this had been set out in the Programme for Government, however, with little tangible positive action since. The President had written to Scottish Government to

seek clarification on the position and received a response from Mr Macpherson, Minister for Social Security and Local Government. In which Scottish Government's commitment to the Bill was reiterated.

Mr Macpherson indicated that he would welcome a tripartite meeting with Mr Ruskell and COSLA.

Members highlighted concerns on timescales and delays. COSLA officers confirmed they would continue to seek clarity from Ministers and would work to hold Scottish Government to its commitment to support Mr Ruskell in bringing the Bill forward via the Reconsideration Stage. Similar representations would be made around progressing the UNCRC Bill.

Amendment

An amendment in the following terms was proposed by Councillor Barrett, moved by Councillor Ross.

Convention expresses its disappointment with the lack of progress in taking forward suitable amendments to enable the Bill. COSLA Convention remains strongly committed to incorporating the provisions of the European Charter for Local Self Government into Scots Law and, accordingly, demands an early meeting with both Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, and Mark Ruskell MSP, in order to agree the timetable for expediting the Scottish Government's Programme for Government commitment and to bring an amended Bill forward via the Reconsideration Stage by, at latest, next Convention in March 2023.

This was agreed unanimously.

Accordingly, Convention expressed its disappointment with the lack of progress in taking forward suitable amendments to enable the Bill. COSLA Convention remained strongly committed to incorporating the provisions of the European Charter for Local Self Government into Scots Law and, accordingly, demanded an early meeting with both Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, and Mark Ruskell MSP, in order to agree the timetable for expediting the Scottish Government's Programme for Government commitment and to bring an amended Bill forward via the Reconsideration Stage by, at latest, next Convention in March 2023..

Councillor Morrison concluded the meeting at 12:10pm and thanked all Convention delegates for attending.