

There will be a meeting of the **COSLA Convention** on **Friday 28th October 2022** at **1100hrs**

Sally Loudon
Chief Executive

AGENDA

Public Session

1. Introduction from COSLA President
2. Draft Minute from Convention Meeting on 17th June 2022
3. Appointments to Outside Bodies
4. COSLA's Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 March 2022
5. COSLA Plan 2022-2027
6. European Charter of Local Self-Government



Convention Item 02

MINUTE OF MEETING OF COSLA CONVENTION

Friday 17th June 2022, 11am

Verity House, 19 Haymarket Yards, Edinburgh and Via MS Teams

Present

Aberdeen City	Cllr Emma Farquhar (Sub)
Aberdeen City	Cllr Miranda Radley
Aberdeen City	Cllr Alex Nicoll
Aberdeen City	Cllr Sandra Macdonald
Aberdeen City	Cllr Ian Yuill
Aberdeenshire	Jim Savage
Aberdeenshire	Cllr Alison Evison
Aberdeenshire	Cllr Mark Findlater
Aberdeenshire	Cllr Ross Cassie
Aberdeenshire	Cllr John Cox
Aberdeenshire	Cllr Gwyneth Petrie
Aberdeenshire	Cllr Anne Stirling
Angus	Mark Armstrong (Sub)
Angus	Cllr Kenny Braes
Angus	Cllr Bill Duff
Angus	Cllr Beth Whiteside
Angus	Cllr Craig Fortheringham (Sub)
Argyll and Bute	Pippa Milne
Argyll and Bute	Cllr Jim Lynch
Argyll and Bute	Cllr Robin Currie
Argyll and Bute	Cllr Daniel Hampsey
City of Edinburgh	Andrew Kerr
City of Edinburgh	Cllr Cammy Day
City of Edinburgh	Cllr Lesley MacInnes
City of Edinburgh	Cllr Adam McVey
City of Edinburgh	Cllr Iain Whyte
City of Edinburgh	Cllr Lewis Younie (Sub)
City of Edinburgh	Cllr Claire Miller
Clackmannanshire	Nikki Bridle
Clackmannanshire	Cllr Ellen Forson

Clackmannanshire	Cllr Denis Coyne (Sub)
Clackmannanshire	Cllr Kenneth Earle
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Malcom Burr
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Cllr Paul Steele
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Cllr Kenneth Macleod
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Cllr Duncan MacInnes
Dumfries and Galloway	Lorna Meahan (Sub)
Dumfries and Galloway	Cllr Stephen Thompson
Dumfries and Galloway	Cllr Linda Dorward
Dumfries and Galloway	Cllr Gail Macgregor
Dumfries and Galloway	Cllr Paula Stevenson (Sub)
Dundee City	Gregory Colgan
Dundee City	Cllr Willie Sawers (Sub)
Dundee City	Cllr John Alexander (Sub)
Dundee City	Cllr Steven Rome
Dundee City	Cllr Kevin Keenan
Dundee City	Cllr Craig Duncan
East Ayrshire	Eddie Fraser
East Ayrshire	Cllr Douglas Reid
East Ayrshire	Cllr Jim McMahan
East Ayrshire	Cllr Maureen McKay
East Ayrshire	Cllr Neill Watts (Sub)
East Dunbartonshire	Gerry Cornes
East Dunbartonshire	Cllr Gordan Low
East Dunbartonshire	Cllr Colette McDiarmid (Sub)
East Dunbartonshire	Cllr Vaughan Moody
East Lothian	Monica Patterson
East Lothian	Cllr Norman Hampshire
East Lothian	Cllr Lyn Jardine
East Lothian	Cllr Lachlan Bruce
East Renfrewshire	Lorraine McMillan
East Renfrewshire	Cllr Own O'Donnell
East Renfrewshire	Cllr Tony Buchanan
East Renfrewshire	Cllr Gordon Wallace
Falkirk	Kenneth Lawrie
Falkirk	Cllr Cecil Meiklejohn
Falkirk	Cllr Paul Garner
Falkirk	Cllr Anne Hannah
Falkirk	Cllr James Bundy
Fife	Eileen Rowand (Sub)
Fife	Cllr David Ross
Fife	Cllr Brian Goodall
Fife	Cllr Lesley Blackhouse
Fife	Cllr Rosemary Liewald
Fife	Cllr Kathleen Leslie
Fife	Cllr Alan Knox
Glasgow City	Cllr Susan Aitken
Glasgow City	Cllr Roza Salih
Glasgow City	Cllr Fyeza Ikhtaq
Glasgow City	Cllr George Redmond

Glasgow City	Cllr Soryia Siddique
Glasgow City	Cllr Jon Molyneux
Highland	Donna Manson
Highland	Cllr Raymond Bremmer
Highland	Cllr Ken Gowans
Highland	Cllr Bill Lobban
Highland	Cllr John Finlayson
Highland	Cllr Alasdair Christie
Inverclyde	Louise Long
Inverclyde	Cllr Stephen McCabe
Inverclyde	Cllr Elizabeth Robertson
Inverclyde	Cllr Martin McCluskey (Sub)
Midlothian	Dr Grace Vickers
Midlothian	Cllr Kelly Parry
Midlothian	Cllr Russell Imrie
Midlothian	Cllr David Virgo
Moray	Roderick Burns
Moray	Cllr Shona Morrison
Moray	Cllr Neil McLennan
Moray	Cllr Marc Macrae (Sub)
Moray	Cllr Graham Leadbitter
North Ayrshire	Craig Hatton
North Ayrshire	Cllr Marie Burns
North Ayrshire	Cllr Shaun Macaulay
North Ayrshire	Cllr Joe Cullinane
North Lanarkshire	Des Murry
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Heather Brannen-McVey
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Jordan Linden
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Tracy Carragher
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Alan Stubbs
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Kirsten Larson
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Paul Kelly (Sub)
North Lanarkshire	Cllr Angela Campbell
Orkney Islands	Karen Greaves (Sub)
Orkney Islands	Cllr James Stockan
Orkney Islands	Cllr Heather Woodbridge
Orkney Islands	Cllr Steven Heddle
Perth and Kinross	Karen Donaldson (Sub)
Perth and Kinross	Cllr Grant Laing
Perth and Kinross	Cllr Eric Drysdale
Perth and Kinross	Cllr John Duff
Perth and Kinross	Cllr Peter Barrett
Renfrewshire	Alan Russell
Renfrewshire	Cllr Ian Nicholson
Renfrewshire	Cllr Jacqueline Cameron
Renfrewshire	Cllr Jim Paterson (Sub)
Renfrewshire	Cllr Iain McMillan
Renfrewshire	Cllr Neill Graham
Scottish Borders	Cllr Euan Jardine
Scottish Borders	Cllr Donald Moffat (Sub)

Scottish Borders
Scottish Borders
Shetland Islands
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West Lothian

Cllr Scott Hamilton
Cllr David Parker (and Clive)
Peter Peterson (Sub)
Cllr Gary Robinson (Sub)
Cllr Andrea Manson
Cllr Davie Sandison
Eileen Howat
Cllr Peter Henderson
Cllr Brian McGinley
Cllr Brian Connolly
Cleland Sneddon
Cllr Joe Fagan
Cllr John Ross
Cllr Maureen Chalmers
Cllr Katy Loudon
Cllr Gerry Convery
Cllr Alex Alison
Carol Beattie
Cllr Graham Houston
Cllr Chris Kane
Cllr Scott Farmer
Cllr Neil Benny
Peter Hessel
Joyce White
Cllr Karen Conaghan
Cllr Clare Steel
Cllr Lawrence O'Neill
Graham Hope
Cllr Lawrence Fitzpatrick
Cllr Janet Campbell
Cllr Kirsteen Sullivan
Cllr Damian Doran-Timson

Apologies

Aberdeen City
Aberdeen City
Angus
Angus
City of Edinburgh
Clackmannanshire
Dumfries and Galloway
Dumfries and Galloway
Dundee City
Dundee City
East Ayrshire
East Dunbartonshire
Fife
Glasgow City
Glasgow City

Angela Scott
Cllr Ryan Houghton*
Margo Williamson*
Cllr Derek Wann*
Cllr Kevin Lang*
Cllr Martha Benny*
Derek Crichton*
Cllr Richard Brodie*
Cllr Heather Anderson*
Cllr Ken Lynn*
Cllr John McFadzean*
Cllr Alan Moir*
Steve Grimmond*
Annemarie O'Donnell
Cllr Kieran Turner

Glasgow City
Inverclyde
Moray
North Ayrshire
North Lanarkshire
Orkney Islands
Perth and Kinross
Renfrewshire
Scottish Borders
Scottish Borders
Shetland Islands
Shetland Islands

Cllr Blair Anderson
Cllr Natasha McGuire*
Cllr Kathleen Robertson*
Cllr Tom Marshall
Cllr Andrew Duffy-Lawson*
John Mundell*
Thomas Glen*
Cllr John Shaw*
Netta Meadows
Cllr Elaine Thornton-Nicol*
Maggie Sandison*
Cllr Emma Macdonald*

*Denotes a Substitute

Public Session

1. Introduction from COSLA Vice President

Councillor Graham Houston, COSLA's current Vice President, welcomed all Members to the first Convention for the new COSLA Presidential Team and Spokespersons, soon to be elected. The Vice President provided advice on how to participate in the meeting in a hybrid setting. Apologies and substitutes were noted separately for the minute.

Councillor Houston handed over to COSLA's Chief Executive, Sally Loudon, who chaired Convention through the election of the new COSLA President and Vice President.

2. Election of President

The Convention received a report which informed Members of the nominations received for the post of COSLA President.

Ahead of the vote for the COSLA President, the meeting was informed that due to the number of attendees at this meeting of Convention the number of votes eligible to be cast were 131 (in room and online).

The COSLA Chief Executive advised that Councillors Tony Buchanan, Paul Kelly, Gail Macgregor and Andrew Polson had withdrawn their nominations for the Presidency and therefore the nominations were as follows:

- Cllr Heather Brannan-McVey
- Cllr Alison Evison
- Cllr Steven Heddle
- Cllr Shona Morrison

Following an electronic secret ballot, it was announced that the vote was as follows:

- Cllr Heather Brannan-McVey – 62
- Cllr Alison Evison – 3
- Cllr Steven Heddle – 0
- Cllr Shona Morrison – 66

- No Vote - 0

The COSLA Chief Executive advised that Councillor Shona Morrison had been duly elected as the new President of COSLA.

Convention thanked Councillor Alison Evison for all her work as the COSLA President for the past five years.

The newly elected President was invited to the top table and then took over as Chair of the meeting.

A recess of the meeting was called at 11.20am and reconvened at 11.30am.

3. Election of Vice-President

The Convention received a report which informed Members of the nominations received for the post of COSLA Vice-President.

The COSLA President Councillor Shona Morrison advised that Councillors Tony Buchanan, Gail Macgregor, and Andrew Polson had all withdrawn their nominations for the Vice Presidency. As a result of Councillor Shona Morrison being elected President, her nomination was automatically withdrawn and as a result of the gender rules Councillor Heather Brannan-McVey could no longer be considered for election. Therefore, the nominations were as follows:

- Cllr Peter Barrett
- Cllr Steven Heddle
- Cllr Paul Kelly

Following an electronic secret ballot, it was announced that the vote was as follows:

- Cllr Peter Barrett – 54
- Cllr Steven Heddle – 69
- Cllr Paul Kelly – 3
- No Vote - 5

The COSLA Chief Executive advised that Councillor Steven Heddle had been duly elected as the new COSLA Vice President.

Convention thanked Councillor Graham Houston for all his work as the COSLA Vice-President for the past five years.

The new COSLA President and Vice-President thanked Members for voting them into their respective posts.

A recess of the meeting was called at 12pm and reconvened at 12.30pm.

4. Presentation on COSLA by Chief Executive

The Convention received a PowerPoint presentation from the COSLA Chief Executive providing an overview of COSLA, governance arrangements, and the role and remit of the Convention.

The Convention noted the content of the presentation.

5. Job Descriptions of Office Bearers

The Convention was provided with a report which invited agreement on the job descriptions for all COSLA Office Bearers.

The Convention agreed the job descriptions for President, Vice President, and Spokespersons as outlined at Appendix A of the report.

6. Appointment of Spokespersons

The Convention received a report which invited Members to agree the apportionment of Spokespersons' roles based on political group numbers within the Convention and agree the appointment of candidates put forward by political groups on that basis. The recommendation was proposed and seconded collectively by COSLA Political Group Leaders.

Accordingly, Convention:

- i. Noted the appointment of Spokespersons' roles as outlined at paragraph 6 of the report; and
- ii. Agreed the appointment of Spokespersons (as recommended by COSLA Political Group Leaders), as below:
 - Resources – Cllr Katie Hagmann (Dumfries and Galloway, SNP);
 - Health and Social Care – Cllr Paul Kelly (North Lanarkshire, Labour);
 - Children and Young People – Cllr Tony Buchanan (East Renfrewshire, SNP);
 - Environment and Economy – Cllr Gail Macgregor (Dumfries and Galloway, Conservative); and
 - Community Wellbeing – Cllr Maureen Chalmers (South Lanarkshire, SNP).

7. Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Convention considered a report which outlined appointments required to be made by COSLA at the start of a new Council term to outside, employer, and other bodies.

In relation to Recommendation **viii a**. Convention was informed that there was a change to the number of vacancies to be filled on the Scottish Teachers Pension Scheme Advisory Board, following an update earlier in the week from the Scottish Public Pensions Agency. SPPA had advised that there were five vacancies to be filled, rather than six as previously stated.

Convention delegates were also informed of an additional recommendation required as **viii d**.:

In addition to the five spaces to be filled on the Teachers' Pension Scheme Advisory Board, there are three posts to be filled on the Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board. There are five Elected Member posts on this Board, but two are already filled, as noted in paragraph 51 of the report.

An Amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Councillor Douglas Reid and seconded by Councillor David Ross. This was agreed unanimously.

Accordingly, Convention:

- i. Agreed that for various international bodies (as paragraphs 2—13) the following places be filled on the basis of political consensus between COSLA Political Group Leaders, achieving gender balance where needed:
 - a. Agreed the following places at the Council of European Regions and Municipalities Policy Committee – Cllr Gary Robinson (full member), Cllr Gail Macgregor (alternative member), and Cllr Peter Barrett (alternative for WLGA member);
 - b. Agreed the COSLA delegate on the UCLG World Council be the President, and agreed the alternative as Vice President;
 - c. Agreed that the practice continues of selecting representation as appropriate to the particular meeting of the EU Committee of the Regions UK Contact Forum from the Presidential Team or Spokespersons;
- ii. Agreed that Councillor Jacqueline Cameron and Councillor Julie Bell continue their positions representing COSLA on the Public Health Scotland Board (as paragraphs 14-15);
- iii. Agreed that the COSLA positions on the Improvement Service Board be filled by the President, Cllr Ellen Forson, Cllr Neil Benny, and a representative of the Labour Group to be confirmed following the meeting (as paragraphs 16-19);
- iv. Agreed the proposed size and political make-up of the TSS Board (as paragraphs 22-25) and to authorise COSLA Political Group Leaders to make the necessary appointments by the end of July;
- v. Agreed the proposed size and political make-up of the Business Gateway Boars (as paragraphs 28-30) and to authorise COSLA Political Group Leaders to make the necessary appointments by the end of July;
- vi. Agreed the Councillors to represent employer interests on the negotiation bodies that agree our employees pay and conditions as follows – encourage as soon as possible the nomination of one Councillor from each Council to join the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees (SJC), authorise COSLA Political Group Leaders to identify twelve Councillors for the SJC steering group and agree the following eight Councillors for the Scottish Negotiation Committee for Teachers (as paragraphs 32-36) – Cllr John Finlayson; Cllr Anne Stirling; Cllr Stephen McCabe; Cllr Angela Campbell; Cllr David Virgo; Cllr Daniel Hampsey; and two representatives of the SNP Group to be confirmed after the meeting;
- vii. Agreed that if there is a need for a Chief Officials or Craft Operatives committee meeting COSLA officers should seek Councillors from those Members representing Councils on the full SJC (as paragraphs 37-39);
- viii. Agreed that, in terms of vacancies on the Scottish Public Pension Agency Pension Boards (as paragraphs 40-57):
 - a. Agreed the proposed process and timeline for filling two vacancies on the Scottish Teachers' Pension Board and the five vacancies on the Scheme Advisory Board;
 - b. Agreed that the call for prospective nominees should include Council Officers with experience of pensions, as well as Elected Members, for the positions on the Scheme Advisory Board in particular;
 - c. Agreed that any future vacancies on both Boards be filled in line with the processes above and that to achieve this, COSLA Officers will work under

the direction of COSLA's Resource Spokesperson and alongside SPPA's Governance Officers, seeking nominations from Councils as required; and

- d. Agreed that the three vacant COSLA Elected Member representatives on the Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board, taking account of the considerations set out in the paper's paragraphs, 46-51, be filled by nominations from Political Group Leaders by mid-July.

N.B. [Appointments were made post-meeting as agreed above, and further details are available on request from COSLA officers]

8. Appointments to COSLA Audit Group

The Convention received a report which invited Members to agree the proposed size and political make-up of the Audit Group, as its membership needed reviewing along with appointments to the Group.

The COSLA Constitution stated that "*Convention shall determine the delegated powers, size, and political composition of all the Association's governance structures.*" Section 5 of the Scheme of Delegation, provided as part of the report, gave further specific detail relating to the Audit Group.

Convention was informed that based on the experience in the last Local Government term and on the new political make-up of COSLA, proposals had been presented within the paper of a suggested size and political make-up of the Group.

Convention was asked to authorise COSLA Political Group Leaders to make the appointments by the end of June, allowing the Group to meet, elect a Chair, and start its work. Importantly, this included presenting a report to Convention in October on the previous year's audited COSLA Accounts.

Convention:

- i. Agreed the proposed size and political make-up of the Audit Group; and
- ii. Authorised the COSLA Political Group Leaders to make the necessary appointments by the end of June.

9. Draft Minute of Previous Meeting of Convention on 25th February 2022

The minute of the Convention Meeting held on the 25th of February 2022 was agreed as an accurate record.

10. COSLA's Strategic Context and Priorities for the New COSLA Plan (2022-2027)

The Convention received a report on the framework for a refreshed COSLA Plan agreed at COSLA Convention on 25 February 2022. The Plan was based on the "Blueprint for Local Government" developed during COVID and the intention was that further detail would be brought to COSLA Convention in October 2022 for approval.

However, since then, there had been many changes to the strategic context:

- Russia had invaded Ukraine, with serious implications for the rest of the world;

- Currently in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis;
- Soaring inflation and energy prices, impacting individuals, families, and councils;
- A new National Strategy for Economic Transformation had been published, and concerns had been raised about COSLA and Local Government's role in relation to governance arrangements;
- Uncertainty around the National Care Service, with legislation to follow shortly; and
- Scottish Government had published its spending plans for the rest of the parliamentary term, which showed a "flat-lining" of core Local Government revenue for the next three years.

Given the changes, the paper provided Convention with an updated summary of the current strategic context for Local Government and an overview of the types of new issues that should be included under each of the six Blueprint themes. With agreement from Convention, COSLA would commence work immediately on the new Plan and it would be brought to Convention in October for approval.

Convention:

- Provided comments on the strategic context and key priorities for COSLA; and
- Agreed that a refreshed COSLA Plan be brought to Convention for agreement in October 2022 using the Blueprint themes as its basis.

11. European Charter of Local Self-Government - Update

The Convention received an update on the European Charter of Local Self-Government, following on from the update received during COSLA Convention on 25 February 2022.

The previous COSLA President had met with Mark Ruskell MSP, the Parliamentary lead on this Bill, and been assured of his support for early progress. Particularly, he assured the then President that he too was pressing Scottish Government to bring forward the required changes as soon as practicable.

Progress remained incremental, so Convention in February, had requested a further update to be presented at this meeting of Convention. Significantly, on 24 May 2022, the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, had delivered a Ministerial Statement to the Scottish Parliament regarding both the European Charter on Local Self-Government and the UNCRC incorporation Bills. The paper listed the salient points made in Mr Swinney's statement.

Convention members asked that the new Presidential Team press for a prioritisation of the changes required in order to resolve the UK Supreme Court issues on competency, so that the Bill could be passed and established in Scots Law as soon as possible. Similarly, an update on the UNCRC Children's Rights and Protection Bill should be expedited as per the recommendations below.

Convention:

- Agreed that COSLA continue to engage with the Scottish Government and press for the development of suitable amendments required by the Supreme Court that could be made to both the European Charter and UNCRC Bills so that they could be formally enacted; and
- Agreed that a further report be provided at the next meeting of Convention.

Close

Councillor Morrison concluded the meeting of COSLA Convention at 1pm. The new COSLA President thanked Members for their attendance and expressed her enthusiasm and excitement to work with COSLA Convention Members over the next five years.

The next meeting of COSLA Convention was Friday 28 October 2022.

Appointments to Outside Bodies

Summary and Recommendations

In line with COSLA's Constitution, this report seeks Convention's approval for COSLA's appointments to outside bodies.

The Convention is invited to:

- i. Agree formally that Cllr Macgregor continue in her role as COSLA Representative on the LAMIT Council for this Local Government term;
- ii. Agree that the outstanding vacancy on the Children in Scotland Board of Directors be filled by Cllr Clare Steel;
- iii. Agree 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 is delegated to COSLA's Spokesperson for Children and Young People; and
- iv. Note 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.

References

Previous key reports:

- 2022-06-17, Convention, Item 7 - Appointments to Outside, Employer and Other Bodies.

Appointments to Outside Bodies

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for further appointments to outside bodies.

Local Authority Mutual Investment Trust (LAMIT) Council

2. Established in 1961 by the various associations of UK Local Government at the time, LAMIT is the trustee of The Local Authorities' Property Fund, which is managed by CCLA Investment Management Limited (Churches, Charities, Local Authorities).
3. In September 2020, COSLA's President received a letter from LAMIT's chair, Cllr Richard Kemp, seeking a representative from COSLA to join the LAMIT Council. Following agreement from Leaders in November 2020, this role was undertaken by Cllr Gail Macgregor in her then capacity as COSLA's Resources Spokesperson.
4. Given the substantial induction already undertaken by Cllr Macgregor, and the relevance of LAMIT's connection to sustainable investment also to the remit of the Environment and Economy Spokesperson, it is proposed that Cllr Macgregor continue to represent COSLA on the LAMIT Council, a proposal supported by COSLA's current Resources Spokesperson, Cllr Katie Hagmann.
5. In September, Leaders agreed that Cllr Macgregor should continue in her role on the LAMIT Council, pending the formal approval of Convention. Convention is asked to agree that Cllr Macgregor continue in this role for this Local Government term.

Children in Scotland Board of Directors and GTCS Council

6. Following the Local Government elections, nominations are required for seats on the Children in Scotland Board of Directors and the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Council.
7. Traditionally, these appointments have been drawn from within the COSLA Children and Young People Board's membership and the Board have been asked to provide nominations in relation to these vacancies.
8. One member of the Board is requested to sit on the Children in Scotland Board of Directors. Children in Scotland is a national network of organisations and individuals working for and with children and young people, which provides an independent voice to help influence positive change in policy and legislation, alongside a range of other work.
9. The Board have nominated Cllr Clare Steel to represent COSLA on the Children in Scotland Board of Directors.
10. In addition, two members of the Board are requested to sit on the General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) Council. The GTCS carries out a wide range of statutory functions to promote, support, and develop the professional learning of teachers, including maintaining the Register of Teachers; setting professional standards; accrediting courses; supporting teachers' professional learning and development; and advising partners.
11. At time of writing, the Board have not supplied nominations for the GTCS Council vacancies.

12. It is therefore proposed that COSLA's Spokesperson for Children and Young People, Cllr Buchanan, continue to work with the Children and Young People Board to fill these vacancies. Convention is asked to agree that Cllr Buchanan be delegated to agree these appointments to the GTCS Council, once nominations are received from the Children and Young People Board.

Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board (LGP SAB)

13. In June, Convention agreed that the three vacancies for COSLA elected member representatives on the Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board be filled by nominations from COSLA Political Group Leaders by mid-July.
14. Following this decision, Cllr Vaughan Moody, Cllr David Richardson, and Cllr Mandy Watt were appointed to the LGP SAB.

Teachers' Pension Board and Teachers' Scheme Advisory Board

15. Convention also agreed that COSLA officers work through the COSLA Resources Spokesperson and with the Scottish Public Pensions Agency to fill existing and planned vacancies on the Teachers' Pension Board and Teachers' Pension Scheme Advisory Board. These processes are currently ongoing and further details will be provided once finalised.

Next Steps

16. Convention is asked to approve the appointment to LAMIT of Cllr Macgregor, and to agree that the vacancies on the Children in Scotland and GTCS Council Boards be filled by members selected from COSLA's Children and Young People Board, as described above. In addition, Convention is asked to note the update provided regarding appointments to the Scottish Local Government Pension Scheme Advisory Board, Teachers Pension Board, and Teachers' Scheme Advisory Board.

October 2022

COSLA's Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 March 2022

Summary and Recommendations

As required by COSLA's Constitution and in line with good accounting practice, COSLA's annual Financial Statements are presented to Convention each year, along with a Letter of Representation. This report summarises the key points from the Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 March 2022, with the details presented at Appendix A, and asks Convention to:

- i. Approve and adopt the Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 March 2022 (Appendix A);
- ii. Approve the associated Letter of Representation (Appendix B);
- iii. Confirm the Chief Executive should sign both documents on behalf of Convention; and
- iv. Note the composition of COSLA's new Audit Group, following the Local Government elections in May 2022

References

- Item 03, Convention, November 2021: 'COSLA's Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending 31st March 2021'.
- Item 08, Convention, March 2021: 'COSLA Budget 21-22 to 24-25'
- Item 08, Convention, June 2022: 'Appointments to Audit Group'

Douglas Gray
Finance Manager
douglasg@cosla.gov.uk
0131 474 9234

October 2022

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to present Convention with:
 - Audited Financial Statements for Year Ending 31 March 2022 for approval and adoption, and
 - an associated Letter of Representation for approval.
2. The report also seeks confirmation from Convention that the Chief Executive can be authorised to sign both documents on behalf of COSLA, and informs Convention of the composition of COSLA's new Audit Group.

Background

3. As required by COSLA's Constitution and good accounting practice, a set of Financial Statements is prepared for each financial year in order to present a formal picture of COSLA's finances. The Financial Statements are independently audited, providing members with assurance that COSLA's finances are in accordance with UK accounting standards.
4. COSLA's newly appointed Audit Group has met to review the Financial Statements and to hear directly from the independent auditors. As a result, the Audit Group supports the recommendations. During the previous Local Government term, the previous Audit Group also received reports during the year to March 2022, allowing them to monitor actual performance against the budget that had been approved by Convention, and engage the Senior Management Team in discussion about their plans.
5. Following the elections in May 2022, the Audit Group membership was revisited and Group Leaders were asked to nominate representatives for this term, in line with the Paper approved by Convention in June 2022. As a result, the Group is now comprises the following councillors:
 - Councillor Phil Doggart, Conservative, City of Edinburgh Council (elected as Chair by the Group at their first meeting in September)
 - Councillor Peter Barrett, Liberal Democrat, Perth and Kinross Council,
 - Councillor Rosemary Fraser, SNP, Stirling Council
 - Councillor Kevin Keenan, Labour, Dundee City Council
 - Councillor Stephen McCabe, Labour, Inverclyde Council
 - Councillor Susan Rae, Scottish Green Party, City of Edinburgh Council
 - Councillor Gary Robinson, SNP, North Lanarkshire Council
 - Councillor Peter Smail, Conservative Midlothian Council
 - Councillor Paul Steele, Independent, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar,

Detail – Financial Statements (Appendix A)

6. In March 2021, Convention approved a four-year budget covering FY2021-22 to FY2024-25. It allowed for a small 0.55% increase in membership subscriptions in each of the four years.
7. Year 1 (FY2021-22) of the four-year budget modelled a Deficit of £133k. The Annual Accounts show a Surplus of £446k for the same time period.

8. This is a strong result, given the challenges to COSLA's finances during the year to 31 March 2022, mostly arising from the Coronavirus pandemic, and the subsequent closure of the Conference Centre, and the overnight disappearance of related income. A gradual re-opening of the Conference Centre has been taking place since October 2021.
9. The key drivers behind the successful results include:
 - Savings on staff of £179k through vacancy management
 - Savings on Property Costs of £56k
 - Extra income from myjobscotland recruitment website of £154k
 - Extra Support Costs recharged to external grant funding of £170k
10. The surplus of £445,905 was added to the General Reserve, which then stood at £851,402 at 31 March 2022.
11. The four-year budget envisaged the General Reserve being brought into line with the target of £300,000 by the end of the four years. The Senior Management Team is assessing options on how best to achieve this, given the stronger than expected results for Year 1. However, there are number of liabilities that must be considered, and work is currently being done to establish a prudent approach to addressing these.
12. Other important areas to note within the Financial Statements are:
 - The healthy position of cash balances. At the year end, almost £2.6m was immediately available to pay staff and suppliers (£1.4m higher than at the previous year end). A further £2.2m was being held in a High Interest Account (£800k higher than at the previous year end).
 - Deferred Income of £4.25m (an increase of £2.6m on the prior year). This represents funding actually received, but to be used in future years.
 - The pension liability of £6.4m (a decrease of £6.8m on the prior year). This reflects the amount by which the pension assets fell short of the pension liabilities, following an actuarial valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2022. It is important to note that this liability would only crystallise on the winding up of COSLA and become a joint and several liability of the members. In the meantime, it will fluctuate in line with the value of the pension scheme's assets and liabilities.

Detail – Letter of Representation (Appendix B)

13. This is a standard letter requested each year by the Auditors. It highlights the responsibilities of COSLA members and the Senior Management Team in connection with the Financial Statements and disclosing information – either in the Financial Statements themselves, or direct to the Auditors.

Recommendations

14. Convention is asked to:

- Approve and adopt the Financial Statements for the Year Ending 31 March 2022;
- Approve the associated Letter of Representation;
- Confirm the Chief Executive should sign both documents on behalf of Convention; and
- Note the composition of COSLA's new Audit Group following the Local Government elections in May 2022.

Next Steps

15. If the recommendations are agreed by Convention:
 - two sets of the Financial Statements will be prepared for signing by COSLA and the Auditors, with each retaining one copy for their records; and
 - One copy of the Letter of Representation will be prepared for COSLA to sign and send to the Auditors as the final piece of Audit evidence.

DRAFT COSLA Plan 2022-2027

Summary and Recommendations

In June 2022 COSLA Convention agreed that a new COSLA Plan be drafted to guide the work we do for Local Government in Scotland for the next five years. The Plan presents a high-level framework setting out the strategic direction and ambitions for COSLA for the current Local Government term (Appendix I) and is based on the Blueprint for Local Government, as agreed previously by Convention.

Convention is invited to consider and approve the new COSLA Plan 2022-2027.

References

Previous reports to Convention:

- 22-06-17 Item 10 - COSLA's strategic context and priorities for the new COSLA Plan
- 22-02-25 Item 6 - COSLA's strategic context and priorities post-election
- 21-03-26 Item 3 - Local Government Blueprint
- 17-06-30 Item 9 - COSLA Plan 2017/18 – 2021/22

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October 2022

DRAFT COSLA Plan 2022-2027

Purpose

1. To allow COSLA Convention to consider the draft COSLA Plan 2022-2027, presented at Appendix I, for approval,.

Background

2. In June 2022 COSLA Convention agreed that a new COSLA Plan be based on the priorities set out in the Blueprint for Local Government, but updated to reflect the current context. The Plan was to be drafted to guide the work we do for Local Government in Scotland during the next five years.

Current Position

3. The previous Plan covered the period 2017 to 2022 during which a number of significant changes to the strategic context took place. This led to a reconsideration and review of our focus as councils responded to austerity, the impacts of UK Withdrawal from the EU, and Covid-19. This was then set out in the 'Blueprint for Local Government', which was published in September 2020 and, whilst grounded around the response to and recovery from Covid-19, its content remains relevant for our work going forward in relation to the new challenges arising from the war in Ukraine and resultant cost crisis that now require to be taken into account.

Proposed Position

4. The new Plan, focussing on the issues important to Local Government in Scotland, has been refreshed to accommodate the range of recent significant changes to the strategic context including the Scottish Government's Resources Spending Review and Programme for Government, National Care Service, National Strategy for Economic Transformation, Resource Spending Review, Cost of Living Crisis, and the UK Government Levelling Up agenda and implications of as yet unquantified cuts to UK public sector budgets.
5. The details of the actions required to achieve these ambitions and support the refreshed priorities (set out below) are detailed in COSLA's individual board plans:
 - Strengthen Local Democracy
 - Improve the Wellbeing of Families and Communities
 - Secure Sustainable Funding
 - Deliver a Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy
 - Enhance Education and Support for Our Children and Young People
 - Support the Most Vulnerable in Our Communities
6. The new COSLA Plan is intended to be a high level framework to guide COSLA's work over the next 5 years. Development of the draft has been informed through engagement across all COSLA teams and Spokespersons as the new Board Plans have been developed and comments on the draft from Leadership Sounding Board have also been accommodated.

Next Steps

7. If approved by Convention, the plan will be published and accompanied by a communication campaign. Periodic reviews of progress will take place and be reported to Convention.



COSLA

COSLA



Plan

2022-2027

*Our vision and priorities for Local Government
and Communities across Scotland*

Introduction



Council services never stop, delivering 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Councils are constantly working to provide the services that are crucial to the very fabric of our local communities and ensuring the well-being of individuals, families, and society. Councils are key to supporting local economic development and recovery, and to providing the local democratic accountability needed to ensure that services are delivered according to the needs and priorities of local people.

COSLA is the national membership organisation for Scottish Local Government. Comprising all of Scotland’s 32 councils, COSLA sets the strategic direction for Local Government to best deliver for Scotland’s communities. To do this COSLA’s staff work with a network of professional advisors and partners.

Local Government and communities continue to face unprecedented and serious challenges. This requires a robust, strategic framework to guide our work for the next few years, so this COSLA Plan sets out our vision, high-level ambitions, and priorities. We do this on behalf of all councils in Scotland, to improve the lives of people in our local communities.

our Vision



“COSLA will work relentlessly to ensure that Scottish Local Government has the powers and the resources it needs to deliver the highest quality services that enable everyone to live well locally.”

To achieve this vision, we will focus on six priorities:



our Current Context



Right now, we face a combination of social and financial challenges never seen in modern times. The current cost crisis exacerbates the threats already posed to local democracy, including years of real terms reductions in settlements, an increase in ring-fenced and directed funding, and very real threats to local services and accountability, for example those now proposed in the National Care Service Bill.

Protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities, our staff and our assets will take significant energy and resolve especially as Scottish Government has set out its intentions for the next 4 years in the 'Resource Spending Review' - Local Government will see a "flat cash" settlement, which in reality will mean cuts to services, unless we think differently about Local Government's role and services into the future.

There are many threats and challenges in our current operating context - some of which are shown in the diagram opposite. Holding onto COSLA's 5 core principles (shown in the centre of the diagram) will become all the more important in this context.



our Priorities



Over the next 5 years, COSLA's work will focus on 6 key priority areas. Below are some of the actions that we will undertake to progress these priorities - further detail of this work is set out in COSLA's Boards plans and will regularly be updated and shared with our key stakeholders and partners.

In order to achieve the outcomes we seek, COSLA will enhance and broaden the scope of our partnership working arrangements, strengthen our existing links with professional associations, and initiate shared programmes of work aimed at enabling transformation for our member councils across Scotland.



Strengthen Local Democracy



Through a renewed relationship with Scottish Government, based on trust and mutual respect, Local Government is empowered to lead and act to ensure local democracy in Scotland delivers effective and inclusive representation of the range of needs and views expressed by our diverse communities.

Why?

Democracy matters, and nowhere more so than at the local level. It enables every person to be able to express their views and embrace their rights in a fair and just society. That is why individuals and communities must be empowered through strong local democratic decision-making processes and be engaged and involved. A well-functioning relationship between Scottish Local Government and the Scottish Government that is based on subsidiarity and recognises the sovereignty of people is essential to delivering better outcomes.

We Will:

- Secure the adoption of the European Charter for Local Self-Government in Scots Law.
- Re-establish an open, honest, and functioning, trusted local and central government relationship.
- Strengthen and rebalance the relationship between Local Government and the people of Scotland and ensure subsidiarity.
- Work with Scottish Government to re-establish and complete the Local Governance Review.
- Continue our work to tackle barriers to elected office for under-represented groups, to ensure elected members are representative of the communities that they serve.
- Support the work toward enabling all communities to be able to participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives and their communities.

Secure Sustainable Funding



In order that communities continue to get the support and high-quality services they need, we will work to ensure that Local Government is funded fairly and has multi-year financial settlements. This would mean more certainty for not only our workforce but for our communities and the services they rely on every day.

Why?

The constant cycle of single year budgets, and annual cycle of justifying why Local Government requires investment is exhausting for everyone – for our councillors, for our senior managers, for our staff on the front line who are continually being faced with savings targets, and for our communities who see the core service that they rely on being cut back each year. We want Local Government to be enabled to take a strategic and long-term approach to budgets that focuses on prevention – this would save valuable resource across the whole of the public sector. Importantly, this would also support councils to recruit, retain, and invest in their workforce as Fair Work employers.

We Will:

- Enable a focus on **person-centred, outcomes-focused services** by developing a 'fiscal framework' – the funding rules between Scottish and Local Government that create certainty, stability and transparency and allow investment in Local Government's workforce, services, and communities across Scotland
- Explore and develop a range of options for councils to be **more fiscally empowered**, reducing reliance on Scottish Government grant and allowing our members to focus spend on what matters locally.

Improve the Wellbeing of Individuals, Families & Communities



Local Government develops sustainable outcome-focused services with support for wellbeing at the core. Any services provided by the National Care Service are subject to local democratic control, enhance local outcomes and focus on the needs of local people.

Why?

Social care and social work are vital to our communities; and local authorities are at the heart of the design and delivery of these services. The proposal to remove the staff functions and assets in these from Local Government to a National Care Service with accountability to Ministers will have a significant and detrimental impact on locally designed services that meet the needs of the very different communities across Scotland. We cannot wait for a National Care Service which is focussed on structural change at the expense of investment in our social care and social work services now when the system is already under severe pressure.

We Will:

- Influence the passage of the National Care Service Bill to ensure that staff functions and assets remain within Local Government and thus subject to vital local democratic accountability.
- Continue to argue for investment into Local Government in order to support the delivery of a rights-based, preventative approach to health and social care.
- Work at pace to improve the support for the social work and social care workforces.
- Continue to take forward and develop the Joint Statement of intent with a focus on Fair Work and ethical commissioning.

Deliver a Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy



In line with the principles of a 'just transition', Local Government makes a meaningful contribution to the 2030 climate change target and is a key leader and driver of local economies.

Why?

The imperative to transition to a net zero economy is a direct response to worsening climate change. It requires fundamental change to many aspects of the economy and society over the next two decades and more, which will need to be delivered in as fair a way as possible. This priority also recognises that there is an economic and societal benefit of taking action on climate change, and that inaction will lead to worse outcomes, including increasing levels of poverty.

We Will:

- Work with Scottish Government and our Local Government partners to ensure just transition is well coordinated at the national level.
- Focus on those high carbon sectors which have the strongest connection to the economy and society e.g. transport and heat.
- Argue for greater investment in Local Government which can be used to fund local net zero projects and programmes.
- Work in partnership to deliver a streamlined and more effective business support landscape;
- Work in partnership to develop and deliver the actions within the National Strategy for Economic Transformation.

Enhance Education & Support for our Children & Young People



Local Government secures the best education for all our children and young people and provides wider learning and support while tackling poverty and social inequality.

Why?

Local Government sets the conditions which support our children and young people to grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding, enhancing their life chances through our early years provision, education and by supporting families when they need it. We include children and families in decisions about their lives and protect their rights, dignity, and wellbeing. Schools and learning environments are loving, respectful and encouraging and everyone can learn, play, and flourish. Children and young people have hope for the future and opportunities to fulfil their dreams.

We Will:

Have at the forefront of our minds the social inequality and factors which mean children and young people do not have an equal starting point in life. We will do this by ensuring Local Government remains directly responsible and accountable for services and supporting the changes and improvements necessary to their:

- Learning opportunities – supporting children and young people to achieve the best possible educational outcomes, including working to close the poverty-related attainment gap, and improving the overall standards of attainment which have been impacted by the effects of the Covid pandemic.
- Care and wellbeing – Keeping the Promise Scotland made to care experienced infants, children, young people, adults, and their families, and supporting all children and young people's mental and physical health.
- Rights and protection – Making sure that children's rights are protected, supporting incorporation of UNCRC into Scots law, and keeping children and young people safe and protected from harm.

Support the Most Vulnerable in our Communities



Local Government supports individuals and families through focussing on the realisation of human rights and tackling poverty and inequalities, particularly where the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Cost-of-Living crisis is impacting negatively on their life opportunities and chances.

Why?

Everyone should have access to sufficient food, clothing, and housing, and warmth, and we should strive for continuous improvement in living conditions for those who are most marginalised. In order for those most vulnerable in society to be part of healthy and happy communities, we must nurture and protect our local resources, environments and all who live in them. Local Government plays a central role in this regard and by working in partnership with colleagues across the public and third sector, we can support and empower those who are at most risk of exclusion and poverty.

We Will:

- Work to ensure that councils are empowered and resourced to maximise their role in preventing poverty.
- Support Local Government's work on strengthening employability services to help those who are most disadvantaged in the labour market.
- Work with partners to develop policies which reduce homelessness and improve access to quality housing.
- Work with councils in their delivery of benefits and financial support, and to develop further the relationship with Social Security Scotland.
- Drive the system changes needed to realise the human rights of all those living in our communities.
- Proactively shape and deliver programmes which support people who are seeking sanctuary in the UK, and work to address the risks of exclusion and destitution faced by migrants.
- Support and strengthen the community justice model to safely reduce offending, while ensuring that we protect, support, and improve outcomes for victims and witnesses of crime.
- Work to strengthen, support, and promote community wellbeing through broadening sport, leisure, and cultural access.





COSLA

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European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

Summary and Recommendations

Convention is provided with a further update regarding the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill and seeks Convention's agreement that COSLA continue to engage with the Scottish Government, and with Mark Ruskell MSP, to press for the development of suitable amendments to enable the Bill, and also separately the UNCRC (Incorporation) Bill, to pass in compliance with the Supreme Court judgement.

This paper invites Convention to agree that COSLA demand 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 to bringing an amended Bill forward via the Reconsideration Stage.

References

Previous reports:

- 22-06-17 Item 11 European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill - Update

European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Convention with such information as is available to for an update on the progress being made toward securing an amended European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill, such that it complies with the requirements detailed by the Supreme Court of Justice necessary to it to receive Royal assent and be passed into Scots Law.

Background

2. As members of Convention will be aware, COSLA has supported the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill throughout the entire process of its development, introduction, and progression through all parliamentary phases.
3. Subsequently the UK Government lodged a case with the UK Supreme Court arguing that some of the sections of this Bill (and the similar United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill (UNCRC Bill), relate to the power of the UK Government and Parliament to legislate and act in Scotland in areas of reserved competence.
4. In October 2021, the UK Supreme Court announced the decision that various sections of both the European Charter for Local Self-Government Bill and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill would be outside the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament. As a result, royal assent could not be given to either Bill; the Bills were returned to the Scottish Parliament so that these issues could receive further consideration.
5. In May 2022, the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, delivered a Ministerial Statement to Scottish Parliament regarding both the European Charter on Local Self-Government and UNCRC incorporation Bills.
6. In this statement, the Deputy First Minister advised that the Scottish Government intend to return the UNCRC Bill to Parliament via the reconsideration stage and will seek to make the necessary changes to the Bill to address the Supreme Court judgement.
7. In terms of the European Charter Bill, the Deputy First Minister advised that the Scottish Government would engage with Mark Ruskell MSP, the member leading this Bill, in order to support him in taking the Bill forward; Mr Ruskell then confirmed his intention to seek reconsideration for this Bill.

Current Position

8. Securing the adoption of the European Charter for Local Self-Government into Scots law remains a priority area for COSLA. COSLA's President and Vice President as well as COSLA's officers have, repeatedly and at every opportunity, stated our willingness to work with the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government to press forward on drafting the amendments required to enable the Bill to pass in compliance with the UK Supreme Court judgement.

9. Scottish Government Ministers have committed to engaging with COSLA, and with Mr. Ruskell, on the progress of the European Charter Bill. However, in the period following the Deputy First Minister's statement, there has been no substantive movement by Scottish Government or Scottish Parliament on this issue. Other than, in their Programme for Government published in September 202, the Scottish Government committed to *“supporting the European Charter Bill”* and to *“work closely with Mark Ruskell MSP, as the designated member in charge of that Bill, to support him in bringing back for Reconsideration Stage.”*
10. In further efforts to initiate progress on this matter the President has written to Ms Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Housing and Local Government, copied to Mr Ruskell, emphasising our concerns and requesting a meeting to agree a timetable for an acceleration of progress on this matter.
11. It is noted that the processes and competencies associated with submitting a Bill for Reconsideration are 'uncharted territory' for the Scottish Parliament and Government. Further, it is appreciated that the work required likely extends beyond the simple deletion of the sections in question and requires ensuring there are no unintended consequences through impacts on links to related legislation/sections. Nevertheless, the extended delay to progress is a significant concern and disappointment.

Next Steps

12. Following this meeting COSLA will engage again with Scottish Government, and with Mark Ruskell MSP, on the development and progress of the European Charter Bill and we will work to hold Scottish Government to its commitment to support Mr. Ruskell in bringing the Bill forward via the Reconsideration Stage. Similarly, representations will be made around progressing the UNCRC Bill.
13. Should a response be received meantime to the President's written representations, then the detail of that will be shared at the Convention meeting.

October 2022