



MINUTE OF MEETING OF LEADERS (DRAFT)

Friday, 12 June 2020 at 1100hrs
Microsoft Teams

Present

COSLA President	Councillor Alison Evison
COSLA Vice President	Councillor Graham Houston
Aberdeen City Council	Angela Scott
Aberdeen City Council	Councillor Douglas Lumsden
Aberdeenshire Council	Jim Savege
Aberdeenshire Council	Councillor Jim Gifford
Angus Council	Margo Williamson
Angus Council	Councillor David Fairweather
Argyll and Bute Council	Pippa Milne
Argyll and Bute Council	Councillor Aileen Morton
City of Edinburgh Council	Andrew Kerr
City of Edinburgh Council	Councillor Claire Miller
City of Edinburgh Council	Councillor Adam McVey
Clackmannanshire Council	Stuart Crickmar (Substitute)
Clackmannanshire Council	Councillor Ellen Forson
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Malcolm Burr
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Councillor Roddie Mackay
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Sheila Morton (Substitute)
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Councillor Rob Davidson
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Councillor Gail Macgregor
COSLA Spokesperson	Roger Mennie (Substitute)
Dundee City Council	Councillor John Alexander
Dundee City Council	Fiona Lees
East Ayrshire Council	Councillor Douglas Reid
East Ayrshire Council	Councillor Elena Whitham
East Ayrshire Council	Gerry Cornes
COSLA Spokesperson	Councillor Andrew Polson
East Dunbartonshire Council	Monica Patterson
East Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Stuart Currie
East Lothian Council	Councillor Norman Hampshire (Substitute)
East Lothian Council	Lorraine McMillan
East Lothian Council	
COSLA Spokesperson	
East Lothian Council	
East Renfrewshire Council	

East Renfrewshire Council	Councillor Tony Buchanan
Falkirk Council	Kenneth Lawrie
Falkirk Council	Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn
Fife Council	Steve Grimmond
Fife Council	Councillor David Alexander
Fife Council	Councillor David Ross
Glasgow City Council	Annemarie O'Donnell
Glasgow City Council	Councillor Susan Aitken
Highland Council	Donna Manson
Highland Council	Councillor Margaret Davidson
Inverclyde Council	Aubrey Fawcett
Inverclyde Council	Councillor Stephen McCabe
COSLA Spokesperson	Dr Grace Vickers
Midlothian Council	Councillor Derek Milligan
Midlothian Council	
Midlothian Council	Councillor Kelly Parry
COSLA Spokesperson	Roderick Burns
Moray Council	Councillor Graham Leadbitter
Moray Council	Craig Hatton
North Ayrshire Council	Councillor Joe Cullinane
North Ayrshire Council	Des Murray
North Lanarkshire Council	Councillor Paul Kelly (Substitute)
North Lanarkshire Council	John Mundell
Orkney Islands Council	
Orkney Islands Council	Councillor Steven Heddle
COSLA Spokesperson	
Orkney Islands Council	Councillor James Stockan
Perth and Kinross Council	Karen Reid
Perth and Kinross Council	Councillor Peter Barrett
Perth and Kinross Council	Councillor Murray Lyle
Renfrewshire Council	Sandra Black
Renfrewshire Council	Councillor Iain Nicolson
Scottish Borders Council	Michael Cook (Substitute)
Scottish Borders Council	Councillor Shona Haslam
Shetland Islands Council	Maggie Sandison
Shetland Islands Council	Councillor Steven Coutts
South Ayrshire Council	Eileen Howat
South Ayrshire Council	Councillor Peter Henderson (Substitute)
South Lanarkshire Council	Cleland Sneddon
South Lanarkshire Council	Councillor John Ross
Stirling Council	Carol Beattie
Stirling Council	Councillor Scott Farmer
West Dunbartonshire Council	Joyce White
West Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Jonathan McColl
West Lothian Council	Graham Hope
West Lothian Council	Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

Apologies

Clackmannanshire Council
Dumfries and Galloway Council
Dundee City Council
East Dunbartonshire Council
East Lothian Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Scottish Borders Council
South Ayrshire Council

Nikki Bridle*
Gavin Stevenson*
David Martin*
Councillor Vaughan Moody
Councillor William Innes*
Councillor Jim Logue*
Tracey Logan*
Councillor Douglas Campbell*

**Denotes substitute provided
Apologies were recorded where notified in advance.*

Public Session

1. Introduction

The President welcomed those present and provided guidance on how the meeting would be conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams. She referred to recent events in connection with Black Lives Matter and reinforced the need for Leaders to help promote the Improvement Service mentoring programme as a way to encourage and support members of underrepresented communities to stand for election

2. Minute of Leaders' Meeting held on 29 May 2020 (paper)

The Minute of the previous COSLA Leaders' meeting held on 29 May 2020 was accepted as a true record.

3. Calendar of COSLA Meetings (paper)

Leaders reviewed the number and types of meetings that might be held during July 2020 to assess potential workload, ensure availability and that the necessary support to transact these was in place.

Leaders:

- (i) agreed the schedule of meetings going forward as set out in the paper (i.e. 15 July - COVID Recovery Special Interest Group; 16 July - Leadership Sounding Board; and 31 July - Leaders) and thereafter to revert to the schedule of meetings previously agreed by Leaders in November 2019; and
- (ii) noted that if required, special meetings of Leaders could be called.

4. COVID-19 Related Consumer Issues (paper)

The paper advised Leaders of the main consumer related issues that had arisen as a consequence of the COVID pandemic and the contribution that COSLA's national trading standards team had made to these.

COSLA officers took on board the request for information to be more specific about the level of personal details that might be requested to help people differentiate between scams and contact between legitimate NHS Test and Protect teams.

Leaders:

- (i) noted the issues of consumer detriment that had arisen as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and the contribution Trading Standards Scotland had made to tackling them; and
- (ii) advocated the practice of including consumer advice leaflets in food parcels distributed by local authorities.

Private Session

5. Finance Update (paper)

The paper provided Leaders with an overview of the work being progressed to ensure that Local Government had the funding it required to continue to address the significant financial challenges being faced.

COSLA officers responded to a number of questions and points of clarification.

Leaders were invited to:

- (i) note the current position in relation to additional costs to Local Government up to end of June 2020 and the work now being done to establish full year costs;
- (ii) note the lobbying activity undertaken in the last two weeks;
- (iii) agree that officers now work to present a consolidated position and lobbying strategy in relation to Local Government finances for 2020/21 to Leaders at the end of June;
- (iv) note the work being undertaken to secure the resources required for health and social care, education recovery and the provision of food over the summer; and
- (v) note the update on business grants and the actions being undertaken to ensure continued joint working on supporting businesses.

Two amendments were presented:

First: Proposed by Cllr Jonathan McColl and seconded by Cllr Douglas Reid

Leaders thank our Spokespersons and officers for their work to date on our behalf during this extremely difficult and stressful time, and we welcome the moves made already to work with our partners across all spheres of Government in the UK.

Leaders agree the recommendations and that the following points be made clear in our campaign/lobbying activity:

- Councils need more funding from the UK Treasury and the Scottish Government to fund our response to COVID-19. While we accept that there will be collective responsibility across all spheres of Government for funding the response to this crisis, the large shortfall in funding available to Local Government across the UK will see extreme detriment to essential services.
- We acknowledge that the Scottish Government has started distributing to Councils our share of the £155m consequentials, despite this sum not yet being included in the Scottish Government's block grant; this must be remedied by the UK Government as soon as practicable.
- The Scottish Government needs significant borrowing powers if they are to help Local Government and the wider public sector come through this crisis without causing serious damage to services in our communities.

Second: Proposed by Cllr James Stockan and seconded by Cllr Jim Gifford

Additional recommendation.

That COSLA seek agreement from Scottish Government and that local authorities are given maximum flexibility in allocation for their resources by the optimum removal of ring-fencing restrictions.

Leaders unanimously agreed that these two amendments be incorporated into the recommendations above as the decision of the meeting.

6. UK-EU Negotiations (paper)

The paper provided an update to Leaders on the ongoing UK-EU negotiations around their future relationship and sought Leaders' views on the possibility of COSLA calling for an extension.

The President, having clarified that the recommendations in the report were to be moved, indicated that first there should be a vote on the two amendments proposed.

First: Proposed by Cllr Peter Henderson and seconded by Cllr Rob Davidson.

Delete recommendations and replace with:

- (i) note the lack of developments around UK-EU negotiations and acknowledge the significant risks to the Scottish economy and Local Government services of the failure to reach a deal;
- (ii) agree that COSLA calls publicly for an extension to the present negotiations immediately;
- (iii) note that COSLA will continue to promote Leaders' agreed positions throughout the negotiations; and
- (iv) agree that further reports be provided regularly.

Second: Proposed by Cllr Andrew Polson and seconded by Cllr Douglas Lumsden.

Remove Recommendation (ii) from the Report

Vote

First Amendment – 26

Second Amendment - 5

Cllr Jim Gifford, seconded by Cllr James Stockan then moved the recommendations in the report. The winning amendment above was moved by Cllr Peter Henderson and seconded by Cllr Rob Davidson

Vote

Motion – 9

Amendment – 23

Accordingly, Leaders:

- (i) noted the lack of developments around UK-EU negotiations and acknowledge the significant risks to the Scottish economy and Local Government services of the failure to reach a deal;
- (ii) agreed that COSLA calls publicly for an extension to the present negotiations immediately;
- (iii) noted that COSLA will continue to promote Leaders' agreed positions throughout the negotiations; and

- (iv) agreed that further reports be provided regularly.

7. ELC Guidance (paper)

The paper provided Leaders with an update on the Re-opening Early Learning and Childcare Setting Guidance. Some concerns were raised over the terminology that was expressed and COSLA officers agreed to seek clarity from the Scottish Government. The issue of financial viability for private operators was acknowledged and would continue to be highlighted in discussions.

Leaders approved the Re-opening Early Learning and Childcare Guidance.

8. Unaccompanied Children Seeking Asylum (paper)

The paper outlined the crisis situation being faced by councils on the south coast of England that were supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Scottish local authorities had shown strong leadership in the UK's humanitarian response in recent years. However, it was recognised that there were specific financial and capacity issues which made this current 'ask' particularly challenging.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 8 in the report which outlined recent developments in relation to funding changes.

Leaders:

- (i) noted the crisis situation in Kent County Council and Portsmouth City Council due to the high number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) they were supporting; and
- (ii) agreed to continue to consider locally whether their council might assist with the request for placements.

9. Social Care Support Fund and Enhanced Sick Pay (paper)

Leaders were advised that the agenda and title of the paper were different. An update on the death in service benefit would be taken to a future Leaders' meeting.

The paper provided Leaders with information on the social care support fund and payment of enhanced sick pay for people working in social care.

Amendment

An amendment to the recommendation was proposed by Cllr Susan Aitken and seconded by Cllr Scott Farmer, which was agreed unanimously. The two additional recommendations that were agreed are highlighted in italics (v) and (vi) below.

Accordingly, Leaders:

- (i) agreed that the payment mechanisms for enhanced sick pay for social care was made by Local Government, subject to final agreement by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport;
- (ii) agreed to the funding mechanism for local authorities and Integration Authorities as detailed in paragraphs 12-15, subject to final agreement by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport;
- (iii) agreed that the principles for provider sustainability payments were extended to the end of July 2020, subject to final agreement by the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport that they would continue to meet all reasonable costs;

- (iv) agreed the updated principles for provider sustainability payments, Appendix 1;
- (v) *agreed that COSLA publicises the level and extent of public funding supporting the sustainability of the private and social care sector; and*
- (vi) *agreed that COSLA publicises the level and extent of public funding that ensured that all workers in the private social care sector were paid a real living wage, received fair sick pay if self-isolating and delivered progress towards the principles of fair work in social care.*

10. Safer Workplaces Assurance Scheme (paper)

The paper introduced the Scottish Government's proposals for a safer workplaces assurance scheme. Leaders emphasised the need for greater clarity around when elements could be de-escalated and/or that resources would continue.

Leaders:

- (i) agreed that the principles of the scheme were sound;
- (ii) noted that the exact role for Local Government and the funding for the scheme were still to be confirmed; and
- (iii) agreed that once funding was confirmed the distribution would go through the Settlement and Distribution Group and be brought back to Leaders for a decision at the end of June 2020.

11. Distribution (paper)

The report provided Leaders with recommendations from the Settlement and Distribution Group (SDG) on distribution for two specific funding streams.

Leaders agreed the recommendations for each of these funding streams.

12. Routemap Phases – Local and National Decision Making (paper)

Leaders were advised that Phases 2 and 3 of the Scottish Government route-map for easing restrictions outlined a future scenario where COVID-19 was controlled or suppressed, and where the focus was on containing outbreaks and monitoring for signs of resurgence. As outbreaks in Phases 2 and 3 were more likely to be localised in nature, a clear understanding of decision making at a national and local lever was required. The report set out a proposed approach aimed at defining the respective roles and responsibilities of the Scottish Government and Local Government in that context.

In welcoming the direction of travel outlined in the paper, Leaders emphasised the need to ensure local flexibility was maintained.

Leaders:

- (i) noted the update provide in relation to Phases 2 and 3 of the Scottish Government's route-map;
- (ii) agreed the approach set out on respective roles and responsibilities as outline in paragraphs 6-7; and
- (iii) agreed that COSLA should continue to work closely with Scottish Government and Local Government partners to refine this approach over the coming weeks and months, providing updates to Leaders as required.

13. Any Other Competent Business

The President provided an update to Leaders on the European Charter item discussed at the previous meeting. Following the President's letter to the Presiding Officer, on 9 June 2020 the Parliamentary Bureau had referred the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Incorporation) (Scotland) Members Bill to the Local Government and Communities Committee for Stage 1 consideration.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held at 1100hrs on Friday, 26 June 2020 via Microsoft Teams.

Close

There being no further competent business, the President closed the meeting at 1300hrs by thanking Members for their attendance.

