



LD/21/03

MINUTE OF MEETING OF LEADERS (DRAFT)

Friday, 11 December 2020 at 1400hrs
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 Andy Kille
Angus Council	Margo Williamson
Angus Council	Councillor David Fairweather
Argyll and Bute Council	Pippa Milne
Argyll and Bute Council	Councillor Robin Currie
City of Edinburgh Council	Andrew Kerr
City of Edinburgh Council	Councillor Claire Miller
City of Edinburgh Council	Councillor Adam McVey
Clackmannanshire Council	Nikkie Bridle
Clackmannanshire Council	Councillor Ellen Forson
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Malcolm Burr
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Councillor Roddie Mackay
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Sheila Mohan (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 Vaughan Moody
East Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Andrew Polson
East Dunbartonshire Council	Monica Patterson
East Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Stuart Currie
East Lothian Council	Councillor Norman Hampshire (Substitute)
East Lothian Council	
East Lothian Council	
COSLA Spokesperson	
East Lothian Council	

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

Apologies

Dumfries and Galloway Council
Dundee City Council
East Lothian Council
Fife Council
Glasgow City Council
Midlothian Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Perth and Kinross Council
Perth and Kinross Council

Gavin Stevenson*
David Martin*
Councillor William Innes*
Councillor David Alexander*
Councillor Susan Aitken*
Councillor Derek Milligan*
Councillor Jim Logue*
Karen Reid*
Councillor Peter Barrett

**Denotes substitute provided*

Public Session

1. Introduction

The President welcomed those present and provided guidance on how the meeting would be conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams. Apologies and substitutes had been noted separately for the Minute.

2. Draft Minutes of Leaders' Meetings

The draft Minute of the Leaders' meeting held on 27 November 2020 was accepted as a true record.

3. Replacement of EU Structural Funds (paper)

The paper primarily provided an update on the replacement of the EU Structural Funds following the UK's exit from the EU, given the recent announcements from the Scottish Government and in the context of new UK Government proposals on the back of the Internal Market Bill and the Spending Review.

COSLA officers responded to a number of comments and provided clarification on several issues.

Leaders:

- (i) noted recent developments from Scottish and UK Governments in preparation for the replacement of EU Structural Funds post UK exit from the EU, by way of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund;
- (ii) agreed to await further detail on both proposals, and that a further report be considered at the January 2021 Leaders meeting, to assist COSLA agree its formal position;
- (iii) noted that lead partners had been working with the Scottish Government to provide the necessary evidence to the European Commission so that the present suspension of the ERDF and ESF programmes could be lifted;
- (iv) noted the updates on Export Health Certificates and Brexit coordination funding;
- (v) noted the work being undertaken by Business Gateway; and
- (vi) noted the up to date information being provided at the following links - [gov.uk/transition](https://www.gov.uk/transition) and [prepareforbrexit.scot.](https://www.prepareforbrexit.scot/)

Private Session

4. Local Government Finance Update (paper)

The paper provided Leaders with the final update for 2020 on a range of issues including funding allocated to Local Government from UK consequential and the implications for Local Government of the Scottish Government's recent announcements in relation to its 'Winter Plan for Social Protection'. It also provided an update on the UK Spending Review, the timetable for the Scottish Budget, COSLA's pre-budget lobbying and the situation in relation to Loss of Income, Health and Social Care funding and Business Support.

Amendment

An amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Cllr Norman Hampshire and seconded by Cllr Joe Cullinane, which was unanimously agreed as shown in italics at (iii) below.

Accordingly, Leaders:

- (i) noted the updated position in relation to the COVID consequential and the implications for Scotland of the UK Spending Review announcement;
- (ii) noted the budget engagement meeting planned for 10 December with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and that an update would be provided to Leaders, and the planned pre-budget lobbying activity;
- (iii) *noted the scale of income loss for Q1 and Q2 (£227m), and given the quantum available from Scottish Government for this purpose (£90m) and agreed distribution of this £90m as soon as possible based on the proposals in paragraph 19 of the report but, continue to press Scottish Government to meet the full extent of loss of income;*
- (iv) agreed that Local Government would be the delivery body for the additional areas of expected business support outlined in paragraph 27 in the paper; and
- (v) noted that an update would be provided to Leaders on Level 4 Welfare/Social support (£15m) and Discretionary Business grants (£30m), given the recent announcement in relation to the Levels.

5. Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) – 1140 Hours (paper)

Leaders were reminded that earlier in 2020, COSLA agreed with the Scottish Government to remove the statutory duty for 1140 hours of funded ELC set to begin in August 2020 in the light of the coronavirus pandemic. It was agreed that a review on when the duty could be reinstated would take place in December 2020. Following a recent meeting of the ELC Joint Delivery Board, it had been recommended that the statutory duty for 1140 should apply for August 2021.

Leaders:

- (i) agreed the reinstatement date of August 2021 for the duty for local authorities to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to all 3-5 year olds and eligible 2 year olds;
- (ii) agreed that where there was a potential to deliver expanded hours ahead of that date, this would be delivered by families;
- (iii) agreed the end goal of the expansion was “That all eligible children whose families wish to access up to 1140 hours should be able to do so, in a way which meets the national standard and the principles of funding follows the child.”
- (iv) agreed that 2 year olds of care experienced parents would be eligible for the 2 year old offer from August 2021 ahead of legislation on this commitment; and
- (v) noted the work being done on future funding, passed end March 2022.

In the light of the above, the ELC Joint Delivery Board would continue to review national progress, including an update report in March 2021. Through Cllr Stephen McCabe, the ELC Joint Delivery Board would regularly report to the COSLA Children and Young People Board, and where required, to Leaders. A joint public statement on the agreed reinstatement date would be prepared by Cllr McCabe and the Minister for Children and Young People.

6. Funding Early Learning and Childcare in the Deferred Year (paper)

The report updated Leaders on the Scottish Government’s commitment to provide funding for an early learning and childcare place if a child’s entry to Primary 1 was deferred. Leaders noted that the paragraph 17 in the paper was incorrect and that legislation had been laid by

the Scottish Government earlier in the week which would require for full implementation of funded places for deferred entry from August 2023. This date had been moved in the light of tight legislative timetable for the remainder of this Parliament.

Leaders agreed the Joint Implementation Plan: Funded Early Learning and Childcare Places for all children who defer their Primary One start.

7. Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) of Children in Scotland (paper)

Leaders were advised that the aims of the National Joint Investigative Interviewing (JII) Project were to improve the quality and experience of child victims and witnesses. It had been developed from a child rights perspective and was based on trauma-informed principles in order to avoid re-traumatisation. The new approach had been tested in six local authorities to date and early findings were promising. Implementing the new model of practice had significant resource implications for local authorities and COSLA officers noted comments on the need to ensure there was general awareness of this.

Leaders:

- (i) endorsed the views of the JII Governance Group that the Scottish Child Interview Model was the new approach for JII across Scotland and the national roll out over three years; and
- (ii) agreed that COSLA officers work to seek agreement from the Scottish Government to fund the National JII Project costs which were estimated at £2.1m from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 and requested that they meet a proportion of local implementation costs.

8. Recovery SIG – Lessons Learned Report (paper)

Leaders had agreed in April 2020 to the formation of a Special Interest Group (SIG) to inform potential direction for Local Government to support medium to longer term recovery work. The paper provided a brief outline of the work that the Group, chaired by the COSLA Vice-President, had undertaken since it had been set up.

Amendment

An amendment to the recommendations in the paper was proposed by Cllr Stephen McCabe and seconded by Cllr Paul Kelly, agreed unanimously and is accordingly incorporated in the decision at (v) below.

Leaders:

- (i) noted the information provided relating to the work conducted by the Recovery SIG since its formation;
- (ii) provided comment on the draft lessons learned report from COVID-19, which had been included as Appendix A to the paper;
- (iii) agreed that the text of the lessons learned report be amended on the basis of point (ii) above;
- (iv) agreed that the Recovery SIG be formally closed down and that the COSLA Presidential team and Spokespeople were mandated to continue the work as part of usual business; and
- (v) *in addition to the above, agreed the draft report as COSLA's position, but invited further comment on the lessons learned from COVID-19 prior the meeting of Leaders on 29 January 2021 with a view to agreeing the final Report as amended at that meeting.*

9. National Performance Framework (paper)

As agreed at Leaders in November 2020, the paper presented the final report of the impact of COVID-19 on the outcomes in the National Performance Framework. Comments were invited on the high-level messages identified and the content of the final report which had been issued separately.

Leaders agreed to delegate final sign off for co-badging and publication, anticipated 17 or 18 December 2020 to Group Leaders.

10. Distribution (paper)

The report asked Leaders to agree the recommendations from the Settlement and Distribution Group for four distribution areas as set out in the paper. The report also drew Leaders' attention to a development regarding changes to distribution of Crown Estate net revenue, which had been agreed by Leaders at the November 2020 meeting.

Leaders agreed the recommendations as set out in each section in the report for:

- Additional Community Justice Funding for 20/21;
- Winter Plan for Social Protection – Funding for Vulnerable Children;
- Additional Homelessness Funding (RRTP) for 20/21;
- £100 Winter Hardship Payment

11. £500 Bonus Payment to Health and Social Care Staff (paper)

The paper provided Leaders with an overview of the one-off pro-rata £500 bonus payment to health and social care staff that had been announced by the First Minister in recognition of their efforts on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COSLA officers responded to several points for clarification and Leaders noted that any additional information would be circulated as it became available.

Amendment

An amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Cllr Joe Cullinane and seconded by Cllr Lawrence Fitzpatrick, which was unanimously agreed as shown in italics from (vii) below.

It was noted that items referenced as (i) and (ii) in the report did not refer to any recommendations.

Leaders:

- (iii) were invited to provide their comments on the payment as outlined;
- (iv) agreed that COSLA officers and advisers continue to work with Scottish Government to seek certainty on the scope and process of the payment;
- (v) sought agreement that when payments occurred, they were done in tandem with those made to Health;
- (vi) delegated authority to Group Leaders to agree the final process for payment as and when asked;

- (vii) agreed that whilst the Scottish Government's announcement to pay £500 (full-time equivalent) to NHS and Social Care staff was welcomed and deserved, it had missed tens of thousands of Public Sector Workers in Local Government, who had been working through the pandemic;*
- (viii) recognised that Local Government had been operating under extremely difficult circumstances – distributing food/medicine/essential items across Scotland, protecting/caring for our vulnerable and elderly, collecting waste, staffing temporary mortuaries, staffing the hubs of “keyworker” children, keeping schools and early years open, staffing the asymptomatic testing sites, Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers enforcing public health and wellbeing., Mental Health Workers with increased caseloads, Housing and Craft workers who had been working in tenants homes, the army of cleaning staff who had done a brilliant job in our care homes/essential buildings/schools and those who had been issuing emergency support grants, noting that this was not an exhaustive list;*
- (ix) recognised the efforts made by many other key workers in the public, private and 3rd sectors in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic;*
- (x) called on Scottish Government to ensure that it recognised the efforts across our “one workforce” in Local Government and lobby Scottish Government to ensure that this payment was extended to all COVID-19 responders and key workers across Local Government and that they were rewarded equally; and*
- (xi) sought their public assurance that Scottish Government would fully fund the payment and costs associated with the delivery of this payment.*

12. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held at 1100hrs on Friday, 29 January 2021 via Microsoft Teams.

Close

On behalf of Leaders, the President thanked Cllr Elena Whitham for her significant support and contribution to the work of COSLA and wished her well for the future.

Leaders were thanked for the important work they had done during the year and for ensuring constructive debates had been maintained through virtual meetings.

The President closed the meeting at 1500hrs by thanking Members for their attendance.