



LD/21/74

MINUTE OF MEETING OF SPECIAL LEADERS (DRAFT)

Friday, 26 March 2021 at 1530hrs

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 Millar
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	Lorna Mehan (Substitute)
Dumfries and Galloway Council	Councillor Rob Davidson
Dumfries and Galloway Council	
COSLA Spokesperson	Councillor Gail Macgregor
Dundee City Council	Robert Emmott (Substitute)
Dundee City Council	Councillor John Alexander
East Ayrshire Council	Eddie Fraser
East Ayrshire Council	Councillor Douglas Reid
East Dunbartonshire Council	Gerry Cornes
East Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Vaughan Moody
East Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Andrew Polson
East Lothian Council	Monica Patterson
East Lothian Council	
COSLA Spokesperson	Councillor Stuart Currie
East Lothian Council	Councillor Norman Hampshire (Substitute)
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 David Alexander
Fife Council	Councillor David Ross
Glasgow City Council	Annemarie O'Donnell
Glasgow City Council	Councillor Richard Bell (Substitute)
Highland Council	Donna Manson
Highland Council	Councillor Margaret Davidson
Inverclyde Council	Aubrey Fawcett
Inverclyde Council	Councillor Stephen McCabe
COSLA Spokesperson	Gary Fairley (Substitute)s
Midlothian Council	Councillor Derek Milligan
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	James Wylie (Substitute)
Orkney Islands Council	Councillor Steven Heddle
Orkney Islands Council	Councillor James Stockan
COSLA Spokesperson	Barbara Renton
Orkney Islands Council	Councillor Robin Currie (Substitute)
Perth and Kinross Council	Councillor Murray Lyle
Perth and Kinross Council	Sandra Black
Perth and Kinross Council	Councillor Iain Nicolson
Renfrewshire Council	Netta Meadows
Renfrewshire Council	Councillor Shona Haslam
Scottish Borders Council	Maggie Sandison
Scottish Borders Council	Councillor Emma Macdonald (Substitute)
Shetland Islands Council	Eileen Howat
Shetland Islands Council	Councillor Peter Henderson
South Ayrshire Council	Clealand Sneddon
South Ayrshire Council	Councillor John Ross
South Lanarkshire Council	Carol Beattie
South Lanarkshire Council	Councillor Scott Farmer
Stirling Council	Victoria Rogers (Substitute)
Stirling Council	Councillor Jonathan McColl
West Dunbartonshire Council	Graham Hope
West Dunbartonshire Council	Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan (Substitute)
West Lothian Council	
West Lothian Council	

Apologies

Dumfries and Galloway Council
Dundee City Council
East Lothian Council
Glasgow City Council
Midlothian Council
North Lanarkshire Council
Orkney Islands
Perth and Kinross Council
Shetland Islands Council
West Dunbartonshire Council
West Lothian Council

Gavin Stevenson*
Gregory Colgan*
Councillor William Innes*
Susan Aitken*
Dr Grace Vickers
Councillor Jim Logue*
John Mundell*
Peter Barrett*
Councillor Steven Coutts*
Joyce White*
Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick*

**Denotes substitute provided*

Private 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. Local Government Finance Update (paper LD/21/61 refers)

The report provided Leaders with an update on three key areas:

- the final Local Government Settlement for 2021/22;
- the current situation in relation to the service concession flexibility and review of statutory migration; and
- on business support, in light of the First Minister's announcement week commencing 15 March 2021, about the easing of lockdown measures.

COSLA officers responded to several points for clarification and took on board Members' requests to seek more certainty entering the next Budget period.

Leaders:

- (i) noted the position in relation to the Local Government Settlement for 2021/22;
- (ii) agreed next steps in relation to the Service Concession flexibility and review of capital accounting; and
- (iii) noted the update on business grants and that a full report would be provided to the April 2021 Leaders' meeting.

3. Pay Negotiation Update (paper LD/21/62 refers)

The report provided Leaders with an update on the pay claim discussions held so far with the SJC trade unions and requested a political steer on some proposals that might alter the current offer.

Amendment

An amendment to the recommendations was proposed by Cllr David Ross and seconded by Cllr Norman Hampshire, which was unanimously agreed as shown below:

Leaders:

- (i) Whilst understanding the pressure on diaries, were disappointed that the Cabinet Secretary could not make time to meet as a matter of urgency to discuss, in particular, the matter of public sector pay policy and the necessary additional funding for Local Government and therefore asked that the President and Spokesperson approach the Cabinet Secretary again to request an urgent and essential meeting;
- (ii) noted the very recent announcement of NHS pay, called for the Scottish Government to also recognise the work carried out by our council staff that kept our communities safe and vital services going during the pandemic and requested that the Scottish Government provide the funding to Local Government that would allow them to fund a similar rise to

- that they had provided to our NHS staff;
- (iii) asked the Spokesperson and officers to look in detail at this offer and produce costings for Leaders on the equivalent for Local Government, together with detailed costings of the other options outlined in the paper, including payment of the SSSC registration fee, as a basis for a further funding request to Scottish Government; and
 - (iv) also asked officers to survey individual councils to determine the affordability to them of the current pay offer and any possible enhanced offer.

4. Distribution (paper LD/21/63 refers)

Leaders were advised that an addendum to the paper had been issued earlier that day and referenced as **LD/21/63A**.

The paper asked Leaders to agree recommendations from the Settlement and Distribution Group in relation to four distribution areas:

- Pandemic Payments – Additional Funding for 2021/22
- Community Justice Funding – Pandemic Recovery Work 2021/22
- Real Living Wage Distribution Method – Funding Allocation for 2021/22 (£30.5m)
- Funding for Pressures (£40m) – announced as part of the Finance Order debate

This paper also invited Leaders to note:

- Local Self Isolation Assistance Service (LSIAS) – Outbound Calling
- Free School Meals during School Closures (March 2021)
- Potential budget pressures during 2021/22

The addendum advised that Leaders had previously agreed that Local Government would deliver the £130 Low Income Pandemic Payment (LIPP), paid to households in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and agreed households who were either exempt from Council Tax or had no liability by summer 2021. However, the addendum provided additional information on Scottish Government's position in relation to this payment, given Leaders' concerns on 12 March about Local Government capacity.

Leaders:

- (i) Agreed the distribution recommendations relating to Community Justice Funding, Real Living Wage, and Funding Pressures (£40m) and the three areas requiring noting; and
- (ii) In relation to Pandemic Payments, agreed that officers further engage with Scottish Government to continue to pursue the position agreed on 12 March.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held at 1100hrs on Friday, 30 April 2021 via Microsoft Teams

Close

The President closed the meeting at 1615hrs by thanking Members for their attendance.