
LEADER'S REPORT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report outlines key activities undertaken within the role of Council Leader since 13th December 2013, through attendance at COSLA and engagement in the recruitment process for the selection of the new Executive Director for Development and Infrastructure Services and the new Head of Economic Development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** It is recommended that Council notes the report and notes that additional documents are available in a Leaders Report Pack through the Leadership Support Officer.

3 COSLA Convention on Friday 13th December 2013

- 3.1** I attended the above meeting in Verity House, Edinburgh with Councillors Ellen Morton and Duncan MacIntyre and with our Chief Executive, Sally Loudon. The agenda contained items taken in both private and public session as follows:-

Items taken in Private Session

1. Children & Young People Bill – Through Care and Aftercare
2. Consultation on Amending the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010
3. Health & Social Care Integration: Legislative and Policy Developments
4. Tackling Health Inequalities
5. Future Community Justice Structure Proposal
6. Police Service of Scotland
7. EU Scottish Funds 2014-2020
8. Motion from Scottish Borders Council

Items taken in Public Session

9. COSLA European Policy Initiatives for 2014
10. Zero Waste / Housing Bill Task Groups
11. Scottish National Action Plan on Human Rights

Although I am unable to report on the items that were taken in private session, I have summarised the “public session” items for you below. Further details of the meeting are available in the Leaders Report Pack.

3.2 COSLA European Policy Initiatives for 2014

The purpose of this paper was to provide an overview of the major priorities from the

European Union for 2014 which directly concern local authorities, and a brief review of COSLA's EU work during 2013. This report is submitted annually to the COSLA Convention at this time of year.

Within the recommendations of the paper, the Convention was invited to:

- agree the key COSLA EU policy initiatives list (**ANNEX 1 below*) for 2014, with any amendments and
- note the ongoing EU policy work by COSLA at political and officer level on EU matters, based around these policy initiatives.

Argyll and Bute Position

The summarised topics related to institutional issues; public services, employment and social affairs, economic development, environment and energy, and transport. COSLA's proposed EU policy initiatives for 2014 will align with many council departments and teams, in particular the services within the Development and Infrastructure Directorate (Economic Development and Strategic Transportation & Waste Management) but also with Strategic Finance, Governance and Law, Improvement and HR and the Procurement Team.

In relation to the State Aid dossier(s) under the "Public Services" heading, the European Team has contributed officer feedback to the Scottish Government on the; Services of General Economic Interest, the General Block Exemption Regulation (and the agricultural equivalent), the De Minimis Regulation and the Regional Aid Assisted Areas Regulation and mapping, to assist the Scottish Government's work in these areas. The European Team has also liaised with our colleagues in Strategic Transportation about the Regional Airport Guidelines.

The recent developments on EU policy areas (including the work of councillors and officers engaged in representing Scottish local government in Europe and negotiating changes to legislation) was noted and the success, to date, was welcomed.

Outcome

The Convention agreed to the recommendations of the paper.

***ANNEX 1**

Draft Summary of COSLA EU Policy Initiatives Work 2014

Institutional Issues

- **Political representation:** support Scottish councillors' engagement in CoR (Committee of the Regions), Congress, CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions), and UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments), and support councils' direct EU engagement where appropriate.
- **Charter of Local Self Government:** ensure that the UK monitoring report reflect Scottish concerns and provides EU evidence to the Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy.
- **Subsidiarity:** contribute to the UK Balance of Competence Review, the Subsidiarity Expert Group and work with Scottish Parliament and Government for an improved involvement in EU prioritisation.
- **CEMR:** actively contribute to, and when possible lead, local government EU policy

development work and officer groups.

Public Services

- **Public Procurement Directive:** support its implementation, including provisions on shared services, and its linkages to the Procurement Reform Bill
- **VAT Regulation:** ensure that the favourable arrangements for VAT remain in place.
- **Data Protection:** argue for a deal that is proportionate in the burden placed on Councils.
- **Standardisation of Public Documents:** ensure that local subsidiarity is respected.
- **State Aid:** contribute to the final stage of the state reform package.

Employment and Social Affairs

- **Working Time Directive:** ensure that the existing Scottish local employment arrangements are respected in the new legislation
- **Youth Employment:** contribute to the Youth Employments Initiative and Guarantee at EU level and to the National Reform Programme
- **Pensions:** ensure that the Retirement Pensions Directive respects' Councils ability to run their own pension schemes.
- **Social Dialogue:** Engage in CEMR's EU Dialogue for Local and Regional Governments as Employers, covering the Social Investment Package, Gender Pay Gap Strategy.
- **Health Inequalities:** influence EU strategy and engage with the Joint Improvement Team on EU health related issues

Economic Development

- **Scottish Partnership Agreement 2014-2020:** support the implementation in Scotland and engage with EU partners accordingly
- **New EU policies:** engage with new EU policies already emerging on urban and rural development and macro-regional strategies (including Atlantic and North Sea)

Environment & Energy.

- **Waste:** ensure that the new EU directive is consistent with Scotland's Zero Waste Plan
- **Air Quality and noise:** ensure that the Directives recognise that Councils are to be accountable for environmental impacts they are directly responsible for.
- **Covenant of Mayors, Smart Cities, Reference Framework of Sustainable Cities:** continue working with Councils and our EU colleagues ensuring Councils are able to benefit from the approach.
- **Climate and Energy:** ensure that the level of ambition of new EU proposals are in synchrony with existing Scottish plans.

Transport

- **Urban Mobility Package:** work with Scottish, UK and European partners to ensure that new EU rules respect Councils ability to decide their local transport policies, schemes and interventions.

3.3 Zero Waste / Housing Bill Task Groups

The purpose of this paper was to ask Convention to agree to the recommendations below.

Within the recommendations of the paper, the Convention was invited to:

- agree to the establishment of a Zero Waste Task Group and a Housing Bill Task Group;
- agree the relevant remit and working arrangements as outlined within the paper; and
- agree that Political Group Leaders be approached for nominations

Argyll and Bute Position

Our position and advice was to agree to the recommendations of the paper. Councillor Robin Currie has been nominated to represent Argyll and Bute Council at the Housing Bill Task Group.

Outcome

Convention members agreed to the recommendations of the paper

3.4 Scottish National Action Plan on Human Rights

The purpose of this report was to advise the Convention of the publication of a Scottish Human Rights Action Plan, on Tuesday 10 December; which is Human Rights Day.

Within the recommendations, the Convention was asked to:-

- note the publication of the Scottish Human Rights Action Plan; and
- agree to refer the document to the next meeting of Leaders in January 2014 for more detailed consideration and the formulation of a response

Argyll and Bute Position

Our position and advice was to agree to the recommendations of the paper

Outcome

COSLA Leaders agreed on the recommendations within this paper.

4.0 Recruitment Process for the Positions of Executive Director for Development and Infrastructure and for the Head of Economic Development

Following the resignation of Sandy MacTaggart, Executive Director of Development & Infrastructure and Robert Pollock, Head of Economic Development & Strategic Transportation, the Council approved the establishment of an Appointments Panel to recruit to the vacant posts.

I chaired the Appointments Panel which included Councillors; Ellen Morton, Len Scoullar, Duncan MacIntyre, Donald Kelly, John Semple and Sandy Taylor as well as Chief Executive, Sally Loudon and HR Manager, Lynn Finlay.

The posts were advertised on 1st November and closed on 22nd November 2013. The Appointment Panel convened on 27th November 2013 to carry out the formal leeting process for both posts.

The formal recruitment & selection process included an interview and presentation to the Appointments Panel, as well as an Assessment Centre run by SOLACE which comprised of a Competency Based Interview, Case Study Briefing Exercise, In-tray Exercise, Group Exercise and Psychometric Profiling. Interview sessions were also held with the Executive Directors and our Community Planning Partners.

The recruitment & selection sessions for the Executive Director of Development & Infrastructure were held on 17th and 18th December 2013 and following this process, Pippa Milne was appointed as the successful candidate.

The recruitment & selection sessions for the Head of Economic Development & Strategic Transportation were held on 7th & 8th January 2014 and following this process Fergus Murray was appointed as the successful candidate.