

**MINUTES of MEETING of POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP ON THE LOCAL GOVERNANCE
(SCOTLAND) ACT 2004 held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on MONDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2006**

Present: Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Ronald Kinloch	Councillor George Freeman
Councillor John McAlpine	Councillor Isobel Strong

Also Present: Councillor Alison Hay

Attending: James McLellan, Chief Executive
Nigel Stewart, Director of Corporate Services

Apologies: Councillor Gary Mulvaney

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy Development Group on Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 of 4 August 2005 were approved as a correct record subject to the amendment of Councillor Donald Kinloch to Councillor Ronald Kinloch and Councillor Len Scoular to Councillor Len Scoullar.

2. REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS: ARGYLL AND BUTE

The Group was asked to give consideration to a report by the Director of Corporate Services advising that the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland had submitted its report to Ministers following the Review of Electoral Arrangements for the introduction of the single transferable vote system for Local Government elections in 2007.

Decision

The Group noted the current position.

(Ref: Report by Director of Corporate Services dated 2 February 2005, and Fourth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements - Argyll and Bute Council Area, submitted).

3. COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION

The Group was invited to discuss the terms of a report advising that the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee (SLARC) had submitted its report on Councillor Remuneration to Ministers.

Decision

1. The Group discussed the terms of the report and noted the current

position.

2. The Group agreed that the Director of Corporate Services should prepare a preliminary estimate of the likely cost implication for 2007 in light of the SLARC proposals.

(Ref: Report by Director of Corporate Services dated 2 February 2006, submitted).

4. COMMISSION ON BOUNDARY DIFFERENCES AND VOTING SYSTEMS (ARBUTHNOTT)

The Commission on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems (Arbuthnott Commission), who have the remit to examine the consequences of having four different systems of voting in Scotland as well as looking at different boundaries for Westminster and Scottish Parliament constituencies, had submitted its report to the Secretary of State for Scotland and the First Minister.

Decision

The Group noted the current position.

(Ref: Report by Director of Corporate Services dated 2 February 2006, submitted).

5. SCOTTISH ELECTIONS 2007

The Director of Corporate Services submitted a report for consideration regarding the current position for planning for the combined Scottish Parliament and Local Government elections being held on Thursday 3 May 2007.

Decision

The Group discussed the current position, noted the terms of the report and agreed –

1. That, subject to satisfactory acceptance testing, the preference is that the counting of votes in the 2007 elections should use e-counting technology.
2. that in view of geographic considerations and the need for proper involvement by candidates and agents in the count process, the count centre for the Argyll and Bute constituency and local government area should be in Argyll and Bute, even if this requires an additional financial input from the Council;
3. that Councillors Scoullar and Freeman should represent the Council at the forthcoming e-counting trials.

(Ref: Report by Director of Corporate Services dated 2 February 2006, submitted).

6. WIDENING ACCESS TO COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP (STAND-UP FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE)

A discussion paper prepared by the Director of Corporate Services was submitted for consideration.

Decision

It was agreed that the Director of Corporate Services should develop –

1. relevant information to be incorporated in an information pack for the benefit of those who may wish to consider standing for election to the Council
2. relevant protocols for multi-member ward working at ward level and cross-party working at Council wide level.

(Ref: Discussion Paper “Argyll and Bute Council Beyond 2007” by Director of Corporate Services and list of questions, tabled)

7. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

It was agreed to continue consideration of this item to the next meeting of the Group to allow Members the opportunity of reviewing the discussion paper by the Director of Corporate Services which was tabled at the meeting.

(Ref: Discussion Paper “Argyll and Bute Council Beyond 2007” by Director of Corporate Services and list of questions, tabled)

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Group noted that their next meeting would take place on 16 March 2006 and that the time of the meeting should take into consideration the Public Service and Licensing Committee which was also due to take place on this day.

