

8 May 2017

Sent to: Chief Executives

Dear Colleague

I realise that the next couple of weeks will be very busy as your new Council beds in and I wish you all the best for this period.

— The purpose of this letter is to outline all the information and deadlines that your Council needs to be aware of and adhere to, to enable this term of COSLA to begin smoothly and ensure a properly empowered Convention takes place on 30<sup>th</sup> June. This letter formally outlines the information I previously wrote to you with on 8<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Leaders' Meeting**

The first COSLA Leaders' meeting after the elections will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> May. It would be helpful if we were to know the name and contact details of the Leader of your Council in time to send out papers for this meeting. This would mean that, ideally, contact details should be with COSLA by **19<sup>th</sup> May**. Any Council who has not appointed a Leader can send an elected member to act as an interim Leader and they could represent the Council's views for this one meeting. Like any normal COSLA meeting, substitutes will also be permissible, if necessary, but I would encourage you to inform us of this as soon as possible.

### **Convention Meeting**

The Convention meeting will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> June. This pivotal meeting will include the election of COSLA's President and Vice President, along with the appointment of Spokespersons. The following information sets out the process that COSLA is constitutionally required to undertake, and the steps that your Council will need to undertake in relation to this.

For ease, a clear breakdown of the timelines which COSLA is working to between now and the Convention meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June is attached as Appendix 1 to this letter.

#### **- Nominations for President and Vice President**

Under the terms of paragraph 5.3 of the Constitution, COSLA is required to elect its principal office bearers at the first meeting of the Convention following the election of Councillors. This meeting has to be held within 9 weeks of the election date. The principal office bearers are the President and Vice President. The Constitution also requires that the President and Vice President must be of different political groups and of different genders.

**This letter provides formal notification that COSLA is seeking nominations for the posts of President and Vice President, and sets out the arrangements for doing so.**

Nominations for the President and Vice President must be sent to Stuart Johnston no later than **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June**. There is no scope for us to vary these timescales because they are set out in the Constitution. Stuart can be contacted by email on [stuart.johnston@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.johnston@cosla.gov.uk) or alternatively 0131 474 9214.

It is Convention delegates who nominate for the posts of President and Vice President. Any elected member from a COSLA member Council is eligible to be nominated for President and Vice President. The same candidate can be nominated for both posts. In order to be valid, nominations must be made by two members of the Convention. The key considerations associated with the Convention Delegations and Election of President and Vice President are attached at Appendix 2 of this letter.

While it is possible for nominations to be withdrawn, it is not possible, constitutionally, to add further nominations after 9<sup>th</sup> June deadline. **If your Convention members miss the deadlines involved they lose the chance to nominate and we have no flexibility to make an exception.**

Once all nominations have been received, COSLA will write to all Convention delegates setting out the names received for each position along with their political group, the Council they represent, and the elected members supporting their nomination. COSLA intends to do this on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June.

#### - **Council Delegation to Convention**

Your Council has a defined number of delegates and the Constitution of COSLA requires that your delegation reflects the balance of party political representation on your Council. Attached to this letter at Appendix 3 is a page which indicates the total number of places each Council has on the COSLA Convention.

Whilst Councils could appoint Convention delegates right up until 29<sup>th</sup> June, as the above makes clear, the deadline for receiving nominations for the posts of President and Vice President is the 9<sup>th</sup> June. **As such, for any Convention Member to be able to fully participate in nominations for the election of the Presidential Team, they must be appointed no later than 8<sup>th</sup> June, and have intimated any nominations for the Presidential Team to COSLA by 9<sup>th</sup> June.**

COSLA cannot appoint any Spokespersons until the political balance of the Convention is established. This hinges on receiving your Council's delegation for Convention. Once the political balance on the Convention is clear, the Groups (via Political Group Leaders) on COSLA will be advised of any Spokesperson vacancies available to them and invited to agree the division of portfolios and agree nominations for Spokespersons. This will collectively have to be gender balanced.

I would therefore be grateful if the names and political affiliation of your Council's delegation to the Convention could be sent no later than **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June**. If you foresee any difficulties in meeting this deadline, please let Stuart Johnston (contact details above) know as soon as this becomes apparent.

#### **Changes to Constitution**

You will recall that, at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017, the Convention agreed the recommendations arising from the COSLA Review and as such authorised the necessary steps be taken to enact the package of proposals, including the process for updating COSLA's Constitution. Immediately following that meeting the Special Leaders' meeting also noted that the Constitution would now require changes and that details of these amendments would be brought forward to the Leaders' meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May.

The final part of this letter is therefore to make you aware of the next steps and processes involved to change the Constitution. Since those meetings on the 31<sup>st</sup> March, COSLA officers have been working their way through the required amendments and these proposals have been given to COSLA's legal advisers who are in the process of translating them into the necessary language to be included in the revised Constitution. Only the Leaders meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May can approve the final proposals that will be submitted to Convention on 30<sup>th</sup> June. Therefore, the proposed changes will be the subject of a full report to the Leaders meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> May and following that, 28 days' notice will be given to member Councils of the exact proposals to be discussed at the June Convention. This process is required to fulfil the requirements regarding how our Constitution can be changed.

I appreciate the challenges involved at this very busy time but by writing to you early I hope that this will make it as easy as possible to integrate COSLA's Constitutional requirements and timescales into your Council's decision making process. Clearly, you will wish to bring these to the attention of your political leadership and appointed Convention delegations as soon as you know who they are.

I hope everything I've outlined makes sense but should you have any queries please do get in touch. I look forward to seeing Council Leaders on 26<sup>th</sup> May and receiving full Convention delegations from every Council by 8<sup>th</sup> June.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sally Loudon', written in a cursive style.

Sally Loudon  
Chief Executive

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2017 ELECTION TO COSLA CONVENTION TIMELINE**

8 <sup>th</sup> March	Email to all Councils outlining constitutional position within COSLA and timelines
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Local Government Elections
8 <sup>th</sup> May	Letter to all Councils inviting nominations for their delegation to COSLA Convention, nominations for President and Vice President and explaining procedures
19 <sup>th</sup> May	Agenda & reports distributed for Leaders meeting on 26 <sup>th</sup> May
26 <sup>th</sup> May	Leaders meeting at the COSLA Offices, Verity House, Edinburgh
<b>8<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Date for receiving notification of Council's Convention delegations</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	<b>Nominations <u>must</u> be received from Convention delegates for COSLA President and Vice-President posts</b>
16 <sup>th</sup> June	Letter to all Councils containing nominations received for President and Vice President
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Agenda and reports for Convention meeting on 30 <sup>th</sup> June distributed
30 <sup>th</sup> June	COSLA Convention at the COSLA Offices, Verity House, Edinburgh

**Convention Delegations and Election of President and Vice President:  
Key Considerations**

- Councils are responsible individually for agreeing their Convention delegation. This must reflect the balance of political representation on the Council.
- Councils should inform COSLA of their Convention delegation no later than 8<sup>th</sup> June in order to allow delegates to be able to make nominations for COSLA President and Vice President.
- All nominations for President and Vice President must be made by members of Convention
- All nominations must be received by COSLA by June 9<sup>th</sup>. COSLA cannot provide any flexibility around this date.
- Any local elected member from a COSLA member Council is eligible to be nominated for President and Vice President.
- The COSLA Constitution requires that President and Vice President must be of different political groups and of different genders.
- The same candidate can be nominated for both President and Vice President.
- To be a competent nomination, any candidate must have at least two nominations.
- The election will take place at COSLA Convention on 30 June by secret ballot. The President will be elected first, followed by the Vice President.
- Councils should provide information to Convention members about the nomination requirements for President and Vice President, and the process for making these. COSLA will also contact all Convention members once these have been confirmed by Councils but, particularly in cases where notification is close to the deadline, it will be important that Councils share relevant information with elected members as early as possible.

## NUMBER OF PLACES ON CONVENTION

<b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>NO. OF COUNCIL PLACES</b>
Glasgow City	8
Edinburgh, City of	6
Fife	6
North Lanarkshire	6
South Lanarkshire	6
Aberdeen City	5
Aberdeenshire	5
Dundee City	5
Highland	5
Renfrewshire	5
Angus	4
Dumfries and Galloway	4
East Ayrshire	4
East Dunbartonshire	4
Falkirk	4
North Ayrshire	4
Perth and Kinross	4
Scottish Borders	4
South Ayrshire	4
West Lothian	4
Argyll and Bute	3
Clackmannanshire	3
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	3
East Lothian	3
East Renfrewshire	3
Inverclyde	3
Midlothian	3
Moray	3
Orkney Islands	3
Shetland Islands	3
Stirling	3
West Dunbartonshire	3
<b>TOTAL SCOTLAND</b>	<b>133</b>