

## POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS – ENGAGEMENT

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its meeting on 30 September 2021, the Council endorsed a Best Practice review of current political management arrangement and the establishment of a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) to progress the review of the Political Management Arrangements. This SLWG is tasked with making a recommendation(s) to a new Council following the Local Government Elections in May 2022 regarding this matter.
- 1.2 The first meeting of the SLWG was held on 30 November 2021 (**Meeting Papers – [LINK](#)**) where members agreed to engage with all 36 Elected Members seeking their views on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working, asking for suggestions in terms of any future arrangements.
- 1.3 Members are asked to:-
- a) note and consider the feedback that was received from members regarding the current Political Management Arrangements and suggestions for future arrangements; and
  - b) agree the next steps to progress the review of the Political Management Arrangements.

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### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report seeks to outline the feedback received from members on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working and suggestions in terms of future arrangements.

### 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Members are asked to:-

- a) note and consider the feedback that was received from members regarding the current Political Management Arrangements and suggestions for future arrangements; and
- b) agree the next steps to progress the review of the Political Management Arrangements.

### 4.0 DETAIL

4.1 At the meeting of the SLWG held on 30 November 2021, Members agreed to engage with all Elected Members. Members were subsequently invited to give their views on how the current Political Management Arrangements are working, specifically strategic and area committees, and were also asked to make suggestions in terms of any future arrangements. A summary of the responses are outlined below, all responses can be found at **Appendix 1**.

#### 4.2 Strategic Committees

4.2.1 There was general agreement that the existing arrangements work well, with all Members offered opportunities to be involved in the democratic process, rather than Cabinet or Executive models which have more limited opportunities for involvement.

4.2.2 Members also suggested some improvements within the current political management arrangement for strategic committees. It was suggested that as a consequence of home working and less travel time strategic committees could meet more regularly with smaller agendas for in-depth discussion on topics that if properly discussed could result in better outcomes for constituents. One member suggested 'space' within strategic committees to consider evidence and to work up policy issues for development and addressing other issues of

concern. It was also suggested that the flow of information between some of the committees could be improved upon. It was noted that there are already provisions in the constitution enabling local Members who wish to contribute and vote on local matters at strategic meetings to do so.

### **4.3 Area Committees**

- 4.3.1 Members were generally content with the existing arrangements for Area Committees, welcoming the opportunities for scrutiny at a local level, but that this would be enhanced by greater engagement and attendance of officers at these meetings.
- 4.3.2 Members also suggested some improvements within the current political management arrangement for area committees, specifically enhancements to area committees' responsibilities. One member raised the lack of influence over investment and spend of area committees.
- 4.3.3 Enhanced responsibilities for area committees, it was hoped, would facilitate greater decision making, scrutiny and accountability at local level and would also serve to acknowledge the diversity of the 4 administrative areas. There was also a suggestion that area committees should meet more regularly with smaller agendas with evening meetings to encourage greater engagement with constituents and community organisations. Members also suggested linking community planning groups to area committees.

### **4.4 Future arrangements:-**

- 4.4.1 In terms of future arrangements there was the suggestion of more dedicated committee support and for officers to attend area committees more often. One Member recognised the importance of Business days and suggested that all major decisions should come to business days for open discussion then to area committees before strategic committees.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Council has agreed that this is an appropriate time to conduct a review of the current Political Management Arrangements in advance of the Local Government Elections in May 2022. This report outlines feedback received from members concerning how the current Political Management Arrangements are working and suggestions for future arrangements.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Policy – none at this stage.
- 6.2 Financial - none at present, but may be financial implications dependent on the outcome of the review.
- 6.3 Legal – none at this stage.

- 6.4 HR – none at present, but may have HR implications dependent on the outcome of the review.
- 6.5 Fairer Scotland Duty – none.
  - 6.5.1 Equalities – protect characteristics – none.
  - 6.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none.
  - 6.5.3 Islands – Addresses consideration of proposed introduction of island only wards.
- 6.6 Climate change – none.
- 6.7 Risk – none.
- 6.8 Customer Service – none.

**Douglas Hendry**  
**Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support**

**December 2021**

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Feedback.