

Scottish Executive News Release

Local democracy working groups

29/08/2003

The chairpersons and membership of the three working groups being established to examine the practical issues related to the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill were announced today.

The establishment of the groups was announced on July 10 alongside publication of the draft Local Governance (Scotland) Bill for consultation.

The Single Transferable Vote Working Group will be chaired by David Green, Chairperson of the Crofters' Commission and former Convener of Highland Council.

The Councillors' Remuneration Progress Group will be chaired by Lord Sewel, Senior Vice-Principal at Aberdeen University.

The Widening Access to Council Membership Progress Group will be chaired by Rowena Arshad, Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland, University of Edinburgh.

Public Services Minister Andy Kerr said:

"I am delighted that David Green, John Sewel and Rowena Arshad have agreed to take on these roles. There is much to be done in taking forward our renewing local democracy agenda. These groups will tackle some of the practical issues which the Local Governance Bill will raise.

"The Chairpersons have the experience and skills needed to get to grips with some very complex issues and I hope the groups will begin their work in earnest in the next few weeks."

Full Membership of each group and its purpose:

Single Transferable Vote Working Group

- David Green, former Convener, Highland Council, (Chairperson)
- Leslie Evans, Scottish Executive
- Jeff Hawkins, Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators =20
- Councillor Jim McCabe, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
- Dr Vicki Nash, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
- Billy Pollock, Association of Electoral Administrators
- Dr Ken Ritchie, Electoral Reform Society
- Bob Smith, Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

The STV Working Group will examine the procedures necessary to facilitate council elections being held using the Single Transferable Vote, of how multi-member wards will operate in practice, and will commission research and other information as required.

Councillors' Remuneration Progress Group

- Lord Sewel, Senior Vice-Principal, University of Aberdeen (Chairperson)

- Tom Aitchison, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives
- Councillor Sam Campbell, National Association of Councillors
- Leslie Evans, Scottish Executive
- Ralph Garden, Scottish Public Pensions Agency
- Professor Michael Horsman, former Director, Office of Manpower Economics
- Graeme Millar, Scottish Consumer Council
- Councillor Pat Watters, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

The Councillors' Remuneration Progress Group will consider options for, and the associated costs of, a new system of remuneration for councillors. The Group will also consider the role which councillors fulfil, the part-time commitment required of the majority of councillors, and the salary which this should attract. The Group will also consider the practical implications of giving councillors access to a pension scheme and options for a one-off severance scheme intended to recompense long-serving councillors who will not be standing at the next election, the remit of the Remuneration Committee which the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill will establish and the skills and experience needed by its members.

Widening Access to Council Membership Progress Group

- Rowena Arshad, Director of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland, University of Edinburgh (Chairperson)
- Leslie Evans, Scottish Executive
- Claire Judson, National Union of Students
- Susan Love, Federation of Small Businesses
- Councillor Corrie McChord, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
- Fiona Smith, Scottish Youth Parliament
- John Wilkes, Equalities Co-ordinating Group
- A former councillor (name to be advised)

The Widening Access to Council Membership Progress Group will take forward work on making council membership more attractive to a wider cross-section of the community, including the preparation of non-statutory guidance on the definition of politically restricted posts, and make recommendations on the training, development and support given to councillors.

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