

Minute of Meeting

Midlothian Council
Tuesday 17 December 2024
Item No 5.1



Midlothian

Midlothian Council – Special Council

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday 12 November 2024	10.30 am	Council Chambers, Midlothian House/Hybrid

Present:

Depute Provost Bowen (Chair)	Councillor Parry (Council Leader)
Councillor Cassidy (Depute Council Leader)	Councillor Alexander (attended virtually)
Councillor Curran	Councillor Drummond
Councillor Imrie	Councillor McEwan
Councillor McKenzie	Councillor Milligan
Councillor Pottinger (attended virtually)	Councillor Russell
Councillor Scott	Councillor Small
Councillor Virgo	Councillor Winchester

In attendance:

Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place	Morag Barrow, Director of Health & Social Care: Midlothian HSCP / Chief Officer to Midlothian IJB
David Gladwin, Chief Financial Officer and Section 95 Officer	Karen McGowan, Communities, Lifelong Learning & Employability Officer (attended virtually)
Iina Jaara, Democratic Services Team Leader	Paul Johnson, Senior Worker, Community Lifelong Learning (attended virtually)
Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions	Nicola Thorburn, Democratic Service Officer
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place	Maria Perez, Democratic Services Officer
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships	Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive
Alan Turpie, Legal and Governance Manager / Monitoring Officer	

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

Depute Provost Bowen (Chair) welcomed everyone to this Special Meeting of Midlothian Council and advised that the meeting was open to the public and would be webcast live.

Apologies were received from Councillor McCall, Councillor McManus and Anne -Theresa Lawrie, the religious representative.

2. Order of Business

The order of business was as per the agenda previously circulated.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Deputations

None.

5. Minutes of Previous Meetings

No items for discussion.

6. Questions to the Leader of the Council

None.

7. Motions

None.

8. Reports

Report No.	Report Title	Submitted by:
8.1	Review of the Scheme for the establishment of Community Councils in Midlothian	Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships
Outline and Summary of Discussion		
The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships presented the report for decision. The purpose of this report is to seek agreement that after 2 periods of consultation, a third and final 4-week period of consultation will be undertaken on the revised Scheme for the establishment of Community Councils in Midlothian.		

The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships explained that the Community Council Scheme was established by the Local Government Act 1973 which requires each Local Authority to produce a Scheme providing a framework for the creation and operation of Community Councils. Midlothian's current Scheme was approved in 2014. There have been several changes in legislation since then, and the Model Scheme for Community Councils has been reviewed at a national level with a good practice guide published in 2023.

Two periods of consultation on the Midlothian Scheme of the establishment of Community Councils have already taken place with a third draft to be circulated to local communities for final consideration and comment. It is anticipated that the outcome of this consultation will be brought back to Council for approval in early 2025.

The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships noted that officers who were involved in the drafting of this document were in attendance and are willing to take questions from Elected Members.

The Depute Provost thanked the Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships for the report and opened it up for questions.

Elected Members highlighted a possible confusion between Elected Members and Elected Members of the Community Council on page 14 and requested consistent use of the word Midlothian Council instead of simply Council through the Scheme for the sake of clarity and to differentiate it from the Community Council. The Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships advised that the amendments proposed by Elected Members would be made to the report.

In reference to the Community Council Complaints Policy, page 46 of the report, Elected Members proposed to make the Liaison Officer aware of any stage two unresolved complaints. The Community Lifelong Learning and Employability Officer explained that attempts have been made to make the Complaint Policy more robust and agreed that this could be achieved by introducing a further stage three which would involve a Liaison Officer.

Elected Members highlighted that the third column header row in Appendix F states that the population of Midlothian is projected to increase to approximately 91,000 residents by 2035 but this figure has already been surpassed. The Community Lifelong and Employability Officer advised the figures would be revised prior to consultation but as there are many areas of rapid growth in Midlothian it is difficult to keep up to date population statistics.

Elected Members also highlighted that according to Appendix F, two Community Councils, Bonnyrigg and District and Penicuik and District serve significantly higher population numbers than others and asked if the current ratio is representative and what the mechanics are for reviewing this ratio. The Community Lifelong Learning and Employability Senior Worker explained that Community Councils are complex as they do not align with population data of wards. Work is in progress to determine what each area covers and how to best include them in Community Councils, and

whether the number of Community Councillors has to be adjusted if the full complement is not reached in some areas.

The report was moved by Councillor Scott and seconded by Councillor Parry.

Elected Members expressed their sincere thanks to the hard work carried out by officers and the Community Councils across the County and wish this to be passed on.

Decision

The Council agreed with the recommendation that the revised draft of the Scheme for the establishment of Community Councils in Midlothian is submitted for public consultation.

9. Private

No items for discussion.

The meeting concluded at 11:00 am.