

To: Council

On: 17 December 2020

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Governance Arrangements until 4 March 2021

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for arrangements for the next cycle of Board meetings up to and including the next full Council meeting on 4th March 2021 and to provide an update on the acquisition of a system that would enable livestreamed hybrid meetings to take place, once restrictions to combat the Covid-19 pandemic have been eased.
 - 1.2 At meetings on 25 June 2020 and 24 September 2020, the Council approved governance arrangements over the summer of 2020 and for the last two cycles of Board meetings.
 - 1.3 The arrangements set out in the report aim to allow the next cycle of Board meetings to take place as efficiently as possible in the current circumstances as well as enabling the Council to continue to respond to any urgent issues arising from the continuing Covid-19 pandemic.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
 - a) approve the arrangements for the next cycle of Council and Board meetings set out in section 4 of this report;
 - b) note the acquisition of a system that enables hybrid meetings to take place and for those meetings to be live streamed;

- c) note that the arrangements for subsequent Board cycles will be the subject of a report to Council on 4th March 2021;
 - d) continue the temporary changes to the membership and remit of the Emergencies Board approved by Council on 25 June 2020.
 - e) agree to appoint Cllr John McIntyre to the Licensing Board in place of Cllr Neill Graham and to appoint Cllr Neill Graham to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board in place of Cllr Jane Strang.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Council has had in place emergency governance arrangements to enable oversight of its functions and services in circumstances where it has not been possible for meetings of the Council's Boards to take place safely in Renfrewshire House.
 - 3.2 These emergency arrangements initially involved weekly meetings of the Emergencies Board, held remotely, extended emergency delegations to the chief executive and the cancellation of all Council and Board meetings up to the Council meeting on 25 June 2020.
 - 3.3 Two full cycles of Board meetings have now taken place with remote access for members using Microsoft Teams. The Emergencies Board continued to meet until 18 September 2020, also remotely.
 - 3.4 Over the summer and autumn there was a gradual easing of lockdown restrictions but the restrictions that remained in place, prevented a return to the preCovid-19 arrangements for Council and Board meetings in the Council Chamber. The resurgence of the virus over October and November resulted in the Scottish Government imposing further restrictions that delayed any possibility of the return of meetings to Renfrewshire House. Despite this, officers continued to negotiate the purchase and installation of a system that would enable socially distanced meetings to take place safely in the Council Chamber with some members present in the Chamber with others accessing the meeting remotely. These are referred to as "hybrid" meetings.
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4. Arrangements for the January to March 2021 Cycle of Meetings

- 4.1 The dates for meetings of the Council and Boards from October 2020 to June 2021 were approved by Council on 26 September 2019. Those dates, including those for meetings during the January to March 2021 Board cycle, have remained in place as scheduled and are listed in the appendix to this report.

- 4.2 It is proposed that, subject to paragraph 4.7 below, the planned meetings in the January to March 2021 Board cycle continue to take place remotely using video or audio links with the same arrangements as previously approved for the last cycle of meetings.
- 4.3 The position in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on the possibility of holding physical meetings in the Renfrewshire House remains the same as in previous reports. Until the position is clarified, it is not possible at this time to arrange meetings in the Council Chamber or any of the committee rooms in Renfrewshire House or any other indoor venue in a way that is in accordance with government guidance.
- 4.4 Officers have continued to investigate ways of enabling public attendance at meetings held by video/audio link and at the potential for streaming each meeting as it happens.
- 4.5 There has been a significant development since the previous update to Council in that a system that would allow hybrid meetings to take place has been purchased from Public-I. This is the same company that currently provides web-casting services to the Council.
- 4.6 The system is due to be installed in mid-January 2021. This is the earliest installation date that could be secured because of demand for the system from other organisations. The system also allows for the meetings to be streamed live. It is hoped that testing of the system with elected member involvement can take place in late January 2021. However, it is not anticipated that the system will be available for use for a hybrid meeting at a Board or Council meeting in the next cycle, even if guidance permitted such a meeting to take place.
- 4.7 In any event, it is proposed to continue the discretion given at the last Council meeting to each Convener in consultation with the chief executive and the representatives of the other political groups on the Board to agree to use that system for a Board meeting once the system has been successfully tested.
- 4.8 Although the Policy Boards are now meeting regularly, the governance of the Council still needs to be sufficiently flexible to respond to the rapidly changing situation during the pandemic. Accordingly, it is proposed that the revised remit and extended membership for the Emergencies Board will continue although no meetings will be programmed at this time. Should any matters relating to Covid-19 require urgent decisions to be taken that can't wait until the next meeting of the relevant Board or Council the Emergencies Board can be reconvened quickly.
- 4.9 The arrangements for future Council and Board meetings will continue to be reviewed and will be the subject of a further report to Council on 4 March 2021.

5. Board memberships for the Conservative Group

- 5.1 At its meeting on 26 November 2020 the Council agreed to appoint Cllr Graham to replace Cllr Kerr as a member of the Licensing Board. However, following that meeting, Cllr Graham has advised that he is no longer able to take up that appointment and instead, it is now proposed that Cllr McIntyre is appointed to the Licensing Board.
- 5.2 In terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2006 all members of the Licensing Board require to undertake a course of training accredited by the Scottish Ministers within three months of their appointment to the Licensing Board, whether or not they have been Licensing Board members before. Assessment of training is taken under exam conditions.
- 5.3 In addition, it is proposed that Cllr Graham replaces Cllr Strang as a member of the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board.

Implications of the Report

- 1. **Financial** – None
- 2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None.
- 3. **Community/Council Planning** – None
- 4. **Legal** – As detailed in the report.
- 5. **Property/Assets** – None
- 6. **Information Technology** – None
- 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
- 8. **Health & Safety** – The proposals in the report recognise that it is not currently possible for formal council and board meetings to take place safely in Renfrewshire House.
- 9. **Risk** - None

- 10. **Privacy Impact** – None
 - 11. **Cosla Policy Position** - None
 - 12. **Climate Risk** - None
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List of Background Papers –

- 1) Minute of the meeting of the Emergencies Board on 20 March 2020.
 - 2) Report to the Emergencies Board on 29 May 2020 headed “Arrangements for the Council meeting on 25 June 2020.
 - 3) Minute of the Council meeting on 25 June 2020.
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Author: Ken Graham, Head of Corporate Governance.

January 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 public holiday	2
3	4 public holiday	5 public holiday	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 - 1/3	18	19 – 1pm: Communities, Housing & Planning 3pm: Police and Fire & Rescue Scrutiny	20 – 10am: Regulatory Functions	21 – 1pm: Education & Children's Services	22	23
24 - 2/3	25 – 10am: Audit, Risk & Scrutiny	26	27 – 1pm: Infrastructure, Land & Environment	28	29	30
31 - 3/3						
February 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 – 2pm: Petitions	2 – 2pm: Local Review Body	3 – 2pm: Finance, Resources & Customer Services	4 – 10am: Regulatory Functions	5	6
7 - 4/3	8	9 – 2pm: JNC	10	11	12	13
14 - 5/3	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 - 6/3	22	23	24 – 1pm: Leadership	25	26	27
28 - 7/3						
March 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 – 9.30am: Council	5	6