

To: Council

On: 16 December 2021

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Governance Arrangements

1. Summary

- 1.1 The main purpose of this report is to set out arrangements for the next cycle of Board meetings starting in January 2022 up to and including the full Council meeting on 3 March 2022.
 - 1.2 The report outlines arrangements for meetings going forward taking into account the current position on public health measures in place to combat Covid-19, including the Omicron variant, and other health concerns over the winter.
 - 1.3 The arrangements set out in the report aim to allow maximum flexibility to enable meetings to take place in the most appropriate and safe way, while taking into account any public health guidance or advice available at the time of the meetings.
 - 1.4 The report also provides an update on the appointment of a new chief executive for Renfrewshire Council and seeks approval to a change of a Board membership by the SNP Group and to a change to the Council's representative on a joint committee.
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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 3 of this report, which will continue to include the options to use hybrid meetings involving elected members attending meetings in person in Renfrewshire House, should this be consistent with advice and guidance on public health, or to hold meetings remotely using the Teams platform.
- b) note that Alan Russell has been appointed to the post of chief executive and Head of Paid Service of Renfrewshire Council.
- c) approve the appointment of Cllr Kenny MacLaren to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board to replace Cllr Jim Paterson and Cllr Andy Steel to replace Cllr Natalie Don as the Council's representative on the West of Scotland Archaeology Services Joint Committee.
- d) note that a further report on the arrangements for future meetings of Council and Boards will be brought to the next scheduled meeting of the Council on 2 March 2022.

3. Background-Arrangements for the Next Cycle of meetings

- 3.1 At its last meeting on 30 September 2021, the Council noted the introduction of hybrid meetings for Council Boards with the Convener of each Board having discretion to continue holding meetings of their board by Teams. It was also noted that all of the Council and board meetings could be broadcast live to allow the public to observe those meetings.
- 3.2 Members will be aware that the new Omicron variant of the Covid-19 virus has emerged recently and there is concern that this variant is more transmissible than previous variants. The current guidance which applies to office-based working is that where possible you should continue to work from home. In these circumstances, it is suggested that until there is clarity on the full impact of the Omicron variant it would not be appropriate to relax existing physical distancing requirements in the Council Chamber. Although legal requirements have been removed, there is still a duty on the Council to protect the health and well-being of its elected members and employees.
- 3.3 The current arrangements in place that were approved at previous Council meetings allow for hybrid meetings to take place in the Council Chamber but the protocol adopted by the Council for hybrid meetings allows each convener to decide to hold the meeting remotely by Teams. It is proposed that those arrangements continue and are reviewed again at the next scheduled Council meeting in March 2022.

- 3.4 Any decision to remove the current physical distancing requirement in the Chamber will only be taken after a full risk assessment has been completed taking into account the relevant Scottish Government Guidance in force at the time.
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4. Chief Executive of Renfrewshire Council

- 4.1 At the last Council meeting it was noted that Sandra Black has intimated that she is retiring from her post as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Renfrewshire Council with effect from 15 December 2021.
A recruitment process to identify her successor was undertaken and Alan Russell, the Council's Director of Finance and Resources has been appointed to replace Sandra.
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5. Board memberships

- 5.1 The SNP group have intimated that due to a material change in circumstances they wish to replace Cllr Jim Paterson with Cllr Kenny MacLaren on the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board.
- 5.2 It is also proposed that Cllr Andy Steel will replace Cllr Natalie Don as the Council's representative on the West of Scotland Archaeology Services Joint Committee.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The report refers to the appointment of a new chief executive.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None.
4. **Legal** – As detailed in the report.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – The report refers to the successful introduction of a system from Public-i which enabled meetings to be undertaken with some members being present in the Chamber with others accessing remotely and also for those meetings to be broadcast live.
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's formal Council and Board meetings only take place in Renfrewshire House when it is safe to do so. The report also acknowledges that where meetings can take place in Renfrewshire House, the number of attendees will be limited by the social distancing restrictions that are in place at the relevant time.
9. **Risk** – None.
10. **Privacy Impact** – The report refers to the introduction of live broadcasting of Council and Board meetings.
11. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.
12. **Climate Risk** – None.

List of Background Papers –

- 1) Minute of the Council meeting on 30 September 2021.

Author: Ken Graham, Head of Corporate Governance.