

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	23 rd August 2017
REPORT TITLE	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/17/016
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
REPORT AUTHOR	Head of Service, Office of Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 The report seeks a decision from members as to whether or not the Council should re-join the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Council resolves:
- i. To agree whether or not to re-join COSLA, and should the decision be to re-join;
 - ii. To agree the five members to take the Council's places on Convention; and
 - iii. To agree a Council nominee for each of the four COSLA Boards.

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 At its Budget Meeting of 6th February 2014 the Council resolved to terminate its membership of COSLA with effect from 1st April 2015, reserving the right to withdraw its notice to leave at any point during 2014/15 in view of the, at that time, impending review of the COSLA Constitution and Standing Orders.
- 3.2 The notice was not withdrawn and at its meeting of 4th March 2015, the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive (OCE/15/005) on the arrangements being put in place at that time in light of the Council no longer being a member of COSLA from 1st April 2015.
- 3.3 At its meeting of 17th May 2017 the Council considered a report by the Chief Executive on COSLA (OCE/17/008). The report detailed that the Chief Executive of COSLA had written to the Council's Chief Executive regarding the possibility of the Council re-joining COSLA.

- 3.4 Council resolved i) to instruct the Chief Executive to confirm whether or not COSLA would be requiring a payment for the two years in which Aberdeen City Council was not a member; ii) to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Executive and President of COSLA inviting them to a meeting with the Group Leaders; and iii) to agree to receive a report at its August 2017 meeting to consider COSLA membership in light of the outcomes of i) and ii) above.
- 3.5 At the time of writing this report, the proposed meeting outlined in paragraph 3.4 has as yet to take place but it is envisaged that it will have done so by the time the Council meets. As a result an update to this report from the Group Leaders' meeting with the COSLA President will be provided on 23rd August.
- 3.6 As noted in the report to Council on 17th May, COSLA holds Leaders meetings 8 times a year. COSLA also holds Convention meetings three times a year. The Convention consists of 133 councillors (if all 32 councils are members) and the City Council has an allocation of 5 places on the Convention.
- 3.7 Under the terms of COSLA's constitution any Council delegation to the Convention must reflect the balance of that Council's party political representation. Legal and Democratic Services colleagues have confirmed that the City Council's allocation would be made up of 3 Administration and 2 Opposition members.
- 3.8 In addition to the above COSLA has four Boards – Children and Young People; Health and Social Care; Environment and Economy; and Community Wellbeing. Each member Council has one nominated elected member on each Board. Each Board meets 6 times a year.
- 3.9 At its meeting on 4th March 2015 the Council noted that Glasgow City Council, Renfrewshire Council and South Lanarkshire Council had all also served notice to leave COSLA membership on 1st April 2015. The Council agreed to join these three Councils in the Scottish Local Government Partnership. These three Councils have all now re-joined COSLA.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The COSLA membership levy payable by the City Council for 2017/18 would be £128,521. This sum can be met from the subscriptions budget held in the Office of Chief Executive.
- 4.2 At its meeting on 4th March 2015, the Council was informed that COSLA's position was that any Council terminating membership would be liable for a one-off payment to COSLA. The size and scope of any such payment would be the subject of negotiation. No figure has to date crystallised in relation to this and no negotiation has to date been held on the matter.
- 4.3 Should the Council agree to re-join COSLA and should COSLA seek a payment in relation to the Council's two year absence from membership the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services would enter into negotiation with COSLA and a further report on this would be brought to a

future meeting of the Council. Given the Council's decision at its meeting on 17th May, this matter will be discussed at the Group Leaders' meeting with the COSLA President.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Beyond the issue set out in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 above, there are no further legal implications in relation to the subject matter of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 The Council's non-membership of COSLA has been the subject of public interest over the past two years and as a result, should the Council decide to re-join COSLA further interest is likely to be generated in the short-term. The Council's decision on this report will be communicated via the Council's website and through a media release.

7. IMPACT SECTION

- 7.1 Should the Council decide to re-join COSLA, membership of the organisation and involvement with its structures will be used wherever possible to support the delivery of the Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Council's Strategic Business Plan across the four strategic themes – economy, people, place and technology.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 None

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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