

The Council had before it a report by the Chief Officer - Governance which addressed External Audit's recommendations with regard to the Governance Reference Group and consultation with elected members and sought decisions on these matters.

The report recommended:-

that the Council -

- (a) note the External Audit recommendations concerning the Governance Reference Group and consultation with elected members;
- (b) consider making a decision on the facilitation and/or chairing of future Governance Reference Group meetings; and
- (c) approve, with effect from 1 April 2026, the "*Delegated Powers and Political Sensitivity - Guidance for Officers*" as appended to the report, to support officers in their operation of the Powers Delegated to Officers within the Scheme of Governance; and instruct the Chief Officer - Governance to review the Guidance in parallel with any future reviews of the Scheme of Governance which take place after 2026.

Councillor Allard moved, seconded by Councillor Greig:-

That the Council -

- (1) note the External Audit recommendations concerning the Governance Reference Group and consultation with elected members;
- (2) note that an elected member Chair had led the Governance Reference Group through a number of successful reviews of the Scheme of Governance over the years, some of which had been unanimously agreed when recommendations were made to Council; and agree to continue with an Elected Member as Chair of the Governance Reference Group; and
- (3) approve, with effect from 1 April 2026, the "*Delegated Powers and Political Sensitivity - Guidance for Officers*" as appended to the report, to support officers in their operation of the Powers Delegated to Officers within the Scheme of Governance; and instruct the Chief Officer - Governance to review the Guidance in parallel with any future reviews of the Scheme of Governance which take place after the 2027 Council Election.

Councillor Malik moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Bonsell:-

That the Council -

- (1) note the External Audit recommendation concerning the Governance Reference Group and reject that recommendation and agree that the Governance Reference Group be disbanded;
- (2) note the Scheme of Delegation (i.e. the Powers Delegated to Officers) states amongst other things the following:-
*"The Council shall exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and the Council's constitutional documents. In particular, the exercise of any power contained within this Powers Delegated to Officers document shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme of Governance and shall be subject to there being sufficient funding available to cover the costs of exercising that power. In exercising such a power, the relevant officers shall have due regard to relevant Council and relevant Integration Joint Board policy. In **considering the possible exercise of** such a power, the relevant officers **should** be mindful of **any** potential for political sensitivity or controversy and, where appropriate, should consider*

consulting with elected members or referring the matter to Council or one of its Committees or Sub-Committees. Some of the powers contained herein expressly require consultation with elected members.” And instructs the Chief Officer- Governance to amend the word ‘should’ to ‘must’ in the above Powers Delegated to Officers.

(3) approve recommendation (c) within the report.

On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (23) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Buchanan, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Fairfull, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

For the amendment (21) - Councillors Ali, Blake, Bonsell, Boulton, Brooks, Crockett, Cross, Farquhar, Graham, Grant, Houghton, Kuszniir, Lawrence, Macdonald, McLeod, Malik, Massey, Nicoll, Mrs Stewart, Tissera and Watson.

The Council resolved:-

to adopt the motion.