

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 11 SEPTEMBER 2000

REPORT ON: THE REPORT OF THE RENEWING LOCAL DEMOCRACY WORKING GROUP

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PLANNING

REPORT NO: 591-2000

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To report on the findings of the Renewing Local Democracy Working Group and how they might apply in regard to Dundee City Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee's instructions are requested.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If the Working Group recommendations on number and remuneration of Elected Members was accepted for Dundee City Council then the estimated cost would range from £457,742 for 29 Members to £505,742 for 33 Members.

The City Council's 2000/01 Revenue Budget contains provision of £385,457 for the same type of expenditure, and therefore if these proposals were accepted there would be an increase required of either £72,285 or £120,285 in future revenue budgets.

4. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

Recommendations within the Report are intended to make Council membership more attractive to a wider cross section of the community and to become more representative.

5. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct Local Agenda 21 implications contained within the review. However, there is an indirect implication that resources should be used efficiently and effectively.

6. BACKGROUND

The Renewing Local Democracy Working Group was appointed by Scottish Ministers in the summer of 1999 and chaired by Richard Kerley, with the Report (hereafter referred to as the Kerley Report) published on Tuesday 27 June 2000.

The Report addressed four main subject areas:-

1. Widening Access
2. Remuneration for Councillors
3. Electoral system for local government
4. Number of Councillors per Council

In total 36 specific recommendations were made by the Working Group in their Report and these are attached as Appendix A.

7. KERLEY REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the recommendations are fairly straight forward and will be areas subject to review by Councils in conjunction with COSLA and the Scottish Executive and revolve around the support available for Councillors and their management and operational requirements. Many of the recommendations will also have financial implications for Councils which may be difficult to implement without additional resources. In addition some of the recommendations refer directly to political parties themselves upon which the Council has no direct influence.

More contentious are the proposed structural changes recommended in the report in regard to remuneration for Councillors, the electoral system proposed for local government and the number of Councillors suggested per Council and the possible effects of their introduction.

7.1 Widening Access

The Working Group made 21 recommendations in regard to making Council Chambers more representative of their communities. A number of these recommendations require to be addressed jointly through COSLA and the Scottish Executive and it is expected that specific consultations on these areas will be forthcoming prior to any legislative proposals and it is not intended to address these particular recommendations numbered 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13 (part), 14, 16, 18, 19 and 21 in this report.

However, there are a number of recommendations that are specific to Councils either recommending actions or a review and these are listed below with the intended actions or proposals either already undertaken or intended to be undertaken by the Council.

Recommendation	Action/Proposal
1 Councils should prepare and publish role descriptions which reflect what its members do.	It is suggested that COSLA should agree a general description of the role of Councillors, which each Council could then consider how best to publish in their area.
2 Councils should carry out a review of its business arrangements to ensure that the majority of councillors can carry out their role effectively on a part time basis.	The Council has already adopted a policy of holding virtually all meetings in the evening, which allows members with day-time commitments to attend. Committees are grouped so that only 3 evenings per month are used.
3 Councils should review the impact of its management arrangements on councillors' travelling time and should act to minimise its impact.	The nature of Dundee City Council's area is such that travelling time is not an issue.

4 Councils should review the time that members are required to spend in meetings and in preparation for meetings and should take action to maximise the time-effectiveness of meetings.

The Council has already taken a number of steps to minimise time spent unnecessarily in meetings and to maximise their effectiveness e.g.

- delegation reduces number of reports to Committee
- policy of minimising reports 'for information only'
- guidance on length and standard format for reports, to clarify decisions required
- effective diaring of meetings by Members' Support Staff

8 Councils should evaluate the current level of administrative support provided to councillors and the impact that this has on the councillor and should carry out an audit of the benefits that are brought about by new arrangements.

The Council provides support with typing, filing, following up correspondence, making appointments, arranging meetings, taking messages and dealing with constituents' enquiries. Surveys of Councillors show very high levels of satisfaction with the service provided through the Members' Support Unit.

To assist councils in carrying out this review we have considered the components of the support package and recommend that the following should be considered for each councillors:

- a dedicated phone line and answerphone or a mobile phone
- all members have a dedicated phone line at their office, along with secretarial support for messages. Members also receive a telephone allowance for which they must provide a publicly accessible home telephone. Mobile phones have been provided to certain members in response to particular needs. The issue of provision to all members requires to be reviewed and a report will be brought forward in the near future.
- a personal computer, printer and modem, together with appropriate software and technical support
- computer facilities are available to members in the Council offices. For those members with their own PC facilities at home, the Council will pay for the necessary software and communication facilities to allow direct and secure access to certain Council systems (Committee Report 633/1999).

- appropriate working accommodation within the community
- effective administrative support within the council
- stationery and postage
- all members have fully equipped offices at Council headquarters, plus free use of suitable accommodation for holding ward surgeries
- effective administrative support is already being provided, as evidenced by Members' Support Unit survey results.
- stationery and postage are provide free of charge for all Council-related business, though not for political activity

9 Councils should review the support that is available to councillors in their ward in order to assist councillors in carrying out their representative duties effectively and efficiently.

The nature of Dundee City Council's area means that the central support provided to Councillors at their office is adequate for this purpose, without the need to consider decentralised support arrangements.

11 Councils should review their arrangements to facilitate and encourage active and effective participation by councillors, and potential councillors, with a disability.

The Council is committed to equal opportunities and would take whatever action is required to ensure that any Councillor with a disability could participate fully in the work of the Council. An accessibility audit of all Council premises has been conducted, and alternative arrangements made for both Councillors and the public to access any services which are not completely 'barrier-free'.

13 Councils should prepare a short educational package to be made available to people who have an interest in standing as a councillors.

As with recommendation 1, it is suggested that it would be appropriate for COSLA to develop the proposed educational package, rather than each Council doing this individually.

There should be information and training for candidates, by parties, councils and COSLA, aimed at equipping candidates to stand as councillors.

This package could be made available to potential candidates, to complement the information and training provided by parties.

There should be systematic training to provide councillors with a good understanding of local government and their own role: this should equip them to carry out responsibilities such as chairing meetings and representing the council.

The Council has recently carried out a survey of members' training and development needs. This will form the basis of a Councillor Development Plan as part of the Council's commitment to the LGIU Councillor Development Charter.

There should be training, by councils and COSLA, tailored to the needs of councillors who are taking on additional responsibilities such as a responsibility for a significant area of policy.

- 15 Councils should set aside a training budget which councillors can draw on to pay for approved training of their choice. COSLA should assist councils to exchange information on training and in facilitating training across councils.

- 17 Councils should review their arrangements and organisation and consider whether these contain factors that impact on women's participation.

- 20 Councils should consider how they can work with community councils and other community groups, both to provide, through them, information about the role and responsibilities of councillors and community members, and to encourage their members to stand as councillors.

The Councillor Development Plan will make provision for specific training for members with particular policy interests or responsibilities (e.g. attendance at appropriate seminars/conferences) as well as general briefings to all members. The Council does not have a dedicated training budget which Councillors use for training of their choice. However, a Councillor Development Plan is being developed which takes account of the needs of members as identified in a survey on training and development. Much of the training will be provided in-house, and expenditure on external courses and seminars is subject to Committee approval.

The Council believes that the steps it has already taken to streamline meetings have made it easier to combine Council membership with other commitments such as childcare responsibility which might otherwise inhibit participation by women.

It is proposed that the information on the role of Councillors (recommendation 1) and the educational package (recommendation 13) will be made available to Community Councils once these have been developed.

7.2 **Remuneration for Councillors (Recommendations 22-27)**

The current basic allowance for Councillors within Dundee is £5,989 which is payable to all 29 Councillors. In addition there are 38 positions carrying a special responsibility allowance of which 28 are being paid to individual Councillors with special responsibilities, either Conveners or Shadow Spokespersons. The above includes a special responsibility allowance for the Leader of the Administration and the Lord Provost.

The Kerley Report recommends that the remuneration payable to individual Councillors should be increased to £12,000 per annum with special responsibility allowances for the civic head (Lord Provost), the Leader of the Administration and 8 other Councillors with significant additional responsibilities, with 1 responsibility allowance for a lead scrutiny and policy challenge role which it is recommended should be a member outwith the Administration Group.

The Kerley Report recommendations would increase substantially the basic councillor allowance from the current £5,989 to £12,000 per annum. The latter amount is in excess of the current combined total of basic allowance plus special responsibility allowance of 14 of the current postholders at present in receipt of special responsibility allowance.

The recommendation for remuneration to the civic head (Lord Provost) is £24,900 which is an increase on the current combined special responsibility allowance and basic allowance which is currently £20,241.89. The Leader of the Administration is recommended to

receive remuneration of £34,242 which compares to the current combined special responsibility allowance and basic allowance of £21,825.09.

In addition it is recommended that there should be 8 Councillors designated as having significant additional responsibilities who would each receive £20,750 which is in excess of the current conveners combined special responsibility allowances and basic allowance, the highest of which is currently £17,866.50. The lead scrutiny and policy challenge role remuneration is recommended at £16,600 which is well in excess of the current major opposition group leader combined responsibility allowance and basic allowance of £10,989.

If these allowances were introduced on the current basis for the existing 29 Members within the City Council then the cost to the Council would be £457,742 which would require an increase of £72,285 in the current 2000/01 Revenue Budget which contains provision of £385,457 for this type of expenditure. For 33 Members the cost would be £505,742, an increase of £120,285 on current expenditure.

The Kerley Report makes no mention of any special responsibility allowance for Group positions within either controlling groups or opposition groups which at present are in receipt of SRA's. Currently there are 16 Convenerships which carry a special responsibility allowance within the scheme of members allowances. However only 8 of these Conveners allowances are currently being paid due to postholders retaining both a Group Officer position and a Convenership. Currently all 14 Members of the Administration are Conveners and receive the appropriate special responsibility allowance. Under the system proposed by the Working Group, the Leader and the Lord Provost would both receive a special allowance and 8 other Councillors with significant additional responsibilities would receive an increased special responsibility allowance. In addition 1 other member not a member of the Administration would receive a special additional responsibility allowance to undertake the lead role in scrutiny.

The report also recommends the provision of consistent taxation arrangements for Councillors and other elected representatives including a review of the arrangements for Councillors' expenses. It is intended the Scottish Executive, COSLA and Councils would carry out this review with the desired outcome likely resulting in Councillors remuneration being treated on a salary basis with concordant pension rights.

It is also recommended that any future increases in levels of remuneration for Councillors should be linked directly to increase in MSP's remuneration.

If the Kerley recommendations are accepted by the Scottish Executive and are legislated through the Scottish Parliament then this would have a significant effect on existing special responsibility allowances and remuneration payable to Councillors. The clear intention is to focus responsibility on a much reduced number of Councillors undertaking Executive functions within local Councils.

This is in line with the modernising government agenda although it does not go as far as the current proposals in the English local government bill now proceeding through Parliament which intends to end the Committee system in all Councils with above 85,000 of a population and introduce either a Cabinet or Executive style of local government with the possibility of a directly elected mayor.

At the very least in Dundee's circumstances the adoption of the Kerley recommendations would involve combining current Convenerships.

7.3 **Electoral System for Local Government (Recommendations 28-31)**

The Working Group has proposed that future elections for local government would best be held under the single transferable vote method although it should be pointed out that 3 members of the Group dissented from this view. The majority rationale is that although it was desirable that wards should reflect natural communities, to do this there should be flexibility in ward sizes ranging from three to five members to allow natural communities to be maintained within wards. The former would allow a maximum of 11 wards for Dundee under the single transferrable vote system but it is difficult to believe that boundaries for this small number of wards could be identified that would be perceived as containing natural communities.

The single transferable vote is a form of preferential voting in multi member constituencies whereby the voter casts a vote by putting 1 in the column next to their preferred candidate, a 2 for their second favourite candidate and so on. This allows voters to vote for as many or as little a number of candidates within and across parties as well as for independents. Ballot papers in Dundee given that there was an average of over 4 candidates per seat at the last Council elections could potentially extend to as many as 20 possible candidates in a new electoral area electing 5 Councillors.

The report recognises that voter education would need to be an essential component for the introduction of a new electoral system for local government.

7.3.1 **Single Transferable Voting (STV)**

The counting of votes in a single transferable vote model is fairly complicated and an explanation is attached at Appendix B. However in order to win every seat parties would have to gain around 85% of the vote. This is highly unlikely and in elections under STV, for example in Northern Ireland, parties tended to field candidates for less than the six seats that were available in individual constituencies.

Under STV voters can choose between candidates of the same party which means they could take into account factors which may cross party boundaries e.g. individual candidates views on contentious issues such as abortion or Europe. As each constituency will be represented by more than one elected member likely to be from different parties then voters are more likely to have an elected member from their particular favourite political party and could therefore choose the elected member which they wish to approach for help.

Arguments used in favour of STV are that it does more than other systems to guarantee that everyone gets their views represented and have a say in what is done by their elected representatives. It is said to put more power in the hands of the voters and keeps elected members linked to the people who voted for them. Most voters can identify a representative that they personally helped to elect and can feel affinity with. Only a party or coalition of parties, who could attract more than 50% of electorate could form an administration. Voters can choose between candidates within parties, demonstrating support for different wings of the party and can also express preferences between the abilities or other attributes of individual candidates. After some political education it is fairly simple for voters to use and there is no need for tactical voting.

Weaknesses that have been expressed in regard to STV is that it does not produce as accurate a proportional representation of the parties as the party list or additional member systems. Outcomes are not always straightforward or proportional especially in cases where electoral support is divided fairly equally among two major parties. Only 2 countries, the Republic of Ireland and Malta use STV in general elections and in the latter the election of 1981 caused a constitutional crisis when the party that gained 49.1% of the popular vote gained 52.3% of the available seats in parliament and formed the government.

STV also breaks the link between an individual councillor and his or her constituency and ward areas would be four to five times larger than they are now with four to five councillors representing each area. Councillors may also have to spend an excessive amount of time dealing with constituency problems and neglect broader issues and there are critics who say that the system leads to permanent coalition governments.

7.3.2 Alternative Systems

Both Marilyn Livingstone MSP and Sandra Osborne MP dissented from the majority report view disagreeing that STV was the best system mainly on the argument that it did not adequately maintain the councillor/ward link. The original remit of the group precluded any recommendation supporting either the first past the post system or the alternative vote systems as neither achieved proportionality although it is arguable that both achieved the best possible maintenance of the councillor/ward link and the alternative vote systems scores highly in “making votes count”.

Smaller multi member wards retain some form of councillor/ward link but fail to deliver proportionality whereas larger multi member wards come closer to achieving proportionality but the councillor/ward link is lost. A problem of numerous councillors representing the same geographic area has also been raised in light of the public confusion arising from the existence of list MSP's alongside constituency MSP's.

Councillor Daphne Sleigh (Conservative) also dissented from the majority view recommending STV and instead opted for the Additional Member System as it had a high level of proportionality satisfied the member/ward link and gave a fairer proportionality as well as providing for independents. However AMS as well as allowing for single ward councillors would also create a number of wider area members and therefore create two types of councillor similar as exists currently with list MSP's in the Scottish Parliament.

Another alternative that has been suggested by some COSLA Council members is the Alternative Vote system. In this system the existing ward boundaries can be utilised and voters would elect one person to represent them as now. However, instead of an "X" each voter would rank candidates in order of preference, 1, 2 etc. If a candidate received a majority of first votes (over 50%) they would be elected. If no candidate received more than 50% then the second choices for the bottom candidate, who drops out, are redistributed. This is repeated until someone has an absolute majority.

Its advantages are the retention of the member/ward link; extreme parties are unlikely to gain support; it prevents successful candidates being elected on a minority of the vote; and removes any negative voting. However, AV is not proportional and can be as distorting as FPTP.

7.3.3 STV in Dundee

Currently there are 29 electoral divisions within Dundee City Council. The range of elected members recommended for Dundee was between 29 and 33 councillors. Currently there is an average of approximately 4,000 electors per seat in Dundee. If the representation was changed to 33 councillors this would give an average of approximately 3,500 electors per seat. The latter would obviously mean some revision of boundaries within the City but would allow for eleven 3 member wards or five 5 member wards with two 4 member wards. The former would be less desirable from a proportionality perspective thus defeating the main purpose of the Kerley report's recommendation for the STV system.

Alternatively the existing 29 wards could be merged to become five 5 member wards with one 4 member ward. This would best accommodate the aim of proportionality within this system of election with the expected outcome being roughly in proportion to the percentage voters cast for each party. However, the Electoral Reform Society recommend Urban

wards of between 7 to 9 Members which in Dundee's circumstances would mean a possible four 7 member wards with one 5 member ward.

7.3.4 Other Alternatives in Dundee

If the Additional Member System (AMS) was introduced in Dundee then the likely balance of single ward councillors to area list councillors would likely be in an approximate ratio of 2:1 as exists in the Scottish Parliament. This would result in 20 single directly elected wards of approximately 5,500 electors and 9 area list councillors or alternatively 22 directly elected wards of approximately 5,200 electors and 11 area list councillors. Although it is not possible to predict the outcome of an election using this system any gains at individual ward level are likely to be balanced at the list level as is the case with MSPs in the Scottish Parliament, the most likely result being a hung council. It would also arguably create a two tier system of councillors.

The Alternative Vote (AV) system if introduced would be more straightforward as existing wards could be maintained. However, if the system had been in place at the 1999 elections, there would have been only 6 seats where the successful candidate had more than 50% of the vote. The remaining 23 seats would have been subject to the candidate with the lowest number of votes dropping out and their second choices re-distributed and so on until one candidate reached 50% of the vote.

First past the post (FPTP) is the current system in use and has the advantage of being simple to understand with the voter being able to express a view on which party should form the administration. It provides a close link between councillors and constituency. However, it has been criticised mainly on the basis of wasted votes and lack of proportionality.

7.4 Number of Councillors Per Council (Recommendations 32-34)

Currently, Dundee is rated as Category 2 within the Local Government Boundary Commission classification for the ratio of elected members to population along with Aberdeen. This figure currently stands at 1:4000. The Kerley Report recommends a minimum size of Council of no less than 19 members and a maximum size of no more than 53 members with an exception being made for Highland Council because of its degree of rurality. Under the report's proposals Dundee would be in a category separate from Aberdeen and is recommended for inclusion in a family of Councils where the number of councillors is suggested to be between 29 and 33.

As Dundee City Council has made representations against the reduction in the number of councillors in the City from 36 to the current 29 then 33 might be a suitable compromise as it would give an average of approximately 3,500 electors per seat. This would allow for recognition of the increased workload for councillors in areas of deprivation and the greater constituency demands thereon.

7.5 Electoral Ward Boundaries (Recommendations 35-36)

Although the Council would welcome the development of a protocol between COSLA, Councils and the Local Government Boundary Commission in regard to developing proposals for electoral wards there are some reservations in respect to the procedural requirements that would be subject to direction by Ministers.

In regard to projecting demolitions Dundee City Council has already been in discussion with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland in regard to the difficulties of identifying surplus housing locations into the future and with hindsight the City Council's assertion that it was not possible to identify locations of demolitions five years in advance has proved correct.

For example it is unlikely that the volume of continued demolition which has taken place in the past five years in Whitfield would have been predicted nor the demolition of multi storey blocks in Lochee.

It continues to be the case that the Council does not have a five year Capital Plan or Housing Action Area proposals which would identify demolitions on the scale which is likely to occur in the next five years.

Nor is the Renewing Local Democracy Working Group's proposal for projecting new house construction likely to be workable. It suggests that this is based on full planning consents granted but the Council's most recent housing land audit indicates that house building in the next five years on sites with planning consent is likely to be around 1,850 units while total production has been averaging over 600 units per year. The owners of many of the sites on which building will take place in future years delay applying for formal planning consent until they are about to start construction.

Therefore, although the Working Group's proposal that the procedure for common standards of projection are the subject of direction by Ministers could be valuable, a more sophisticated approach is required than it puts forward in its report.

8. **CONCLUSION**

The Kerley Report seems to have been based on a number of unstated assumptions: that local democracy is old; unattractive to sections of the community; is unrepresentative; and councils have a poor image. The strategy to overcome these "problems" is to clarify the role and method of personal support to individual councillors; communicate the role and its value to society; the latter implying that people do not stand for council because they don't know what the council's role is, pay more money to certain individual councillors; and introduce the single transferable vote.

9. **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Director of Support Services and Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The Report of the Renewing Local Democracy Working Group – June 2000; Scottish Executive Central Research Unit Research Findings No 87 and No 88; Electoral Reform Society – Voting Systems; Electing the Northern Ireland Assembly; How Malta Votes; An Overview.

Director of Corporate Planning

Date

The Working Group's Recommendations

Making Council Chambers more Representative of their Communities

1. Councils should prepare and publish role descriptions which reflect what its members do.
2. Councils should carry out a review of its business arrangements to ensure that the majority of councillors can carry out their role effectively on a part time basis.
3. Councils should review the impact of its management arrangements on councillors' travelling time and should act to minimise its impact.
4. Councils should review the time that members are required to spend in meetings and in preparation for meetings and should take action to maximise the time-effectiveness of meetings.
5. Councils and representatives of employers and employees should discuss how to facilitate the participation of employees on councils. The Executive, with its wider interests in public service, should also be involved in these discussions. Specific practical issues that should be addressed include arrangements for individuals to alter their pattern of work on taking up, and on ceasing, council membership; and arrangements for protecting superannuation contributions.
6. The Executive should discuss, with COSLA, and representatives of employers and employees the possibility of establishing an employers' fund which could provide financial compensation to individual employers to assist them in meeting the costs of releasing staff to become councillors.
7. COSLA should play a role in encouraging the exchange of information and ideas about effective administrative support for councillors and in providing feedback on the benefits that such ideas can generate.
8. Councils should evaluate the current level of administrative support provided to councillors and the impact that this has on the councillor and should carry out an audit of the benefits that are brought about by new arrangements.

To assist councils in carrying out this review we have considered the components of the support package and recommend that the following should be considered for each councillor:
 - A dedicated phone line and answerphone or a mobile phone
 - A personal computer, printer and modem, together with appropriate software and technical support
 - Appropriate working accommodation within the community
 - Effective administrative support within the council
 - Stationery and postage.
9. Councils should review the support that is available to councillors in their ward in order to assist councillors in carrying out their representative duties effectively and efficiently.
10. COSLA should have a role in sharing information on the benefits of different types of administrative support to councillors. COSLA and councils should keep this area under review in order to benefit from future developments in both technology and organisational good practice.
11. Councils should review their arrangements to facilitate and encourage active and effective participation by councillors, and potential councillors, with a disability.
12. The Scottish Executive should review legislation that hinders councils from using information and communication technologies to streamline the conduct of council business.
13. Councils should prepare a short educational package to be made available to people who have an interest in standing as a councillor.

There should be information and training for candidates, by parties, councils and COSLA, aimed at equipping candidates to stand as councillors.

There should be systematic training to provide councillors with a good understanding of local government and their own role: this should equip them to carry out responsibilities such as chairing meetings and representing the council.

There should be training, by councils and COSLA, tailored to the needs of councillors who are taking on additional responsibilities, such as a responsibility for a significant area of policy.

14. Councils and representatives of employers and employees and the Scottish Qualification Authority should consider how to develop mechanisms to facilitate the development and recognition of transferable skills.
15. Councils should set aside a training budget which councillors can draw on to pay for approved training of their choice. COSLA should assist councils to exchange information on training and in facilitating training across councils.
16. An integrated communication strategy - involving local authorities, COSLA, political parties and the Scottish Executive - should be developed to explain why local government matters - what it does and how it affects people.
17. Councils should review their arrangements and organisation and consider whether these contain factors that impact on women's participation.

18. COSLA and representatives of people from ethnic minority backgrounds should draw up an action plan to encourage increased participation on councils by individuals from an ethnic minority background.
19. Political parties should review their arrangements for selecting candidates in order to ensure that a diverse and representative range of men and women is selected in wards where they have a good chance of being elected, and we encourage them to publicise these arrangements.

Political parties should consider using a specific mechanism to increase the number of women selected as candidates.

Political parties, COSLA, and representatives of independents should work together on common issues, such as providing information on local government and the role of councillors, in order to encourage a diverse and representative range of candidates.

20. Councils should consider how they can work with community councils and other community groups, both to provide, through them, information about the role and responsibilities of councils and councillors, and to encourage their members to stand as councillors.
21. The age for standing for election should be brought into line with the voting age - currently 18.

2

Remuneration for councillors

22. The remuneration payable to councillors should be £12,000.

23. The current remuneration for MSPs is £41,255: the leaders of Glasgow and Edinburgh should receive the same amount. Other leaders should receive similar remuneration on a proportional basis.

Remuneration for council leaders

Edinburgh, Glasgow	£41,255
Fife, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire	£38,367
Highland	£36,304
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dundee City, Dumfries & Galloway, Renfrewshire	£34,242
Falkirk, North Ayrshire, West Lothian	£32,591
Angus, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Perth & Kinross, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire	£31,354
Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde	£29,291
East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Stirling	£27,641
Midlothian, Moray	£26,816
Clackmannanshire, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands	£24,753

24. A small minority of councillors in each council will carry significant additional

responsibilities: their remuneration should reflect this.

Remuneration for councillors with significant additional responsibilities

	Civic Head (1 post)	Other councillors with significant additional responsibilities		Lead scrutiny and policy challenge role (1 post)
	£	No*	£	£
Edinburgh, Glasgow	30,000	8	25,000	20,000
Fife, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire	27,900	8	23,250	18,600
Highland	26,400	8	22,000	17,600
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dundee City, Dumfries & Galloway, Renfrewshire	24,900	8	20,750	16,600
Falkirk, North Ayrshire, West Lothian	23,700	6	19,750	15,800
Angus, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Perth & Kinross, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire	22,800	6	19,000	15,200
Argyll & Bute, Inverclyde	21,300	6	17,750	15,000
East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Stirling	20,100	5	17,000	15,000
Midlothian, Moray	20,000	5	17,000	15,000
Clackmannanshire, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands	20,000	5	17,000	15,000

*maximum no of councillors with remuneration for significant additional responsibilities.

25. The Scottish Executive should initiate discussions with COSLA, councils and the UK Government with a view to providing for consistent taxation arrangements between councillors and other elected representatives.
26. A review of the arrangements for councillors' expenses would complement our work and we would encourage the Executive, COSLA and councils to carry out such a review.
27. Future increases in levels of remuneration for councillors should be linked directly to increases in MSPs' remuneration.

Electoral System for Local Government

28. A programme of voter education will be an essential component of the successful introduction of a new electoral system for local government.
29. STV best meets the requirements of our remit. *(Three members of the group dissented)*
30. It is highly desirable that wards should reflect natural communities and accordingly, there should be flexibility in ward sizes – ranging from 3 to 5 member wards – to allow natural communities to be maintained within wards. In sparsely populated parts of Scotland, exceptionally, wards comprising a minimum of 2 councillors may be appropriate.
31. We would urge the Scottish Executive to take an early decision on the date of implementation of a new electoral system.

Numbers of councillors per council

32. A council should have no fewer than 19 members.
33. In general terms no council should have more than 53 members.
34. We suggest the following 'families' of councils:

Council	No of councillors
Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Highland*	49-53
Aberdeen, Renfrewshire	39-43
Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee, East Ayrshire, Falkirk, North Ayrshire, Perth and Kinross, Scottish Borders, South Ayrshire, West Lothian	29-33
Clackmannanshire, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Midlothian, Moray, Orkney, Shetland, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire	19-23

*up to a further 10 councillors may be required to take account of geographical features

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35. COSLA, councils and the LGBC should develop a protocol to cover their working relationships in developing proposals for electoral wards.

36. The task of the LGBC, councils, and local communities would be eased in future if the following procedural requirements were the subject of direction by Ministers:

- Parity of electorate to be the clear first order consideration, with divergence from this to be accepted as a means of accommodating well established natural communities.
- Councils should be required to supply the LGBC with draft and final paper

and electronic copies of electoral registers on an annual basis at no cost. If appropriate councils should be required to allow the LGBC with remote networking to electoral registers, again at no charge.

- For the purposes of population/household projection all councils should be required to adhere to common standards of projection. For construction this should be full planning consents granted, for demolition of social or privately owned housing a combination of any proposals in the 5 year capital plan and any proposals for Housing Action Areas or similar.

If you should like to discuss any of the recommendations in the report with COSLA please contact Norman Murray, President (0131 474 9203), Oonagh Aitken, Chief Executive (0131 474 9203) or Andy O'Neill, Policy Officer (0131 474 9206).

5.

APPENDIX B

The Single Transferable Vote

An Introduction

The Single Transferable Vote (STV) is a form of preferential voting in multi-member constituencies.

Preferential voting means that instead of casting a single vote for a single candidate, a voter can express a list of preferences. Votes are cast by putting a '1' in the column next to the voter's preferred candidate, a '2' beside their second favourite candidate and so on until they no longer wish to express a preference. Voters may vote for candidates within parties and across parties as well as for independents.

A quota is calculated which sets the number of votes a candidate must attain to be elected. This is, simply, the total number of votes cast, divided by one more than the number of candidates to be elected, plus one vote. By following this formula, no more than the required number of candidates can reach the quota.

Votes are counted according to the first preferences and any candidates who have achieved the quota are elected.

To decide which of the remaining candidates are elected the votes are transferred from candidates who have more than the necessary number to achieve the quota and from the candidate with the least number of votes. This means that where the first preferences of the voters were not able to be used to elect a candidate, their second preferences come into play. This process of transferring votes continues until the required number of candidates have attained enough votes to be elected.

The Single Transferable Vote is currently used in Northern Ireland for local and European elections.

A Rationale

(This is based on an extract from "The Politics of Electoral Reform" by Michael Meadowcroft)

The Single Transferable Vote is so called because it is based on the principle that the elector has a first choice of representative, but if that preferred candidate has either so many votes that the individual's vote is not needed or has the least chance of being elected, then his or her vote is transferred pro rata to a second or subsequent choice. The aim of the system is to give the voter the widest choice possible between candidates whilst eliminating, as far as possible, wasted votes (i.e. all votes which do not help to elect a candidate).

The mathematical formula to implement the principle may initially appear complex, but quickly becomes clear through usage, and operates under rules which have been accepted over decades in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Because constituencies are multi-member, the number of seats in each one can vary, depending on natural boundaries, so that the artificiality of carving segments out of a city, or tacking odd bits of countryside on to a town to make up the numbers, can be avoided. In Ireland, constituencies

elect three, four and five members. A similar provision of minimum and maximum numbers of seats per constituency could be made for the UK - preferably with a higher maximum to reflect the larger population concentrations in Britain.

All the major parties have expressed increasing concern at the desperately low representation of women and of ethnic minorities in Parliament. With STV and multi-member constituencies, parties would have a powerful electoral incentive to present a balanced team of candidates in order to maximise the number of higher preferences that would go to their sponsored candidates. It seems unlikely that single-member constituencies will ever depart significantly from adopting the traditional "safe" candidate, thus denying the electors the chance to redress the present parliamentary imbalance.

An argument against multi-member constituencies has been the inherent need to have particularly large constituencies in rural areas. As with every argument on election systems, there are genuine difficulties with some aspects of each case. The crucial fact is that the constituency link is retained, albeit between several MPs and an enlarged constituency. The accountability of MPs to their constituency is actually increased in that, unlike British single-member constituencies, no individual MP has a safe seat.

In any case, electors tend to feel a natural link with, say, the City of Leeds as a whole rather than Leeds Central, North East or North West. They may well prefer to have real influence over the MPs representing the whole city rather than pretend to hold the one MP for their sector accountable. Multi-member seats are, of course, the norm for local government where the concept of working as a team for a local ward is often seen to be advantageous.

Under STV, with voters able to express as many preferences as they wish, it is impossible to vote negatively. Parties will inevitably respond to this by developing policies to attract a wider cross-section of support, rather than being able to rely on people voting against one party or another.

The key point about STV is that it reflects proportionally the individual's voting intentions far better than any other system. Every vote has equal value and the number of 'wasted' votes i.e. those which failed to elect any candidate of the voter's choice, is extremely small. Its ability to empower the voter is its greatest asset, and will reward the best in party politics as much as it will penalise the worst.