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| Report To: | Policy and Resources Committee | Date: | 6 February 2018 |
| Report By: | Head of Legal & Property Services | Report No: | GM/LP/009/18 |
| Contact Officer: | Gerard Malone | Contact No: | 01475 712710 |
| Subject: | Committee Agenda Process | | |

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report outlines changes to the Committee agenda process in order to (1) achieve a savings target of £10,000 in printing and stationery; and, (2) prepare for future modernisation and streamlining to paperless meetings.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Council's long-standing Committee agenda processes are wholly based upon volume printing and hard copy distribution by post and/or Council Officer delivery of meeting summonses, agendas and reports to all Elected Members, Officers, outside representatives on Committees (where appropriate), all Community Councils and the Council's external auditor.
- 2.2 This report outlines Phase 1 of an overall modernisation process. Phase 1 (or "housekeeping") focuses on practical steps to address savings and efficiencies in the printing and circulation of summonses, agendas and reports. Phase 2 will involve the preparation for and the implementation of paperless systems, the hardware for which is already available to Members but which will require planned introduction and considerable ICT transitional support, at later dates.
- 2.3 Nevertheless, the changes in Phase 1 involve the legal entitlements of Elected Members, the practices of Officers and outside representatives (where appropriate) and will require the co-operation and support of the Community Councils.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the printing and circulation scheme set out in section 5, below, be considered by the committee and approved for implementation onwards from the April 2018 cycle of meetings.

Gerard Malone
Head of Legal & Property Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 There are fundamental requirements in the Local Government (Scotland) Acts and the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 relative to the meetings and proceedings of the Council and its Committees, Sub-Committees and Boards (all of which for the purpose of this report are referred to as "Committee meetings"). These fundamental legal provisions ensure there is both public awareness and Elected Member knowledge by written notice and publication of the times and places of meetings and the specifying in detail of the business to be transacted at such Committee meetings.
- 4.2 The public is entitled to have access prior to a meeting to agendas, reports for the meeting and the background papers for reports. Agendas and reports must be made available for inspection by the public at least three clear days before the meeting (with certain exceptions) and no items of business can be considered at the meeting unless the agenda including the item has been open for inspection for at least three days (with certain exceptions). Background papers to reports are similarly open for inspection.
- 4.3 The Council's long-established practices, of course, exceed any statutory minimum in terms of notice, timescales, details of business to be transacted and inspection. Most relevantly, for the purposes of this report, summonses to meetings, numbered agendas and reports are copied, printed and distributed by post or sometimes by personal delivery to all Elected Members, outside representatives (where appropriate), a wide range of Officers, all Community Councils and the external auditor.
- 4.4 Phase 1 of the proposed modernisation streamlines the copying, printing and circulation processes and will require the active co-operation of all parties and the specific voluntary acceptance by Elected Members whilst maintaining their legal rights for summonses and notice.

5.0 PROPOSED SCHEME

- 5.1 Within this Council, the Committee meeting papers incorporate as one document three separate elements: the summons to the meeting; the list of agenda items; and, the reports.

5.2 Summonses

Summonses to meetings, or calling notices, within this Council are in the form of the calling notice specifying the date and time of the meeting and signed by me and which is contained in the first page of any Committee's agenda volume. The summons is a formal part of Local Government Act procedures and, as stated above, is incorporated within this Council's list of agenda items and reports in a single document.

- 5.3 It is a fundamental requirement of the Local Government Acts that a summons to attend any Committee meeting specifying the business to be transacted be sent in writing to the usual address of every Elected Member of the Council. This requirement ensures that all Elected Members within the corporate body forming the Council know and are made aware of every meeting, whether or not the individual Elected Member is a Member of that Committee, and are also aware of the specific business to be transacted at that Committee. This ensures both overall awareness of the business being conducted within the corporate body and allows Members to scrutinise or identify any item irrespective of any aspect of individual membership or not of the relative Committee.

5.4 Summonses and lists of agenda items - Present

At present, all Elected Members receive all summonses, lists of agenda items and all reports by hard copy by post or by personal delivery irrespective of membership of the relative Committee.

Proposed

It is proposed that Elected Members who are not Members of a Committee be requested

voluntarily to accept the summons and the list of agenda items (and not the individual reports) by email notification instead of by hard copy. Non-Members of Committees will thus have the necessary statutory notice of all Committee meetings and the list of agenda items by email but will not receive hard copy summonses, lists of agenda items or reports.

In order to give effect to this, individual letters of confirmation will be made available to Elected Members to implement this change and the individual Members will be asked voluntarily to accept this means of receipt of summons and notice of business by email. In this way, the requirements of the Local Government Acts will be maintained and Members' entitlements for meetings' summonses will be dealt with by email.

5.5 Committee Reports

Present

All Elected Members receive hard copy delivery (by post/personal delivery/uplift) of all agendas and reports relative to all Committee meetings.

All outside representatives on Committees receive hard copy delivery by post or personal delivery of relevant Committee agendas and reports.

A wide range Officers (Chief Officers and other Officers) receive hard copy delivery of all Committee agendas and reports.

All Community Councils receive hard copy delivery by post (and sometimes by personal delivery) of all Committee agendas and reports.

The Council's external auditor receives hard copy delivery of all Committee agendas and reports.

Proposed

Non-Members of Committees will not receive hard copies of reports and will access these through the Council's website.

Members of Committees will continue to receive hard copy summonses, lists of agenda items and reports as at present except if the individual Member requests not to receive these by hard copy and elects to accept these through the Council's website and to use their Council-provided devices to access these at the meeting. This choice of hard copy or paperless alternative will be for the individual personal choice of any Committee Member in every case pending any future implementation of phase 2 of this modernisation.

Outside Representatives

Outside representatives at present receive only hard copy summonses, lists of agenda items and reports for those Committees on which they are Members. This practice will continue except if the outside representative accepts the paperless option and will be supported in that event by ICT colleagues.

Community Councils

Summonses, lists of agenda items and reports will not be delivered to all Community Councils as all Committee business is accessible through the Council's website. In the transitional period, notice of the placing of agendas for meetings will be given by email to the Community Councils until the new procedures are embedded. Copies of the Council's approved annual Committee meeting timetable will continue to be given to the Community Councils so there is an awareness of the meeting schedule and the availability of reports on the dates as shown within the timetable. Special meetings of Committees will be notified to the Community Councils.

Officers

There will be a comprehensive review of the significant numbers of hard copy agendas and reports that are delivered to Officers and it will be the expectation that Officers and their relative teams will access Committee papers through the Council's website.

External Auditors

The Council's external auditors will be asked to access Committee agendas and reports through the Council's website and will be given a note of the Council's approved annual timetable for awareness of publication dates thereon. Special meetings of Committees will be notified to the external auditors.

Members of the Public

There is no effect upon any of the rights of the members of the public in respect of the changes to the Committee agenda process. Hard copy agendas and reports will continue to be kept available for public use at Committee meetings. The public also have right to inspect various documents after meetings and for a period of six years from the date of each meeting there must be kept available for inspection a copy of the minutes of that meeting and its reports and there are no changes proposed to these arrangements.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

Financial Implications

6.1 One-off Costs

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | Budget Years | Proposed Spend this Report | Virement From | Other Comments |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | |

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

| Cost Centre | Budget Heading | With Effect from | Annual Net Impact | Virement From (if Applicable) | Other Comments |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Committee agendas | Printing and Stationery | 1 April 2018 | (£10,000) | N/A | N/A |

Legal

6.2 The provisions of this review are within the terms of the Local Government Acts and the Local Government Access to Information Act 1985.

Human Resources

6.3 There are no HR implications.

Equalities and Diversity

6.4 There is no effect upon equalities.

Repopulation

6.5 There are no direct effects upon repopulation.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 This report has been considered and endorsed by the CMT.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 These proposals are focused upon savings relative to printing and stationery. There is no intent to diminish any aspect of publication, awareness or scrutiny in relation to any aspect of this process but the Council's financial pressures require conscientious scrutiny of every aspect of its business processes. No legal rights of Members are infringed although the changes do require the voluntary and individual acceptance of Members of the changes outlined.

8.2 Phase 2 of the streamlining process will require time for preparation and planning and will require ICT support to Members and Officers for the implementing of a paperless system. These activities will be reviewed and developed following appraisal and review of phase 1.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

Committee Agenda Process

Present

| <u>Recipient</u> | <u>Hard Copy Delivery</u> | <u>Website</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Members of Committees | ✓ | ✓ |
| Non-Members of Committees | ✓ | ✓ |
| Chief Officers and Other Officers | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community Councils | ✓ | ✓ |
| External Auditor | ✓ | ✓ |
| Copies for Public Inspection | ✓ | ✓ |

Proposed

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Members of Committees | ✓ ¹ | ✓ |
| Non-Members of Committees | | ✓ ² |
| Chief Officers and Other Officers | | ✓ |
| Community Councils | | ✓ |
| External Auditor | | ✓ |
| Copies for Public Inspection | ✓ | ✓ |

¹ The individual Elected Member can choose to access the agendas and reports through the Council's website instead of receiving hard copies.

² The individual Elected Member's confirmation is required.