

# The City of Edinburgh Council

10am, Thursday, 12 March 2015

## Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee - Appointment

Item number	7.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

### Executive summary

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Council is asked to approve the appointment of one additional member to the Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee, and confirm the appointment of the remaining members until the replacement of visiting committees with a new prison monitoring system.

### Links

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Coalition pledges

Council outcomes [CO25](#)

Single Outcome Agreement

## Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee - Appointment

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 To agree the appointment of Mr Robyn Murray as a member of the Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee until the Visiting Committee's replacement by a prison monitoring system and subject to the usual checks.
- 1.2. To continue the terms of office of the remaining Edinburgh appointed members of the Visiting Committee for a similar period.
- 1.3 To note that Edinburgh's appointments to the Visiting Committee will therefore comprise:-
  - Gregor McNie
  - Marie McQuillan
  - Robyn Murray
  - Mickey Piper
  - Fergus West

### Main report

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- 2.1 The Council has previously been advised of the Scottish Government's intention to transfer the responsibilities for voluntary Visiting Committees to a new prison monitoring service.
- 2.2 The initial timescale for the transfer was March 2013. Current indications are that this will now take place in late summer 2015, although there may also be a three-month handover to the new agency.
- 2.3 Four additional members were appointed to the Visiting Committee by the Council in May 2013, in the expectation that this would sustain the Committee until the formal transfer.
- 2.4 The Chair of the Visiting Committee recently received a number of resignations and indicated that should there be any more it might be unable to fulfil its statutory duties. Given the approaching transfer of responsibilities, and the lead-in time for compulsory training, it was agreed that public advertisement for new members would not be appropriate. Instead, soundings were made of neighbouring visiting committee members to establish whether they would be prepared to assist Edinburgh. One member of the Glenochil Visiting Committee, Robyn Murray, agreed to be considered for appointment.

- 2.5 Following assessment of this application by Council officials and the Chair of the Visiting Committee, the Council is recommended to agree Mr Murray's appointment for the remaining life of the Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee, and to re-appoint the remaining Edinburgh members for the same period.
- 2.6 A second application was received at the same time from a member of the public. This application was similarly assessed, and it was felt that the candidate did not meet the necessary criteria. The transfer timetable required any appointee to be able to commence prison visiting duties immediately, without the need for supplementary training. The unsuccessful applicant did not meet this criteria, and has been advised to apply for membership of the new service.

### **Measures of success**

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- 3.1 The Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee is able to continue its statutory activity, with two Visitors visiting every two weeks, until such time as these are transferred to a new prison monitoring system.

### **Financial impact**

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- 4.1 Prison Visiting Committee members are entitled to claim limited subsistence and travel costs from the Council.

### **Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 5.1 The risk of not appointing the additional member is that the Council could fail to meet its statutory duties to form a Prison Visiting Committee in terms of the Prisons and Young Offenders Institutions (Scotland) Amendment Rules 2012.

### **Equalities impact**

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- 6.1 Not applicable.

### **Sustainability impact**

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- 7.1 Not applicable.

### **Consultation and engagement**

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- 8.1 Not applicable

### **Background reading / external references**

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[Report to June 2013 Council - Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee - Appointment of Members](#)

[City of Edinburgh Council minute of 27 June 2013](#)

[Report to May 2012 Council - Edinburgh Prison Visiting Committee - Appointment of Members](#)

[City of Edinburgh Council minute 24 May 2012](#)

## Alastair D Maclean

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## Links

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### Coalition pledges

**Council outcomes** CO25 – The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives.

**Single Outcome Agreement**

**Appendices** None