

City of Edinburgh Council

10.00am, Thursday 31 August 2023

Update regarding Community Council Scheme and Boundary Review 2023 and Community Council Elections 2024

Executive/routine
Wards ALL

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the update and timescales for the Community Council Scheme and Boundary Review which has commenced and will progress throughout 2023.
- 1.2 To agree the timescale for Community Council elections to be held in 2024 and that this timescale could change if a national election is announced.

Dr Deborah Smart
Executive Director of Corporate Services

Contact: Gavin King, Head of Democracy, Governance and Resilience
E-mail: gavin.king@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 4329

Report

Update regarding Community Council Scheme and Boundary Review 2023 and Community Council Elections 2024

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report presents an update on the Community Council Scheme and boundary review which is being progressed during 2023 and Community Council elections which are intended to occur in summer 2024 (unless a national election is announced for May 2024 in which case the Community Council elections will be rescheduled to later in the year).

3. Background

- 3.1 Community Councils were first established in Scotland following the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Under the Act each Local Authority is required to produce a Scheme which provides a framework for their creation and operation. The current scheme was approved by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2019.
- 3.2 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires that a special convened meeting of the Council pass any further amended schemes with not less than a two-thirds majority of the members voting at the meeting.
- 3.3 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 allows a local authority to amend their Scheme provided that Community Councils are given the opportunity to make “representations as respects the proposals” in accordance with the statutory review process.
- 3.4 A series of consultations with Community Council Liaison Officers (CCLOs), Community Councils, COSLA, Scottish Community Development Centre produced a series of proposed amendments to the Scottish Governments Model Scheme for Community Councils in March 2023 (Appendix 2).
- 3.5 The intention of the amendments to the Model Scheme is a practical update to the 2009 Model Scheme.
- 3.6 The Scheme for Community Councils in Edinburgh is largely based on the Scottish Governments Model Scheme for Community Councils and was last reviewed and agreed in June 2019.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Following the Collaborative working with Community Councils report to Culture and Communities Committee on 1 February 2022 it was agreed to undertake a review of the Community Council Scheme and boundaries in 2023 and in advance of Community Council elections which were proposed to be held in 2024.
- 4.2 The term of current Community Councils was extended to 2024 to enable the scheme and boundary review to be completed prior to any election. This was proposed by the Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC). It was acknowledged that if there is a national election announced in May 2024 then the Community Council election date will be amended to later in that year.
- 4.3 The Council supports the governance and administrative arrangements (including the annual grant award) for Community Councils in Edinburgh. Through ongoing interactions with Community Councils, a number of scheme clarifications or proposed improvements have been identified. These include:
 - 4.3.1 Eligibility of Membership for Community Councils
 - 4.3.2 Boundaries of Community Councils in Edinburgh
 - 4.3.3 Financial Arrangements and Resourcing of Community Councils
 - 4.3.4 Virtual Meetings
 - 4.3.5 Role of Edinburgh Association of Community Councils (EACC)
- 4.4 The Council have now commenced the preliminary consultation period for the Community Council scheme and boundary review (Appendix 1 – Outline Consultation Plan and Timeline).
- 4.5 The intention of the pre-statutory consultation period is to give interested parties the opportunity to make initial contributions and suggestions regarding the existing Community Council scheme and boundaries. It is also intended to enable the provision of feedback and recommendations for any proposed changes that interested parties believe would be beneficial, to both the operation of Community Councils and for respective local communities.
- 4.6 Key stakeholders have been invited to participate in the pre-statutory consultation and provide feedback and recommendations via the following routes;
 - 4.6.1 Invite to attend a drop-in session held at Waverley Court on 7 August 2023 from 17.00-19.30.
 - 4.6.2 Invite to attend a drop-in session held at Waverley Court on 15 August 2023 from 13.00-16.00.
 - 4.6.3 Invite to attend a virtual drop-in session held via MS Teams on 17 August 2023 from 17.00-19.30.
 - 4.6.4 Invite to complete an on-line questionnaire which closes on 1 September 2023.

- 4.6.5 Invite to provide written feedback by email to community.councils@edinburgh.gov.uk or by post to the Governance Team Business Centre 2.
- 4.7 The key stakeholders that have been contacted during the pre-statutory consultation period include all active Community Councils, elected members, and internal service area's (e.g. Community Empowerment and Engagement, Insurance Services, Planning, Licencing etc).
- 4.8 Communications have also encouraged key stakeholders to widely share all invitations to all interested parties.
- 4.9 The Governance Team will collate and analyse feedback received and this will be considered when drafting amendments, where applicable, to the scheme and boundaries.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Following the conclusion of the preliminary consultation a report will go to Council initiating the statutory consultation process in September 2023.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 All financial implications are expected to be contained within existing budgets.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process identified implications for groups including: older people and people in their middle years; young people and children.
- 7.2 Accessibility support and physical location was considered to enable participation in the consultation events.
- 7.3 Opportunities for intergenerational participation are being explored through specific questions within the consultation.
- 7.4 Community Council members are seeking to represent the diverse needs and characteristics of the communities they represent and any amendments to the scheme are envisaged to support this.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 Community Council meetings, and pre-statutory consultation events now have the option to be held virtually or hybrid. Previously attendance at meetings could incur travel omissions.
- 8.2 All correspondence inviting feedback have been electronic unless otherwise requested.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 A pre-statutory consultation period is being progressed currently which included three drop-in sessions, an online questionnaire and invitations to provide written feedback. The feedback received will be reviewed and considered to shape the parameters of the statutory consultation.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Collaborative Working with Community Councils - Culture and Communities Committee 1 February 2022](#)
- 10.2 [Scheme for Community Councils](#)
- 10.3 [Community Council Maps](#)
- 10.4 [Community Council Guidance Notes](#)
- 10.5 [Community Council scheme and boundary review \(pre-statutory consultation\) - City of Edinburgh Council - Citizen Space](#)

11. Appendix

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Outline Consultation Plan and Timeline

Appendix 1 - Outline Consultation Plan and Timeline

June 2023 – September 2023	Preliminary consultation period
28 September 2023	Subject to Council approval, public notice of the Statutory Consultation Process will be issued. This consultation phase will be for eight weeks.
8 February 2024	Subject to Council approval, public notice of the draft Scheme and proposed boundary changes will be issued. This consultation phase will be for eight weeks.
26 April 2024	Report to Council to approve the finalised Scheme and boundary changes following the consultation.
9 May 2024	Subject to Council approval, a final 4 week consultation period before Council will determine if they are approving the new Scheme and boundaries.
May/June 2024	Final scheme to be implemented for CC elections and CC term.

This timetable is indicative and subject to change depending on a requirement for a second statutory period of consultation.