

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services

Council: 27 August 2008

Subject: Evidence to the Commission on Scottish Devolution

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To invite the Council to make a formal submission to the Commission on Scottish Devolution.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Commission on Devolution has been set up with the following remit:-

“to review the provisions of the Scotland Act 1998 in the light of experience and to recommend any changes to the present constitutional arrangements that would enable the Scottish Parliament to better serve the people of Scotland, that would improve the financial accountability of the Scottish Parliament and that would continue to secure the position of Scotland within the United Kingdom”

- 2.2** Sir Kenneth Calman, Chair of the Commission, has written to the Council advising that public engagement is central to the Commission’s work and that it will be listening to as wide a range of views as possible from across Scotland and the wider UK.

- 2.3** In that context, he now invites the Council to make a formal submission to the Commission. Submissions may be on any matter within the Commission’s remit, but he requests that they be structured by reference to a list of questions compiled by the Commission, supplied with the letter and forming the Appendix to this report.

- 2.4** A copy of the letter with its enclosures has previously been issued to the Secretaries of the political groups and individually to the S.S.P and Independent members.

- 2.5** The closing date for submissions is Wednesday 3 September 2008, which means that a decision must be made at this meeting if the Council’s response is to meet the deadline.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The key topics are attached in the Appendix. The political nature of the topics and the opinions sought make it inappropriate for officers to recommend responses on the individual points raised.

- 3.2** It is worth pointing out, however, that the Council has previously expressed an opinion on the following issue:-

Question 4, note A – the number of Members of the Scottish Parliament

On 27 February 2002, in response to a consultation on the size of the Scottish Parliament, the Council, after debate and a vote, agreed to respond that a reduction in the number of MSPs would not be a disadvantage to the operation of the Scottish Parliament and to suggest that any reduction in the number of MSPs should come from list MSPs, whom it saw as unnecessary.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues arising from this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. Risk Analysis

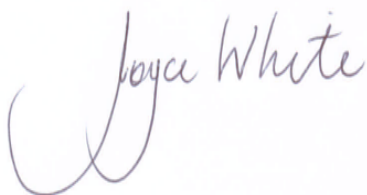
- 6.1** There are no significant risks associated with this report.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** This is a very important consultation, the results of which could help form the relationship between the Scottish and UK Parliaments in future. It is essentially political in nature and since the response is unlikely to be agreed by consensus, the Council has the choice to agree a response by majority vote or to remit to the individual political groups to make their own responses.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** It is recommended that the Council decides how it wishes to respond to the consultation and that, if it is minded to agree the response in Council, that it considers the key topics detailed in the Appendix individually, noting that the submission must be received by the Commission not later than 3 September 2008.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Joyce White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joyce White: Executive Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

Letter dated 18 June 2008 from the Commission on Scottish Devolution inviting the Council to submit evidence.

Minute of Meeting of West Dunbartonshire Council held on 27 February 2002

Wards Affected: All wards

Officer to Contact:

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