

The City of Edinburgh Council

10am, Thursday 27 April 2017

Establishment of Muirhouse/Salvesen Community Council

Item number	8.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	Ward 1 – Almond

Executive summary

This report provides the City of Edinburgh Council with a briefing on the submission of a petition by over 20 electors requesting that a Community Council be established in Muirhouse/Salvesen and seeks approval for the process and timetable to deliver this.

Links

Coalition pledges	P33
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Establishment of Muirhouse/Salvesen Community Council

1 Recommendations

It is recommended that the City of Edinburgh Council:

- 1.1 approve the process of combined online, postal and polling place voting, should a poll be required;
- 1.2 approve the timetable for the election of Muirhouse/Salvesen Community Council, and:
- 1.3 appoint the Election Manager as Returning Officer.

2 Background

- 2.1 Community Councils are the key community representative bodies within the local and strategic community planning arrangements in Edinburgh and have representation on each of the 12 Neighbourhood Partnerships and Edinburgh Partnership Board. This is a reflection of the national picture where Community Councils are seen as one of the key ways to encourage community involvement in decision making.

3 Main report

- 3.1 A petition was received on 6 April 2017 with a request from over 20 local electors to establish a Community Council for the Muirhouse/Salvesen area under the terms of Section 52 (7) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. This is sufficient in terms of a formal request for a Community Council to be established.
- 3.2 An election process will therefore be required to support the establishment of the new Community Council for the Muirhouse/Salvesen area. This will involve a nomination process to identify new community councillors. At the close of nominations, should there be more valid nominations than the maximum permitted membership then a poll would be required to elect the members of the Community Council.

3.3 The City of Edinburgh Council [Scheme for Community Councils](#) requires that in the event of a poll being required, it will be conducted by secret ballot of local electors, organised by the Returning Officer (approved by the City of Edinburgh Council in accordance with the Scottish Local Election Rules subject to modification and simplification as deemed necessary by the City of Edinburgh Council). A poll was required for one Community Council in October 2016 in Leith Links. The poll was undertaken by a process of online and polling place voting. As this process resulted in an increased turnout, it is proposed to use this, together with postal voting, with Muirhouse/Salvesen Community Council, should a poll be required.

3.4 The proposed timetable for election is as follows:

- Nomination period – 5 June 2017 until 30 June 2017
- Notice of poll – 3 July 2017
- Poll (if required) – 13 July 2017

The poll, if required, needs to take place within six weeks of the start of the nomination period.

3.5 The Council's preferred practice is to appoint, where possible, a ward Councillor as the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer will be responsible for calling and chairing the first meeting of the new Community Council and will be advised of the terms of the proposals in this report. Given that there will be elections to the City of Edinburgh Council on 4 May 2017 rather than appoint a Councillor as Returning Officer it is proposed that the duties would be undertaken by the Elections Manager within the Governance and Democratic Services section of Strategy and Insight Division .

4 Measures of success

4.1 A Community Council is established in the Muirhouse/Salvesen area as requested by the signatories. Further, that the process is fully understood by all participants.

5 Financial impact

5.1 An annual administration grant of £620.16 is required for Muirhouse/Salvesen Community Council. This cost can be met from existing budgets. Should a poll be required for Muirhouse/Salvesen Community Council the cost is anticipated to be around £7,500. This will be managed within existing budgets.

6 Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

6.1 The process will comply with the Scottish Local Election Rules as modified.

7 Equalities impact

- 7.1 The Scheme for Community Councils promotes and enhances the Council's ability to meet its General and Public Duties under equalities legislation. An Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment has recently been carried out as part of the Review of the Scheme. The addition of a new Community Council will contribute to and enhance the assessment.

8 Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse environmental implications arising from this report.

9 Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Council officers have been in discussions with local electors to support the submission of the petition to establish the Community Council. To encourage nominations, a publicity campaign will take place. As in previous circumstances where new Community Councils are being established, this will be led by the Council and will include the use of posters, leaflets, messages in local press and online promotion through existing social media platforms and the Council and Neighbourhood Partnership websites.

10 Background reading/external references

- 10.1 [Scheme for Community Councils](#)

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Links

Coalition pledges	P33 – Strengthen Neighbourhood Partnerships and further involve local people in decisions on how Council resources are used
Council priorities	CP4 – Safe and empowered communities
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 – Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	