



## **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY 9 APRIL 2013  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

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### **Committee Members Present:**

Provost L Broun-Lindsay (Convener)	Councillor N Hampshire
Councillor S Akhtar	Councillor W Innes
Councillor D Berry	Councillor M Libberton
Councillor S Brown	Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor J Caldwell	Councillor F McAllister
Councillor S Currie	Councillor K McLeod
Councillor T Day	Councillor J McMillan
Councillor A Forrest	Councillor J McNeil
Councillor J Gillies	Councillor M Veitch
Councillor J Goodfellow	Councillor J Williamson
Councillor D Grant	

### **Council Officials Present:**

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive  
Mr A McCrorie, Executive Director (Support Services)  
Ms M Patterson, Executive Director (Services for Communities) and Monitoring Officer  
Dr R Jennings, Head of Housing & Environment  
Mr J Lamond, Head of Council Resources  
Mr M Leys, Head of Adult Wellbeing  
Ms S Saunders, Head of Children's Wellbeing  
Mr T Shearer, Head of Policy & Partnerships  
Ms M Ferguson, Corporate Legal Adviser  
Ms C Johnson, Strategic Policy Officer (Housing)  
Mrs K MacNeill, Corporate Legal Adviser  
Ms E Wilson, Housing Strategy & Development Service Manager

### **Visitors Present:**

None

### **Clerk:**

Mrs L Gillingwater

### **Apologies:**

Councillor P McLennan  
Councillor T Trotter

*Prior to the commencement of business, Councillor Veitch made a statement about the former Prime Minister, Baroness Thatcher, who had passed away recently. He paid tribute to the achievements of Baroness Thatcher, describing her as an “inspirational leader and one of Britain’s great prime ministers”.*

## **1. APPOINTMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION, MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

A report was submitted by the Executive Director (Support Services) advising of the appointment of a new Leader of the Opposition and seeking approval of related changes to the membership of Council committees and the list of representatives to outside bodies.

The Head of Council Resources, Jim Lamond, presented the report, advising that Councillor McLennan had recently resigned as Leader of the SNP Group and would be replaced as Leader of the Group by Councillor Currie. He drew attention to amendments to committee membership and outside bodies proposed as a result of this change.

On behalf of the Conservative Group, Councillor Veitch paid tribute to the contribution made by Councillor McLennan, both as a former Leader of the Council and as Leader of the SNP Group. He congratulated Councillor Currie on his new status.

Councillor Berry also congratulated Councillor Currie on becoming Leader of the SNP Group and also welcomed the proposal to appoint Councillor McLeod as Convener of the Audit & Governance Committee and Councillor Williamson as Depute Convener.

Councillor Day also thanked Councillor McLennan for his contribution to the Council.

Councillor Currie echoed the comments made in relation to Councillor McLennan, remarking that leading the Council and the Opposition were difficult tasks but were nevertheless very important ones. He undertook to continue to hold the Administration to account and sought to work with the Administration for the benefit of the county’s constituents.

### **Decision**

The Council agreed:

- i. to note that change of Leader of the Opposition as outlined in Section 3.1 of the report and also the related ex-officio appointments as contained with Section 3.4 of the report;
- ii. to approve the nomination of Councillor McLeod as the Convener of the Audit & Governance Committee, replacing Councillor Currie, and also the nomination of Councillor Williamson as the Depute Convener of the Audit & Governance Committee; and
- iii. to approve the nomination of Councillor Currie to represent the Council on the CoSLA Convention, replacing Councillor McLennan.

### **Urgent Item**

Councillor Innes requested that an urgent item be considered, in relation to the announcement about the closure of the court in Haddington. The Council agreed to accept this urgent item of business.

**2. CLOSURE OF HADDINGTON SHERIFF COURT AND JUSTICE OF THE PEACE COURT**

Councillor Innes advised that the Scottish Court Service had announced the closure of a number of courts, including Haddington Sheriff and Justice of the Peace Courts. Councillor Innes expressed his disappointment at this decision, indicating that it would have a significant impact on East Lothian, both economically and socially. He called upon the Council to write to the Scottish Government opposing the closure in the strongest possible terms, with a view to having the position as regards Haddington Courts reconsidered.

Councillor Currie reminded Members that the SNP Group had supported the Council's response to the consultation and stated that this view remained unchanged. He advised that this matter would require the approval of the Scottish Parliament.

Councillor Veitch and Councillor Berry voiced their support for the retention of the Haddington Courts.

**Decision**

The Council agreed to contact the Scottish Government seeking to have the decision to close Haddington Sheriff Court and Justice of the Peace Court reconsidered.

Signed .....

Provost Ludovic Broun-Lindsay  
Convener of the Council