

REPORT TO: FINANCE COMMITTEE – 19 MARCH 2001

REPORT ON: CONVENTION OF SCOTTISH LOCAL AUTHORITIES (COSLA) – MEMBERSHIP 2001/2002

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 186-2001

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider whether the Council should renew its membership of The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) for 2001/2002.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 As there is no financial provision in the 2001/2002 Revenue Budget for membership of COSLA the Committee is asked to either:

a) confirm that Dundee City Council is formally withdrawing its membership of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities.

or

b) the Council renews its membership of COSLA, in accordance with the agreement reached at the Leaders' Meeting on 23 February 2001, ensuring that the Council remains within the joint national contract and wages negotiating structure and Officers have access to the services provided by COSLA, as outlined in this report.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current financial contribution to COSLA for 2000/01 is £70,480. The Council's Provisional Revenue Budget for 2001/02 included an allowance of £72,000 for the COSLA levy but this budgetary provision was removed as part of the revenue savings indicated in the successful budget motion passed at the meeting of 15 February 2001.

If the Committee decides to remain within COSLA then the £72,000 interim membership fee shortfall can be met from the CFCR provision of £150,000 which was included in the 2001/2002 Revenue Budget.

4 BACKGROUND

Since early 1999 COSLA has been undergoing fundamental changes to its political and operating structures. The advent of the Scottish Parliament in July 1999 made changes necessary and now all Council Leaders are fully involved in the decision-making process of the organisation on a monthly basis. COSLA has also appointed a number of Councillors from all political groups of the Convention to act as the Local Government spokesperson for particular areas of policy development.

During the last year, COSLA has also been making changes to the internal structure of the organisation to reflect the priorities of member Councils and the clear wish to continue to lobby on Local Government Finance, be an effective employers organisation, and to continue to improve communications and the use of new technology.

It should be noted that COSLA has taken on the additional workload of influencing the Scottish Parliament and its committees as well as a new Executive consisting of 22 ministers without any additional resources from member Councils.

5 COSLA LEVY 2001-2004 AND BUDGET REDUCTIONS

The initial estimates for the draft budget of 2001/02 for COSLA showed the provision of inflation allowances at 3% for pay and 2.5% for non-pay items. The initial budget proposal was prepared on a no growth basis before applying agreed saving measures. It also affected the likely outcome of the internal structure review with a further reduction in the Management Team members of two. Over the last year or so, four posts had been deleted from the Management Team and this has resulted in ongoing net annual savings of £222,000. There are currently eight grant-aid funded posts within COSLA with a total funding of £375,000 being received. There are also three seconded posts which are a free service to COSLA with an approximate value of £136,000.

Following representations from member Councils in regard to possible levy levels the General Purposes Committee of COSLA re-examined budget proposals in order to limit any increase in levy to 2.5% for each of the next three financial years. To achieve this would have meant further cuts of £583,000 in 2001/02, £666,000 in 2002/03 and £748,000 in 2003/04 in addition to the £357,000 savings already identified. Adoption of this proposal was not practical as COSLA would not be able to remain a viable organisation.

As an alternative the General Purposes Group recommended levy increases over the next three years in line with the increases in the local government settlement. This latter recommendation would have involved a total of 9 voluntary or compulsory redundancies in the current COSLA permanent workforce and COSLA had requested that Councils consider any opportunities there may be in their own organisation to redeploy the COSLA staff affected.

Subsequent to the above, at the Leaders' Meeting of 23 February 2001 a motion was agreed asking local authorities to commit to pay one year's levy plus 3% by 1 April 2001 on condition that a working group be established to examine the fundamental duties and obligations of COSLA to report back to the Convention meeting of 29 June 2001 (see letter at Appendix A). For Dundee this would amount to £71,487.09.

A statement from the COSLA Management Team outlining current areas of operation and involvement are attached at Appendix B.

6 IMPLICATIONS FOR DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

- 6.1 One of the consequences for Dundee of the revised proposals from COSLA is the loss of membership of LACOTS. The Local Authorities Co-ordinating Body on Food and Trading Standards (LACOTS) is a company limited by guarantee, constituted by and accountable to the Local Authority Associations for England (LG) and Wales (WLGA), Scotland (COSLA) and Northern Ireland (LAANI). LACOTS overall aim is to enhance the quality of Local Authority Trading Standards and Food Safety enforcement through activities designed to promote co-ordination, consistency and good practice. A report submitted to the Protective Services Forum of COSLA on 1 October 1999 in response to the Consumer White Paper "Modern Markets : Conflict with Consumers" recommended that COSLA, LACOTS and SCOTSS (Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland) should work together to ensure that an adequate proportion of the extra £30M recently announced by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to deliver

proposals outlined in the White Paper is directed to the Trading Standards service in Scotland.

Individual membership of this organisation will still be required at a comparable cost, as yet unquantified, as it is the only body that supplies a regulating framework for costing of charges by Trading Standards.

As well as the direct consequences in regard to LACOTS there are a number of implications for the Council corporately as well as for individual services which are outlined below.

6.2 NJC/JNC

Currently COSLA services a number of negotiating bodies as the employers side in contract and wage negotiations. These are respectively the **Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees; the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officials; the Joint Negotiating Committee for Craft Operatives and the Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff.**

The Employers' side secretary for each of these bodies is provided by COSLA (currently the COSLA Chief Executive) and the bodies are serviced by COSLA's Head of Personnel Strategy and his team of officers. The Convener of Personnel and Management Services is a COSLA representative on the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employers.

These bodies facilitate negotiations on wages and conditions in local government at a Scottish level and it is understood that the trade unions wish to continue to negotiate on a national basis.

Given the possibility of Dundee City Council no longer being a member of COSLA, the Chief Executive thought it prudent to ascertain from COSLA the likely outcome in regard to national negotiating bodies consequent upon our withdrawal.

If Dundee is no longer a member then, in the view of the COSLA Chief Executive, the Council would not be able to participate in discussion in the new negotiating body which is being established to discuss teachers' pay and conditions of service since the constitution of that body states that the members will be drawn from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the Scottish Executive and organisations representing teachers.

Similarly, in COSLA'S view the membership of the Employers Side of the Scottish Joint Council, which negotiates the pay and conditions of service for local government staff, i.e. former APT & C and Manual Workers, currently has representation drawn from all 32 councils in Scotland, but the constitution states "the 33 employers' representatives will be appointed by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities". If Dundee is no longer a member of COSLA however, then, in the view of the Chief Executive of COSLA, it will no longer be entitled to send a representative to meetings of the SJC.

The constitution of these bodies is, however, ambiguous and COSLA's view may therefore be challengeable.

In summary, if Dundee City Council remains outwith COSLA, in COSLA's view it will have no influence on the collective wage bargaining process and any future settlement which might adversely affect the Council's interests.

6.3 COSLA Working Groups

6.3.1 Chief Executive and Corporate Planning

The Chief Executive attends all Leaders meetings of COSLA which are preceded by a Chief Executive's meeting, a valuable forum for discussing strategic issues which affect all Councils. Officers from Dundee City Council have been involved in the **Best Value Improvement Network** and contributed to the design of interactive benchmarking databases. COSLA received a contribution of £100,000 from the Scottish Executive to develop this area covering Best Value Review information, customer survey and employee survey results across all Scottish Local Government. Withdrawal from COSLA may lead to Dundee City Council being denied access to these facilities having contributed considerably to establishing them.

The Council will no longer be eligible for entering the **COSLA Quality Awards** which we have won twice and been shortlisted three times. The Council has submitted 41 applications in all which have had a significant effect in recognising the efforts of staff in producing projects that are worthy of submitting for an award.

The Director of Corporate Planning was appointed by COSLA as a member of the **Best Value Task Force** involving tripartite meetings at officer level between local government, the Scottish Executive and Audit Scotland. The Director is also a COSLA appointed representative on the **Service Improvement Member/Officer Task Group** which is overseeing Local Government Service Improvement in Scotland and the Council officer representative on the **Urban Affairs Members Network**.

6.3.2 Information Technology

21st Century Government Advocates is the E-Government Digital Scotland Forum and relates to the implementation of Dundee City Council's ICT Strategy. This COSLA Working Group is also attended by Scottish Executive officials who recommend to Ministers how the Modernising Government money is spent in Local Government.

6.3.3 Public Relations

The Director of Public Relations is a member of the **COSLA Public Relations Officers' Working Group** which helps COSLA formulate campaigns on issues such as the Local Government Financial Settlement as well as promoting Local Government.

6.3.4 Personnel and Management Services

In Personnel and Management Services the Management Services Manager is a member of the **COSLA New Deal Officers' Network** and the **COSLA Improvement Network**.

6.3.5 Support Services

Officers within the Architectural Services Division are currently involved in a Working Group organised by COSLA to discuss and negotiate a way forward on the **LEIA (LIFT)** situation. Staff members from the Administration and Legal Sections of Support Services attend sub-groups of the **COSLA Elected Members Licensing Board Network** and both the Director of Support Services and Administration Manager have served on **COSLA Bill Teams** from time to time.

6.3.6 Education

Education Department staff have been involved in a number of COSLA Working Groups looking at cross authority financial issues including special school fees; prepaid transport and bursaries. Currently COSLA is establishing a forum which will influence the implementation of the McCrone Agreement.

6.3.7 Social Work

In the Social Work Department the Director is the **Association of Director of Social Work/COSLA Advisor for Social Work** matters and makes presentations to Parliamentary Committees in regard to the drafting of new legislation. The Manager, Criminal Justice Services, represents COSLA on the **Criminal Justice Development Centre Advisory Group; the Finance and Management Group for Criminal Justice** and is a representative on the **Criminal Justice Partnerships** which monitors progress and problems in the Criminal Justice Service. The Manager, Community Care, represents COSLA on the **National Supporting People Stakeholder Group** which works on guidance and implementation plans, and chairs the COSLA Network Group supporting these developments. She was also nominated by COSLA as the local government generalist on the **New Opportunities Fund Healthy Living Centre Board**.

6.3.8 Housing

Officers from the Housing Department are involved in a number of COSLA Working Groups including the **Homelessness Task Force** which is current developing improvements to the Homeless Service to be incorporated into the Housing Bill; the **New Housing Partnership Network Group**, a forum for sharing best practice and knowledge as well as inputting into policy development at Scottish Executive level; the **Housing Policy Research and Information Group** responsible for commissioning and sharing research into Housing services; and the **Housing Practitioners Forum in Community Care** which provides information and advice on new initiatives such as supporting people. In addition COSLA is co-ordinating local authorities responses to the new Housing Bill and is currently debating key issues such as financial implications of the Bill and the role of the Executive Agency with the Scottish Executive and Scottish Homes. Withdrawal from COSLA will make it far more difficult for the Council and the Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations' views on the new Housing Bill to be discussed and supported by other local authorities and thence to the Scottish Executive.

6.3.9 Planning and Transportation

The Planning and Transportation Department is a member of the **Scottish Building Control Organisation** which is administered by COSLA and is a member/officer group looking at building control issues as well as allowing entry to the Type Approval Scheme. The Policy and Regeneration Division of the Planning and Transportation Department is also represented on the **COSLA Research and Information Management Network** and the Policy and Regeneration Manager has represented COSLA as a planning adviser on **COSLA Officer/Member Group on Land Use Planning**. Other officers within the Policy and Regeneration Division are members of the following COSLA Working Groups: **GIS Research and Information Managers' Network** which provides knowledge about Geographic Information Systems and their application; **Planning, Economic and Transport Research and Intelligence Group**; **Social Inclusion Research and Information Group** which monitors and develops statistical information relating to local government, in particular deprivation; and **Scottish Census Advisory Group** which provides consultation on the Census.

6.3.10 Economic Development

Heads and Conveners of Economic Development meets under the auspices of COSLA to discuss major strategic issues, and is the main contact for negotiations with the Scottish Executive.

Representatives from the Economic Development Department attend the **COSLA European Officers Network**. The primary objective of this network is to provide support for the European Members' Network which in turn ensures that Local Government has a voice in terms of European Policy Development and the administration and implementation of the structural funds. The network relies on COSLA for the provision of intelligence and has a vehicle for lobbying the Scottish Executive, Westminster or Brussels on a range of European issues. The activity level of these groups is very high and it is difficult to perceive how Local Government could effectively challenge any of these bodies in the absence of this network. Membership of COSLA and ESEC has given Dundee City Council the opportunity for direct access to the Ministers for Finance, Local Government and European affairs at a time when the Objective 2 map proposed by the Scottish Executive was, at best, ineffective for Dundee. Dundee's position has been significantly improved as a result of this lobbying through COSLA and ESEC and Dundee is now managing the ESEC secretariat which has developed a strong working relationship with COSLA. Withdrawal from COSLA will obviously leave question marks over this relationship.

The Economic Development Department is also a member of **COSLA's ESF Network** which again provides for a strong voice for Local Government on this issue. The introduction of a new Objective 3 programme together with significant changes to the application process and scoring procedures led to many authorities including Dundee being unhappy with the outcome and much lobbying has been undertaken in an attempt to resolve this issue with the result that the European Committee of the Scottish Parliament has produced a report appraising this system and reflecting many, if not all, of the issues raised through COSLA.

Dundee City Council is currently involved in the joint project with COSLA and five other local authorities looking at **Best Practice in Development and Delivery of Local Employment Action Plans**. The value of the project is £100,000 with a £4,000 contribution from Dundee City Council and 70% from the European Commission. COSLA submitted the combined application to Brussels and is facilitating and administering the project. The Economic Development Department also attends the **COSLA Energy Managers' Group** quarterly meetings which operates as a good source and sounding board for energy related issues as well as the **Officers Standing Group on Tourism** which discusses tourism issues.

6.3.11 Environmental and Consumer Protection

In the Environmental and Consumer Protection Department officers attend the **Environmental Services Group** which provides information on waste management, the **COSLA Contaminated Land Officers' Network** which looks at matters arising from regulations, registers and strategy as well as liaising with the Scottish Executive's Environmental Protection Unit. In addition, in emergency situations, such as the current Foot and Mouth epidemic all directives to local government have come from COSLA as the co-ordinating body.

6.3.12 Dundee Contract Services

The Director of Dundee Contract Services is currently a member of the **Pay and Grading Task Group** which examines the implications of single status covering job

evaluation, incentive bonus schemes, all elements of wages. In addition, the Director is chairing the Sub-Group which is preparing an advisory paper on incentive bonus schemes which is in its final draft stage. The Director of Dundee Contract Services also represents COSLA on the **Scottish Joint Apprenticeship Board for the Building Industry** which is made up of representatives from private contractors, trade unions and the CITB. It covers all aspects of craft apprenticeships and is currently progressing multiple skills which will be built into the training plan for apprentices.

6.3.13 Neighbourhood Resources and Development

There are a number of officers from the Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department who attend a variety of COSLA working groups including **the Equality Network** which provides a forum for research, good practice development and policy formulation in all equality issues; the **Voluntary Sector Officers Network** which shares information and good practice in regard to all aspects of the voluntary sector; the **Decentralisation Officers Network** which established a benchmark for consistent quality in Council decentralisation schemes; the **Social Inclusion Officers Network** which provides input to the Scottish Executive Inclusion network; the **COSLA Credit Union Taskforce** which has fed information to Councils regarding the National Development Strategy for Credit Unions in Scotland; the **COSLA/Scottish Executive Community Education Task Group** which monitors the progress of the development of community learning strategies and their relationship to Community Planning and the **Neighbourhood Statistics Steering Group** set up by the Scottish Executive under the auspices of COSLA to agree a workplan for a major project aimed at advancing the production, dissemination and use of data at local and national levels.

6.3.14 Arts and Heritage

The **Local Cultural Network** is an elected member forum which meets quarterly to network and discuss various arts and leisure issues and is attended by the Director of Arts & Heritage.

6.3.15 Finance

The Director of Finance is a member of the **Distribution and Expenditure Committees** respectively which have a critical role in advice and negotiations with the Scottish Executive in regard to funding for local government. The Director of Finance is also a representative on the **Advisory Group on Waste Disposal** and the **Advisory Group on the Councillors Code of Conduct**. The Corporate Finance Manager is a member of the **Water and Sewerage Charges and Benefits Group** with the Principal Pensions Officer being an adviser to COSLA on pension matters.

As well as the above COSLA is in the process of establishing a number of Elected Member Task Groups specifically in regard to the Local Government Finance Inquiry being undertaken by the Local Government Committee of the Scottish Parliament. These elected member groups are intended to develop policy to feed into the Local Government Committee's Inquiry and are respectively on the **Local Government Finance Settlement** which among other issues will address possible changes in the balance between central and local funding, the possible elimination of hypothecation and an independent assessment of resources necessary to recognise and tackle deprivation and poverty within individual councils; on **Local Taxation** which among other issues will address the case for revision/refinement of Council Tax bandings, consider possible supplementary/alternative local taxes, and develop and promote a case for the return of business rates to local control; and on **Capital** to promote a case for abolition of Section 94 consents and develop a case to challenge public expenditure definitions.

6.4 COSLA Training Events

Most departments have at one time or another had staff attending COSLA training events which they have found useful e.g. Finance staff at courses on Verification Framework and New Benefits Appeal procedure. In particular, there are forthcoming seminars scheduled to cover the new European Union Social Agenda, the 6th Environmental Action Programme, Community Planning and Sustainable Urban Communities. In the past year staff have attending training/conferences/seminars on Anti Social Behaviour; Scottish Vocational Qualification Assessor and New Housing Partnerships and Homelessness.

COSLA with Volunteer Development Scotland have organised seminars on “Active Communities”; Volunteering Policies; Employer-Supported Volunteering; and Grants to Third Parties.

If the Council is no longer a member of COSLA then officers will no longer be able to attend training events for COSLA member Councils.

7 **CONCLUSION**

The withdrawal of Dundee City Council from membership of COSLA will adversely affect the influence of the Council’s officers and members in many areas of policy development which have a direct effect on the services provided by the Council.

The Council may lose its “seat at the table” in the negotiations that are undertaken with the Scottish Executive through the Distribution Committee which may affect the amount of grants the Council receives in the Annual Financial Settlement, and also in the negotiation between the employers’ side and staff and Trade Union organisations in regard to wages and conditions of local government employees.

Chief Executive

Date

From the President Norman Murray



26 February 2001

Your Ref:

Our Ref: I/4

To: Leaders of Councils

copy : Chief Executives

Dear Colleague

Further to our meeting on Friday, I am writing to confirm the decision reached by Council Leaders.

The meeting endorsed the motion put forward by Cllr Jim McCabe, Labour Group Leader, as follows:

'Scottish local authorities are committed to the continuation of COSLA as the representative body of local authorities in Scotland.

Scottish local authorities commit to pay one year's levy plus 3% by 1 April 2001 and that a working group be established to examine the fundamental duties and obligations of COSLA and report back to the Convention Meeting on 29 June 2001'.

I would be grateful if those authorities who have indicated that they wish to withdraw from COSLA could submit the agreed motion to their own council as soon as possible and let me know the outcome of their deliberations. I would strongly urge those who have indicated they might withdraw to re-assess their position in order that once again Scottish local government can speak with a single voice and not be fragmented. That would only assist those who wish to attack local government in Scotland. It is important for the short term financial stability of COSLA that payment is made by 1 April 2001. I have made it clear to the management team that there should be a moratorium on new investment between now and the outcome of the review process. I have enclosed a table to show each council's share of the levy. When the nature of the reshaped organisation is clear, there will be a rebalancing of the levy.

The meeting further endorsed the recommendation that the working party review group should be cross-party and should begin work as soon as possible; the group's deliberations will be open, transparent and shared with all councils. I will be writing to party group leaders seeking nominations to the group in the next few days.

The meeting also endorsed the view that a cross party meeting with Ministers should be sought as soon as possible; arrangements for that meeting are in train.

I/

WHEN CALLING PLEASE ASK FOR

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COSLA, Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5XZ
Telephone 0131 474 9200 Fax 0131 474 9292 Internet www.cosla.gov.uk

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I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Norman

Norman Murray
President

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COSLA Levy 2001/2002
Split According to Council's Populations
3% Increase

<u>Council</u>	<u>Population</u> <u>1999</u>	<u>Net Levy</u> <u>2000/01</u> <u>£</u>	<u>Net Levy</u> <u>2001/02</u> <u>£</u>
Aberdeen City	212,650	102,373.48	105,253.28
Aberdeenshire	227,440	108,710.86	112,573.74
Angus	109,840	52,885.20	54,366.42
Argyll & Bute	89,730	43,232.58	44,412.77
Clackmannanshire	48,530	23,331.56	24,020.42
Comhairle Nan Eilean	27,560	13,424.30	13,641.10
Dumfries & Galloway	146,800	70,773.05	72,660.15
Dundee City	144,430	70,479.96	71,487.09
East Ayrshire	120,940	58,280.86	59,860.48
East Dunbartonshire	110,690	52,644.96	54,787.14
East Lothian	90,430	43,035.59	44,759.25
East Renfrewshire	89,280	42,271.64	44,190.04
Edinburgh	451,710	216,297.41	223,578.45
Falkirk	144,370	69,240.35	71,457.40
Fife	349,200	167,635.55	172,840.08
Glasgow	611,440	297,736.87	302,638.42
Highland	208,600	100,081.64	103,248.69
Inverclyde	85,190	41,032.03	42,165.66
Midlothian	81,680	38,850.70	40,428.35
Moray	85,210	41,257.85	42,175.55
North Ayrshire	139,410	67,102.27	69,002.39
North Lanarkshire	327,940	156,978.75	162,317.23
Orkney Islands	19,600	9,393.16	9,701.22
Perth & Kinross	134,030	63,921.56	66,339.51
Renfrewshire	177,230	85,441.76	87,721.79
Scottish Borders	106,400	51,073.83	52,663.76
Shetland Islands	22,740	11,007.54	11,255.39
South Ayrshire	114,250	54,984.84	56,549.20
South Lanarkshire	307,520	147,436.64	152,210.15
Stirling	84,700	39,941.37	41,923.12
West Dunbartonshire	94,980	45,586.88	47,011.32
West Lothian	154,680	73,554.96	76,560.44
TOTAL	5,119,200	2,460,000.00	2,533,800.00

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STATEMENT FROM COSLA MANAGEMENT TEAM TO POLITICAL GROUPS

COSLA's purpose is to be the national voice for local government in Scotland. It is essential that local government has a unified voice in order to be effective. The Management Team is committed to working for all 32 Councils in Scotland.

We are committed to defending the position of local government as the legitimate tier of governance closest to the people of Scotland.

We believe that COSLA is crucial to the promotion of local government's agenda and works with all member councils in its lobbying and campaigning activities. It is essential that we engage with and influence the Scottish Executive and Parliament. We will work to promote the value of local decision-making and to streamline and rationalise the number of new initiatives, plans and strategies which impact on local government and the communities they serve.

COSLA adds value around the three key interlinked areas of:

- Finance and distribution
- Pay and negotiations
- Services and legislation

Within these areas there are a number of key issues facing local government which cut across party political divisions. COSLA exists to defend all councils' interests in these key issues.

In our view, these key issues are:

FINANCE AND DISTRIBUTION

- Grant Distribution
Develop and introduce with effect from 2004/05 a simplified and transparent formula for distributing revenue grant. That formula will provide fair and reasonable results for all local authorities taking into account the various factors which may impact on councils' spending need.
- Deprivation and Poverty
Campaign for an independent study to assess the level of resources necessary to recognise and tackle deprivation and poverty within individual councils, this taking full account of the differing aspects of urban and rural circumstances.
- Ringfencing
Work to eliminate the level of hypothecation, ringfencing through specific grants and challenge funding, and move towards an approach of defining joint priorities with the Executive based on outcomes to be achieved.
- Spending Review 2002
Campaign for the establishment of a joint planning framework which will agree joint priorities, performance outcomes and the necessary level of resources to enable delivery.

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- **Capital**
Campaign for the abolition of Section 94 consents with central controls being replaced by self-regulated prudential safeguards. This will cover both general services and housing and press for the abandonment of housing set-aside arrangements
- **Local Taxation**
Campaign for the refinement of existing council tax bandings and putting in place a revaluation timescale. Promote consideration of a basket of new taxes which may be seen as a supplement or alternative to the council tax.
- **Business Rates**
Campaign for full/part localisation of business rates with due consideration of appropriate grant equalisation arrangements.
- **LGF Inquiry**
Contribute in full to the Local Government Committee's Inquiry into LGF promoting changes in local government finance arrangements which will introduce a more appropriate balance between central direction and local flexibility.

PAY AND NEGOTIATIONS

- Representing councils' interests in discussions with trade unions in developing a modern employment framework which will involve substantial changes to pay and conditions and the development of new grading structures for local government staff
- Taking forward the McCrone agreement
- Defending local government's interests in proposals to change representation on police and fire negotiating bodies

SERVICES AND LEGISLATION

- COSLA will defend local government's role in the areas where it is under threat:
 - New Government Agencies and initiatives - eg the proposed New Executive Agency for Housing and the Social Work Regulatory bodies;
 - The Executive's Regionalisation Agenda - eg the Criminal Justice Social Work proposals; regional transport strategies; Area Waste strategies and the review of strategic planning,
 - Chronic underfunding of services eg Schools Buildings; Road Maintenance; waste management
 - Possible removal of functions – eg education, areas of social work, economic development

COSLA will use every opportunity to press the case for local delivery of services and proper funding for those services.

- **Community Planning and Best Value**
 - Ensuring a non-prescriptive approach in taking forward the legislative agenda for community planning, the community initiative and best value, and ensure that the statutory provision extends across the public sector.
 - Promoting the need to address cross-cutting issues affecting community well-being – such as social justice, sustainable development, health improvement,

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community safety and equalities – as mainstream activities for councils rather than through adhoc initiatives from the Executive.

- Using local outcome agreements to pool public sector funding streams to address poverty
- Urban Issues
 - Secure new approach by the Scottish Executive to work with Local Government to tackle Urban deprivation and 'at risk' communities.
- Rural Issues
 - Promote the provision of rural services and promote the elimination of rural poverty
- Post McIntosh Issues
 - Promote a local government centred focus to the modernisation agenda
- 21st Century Government
 - Secure the role of councils in delivering this agenda and determining their own service delivery priorities
 - Secure additional and sustainable funding for councils from the outset
- Legislation
 - influencing legislation which significantly affects local government at a Scottish, UK and European level

THE WAY FORWARD

As a Management Team, we recognise the need to refocus and restructure around these issues as reflected in the budget proposals tabled for 23 February 2001, but COSLA needs sufficient financial stability over the next 3 years to allow us to deliver these key issues with you.

If the organisation does not survive with the capacity to defend local government's interest in these areas, we will give, to those who do not believe in local government, the opportunity to work against us.

As a management team, charged with the day to day operation of COSLA, we are committed to motivating and inspiring our staff to achieve these priorities for Scottish Local Government.

COSLA Chief Executive
& Management Team
February 2001

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