



West Lothian Council

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

5 December 2017

A Special meeting of West Lothian Council will be held within **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre**, on **Monday 11 December 2017** at **5:00 p.m.**

BUSINESS

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.
3. Order of Business

Public Items for Decision

4. Notice of Motion - Accounts Commission Key Facts - Submitted by Councillor Peter Johnston (herewith)

NOTE For further information please contact Elaine Dow on 01506 281594 or email elaine.dow@westlothian.gov.uk

West Lothian Council SNP Group

Leader: Cllr Peter Johnston
Depute Leader: Cllr Frank Anderson
Secretary: Cllr Sarah King

*Dico Tibi verum, Libertas Optima Rerum
Nunquam Servili!*



Call for Special Meeting of West Lothian Council

We, the undersigned elected members of West Lothian Council, call for a special meeting of West Lothian Council to consider the matters attached.


Cllr. Peter Johnston


Cllr. Frank Anderson


Cllr. Sarah King


Cllr. William Boyle


Cllr. Diane Calder


Cllr. Janet Campbell


Cllr. Pauline Clark


Cllr. James Dickson


Cllr. Carl John


Cllr. Andrew Miller


Cllr. Molra Shemilt


Cllr. David Tait

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL
28 NOV 2017

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

West Lothian Council SNP Group

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Accounts Commission Key Facts

Council notes that the Accounts Commission in their “Best Value Assurance Report” published on Thursday 23rd November 2017 has identifies critical failings in this council’s budgeting process.

Council notes that the Accounts Commission identifies, as a “Key Fact” that;

“It is crucial that elected members play a more prominent and leading role in responding to these challenges. They should identify earlier in the budgeting process the priorities which need to form the basis of engagement with communities. A council’s Best Value duty is the responsibility of all elected members. The council needs an approach where all members are involved effectively in scrutiny of policy priorities and performance on a council-wide basis. Such scrutiny also needs clearer links between budget and service performance.”

Council notes that the Accounts Commission makes clear:

- 1. Elected members first formal involvement in the process for agreeing council priorities and considering savings proposals will be in December 2017.**
- 2. The council’s new five-year corporate plan and supporting corporate strategies, including the financial strategy, are due to be approved in February 2018.**
- 3. Earlier involvement by councillors in identifying priorities would have reduced the significant risk to the council of failing to deliver savings in the required timescales, particularly in 2018/19.**
- 4. While each PDSP has a slightly different remit, they would appear to be the appropriate panel to scrutinise proposed savings plans for their relevant service areas, prior to them being passed to the Council Executive for approval. This would demonstrate good practice that there has been robust scrutiny of savings plans.**

Council further notes that the Accounts Commission specifically recommends;

“All members now need to take the lead in setting the priorities for the council, and ensure that savings proposals are in line with those priorities.”

Council welcomes the Accounts Commission report and accepts that this report’s identification of serious failings in the current budgeting process must be addressed.

West Lothian Council SNP Group

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Council therefore agrees;

1. To take all steps necessary to ensure that all elected members are fully involved in agreeing this council's priorities prior to considering budget savings proposals.
2. That appropriate information for every proposed budget saving, including information detailing the impact on jobs, inequalities and the quality of services, be provided to the council's Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels **PRIOR** to any proposed budget saving being determined by the Council to ensure "robust scrutiny" of all proposed savings can take place.
3. That a revised schedule of meetings of the Council's PDSP's be put in place to ensure that the failings in the current process, identified by the Accounts Commission, be addressed and that their specific recommendations, detailed in 1 & 2 above, be fully implemented.

Proposed

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Johnston". The signature is stylized with a large 'P' and a cursive 'J'.

Cllr. Peter Johnston
Leader of the SNP Group