

TAKING THE OPPORTUNITY: MAKING STV WORK FOR WOMEN – CONFERENCE - EDINBURGH - 1 DECEMBER 2005

1. Reason for Report

1.1 This report requests authorisation for attendance at a conference in Edinburgh on 1 December 2005.

1.2 A request is made under Standing Order 20.2 - matter of ordinary business requiring to be dealt with expeditiously without awaiting the decision of the appropriate committee.

The conference takes place on 1 December 2005. No meetings of the Ad-Hoc Modernising Local Government Sub-Committee are scheduled prior to that date. It is not deemed necessary to call a special meeting of the Committee.

2. Background

2.1 With the introduction of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) for Local Government Elections from 2007, a coalition of organisations has planned a one-day conference to explore how parties can make this work for women. Currently there is a gender imbalance in Local Government with women making up only 1 in 5 Councillors. Experts in STV and gender equality will examine how to use the STV system to prioritise gender equality and the anticipated electoral benefits in doing so.

The conference will be led by the Scottish Women's Convention and the Electoral Reform Society with debate on how a greater proportion of women would benefit Local Government and guidance on how political parties can work towards this objective.

2.2 An invitation has been issued for representatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council to attend this conference on 1 December 2005 at the Apex City Hotel, Edinburgh. It is being held free of charge and a programme is attached at the **Appendix**.

2.3 It is recommended that one Member from each Political Group attends the conference.

3. Recommendation

Members are asked to: approve the attendance of one Member from each Political Group at the 'Making STV Work for Women' conference in Edinburgh on 1 December 2005.

Aideen Foley
Policy Support Officer
Committee and Member Services
Tel: 01387 260035
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Appendices - one

Alex Haswell
Group Manager
Corporate Support and Governance
Council Offices
English Street
Dumfries

The Chief Executive after consultation with the Chair and Depute Convener has agreed the recommendation and Members are asked to homologate the decision.

A Haswell
Group Manager, Corporate Support & Governance



Dumfries
& Galloway
COUNCIL

Taking the Opportunity: Making STV Work for Women

1 December 2005 – Apex City Hotel, Edinburgh



Electoral Reform Society



EN+GENDER



Equalities and
Human Rights
Coalition



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

For more info:
Christine McCartney, ERS
0207 928 1622
christine@reform.demon.co.uk

Carol Flack, SWC
0131 557 8950
development@scottishwomensconvention.org

Conference Programme

- 9.30 Registration & Coffee
- 10.00 Introduction & Welcome
Rowena Arshad
Equal Opportunities Commission
- 10.15 Key Note Address: **Margaret Curran MSP**
Minister for Parliament
- 10.45 **Setting the scene**
Dr Fiona Mackay, Gender and Constitutional
Change Unit, Edinburgh University
- 11.15 **What are the opportunities?**
Christine McCartney,
Electoral Reform Society
- 11.45 Break
- 12.00 Workshops: Finding the solutions
- 13.00 Lunch
- 14.00 **The Parties Respond**
(A Question Time-style panel with
representatives of Political Parties)
- 15.00 **Where Next?**
Response & Conclusions
- 15.30 Close

Biographies of speakers are on the reverse
For further information and updates see:
www.electoral-reform.org.uk/women.htm