



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

**TUESDAY 8 JUNE 2010
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor J Bell	Councillor M Libberton
Councillor D Berry	Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor L Broun-Lindsay	Councillor S MacKinnon
Councillor J Caldwell	Councillor P McLennan
Councillor R Currie	Councillor K McLeod
Councillor S Currie	Councillor J McNeil
Councillor J Gillies	Councillor N Rankin
Councillor D Grant	Provost S Richardson (Convener)
Councillor N Hampshire	Councillor T Trotter
Councillor W Innes	Councillor B Turner
Councillor R Knox	Councillor J Williamson

Council Officials Present:

Mr A J Blackie, Chief Executive
Mr D Ledingham, Executive Director of Education & Children's Services
Ms M Patterson, Executive Director of Community Services
Mr A Forsyth, Head of Community Housing & Property Management
Mr J Lamond, Head of Governance & Performance Management
Mr K MacConnachie, Head of Law & Licensing
Mr G Miller, Acting Head of Adult Social Care
Mr T Shearer, Head of Community Wellbeing
Ms C Dora, Administration Research Assistant
Mr D Russell, Communications & Democratic Services Manager

Clerk:

Mrs L Gillingwater

Apologies:

Councillor A Forrest

1. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL LEADER

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval of the appointment of a new Council Leader, replacing Councillor David Berry.

The Head of Governance & Performance Management spoke to the report, advising Members that Councillor Berry had intimated that he wished to relinquish his position as Council Leader and as a member of Cabinet, and that the Administration was proposing Councillor Paul McLennan as his successor. It was noted that this change would result in a reduction in Members' allowances of £4060 per annum.

Councillor Rankin commented that if the Council had been asked to vote on accepting the resignation of Councillor Berry at the same time as approving the appointment of a new Leader, then he would have voted against it, on the grounds that he considered Councillor Berry to have done an excellent job during a very difficult period. He hoped that Councillor Berry would return to the Cabinet at a later date. He added that he would support Councillor McLennan in his new role if it was felt he was acting in the best interests of the county.

Councillor Innes claimed that Councillor Berry had been made a scapegoat by the Administration because of decisions taken that had been unpopular with communities. His comments were supported by Councillor Hampshire, who also claimed that friction between Councillors Berry and Stuart Currie had culminated in the move to appoint a new Leader.

Councillor Berry thanked Councillor Rankin for his contribution, but refuted the claims that differences with Councillor Stuart Currie had resulted in his resignation.

Councillor Berry also received tributes from Councillors Broun-Lindsay, Stuart Currie and Knox, as well as Councillor MacKinnon who, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, thanked Councillor Berry for his advice and guidance and his commitment to the coalition. His comments were echoed by the Provost, who added a personal note of thanks. She concluded by stating that there were difficult times ahead for the Council but that the Administration was committed to working together to achieve the objectives of the Contract with the People.

Decision

The Council agreed to the appointment of Councillor Paul McLennan as Council Leader, with immediate effect.

Statement by Councillor McLennan – Councillor McLennan declared that it was a great honour and privilege to be appointed Leader of the Council. He applauded the efforts of Councillor Berry in forming the Administration and highlighted a number of the Council's achievements since 2007, including the delivery of affordable homes, record levels of capital investment, increased funding in adult social care and charging the second lowest Council rent levels in Scotland. However, he warned of the challenges and difficulties facing the Council and of the need to deliver services more efficiently. He hoped that members of all political groups would work together to overcome these difficulties.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CABINET MEMBERSHIP AND PORTFOLIOS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval of proposed changes to the Cabinet membership and portfolios, resulting from the appointment of a new Council Leader.

The Head of Governance & Performance Management spoke to the report, advising that the resignation of Councillor Berry from the Cabinet and Councillor Knox's decision to relinquish his membership of the Board of NHS Lothian had resulted in the need to make changes to Cabinet portfolios. He drew attention to the proposed revised portfolios and commented that these changes would incur an increase of £4060 in Members' allowances, which could be met by the savings made from the change of Leadership.

Councillor Innes expressed concern that Councillor Bell would be taking on a role currently undertaken by two Cabinet members and that this role would carry a significant workload and responsibility. He asked how she would be able to carry out these responsibilities effectively, considering that she also had a full-time job.

Councillor McLennan responded, explaining that Councillor Bell had extensive and relevant experience in the areas of adult social care and health matters, and that she had also chaired the Community Services PPRP. Councillor MacKinnon added that Councillor Bell was currently in negotiations with her employer as regards allowing her additional time to spend on Council duties and that he had great confidence in her ability to carry out the duties required. It was noted by Councillor Berry that NHS Lothian had requested that one Member carries responsibility for both adult social care and health.

Responding to comments from Councillor Grant concerning changes to Cabinet portfolios, Councillor Stuart Currie remarked that it was the delivery of policies which was most important, rather than the personalities involved. He congratulated both Councillors Bell and Ruth Currie on their new appointments, adding that Councillor Ruth Currie was best placed to take on the Community Wellbeing portfolio due to her work as Youth Champion and in community learning and development.

Councillor Innes intimated that the Labour Group would be abstaining from approving the recommendations. The Provost therefore moved to the vote on the recommendations:

For: 16
Against: 0
Abstentions: 6

Decision

The Council agreed to the Changes to Cabinet and portfolios, as follows:

- i. that Councillor Jacqueline Bell be appointed to the Cabinet; and
- ii. that proposed changes to responsibilities for Cabinet members be approved, as outlined below:

Current Portfolios:

Public Health	Cllr R Knox
Economic Development and Tourism	Cllr S MacKinnon
Education & Children's Services	Cllr P MacKenzie
Partnership & Social Care	Cllr R Currie
Housing	Cllr S Currie
Environment	Cllr B Turner
Community Wellbeing	Cllr P McLennan

Proposed Portfolios:

Health & Social Care	Cllr J Bell (new member and new portfolio)
Economic Development & Tourism	Cllr S MacKinnon (no change)
Education & Children’s Services	Cllr P MacKenzie (no change)
Housing	Cllr S Currie (no change)
Environment	Cllr B Turner (no change)
Community Wellbeing	Cllr R Currie (new portfolio)

Statement by Councillor Bell – Councillor Bell thanked the Council for appointing her as the Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care. She declared that her experience in working in the social care and health sectors would be of benefit in this role. As regards Councillor Innes’s concerns, she assured Members that she would be fully committed to her new portfolio. She paid tribute to the work of Gordon Miller and his staff and looked forward to working with the new Head of Service, NHS Lothian and the Community Health Partnership.

3. APPOINTMENT TO THE BOARD OF NHS Lothian

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval of the nomination of Councillor Jacqueline Bell as the Council’s representative on the Board of NHS Lothian.

The Head of Governance & Performance Management spoke to the report, outlining the reasons for the need to appoint a new Council representative to the Board of NHS Lothian.

Responding to a question by Councillor Innes regarding Councillor Knox’s other responsibilities, Councillor Knox advised that his role on the Committee of the Regions was a CoSLA appointment but that it was also a Council role, as CoSLA represents all 32 Scottish local authorities.

It was noted that, as Depute Provost, Councillor Knox would remain a member of Cabinet.

Decision

The Council agreed to approve the nomination of Councillor Jacqueline Bell as the Council’s representative on the Board of NHS Lothian.

Signed

Provost Sheena Richardson
Convener of the Council