

Members' Library Service Request Form

Date of Document	06/06/25
Originator	Simon Davie, Hayley Barnett & Caroline Rodgers
Originator's Ref (if any)	
Document Title	Community Council Elections 2025

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Authorised By	Hayley Barnett
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Date	16/06/25

For Office Use Only:	
Library Reference	58/25
Date Received	06/06/25
Bulletin	Jun25

REPORT TO: Members Library Service

MEETING DATE: 6 June 2025

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: Community Council Elections 2025

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the proposed Community Council elections to be held in October 2025.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council notes the update on Community Councils;
- 2.2 It is recommended that Council notes that Council officers from Connected Communities and Corporate Support will proceed to prepare for Community Council elections to be held on Thursday 9 October 2025.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Community Councils are provided for in statute by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994. They are local representative bodies which are recognised as statutory planning and licensing consultees. Elections are usually held every four years and in East Lothian were due to take place in Autumn 2020, however these were deferred by the Chief Executive due to the Covid19 pandemic. This reset the election cycle to 2021 and subsequently every four years thereafter. It is proposed that East Lothian's Community Council elections will be held on Thursday 9 October 2025. It is intended that this will be held in person in local communities depending on the interest in participation, as per the Scheme for Community Councils Section 6 - Elections.
- 3.2 Under the proposals for elections this year, we will provide an opportunity for local residents to allow someone to act on their behalf and vote. This will enable local residents who cannot attend a polling station for whatever

reason the opportunity to get someone to vote on their behalf. This is termed a proxy vote, to be eligible as a proxy voter you must:

be 16 years of age or over and be on the register of local government electors applicable to East Lothian.

A proxy can vote for close relatives and up to two other people at an election. Close relatives are the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of the applicant.

- 3.3 Under the terms of Section 51(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the purpose of a Community Council, in addition to any other purpose which it may pursue, shall be "to ascertain, co-ordinate and express to the local authorities for its area, and to public authorities, the views of the community which it represents, in relation to matters for which those authorities are responsible, and to take such action in the interests of that community as appears to it to be expedient and practicable". S.52 (c) of the 1973 Act requires the Council's Scheme for Community Councils (referred to as the 'Green Book') to state the provisions that govern elections and voting arrangements.
- 3.4 There are currently 20 Community Councils (comprised of 36 Community Wards) and 217 Community Councillors in East Lothian which meet monthly. General information about Community Councils in East Lothian can be found here:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210567/your_community/12158/community_councils

EAST LOTHIAN COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.5 Operational support and annual funding for Community Councils is provided by the Connected Communities Service within the Communities Division of the Place Directorate. Each Community Council is supported by their local Connected Communities Manager as a first point of contact on any local issues or requests for advice on Community Council operational matters.
- 3.6 The Council's Licensing and Democratic Services Team within Corporate Support within the Council Resources Division manages and administers the elections process for Community Councils, including nominations.
- 3.7 The Chief Executive is responsible for deciding when to hold the Community Council elections.

PROPOSED TIMESCALES

- 3.8 The following timetable sets out the key steps which will be taken preceding the proposed elections in October 2025:

Publication of notification of elections	Monday 1 st September 2025
Issue of Nomination Papers	Monday 1 st September
Last day for lodging nominations	Thursday 18 th September 4pm
Last day for withdrawal of nomination papers	Thursday 25 th September 4pm
Publication of notice of poll and statement of nominees	Thursday 25 th September
Polling Day	Thursday 7 th October 12noon -7pm
Count	Friday 10 th October 10am
Confirmation of Election Outcomes	ASAP after close of poll

- 3.9 This timescale allows time over the summer months for awareness raising about the role of Community Councils and of Community Councillors and advance promotion of the elections during the lead up to the formal announcement of the elections on 1 September. This work will be undertaken by Council officers in the Connected Communities Service, in collaboration with the Association of East Lothian Community Councils (AoELCCs) and the Council's Communications team.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- 3.10 Council officers will work with the Communications team to promote the work of Community Councils in advance of the formal notification of the elections, as outlined at 3.9 above, at the end of August. A communications plan will be developed in conjunction with the AoELCCs, advised by the Council's Communications team to ensure optimum publicity in advance of the elections, both to encourage potential nominees and to stimulate voter engagement with the election process.
- 3.11 The Connected Communities Managers have well-developed links with the local community councils in their areas and will provide support and advice to existing community councillors and potential new members.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Community Councils provide a democratically elected, representative voice for their local communities, they sit on the Area Partnerships and are statutory planning consultees. They play an important role in supporting the Council's community empowerment and place-making objectives.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not applicable to the wellbeing of equalities groups and an Integrated Impact Assessment and or Children's Rights and Wellbeing Assessment (CRWIA) are not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – The Communities budget will meet the costs of the election.
- 6.2 Personnel – There are key roles for the Council's Connected Communities, Corporate Support and the Communications teams contributing to meeting the requirements of this Community Council elections process. Staff have been asked to volunteer to support the elections, should this be required across the county, and we believe we have the necessary number to facilitate elections.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

AUTHOR'S NAME	Simon Davie Hayley Barnett Caroline Rodgers
DESIGNATION	Service Manager – Connected Communities (Temporary) Head of Corporate Support Head of Communities (Temporary)
CONTACT INFO	sdavie@eastlothian.gov.uk hbarnett@eastlothian.gov.uk croddgers@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	06/06/25