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Our Reference: 202100147643
Your Reference: JB21244

11 February 2021

Dear Jackie Baillie MSP,

Thank you for your letter dated 18th January 2021 regarding Mr MacLellan's desire to progress the work of Kilmarnock Community Council.

The Scottish Government values the important role community councils play in representing their community which is why we fund the Improvement Service to provide support to Scotland's 1,200 community councils and to local authority Community Council Liaison Officers.

As you will know, local authorities have statutory oversight of community councils and are required to introduce Community Council Schemes of Establishment and provide necessary funding, training and support. This responsibility includes the arrangement and administration of community council elections.

The Scottish Government does not hold national information on community council elections, with some local authorities holding rolling elections each year and others timetabling elections in different years. We do know that some local authorities have postponed elections that fell due during the pandemic, with some relaxing schemes of establishment to allow for longer periods of service for community councillors and the co-option of new members.

I understand that West Dunbartonshire Council have been in contact with Mr MacLellan and directly with you to give a full account of the reasons behind their decision and communicated their aim to hold community council elections in late 2021.



This situation highlights the need to improve guidance and support for community councils. The community empowerment team will work with COSLA, the Improvement Service and Community Council Liaison Officers to update the 2009 Model Scheme of Establishment and associated documents to ensure community councils feel better supported to continue to fulfil their role as the most local tier of statutory representation in Scotland and can function effectively even during unprecedented circumstances such as this.

We would welcome Mr MacLellan's input to this consultation which will be publicised in the coming months on <http://www.communitycouncils.scot/>

Yours sincerely



AILEEN CAMPBELL

