

Labour group pick the new Lord Provost of Edinburgh

✘ The Labour Group will confirm at their meeting tonight that the new Lord Provost will be a councillor with 13 years' experience at the City Chambers. Donald Wilson, councillor for Sighthill/Gorgie Ward, is the group's sole nominee, and will therefore sit in the big chair at the first council meeting of the new administration on 17 May. He will also be the person responsible for handing over the keys of the capital to The Queen when she visits in July, as The Lord Provost also becomes Lord Lieutenant of Edinburgh. (That means he is also responsible for getting you an invitation to the garden party at Holyrood...)

So what else happens now at the City Chambers? The election result last week gave a clear lead to the Labour Group, and they have now signed a formal coalition document with the SNP group, agreeing that they will run the council for the next five years in tandem, but all the various positions of responsibility still have to be filled.

Perhaps the most important position is that of council leader, and that will fall to Andrew Burns, Labour Group Leader. As he was in the last administration, Councillor Steve Cardownie, will again be Deputy Leader, although the administration will have a different make-up.

Councillor Burns claims to be absolutely delighted with his new job, and said to The Edinburgh Reporter:-" I am thoroughly excited about the whole prospect of it. ✘

"As for the other jobs we still have to agree the division of responsibilities with the SNP. On 17 May, the positions of Leader, Deputy Leader, Provost and Deputy Provost will then be ratified. Our group has a meeting tonight about this. Donald

is our sole nominee for this position, having been a Bailie for five years and a councillor for 13 years.

“Although the division of responsibility will have to be thrashed out with the SNP in the next few days, each group will go through the nomination process to decide on the actual people who will take up each job which will then be formally ratified on 24 May. The Labour Group will meet next Tuesday to try and sort those positions out.

“If you look at the two manifestos, then I think it is hard to put a cigarette paper between the vast bulk of the policies. There are differences of course, but there is about 80 plus per cent of commonality. It won't be a problem delivering on that – there is a difference between Labour and SNP on national issues, but this will not be a problem for us at local level.”

One matter The Reporter is keeping a close eye on is the council newspaper Outlook, which is most probably for the chop. Burns said:-“Obviously this is not a done deal, but it is presently our intention to make good on our manifesto commitment to look at more effective alternatives.” The cost of running the paper, nicknamed Pravda by some, is reportedly around £200,000 per annum.

One other matter which both groups claimed during their election campaigns to have in their sights, is road repair. But it will take a few weeks to get the people in place before the new council can make any moves in any direction.