

Reflections instead of prayers at council meetings

☒ New ten-minute Pause for Reflection sessions will be held prior to meetings of The City of Edinburgh Council under plans unveiled today.

Group leaders from each of the political parties represented on the Council and the Lord Provost agreed unanimously to the move, which will open up the opportunity for reflection to all staff, councillors and visitors who would normally be attending the Full Council meeting.

The sessions, to be held in the Main Council Chamber itself, will be delivered by representatives from a wide variety of civic and community interests, including faith / belief groups, civic institutions and community and voluntary sector organisations.

The start of each Pause for Reflection session will be signalled by a bell at 9.50am on the day of a Full Council meeting, at which point the Lord Provost will accompany the individual delivering the session into the Chamber.

A further bell will be rung shortly before 10am, when those not taking part in the Pause for Reflection session will take their seats for the subsequent Council meeting. After this, the City Officers will bring in the ceremonial mace and sword to mark the official commencement of the meeting.

The first Pause for Reflection session will be held prior to the Council's meeting on 28 June 2012, delivered by Charlotte Chapel Senior Pastor Paul Rees.

Lord Provost Donald Wilson said:- "Scotland's Capital is a place of tolerance, fairness and diversity and I am more than proud to stand as First Citizen in such a forward-looking city. As a Council, we have a duty to respect the beliefs,

opinions and interests of all our residents, which is why this review of the current Prayers at Full Council meetings seems entirely appropriate.

“These Pause for Reflection sessions will be genuinely inclusive, providing a time for contemplation open to all staff, councillors and visitors who would normally be attending Full Council meetings. The first session on 28 June will be delivered by Rev Paul Rees and I will be inviting suggestions for future speakers from all my elected member colleagues to ensure the Pause for Reflection programme covers the broadest possible spectrum of faith, community and civic interests.”