

By-election in Midlothian

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

There will be a by election after a Midlothian councillor announced that he is stepping down from his post.

The resignation of Cllr Kenneth Baird, who has represented Midlothian East since 2017, was revealed as the council published its agenda for a meeting later this month.

The SNP councillor is one of seven SNP Group elected members on the council, which has a minority Labour administration of six councillors in charge.

The balance of power at the council swung towards the SNP after they gained a seat in a Penicuik by-election in 2018, when Cllr Joe Wallace, who had lost his place in the council vote the year before, returned to his post.

However, ousting Labour, which was the biggest party on the council prior to that by-election, would have required support from the council's five Conservative councillors, which did not happen.

Dr Grace Vickers, Midlothian Council chief executive, confirmed that plans for a by-election were now under way, with a public notice due to be published some time in the next week.

It is not yet known if the by-election will run alongside the

Holyrood elections due in May or on a separate date.

She said: "Please be assured we will be taking all precautions to make sure local people in the ward can vote as safely as possible.

"I will also be urging those who can't or would prefer not to vote in person on the day to apply for a postal or proxy vote."