

# **Midlothian Council leader to challenge veteran MSP at Holyrood election**

**Midlothian MSP Colin Beattie faces a fight to stand at the next Holyrood election after one of his own local council leaders confirmed she would be challenging him for the position.**

Councillor Kelly Parry confirmed over the weekend that she had been nominated as a potential candidate for the Midlothian North and Musselburgh seat which Mr Beattie has represented for 14 years.

Mr Beattie, who is expected to make his own announcement in the next 24 hours, has confirmed he has no plans to step aside.

When asked by the Local Democracy Party Service if he was planning to stand, he said: "Yes I have been nominated by both the constituency branches and will be issuing a statement today or tomorrow expanding on that."

Mr Beattie who was SNP National Treasurer from 2004 to 2020 was recently cleared of any criminal wrongdoing in connection with two year investigation into party finances launched by Police Scotland.

The MSP was arrested alongside former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon in 2023 as part of the investigation known as

Operation Branchform. Last month Police Scotland confirmed neither Mr Beattie nor Ms Sturgeon would face any charges.

A former international banker, Mr Beattie served on Midlothian Council before becoming an MSP and was SNP group leader at the local authority.

Councillor Parry, SNP, the current Midlothian council leader, said she was delighted to be able to announce her formal nomination as a potential candidate.

She said: "I've been blessed to be able to represent my home as a councillor for almost 10 years, and as the leader of Midlothian Council since 2022.

"I grew up here, I went to school here and I've raised my two children here. I know Midlothian – this is my home too, and I really care about what happens here.

"This election will be an important moment for Scotland, and in every constituency we must put our best foot forward and send the best candidates that we can to the Scottish Parliament. I know I can bring the energy, enthusiasm and drive needed to this election, and beyond."

"I have been overwhelmed by the support of members and colleagues so far, and I hope to secure the support of local members in the forthcoming internal ballot."

The ballots for the candidate for the sea will open later this month and close on May 5 with the result expected to be announced within days.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter