

DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE**16 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes**Four Yearly Elections Interim Report**

Final Decision-Maker	Democracy Committee
Lead Head of Service	Head of Policy and Communications
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse
Classification	Public
Wards affected	

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the progress of the Committee's review of four yearly elections.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Democracy Committee	16 November 2016
Democracy Committee – Final report	8 March 2017

Four Yearly Elections Interim Report

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In July the Committee agreed to a review to explore the possibility of changing to a system of four yearly elections.
 - 1.2 This report outlines progress so far with the review.
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The group has met four times. So far they have considered the cost of elections yearly versus four yearly at Maidstone Borough Council as presented by the former Head of Finance and Resources as the first officer supporting the review. Councillors were also informed at the first meeting that a change to the system of elections would also require a boundary review.

Background Information

- 2.2 In March 2008 the following motion was agreed by the Council:

“Following on from previous questions on the issue of having whole Council elections and the obvious support at the time from Councillors, Members were advised by the Chief Executive that this could not be feasibly introduced until 2009.

I would therefore formally propose that this Council agrees, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, to consult all interested parties on the introduction of whole Council elections for Maidstone.”

At its meeting in June 2009 the Council received a report from the Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on whole Council elections and the benefits of that system as well as the benefits of retaining the existing system of elections by thirds.

The Council decided to proceed with public consultation on implementing whole Council elections for Maidstone. It also agreed that the General Purposes Group should consider the format of the consultation.

Result:

- Number voting YES 22,907, 71.7%
 - Number voting NO 9033, 28.3%
- Total 31,940 100%

On 15 December 2010 full Council considered the information above and the motion to change the electoral cycle was lost. In order to adopt a

system of whole Council elections, the legislation requires that the Council do so with a two thirds majority of those voting.

On 17 September 2014 – A motion was put to full council to change to a four yearly cycle for elections also known as whole council elections. This motion was lost.

On 22 April 2015 – A motion was put to council to hold a referendum on four yearly elections. This motion was lost.

- 2.3 The group received a presentation from the GIS team in relation to population projections and ward boundaries as attached at **Appendix A**. Ben Forbes, GIS Technical Analyst has been invited by the group to present this to the Committee as part of this update.
- 2.4 Further work is planned to look at the cost of elections at neighbouring councils including Swale Borough Council who have changed from elections by thirds to all out elections every four years.
- 2.5 The Committee are asked to note the progress so far and decide whether to continue with the review.