

Whole Council Elections – Consultation Stage Approval

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Ryan O’Connell, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The report sets out the considerations for moving to Whole Council Elections and detailed options of the possible consultations to be carried out in the event the Committee agree to proceed to consultation to inform the Council decision.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To decide whether the Whole Council Elections process moves onto the consultation stage;
2. That if the consultation stage is agreed, agree the form of consultation they wish to undertake from the options set out in Appendix 2; and
3. Request Policy and Resources Committee to approve the funding for the consultation.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	20 November 2019
Democracy and General Purposes Committee	29 January 2020
Council	26 February 2020

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1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Ensuring the Council has appropriate forms of Governance, including how Members are elected and the Council is formed, is crucial to the proper functioning of the Council and therefore contributes indirectly to all Council objectives.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	Ensuring the Council has appropriate forms of Governance, including how Members are elected and the Council is formed, is crucial to the proper functioning of the Council and therefore contributes indirectly to all Council objectives.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Risk Management	The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council’s Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council’s risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The options in the report include consideration of the financial impact of switching to Whole Council Elections. It is for the Committee to weight those up against the non-financial considerations. • The proposals also consider costed options for consultation. If the Committee proceed with a consultation on whole Council Elections the cost of the necessary consultation will be referred to P&R for full financial consideration. 	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The legislation governing the move to Whole Council Elections is the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. The Acts give Councils the power to decide whether to move to 	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS

	<p>whole council elections, elections by halves or elections by thirds. The legislation to move to whole council elections includes certain actions that must be taken during the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One requirement is to have carried out a consultation on the proposal. The format of that consultation is a consideration of this report. 	
Privacy and Data Protection	Any consultation agreed by the Committee will be carried out using the Council's corporate policies for consultations and will meet data protection requirements.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The chosen consultation will be carried out using the Council's corporate policies for consultations and this will include consideration of equalities.	[Policy & Information Manager]
Public Health	No impacts.	[Public Health Officer]
Crime and Disorder	<u>No impacts.</u>	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager
Procurement	Any consultation will be carried out in house.	Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting on 27 February 2019 the Council adopted a motion on Whole Council Elections requesting that Officers report to the Democracy Committee.
- 2.2 A short report considering Whole Council Elections and considering a wider Democratic Representation Review was brought to Committee on 3 July 2019. The Committee agreed to proceed with the work on Whole Council Elections and to carry out consultation with Members on boundary issues. This consultation was carried out via a workshop and a survey and questions on Whole Council Elections were included to help inform the overall review.
- 2.3 At its last meeting on 4 September 2019 the Committee agreed the review's structure and timetable, including the decision making points and

factors to be included in this report on Whole Council Elections. These have been included in the analysis in Appendix 1.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 To agree to proceed to the consultation stage of Whole Council Elections and select one of the possible consultation options in Appendix 2. The Committee will need to consider the form of the consultation and any amendments they may wish to make to the wording to ensure that it is balanced and clear about the options the public are being asked to express an opinion on.
 - 3.2 On the basis of the information presented in this report, the Committee could decide not to proceed to the consultation stage and not to request funding for a consultation from Policy and Resources. This would need to be made on a balance of the reasons for and against moving to Whole Council Elections.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 This report does not make a recommendation on which option is preferred as any decision on Whole Council Elections will require the Committee to balance the factors, including political considerations, and conclude on how much weight to give to each of these factors.
 - 4.2 Should the Committee decide to proceed to consultation stage it is recommended that the Committee carefully consider the format, wording and method of consultation.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The decision on whether to move to Whole Council Elections needs to weigh up the pros and cons of changing the electoral cycle. Some of the risks are political in nature and are not considered here.
 - 5.2 Any change inherently carries risks. From an administrative viewpoint the primary risk is the capacity of the electoral services team to support the increased size of a Whole Council Election. However, this risk is considered to be low given that the team already currently administer larger elections, for example a General Election.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Whole Council Elections have been considered on several previous occasions:

- Following a motion to Council in 2008 to look at elections, a scrutiny review was commissioned in 2009 which led to public consultation on 4 yearly elections in September 2010. A motion to change the electoral cycle to all out elections was put to full Council in November 2010. This motion was lost.
- On 17 September 2014 – A motion was put to full Council to change to a four yearly cycle for 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.
- In summer 2016 the Democracy Committee began a review of the electoral cycle and in November 2016 the Committee decided not to continue with the review.

6.2 A Member workshop was held at the end of July 2019 and a Member consultation was carried out in August 2019. The results of these have been factored into this report and will be considered through the decision making process.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If the Committee agree to move to consultation stage a reference will be made to Policy and Resources to approve the funding for the consultation.
- 7.2 The consultation will then be carried out and the results reported to Democracy and General Purposes Committee for a final decision on whether to put the issue to an extraordinary meeting of Council in February 2020.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Whole Council Elections - Analysis
- Appendix 2: Whole Council Elections – Consultation Options

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None