

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 19th November,
2014
at 2.00 pm

Council Chamber - Civic Centre

This meeting is open to the public

Members of the Council

The Mayor – Chair

The Sheriff – Vice-chair

Leader of the Council

Members of the Council (See overleaf)

Contacts

Director of Corporate Services

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Democratic Services Manager

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WARD	COUNCILLOR	WARD	COUNCILLOR
Bargate	Bogle Noon Tucker	Millbrook	Denness Galton Thorpe
Bassett	Hannides B Harris L Harris	Peartree	Keogh Lewzey Dr Paffey
Bevois	Barnes-Andrews Burke Rayment	Portswood	Norris Claisse O'Neill
Bitterne	Letts Lloyd Stevens	Redbridge	McEwing Pope Whitbread
Bitterne Park	Baillie Inglis White	Shirley	Chaloner Coombs Kaur
Coxford	Morrell Spicer Thomas	Sholing	Mrs Blatchford Hecks Jeffery
Freemantle	Moulton Parnell Shields	Swaythling	Mintoff Painton Vassiliou
Harefield	Daunt Fitzhenry Smith	Woolston	Chamberlain Hammond Payne

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Role of the Council

The Council comprises all 48 Councillors. The Council normally meets six times a year including the annual meeting, at which the Mayor and the Council Leader are elected and committees and sub-committees are appointed, and the budget meeting, at which the Council Tax is set for the following year.

The Council approves the policy framework, which is a series of plans and strategies recommended by the Executive, which set out the key policies and programmes for the main services provided by the Council. It receives a summary report of decisions made by the Executive, and reports on specific issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. The Council also considers questions and motions submitted by Council Members on matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the City.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Questions:-

People who live or work in the City may ask questions of the Mayor, Chairs of Committees and Members of the Executive. (See the Council's Constitution ref Part 4 Council Procedure Rules 10.8)

Representations:- At the discretion of the Mayor, members of the public may address the Council on any report included on the agenda in which they have a relevant interest. Any member of the public wishing to address the meeting should advise the Democratic Support Officer (DSO) whose contact details are on the front sheet of the agenda.

Petitions

At a meeting of the Council any Member or member of the public may present a petition which is submitted in accordance with the Council's scheme for handling petitions. Petitions containing more than 1,500 signatures (qualifying) will be debated at a Council meeting. (See the Council's Constitution ref Part 4 Council Procedure Rules 10.1)

Deputations:- A deputation of up to three people can apply to address the Council. A deputation may include the presentation of a petition. (See the Council's Constitution ref Part 4 Council Procedure Rules 10.7)

MEETING INFORMATION

Use of Social Media:- If, in the Chair's opinion, a person filming or recording a meeting or taking photographs is interrupting proceedings or causing a disturbance, under the Council's Standing Orders the person can be ordered to stop their activity, or to leave the meeting

Mobile Telephones – Please switch your mobile telephones to silent whilst in the meeting.

Fire Procedure – In the event of a fire or other emergency, a continuous alarm will sound and you will be advised by Council officers what action to take.

Southampton City Council's Priorities:

- Jobs for local people
- Prevention and early intervention
- Protecting vulnerable people
- Affordable housing
- Services for all
- City pride
- A sustainable Council

Access – Access is available for disabled people. Please contact the Council Administrator who will help to make any necessary arrangements

Smoking policy – The Council operates a no-smoking policy in all civic buildings

2014	2015
16 July	11 February (Budget)**
17 September	18 March
19 November	20 May (AGM)"

CONDUCT OF MEETING

FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

The functions of the Council are set out in Article 4 of Part 2 of the Constitution

RULES OF PROCEDURE

The meeting is governed by the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution.

BUSINESS TO BE DISCUSSED

Only those items listed on the attached agenda may be considered at this meeting.

QUORUM

The minimum number of appointed Members required to be in attendance to hold the meeting is 16.

DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members are required to disclose, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, **both** the existence **and** nature of any "Disclosable Pecuniary Interest" or "Other Interest" they may have in relation to matters for consideration on this Agenda.

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

A Member must regard himself or herself as having a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter that they or their spouse, partner, a person they are living with as husband or wife, or a person with whom they are living as if they were a civil partner in relation to:

(i) Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.

(ii) Sponsorship:

Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from Southampton City Council) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expense incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

(iii) Any contract which is made between you / your spouse etc (or a body in which the you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest) and Southampton City Council under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed, and which has not been fully discharged.

(iv) Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of Southampton.

(v) Any license (held alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of Southampton for a month or longer.

(vi) Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) the landlord is Southampton City Council and the tenant is a body in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interests.

(vii) Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of Southampton, and either:

a) the total nominal value for the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body, or

b) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you / your spouse etc has a beneficial interest that exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Other Interests

A Member must regard himself or herself as having an, 'Other Interest' in any membership of, or occupation of a position of general control or management in:

Any body to which they have been appointed or nominated by Southampton City Council

Any public authority or body exercising functions of a public nature

Any body directed to charitable purposes

Any body whose principal purpose includes the influence of public opinion or policy

Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:-

- proportionality (i.e. the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;
- respect for human rights;
- a presumption in favour of openness, accountability and transparency;
- setting out what options have been considered;
- setting out reasons for the decision; and
- clarity of aims and desired outcomes.

In exercising discretion, the decision maker must:

- understand the law that regulates the decision making power and gives effect to it. The decision-maker must direct itself properly in law;
- take into account all relevant matters (those matters which the law requires the authority as a matter of legal obligation to take into account);
- leave out of account irrelevant considerations;
- act for a proper purpose, exercising its powers for the public good;
- not reach a decision which no authority acting reasonably could reach, (also known as the "rationality" or "taking leave of your senses" principle);
- comply with the rule that local government finance is to be conducted on an annual basis. Save to the extent authorised by Parliament, 'live now, pay later' and forward funding are unlawful; and
- act with procedural propriety in accordance with the rules of fairness.

Director of Corporate Services
M R HEATH
Civic Centre, Southampton, SO14 7LY

Tuesday, 11 November 2014

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the COUNCIL to be held on WEDNESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2014 in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE at 2:00pm, when the following business is proposed to be transacted:-

1 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies.

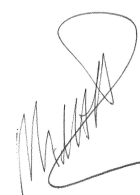
2 ELECTORAL CYCLE AND OTHER GOVERNANCE MATTERS (Pages 1 - 26)

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services seeking a decision on options regarding changes to the electoral cycle, attached.

NOTE:

Under the provisions of Section 33 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the resolution to change the electoral cycle must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting at the meeting.

NOTE: There will be prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain, David Adcock, in the Mayor's Reception Room at 1.45 pm for Members of the Council and Officers who wish to attend.



M R HEATH
Director of Corporate Services

DECISION-MAKER:	COUNCIL		
SUBJECT:	ELECTORAL CYCLE AND OTHER GOVERNANCE MATTERS		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 NOVEMBER 2014		
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Mark Heath	Tel: 023 8083 2371
	E-mail:	Mark.heath@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Mark Heath	Tel: 023 8083 2371
	E-mail:	Mark.heath@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
None.

BRIEF SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to advise Council on the outcome of consultation on a possible move from elections by thirds to election of the whole council once every four years. In addition, other issues were consulted upon, specifically the form of governance of the Council (Leader and Cabinet or directly elected mayor) and the number of councillors, and the results of the consultation on these matters are also referred to in this report.

Council is therefore asked to decide if the electoral cycle for Southampton City Council should remain as elections by thirds or changed to whole-council elections every four years, and also to determine how it wishes to approach the other governance issues consulted upon

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Council notes the results of consultation in relation local elections and governance issues;
- (ii) That the Council determines whether or not it wishes to reduce the number of councillors and, if so, for the Director of Corporate Services to inform the Local Government Boundary Commission for England that the Council wishes to undertake an electoral review.
- (iii) That the Council determines whether or not, in principle, it wishes to change its current governance model from a Leader and Cabinet model to a directly-elected Mayor model, and if it resolves to do so, notes that the formal process as required by the Local Government Act 2000 would be commenced by the Director of Corporate Services.
- (vi) That the Council decides if the present process of elections by thirds should be changed to whole-council elections once every four years.
- iv) If the Council chooses to determine that the authority's electoral cycle should be changed to whole-council elections once every four years, the date of implementation.
- (vi) If the Council chooses to change the electoral cycle to whole-Council elections once every four years, the Council authorises the Director of

Corporate Services to issue the necessary public information leaflet as required by the legislation and undertake any further actions necessary to give effect to the content of this report.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Having consulted on the proposal for changing the electoral cycle and other governance matters, it is now a decision for Full Council as to whether or not the Council wishes to change the electoral cycle and how it wishes to approach the other governance matters.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. The Council has the option for deciding whether or not to change the electoral cycle, or the other governance matters, having taken into account the consultation process followed.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

INTRODUCTION

3. On 17th September 2014, a report was considered by Council which provided advice on its ability to opt for whole-council elections rather than by the current method of elections by thirds. A copy of that report is attached at Appendix 1. Council noted its ability to alter the electoral pattern for this authority, and asked that consultation be undertaken to ascertain their preference for either continuing to elect councillors by thirds or move to whole council elections every fourth year. In addition, Council requested that the consultation also asked for views upon the governance model (Leader and Cabinet or directly-elected mayor) and the number of councillors.
4. Under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, councils such as Southampton that elect by thirds can move to whole-council elections by passing a resolution at a special meeting of the Full Council, the resolution will only be deemed carried if there are two-thirds majority of those voting in favour of a proposed change to the electoral cycle.
5. If an authority wishes to move from thirds to whole-council elections, it must:
 - a. Consult such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed change;
 - b. Convene a special meeting of council;
 - c. Pass a resolution to change by a two-thirds majority of those voting;
 - d. Publish an explanatory document on the decision and make this available for public inspection; and
 - e. Give notice to the Electoral Commission.

CONSULTATION

6. The Council is obliged to take reasonable steps to consult such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed change. The consultation activity by Southampton City Council was made up of the following
 - a. The publication of background information and a survey on the Council's website seeking views on the possible changes to the council electoral cycle and other matters previously referred to. Hard

copies of the consultation survey were also available in the Gateway Office, at all Southampton libraries and Local Housing Offices and on request from the Council.

- c. Issuing of a press release which was picked up and covered by a number of local media outlets.
 - d. Social media promotion through various council-owned Twitter feeds and Facebook pages, pointing people to the online and hard copy surveys. This included a sponsored Facebook post to improve reach.
 - e. Promoted via an advert on internal and external Stay Connected emails during the consultation period, and as a specific item in relevant Stay Connected e-alerts.
 - f. Key organisations in the City including Southampton Voluntary Services, Business South, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, the NHS and Hampshire Constabulary were also made aware that the consultation was taking place and asked to disseminate this information among their contacts.
7. In summary, the results of the consultation exercise were as follows (with full details being set out in Appendix 2)
 8. A total of 1438 responses were received to the consultation. The main question the survey relating to the frequency of the electoral cycle for Southampton City Council showed that very slightly more respondents, 55%, were in favour of moving to whole council elections compared to 45 % who preferred election by thirds.
 9. There was also a split opinion in relation to future governance models with 52% of respondents preferring to retain a Leader and Cabinet Model while 48% were in favour of moving towards a directly elected Mayor.
 10. The final question, which related to the number of councillors in the City, showed the strongest consensus among respondents with over two thirds, 69%, of respondents favouring a reduction in number to 32, while 31% of respondents were in favour or maintaining current number of 48 councillors.
 11. In September, Full Council requested that information was sought from other councils who have changed their electoral cycle to whole-council elections. Relatively few have responded with details. Those that have, have all indicated that their prime motivation was to provide medium term stability and, in particular, production of longer-term budget strategies. All those that responded have indicated that the change has, in their view, benefited the authority in that regard.

PROGRAMME OF FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

12. The current electoral cycle is as follows:
 - European Parliamentary elections – every five years

- UK Parliamentary elections – every five years
 - Police and Crime Commissioner elections – every four years
 - Southampton City Council elections – every three out of four years
13. In addition, the Localism Act 2011 allows for local referenda to be held and there is always the possibility of national referenda.
- | | |
|------|--|
| 2015 | Southampton City Council Elections & UK Parliamentary General Election |
| 2016 | Southampton City Council Elections & Police and Crime Commissioner Elections |
| 2017 | None |
| 2018 | Southampton City Council Elections |
| 2019 | Southampton City Council Elections & European Parliamentary Elections |
| 2020 | Southampton City Council Elections & UK Parliamentary Elections |
14. If in November Council resolves to move to whole-council elections, it is a decision for the Councillors at that Special Meeting as to when they wish to implement this.

DIRECTLY ELECTED MAYORS

15. The Local Government Act 2000 introduced new governance arrangements for all local authorities with population of over 85,000. Councils had to adopt one of three systems: a mayor and cabinet; a mayor and council manager or a leader and cabinet. Southampton adopted a leader and cabinet model.
16. Several changes to the system have taken place since its introduction. The mayor and council manager option has been abolished and in England authorities may now resolve to introduce an elected Mayor. However, an authority may still choose to hold a referendum on the issue.
17. Alternatively, authorities can be obliged to hold a mayoral referendum if five per cent or more of the local population sign a petition demanding one. The Government may also compel an authority to hold a referendum. The result of a mayoral referendum is binding on a local authority.
18. Authorities which change their governance arrangements as a result of referenda, can only make further change following a further referendum and where a local authority has held a referendum on its governance arrangements, a further referendum may not be held for ten years,
19. Should Council propose to make a change in its governance arrangements, there is a process set out under the Local Government Act 2000 which the Council will have to follow, including drawing up formal proposals for the change setting out a range of details, including a timetable and transitional arrangements. These then have to be advertised in accordance with the Act, following which the local authority will then be required to pass a further formal resolution in order to make the changes to the governance arrangements.

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

20. Where a council wishes to reduce the total number of councillors to be elected to the council, this can only be given effect following a review carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

The LGBCE is an independent body set up by Parliament. It carries out electoral reviews, the main of which is to:

- a. To deliver electoral equality for voters;
 - b. Establish electoral areas (wards) for local authorities that reflect, as far as possible, community identities in that area; and
 - c. Promote effective convenience of local government.
21. An electoral review would examine the proposed new electoral arrangements for the authority which would include:
- a. The total number of councillors to be elected;
 - b. The names, number and boundaries of wards;
 - c. The number of councillors to be elected from each ward.
22. The LGBCE carry out views on request and in their guidance acknowledge that councils may wish to make changes to their electoral arrangements in order to improve the way they represent and serve people in the area. Requests have been made where councils believe they have too many (or too few) councillors for them to work most effectively.
23. In summary, the process that an LGCBE electoral review would undertake would be that the Commission would gather information about the authority and brief the authority on the process. There would then be a consultation on the council size followed information gathering on new ward boundaries. The Commission then publishes draft recommendations and consults on those and then publishes final recommendations which are placed before both House of Parliament for approval. If accepted by Parliament, the new arrangements come into force at the next local elections, which are automatically all-out elections.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

24. The resource implications were set out in the attached September 2014 report. It should be noted that a move to whole-council would see a saving of some £170,000 for those years where elections would no longer be held by thirds, but where the council elections are not combined with other elections. Where they would otherwise be combined, the saving would be less.
25. It is worth noting that by-elections are more likely to occur under a four year system because vacancies will need to be refilled, rather than left to be filled each May, as is sometimes the case under the current arrangements.

Property/Other

26. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

27. Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended).

Other Legal Implications:

28. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

29. None.

KEY DECISION? ~~Yes~~/No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: All

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

- 1 Report to Full Council on 17th September 2014
2. Results of the consultation exercise

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None.

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out. Yes/No

Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1. None	

DECISION-MAKER:		COUNCIL	
SUBJECT:		ELECTORAL CYCLE	
DATE OF DECISION:		17 SEPTEMBER 2014	
REPORT OF:		DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES	
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Mark Heath	Tel: 023 8083 2371
	E-mail:	Mark.heath@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Mark Heath	Tel: 023 8083 2371
	E-mail:	Mark.heath@southampton.gov.uk	

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY
N/A

BRIEF SUMMARY

The Council has the choice of moving from elections by thirds to whole Council elections. If the Council wishes to change its election cycle, it must consult. This report therefore looks at the consultation arrangements that should be undertaken prior to the Council deciding which options should be approved.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Director of Corporate Services be authorised to consult on the principal of changing the Council's electoral cycle from elections by thirds to whole-Council elections every four years;
- (ii) That the consultation process set out in this report be approved;
- (iii) That a Special meeting of the Council be convened before the 19th November 2014 meeting in order for Council to consider the results of the consultation and determine proposals for any change in its electoral governance arrangements; and
- (iv) That a cross-party working group be established to consider the results of the consultation and make a recommendation to be considered by Full Council.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Council needs to consult on the proposal for changing the electoral cycle from elections by thirds to whole-Council elections before making a decision.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

2. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act received Royal Assent in December 2007. The Council is required to follow the process prescribed within the Act. The option not to consult is, therefore, not available.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

Electoral Arrangements

3. The Council has undertaken elections by thirds since 1980. However, legislative change introduced under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables the Council to resolve to change its electoral cycle and move to whole-council elections which would take place every four years.
4. Reasons to change to whole-Council elections:
 - A clear mandate from the electorate once every four years would enable the Council to adopt a more strategic, long-term approach to policy and decision-making and focus less on yearly election campaigning;
 - The results from whole-Council elections are simpler and more easily understood by the electorate. This may increase turn-out at local elections;
 - There would be a clearer opportunity for the electorate to change the political composition of the council once every four years;
 - Holding whole-Council elections once every four years rather than smaller elections every three years out of four would cost less and would be less disruptive for public buildings used as polling stations, for example, schools.
5. Reasons to keep elections by thirds:
 - Elections in three years out of every four provide more frequent opportunity for electors to vote and to influence the political make-up of the Council. This may, therefore, provide more immediate political accountability and provide a more up-to-date reflection of the views of local people.
 - Electing by thirds means there is more continuity of councillors without any chance of them all being replaced in a single election.
 - Voting for one councillor at a time under "elections by thirds" is well understood by voters in Southampton. Voting for more than one councillor at the same time under "whole council elections" could cause confusion.
 - An election by thirds provides a regular influx of newly elected councillors who can bring new ideas and fresh approaches to the Council.
 - Elections by thirds is the system that electors in the City are used to and the withdrawal of the opportunity to vote more frequently may disengage some of the City's electors if they only vote once every four years, as opposed to elections by thirds.

The Electoral Commission

6. The Electoral Commission undertook a review of electoral cycles in 2003 in a report entitled *The Cycle of Local Government Elections in England*.
7. The Electoral Commission, having taken into account the evidence and arguments presented during the consultation process concluded that a pattern of whole-Council elections for all local authorities in England would provide a clear, equitable and easy to understand electoral process that would best serve the interests of local government electors. The Electoral Commission, therefore, recommended that each local authority should hold whole-Council elections, with all councillors elected simultaneously, once every four years. However, this is currently a matter for local choice.

Methodology for Consultation

8. If an authority wishes to move from thirds to whole- Council elections, it must consult. Councils undertaking such consultation must:
 - Consult such persons as the Council thinks appropriate on the proposed change;
 - Have regard to the outcome of the consultation before making its decision;
 - Convene a special meeting of the Council;
 - Pass a resolution to change by a two thirds majority of those voting;
 - Publish an explanatory document on the decision and make this available for public inspection; and
 - Give notice to the Electoral Commission on any changes to the electoral arrangements.
9. It is, therefore, recommended that the Council undertakes a consultation exercise which includes an opportunity for the public and other stakeholders, to express their views on the options available.
10. It is proposed that this consultation is primarily undertaken by way of an on-line questionnaire. The proposed arrangements are set out in the Appendix. An equality impact assessment of this approach has been undertaken.
11. The on-line questionnaire would include:
 - Information on the current electoral governance arrangements;
 - Information on the proposed changes together with an explanation of the impact of change;
 - Arguments for and against the changes;
 - The choice of 'tick' boxes for the respondent to indicate their preferred options;
 - A question to indicate if they are completing the questionnaire in the capacity of a local resident, local business or as a representative of a group or organisation;
 - Basic demographic information such as gender and age;
 - Deadline for completion.

12. Questionnaires would also be available at Council venues such as leisure centres, reception areas and libraries.
13. Links to an on-line questionnaire would be sent to the business community via the Chamber of Commerce, to community groups and tenants' and residents' groups through the Council's existing communications networks. Similarly, links would also be sent to other stakeholders such as the MP's, MEP's, and Southampton Universities.
14. Feedback would be provided at the end of the consultation via the Council's website, and by using the Council's existing communication networks for other community and interest groups.
15. It is also proposed that information is sought from councils who have changed their electoral cycle to whole-council elections.
16. An analysis of the results from the consultation would be included in a report submitted to the Special Council meeting to be held prior to the November Council meeting.

Programme of forthcoming elections

17. The current electoral cycle is as follows:
 - European Parliamentary elections – every five years
 - UK Parliamentary elections – every five years
 - Police and Crime Commissioner elections – every four years
 - Southampton City Council elections – every three out of four years
18. In addition, the Localism Act 2011 allows for local referenda to be held and there is always the possibility of national referenda.
19. The current electoral timetable is as follows:

2015	Southampton City Council Elections & UK Parliamentary General Election
2016	Southampton City Council Elections & Police and Crime Commissioner Elections
2017	None
2018	Southampton City Council Elections
2019	Southampton City Council Elections & European Parliamentary Elections
2020	Southampton City Council Elections & UK Parliamentary Elections
20. If in November Council resolves to move to whole-council elections, it is a decision for the Councillors at that Special Meeting as to when they wish to implement this.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

21. There are no capital resource implications.

22. There are minimal revenue resource implications. Additional revenue costs of carrying out this activity will be met from within existing budgets.
23. In terms of the costs of elections, these are generally met by the body or bodies whose representatives have been elected. For example, the UK Government (through the Consolidated Fund) pays for European Elections and UK Parliamentary elections. Southampton City Council pays for the cost of local elections to the City Council. Where elections are combined, for example, a local election and a General Election, the costs are shared (although not equally) between central Government and the Council.
24. The cost of a whole City Council election is around £170,000. A move to whole Council elections would see two fewer City Council elections being held over a four year period. The cost of any election that would otherwise be combined would be met, for example in the case of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, by the Home Office (central Government).
25. There would, therefore, be savings to the Council from moving to a whole Council electoral cycle once every four years. The precise size of the saving would depend upon whether any elections were combined, and also the formulation of the Fees and Charges Order for any elections paid for by central Government as that varies from election to election.

Property/Other

26. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

27. Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended).

Other Legal Implications:

28. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

29. None.

KEY DECISION? Yes/No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	All
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SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Proposed consultation arrangements.
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Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
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Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out.	Yes/No
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Other Background Documents

Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

Title of Background Paper(s)

Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

1.	None	
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Have your say on local elections

Consultation Overview

Southampton City Council will soon be deciding whether to move to a four year elections cycle as opposed to annual elections. These proposals have implications for everyone who lives and/or works in the city. The Council will be making a final decision about which options to adopt in November 2014.

What are the current arrangements?

Southampton City Council has 48 councillors representing 16 wards across the city (three councillors per ward). The Council currently holds elections by thirds. Councillors are elected on a four year term of office and one of the three seats in each ward is then up for re-election in 3 of the 4 years of the cycle. There are no city council elections in the fourth year. The Council then elects a Leader and s/he then chooses a small team of councillors usually from among his or her political group to form a cabinet who make decisions about Council policies and services.

What is the alternative the Council is consulting on?

The Council is consulting on a proposal to change its election cycle to whole Council elections. The election of all 48 councillors would take place in one election and then every fourth year after that.

Benefits of a move to a four-year cycle include:

- Political stability, enabling longer term visioning and planning.
- Less cost to the taxpayer
- Less confusion as electors in Southampton would be voting for all councillors at the same time.
- Ability for electors to completely change the political leadership of the Council and therefore its direction at one time.

Benefits of the current system include:

- With only one-third of seats contested each year it ensures experienced councillors remain regardless of the outcome.
- One councillor is elected for each ward at a time, allowing the electorate to focus on the aptitude of particular candidates.
- It is easier for independent and smaller party candidates to stand and be represented when less seats are contested.
- Changes in the political direction of the Council are more likely to happen over a period of time, rather than there being sudden dramatic shifts, contributing to continuity.

We need to know what you think

No decisions will be made without taking into consideration a range of views and opinions. These arrangements are fundamental to local democracy and it is therefore essential that local people and communities are consulted. Please let us have your views by completing the following questionnaire.

Questionnaire

ELECTIONS (Electoral Cycle)

1. Do you think that Southampton City Council's electoral cycle should involve:
PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

(a) Electing one third of city councillors for three years out of four.	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--------------------------

(b) Electing all city councillors at the same time every four years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please use this space if you would like to explain the reason for your answer.

2. What is your postcode

ABOUT YOURSELF

You do not need to complete this section, but answering the following questions will help us to see if there are differences between the views of different residents. All the information you give will be kept completely confidential.

3. What is your age?

Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	25 – 34	<input type="checkbox"/>	45 – 54	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 – 74	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 -24	<input type="checkbox"/>	35 – 44	<input type="checkbox"/>	55 – 64	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 75	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your time

The results of the consultation will be made available on the Council's website. In addition, if you would like to receive feedback on the decisions made, please give your name, postal or email address in the space below, but you do not need to give us your details for your views to be taken into account.

Name:

Postal or email address:

Local Elections and Governance Issues

Consultation Report

Background

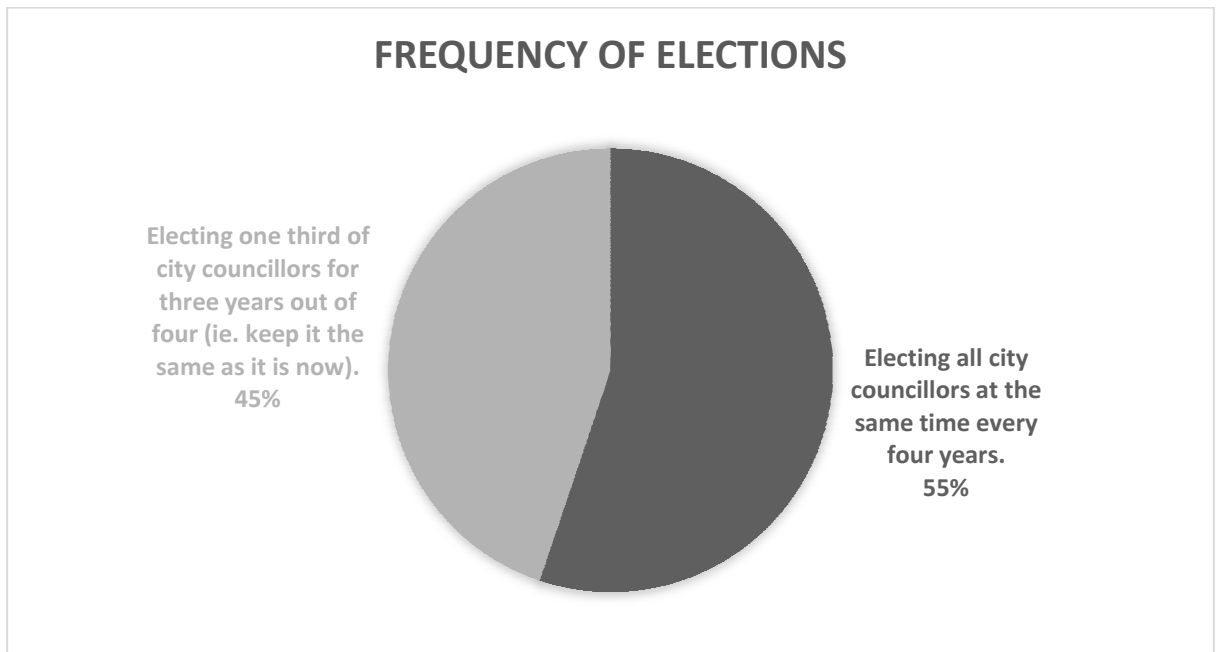
1. This Appendix summarises the consultation process and consultation feedback received in relation to local elections and governance issues.
2. Following approval of a motion at Full Council on 17 September 2014, Southampton City Council launched a consultation seeking people's views regarding the frequency of elections, the possibility of having an elected mayor and the number of Councillors in the City.
3. There are set times, every four years, on which a council can take a decision on changes to its electoral cycle. A consultation was last held on the electoral cycle and governance model in 2010, as the last time that a resolution could have been passed to make changes in Southampton was 31st December 2010. We are currently in the period on which a decision to make changes to the electoral cycle could be taken by the Council (May 2014 and 31st December 2014).
4. The consultation was undertaken between 4 October 2014 and 6 November 2014 in order to enable Full Council to make a decision in November. This will allow time for the option of introducing any changes to the electoral cycle next May should that be option be supported at Full Council.
5. The consultation documentation and survey was available on the Council's website and can be found at annex 1 Hard copies of the consultation survey were also available in the Gateway Office, at all Southampton libraries and Local Housing Offices and on request from the Council. The consultation was promoted via Stay Connected (the Council's e-bulletin system), a press release, radio interview with the Leader and social media.
6. Key organisations in the City including Southampton Voluntary Services, Business South, Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, the NHS and Hampshire Constabulary were also made aware that the consultation was taking place and asked them to disseminate this information among their contacts.

Consultation Survey Results

7. The consultation held on election and governance issues in 2010 yielded a total of 29 responses. The current consultation has resulted in 1438 responses. This increased response rate reflects the efforts that have been made to improve the level and type of consultation undertaken.
8. The first question in the survey related to the frequency of elections:

- What is your preference for the frequency of the electoral cycle for Southampton City Council?

Of those that responded, 635 were in favour of electing one third of city councillors for three years out of four, while 781 respondents favoured electing all city councillors at the same time every four years.



9. The vast majority of comments from those who supported a move to 4 year elections related to 2 key issues

- increasing political stability/consistency and long term planning;
- reducing the cost of elections.

"I think there are pros and cons of both, so not an easy decision. However, on balance, electing a council once every 4 years would ensure more stability for that period (for good or ill), and should aid more efficient planning and governance."

"I would agree that this option has significant advantages in terms of greater stability and enabling longer term visioning and planning. It will also reduce costs to the taxpayer. It is unlikely to cause any problems in terms of the potential loss of experienced councillors since the chances of all sitting members losing their seats at the same time must presumably be relatively low."

"Cost have been cut everywhere else and elections are expensive."

10. Other issues that respondents raised in support of moving to 4 year elections included:

- Improving voter turnout;
- Reducing the burden on buildings which hold elections – i.e. schools;
- Easier for residents to understand.

11. Respondents in favour of electing one third of city councillors for three years out of four, focused their comments around
- Retaining councillors, knowledge and experience rather than having a whole new council;
 - Less scope for a radical shift which could be influenced by national or time limited issues;
 - More opportunity for residents to be engaged in the democratic process and 'judge' the performance of the Council.

"4 yearly would make the result too closely linked to instant opinion and electioneering. By spreading it out the council is more accountable as the public get to show their displeasure more often and parties would have to listen for the whole of the 4 years instead of just the last one."

"Allows experienced councillors to always be in place. Keeps some continuity from one year to the next. Allows voters to concentrate on one candidate at a time, and gives candidates a bigger profile at election time Some councillors wd resign during their term anyway, so bye-election costs."

"It would not be good to risk having a whole new council, possibly with many inexperienced members. The current system also enables some change in the make-up of the council to reflect current issues without being "stuck" for 4 years with the same pattern when issues will change."

12. Other issues raised in support of elections by thirds included:

- All in one is too confusing;
- Avoids complacency among Councillors and helps them be more focused;
- The current system works so why change it.

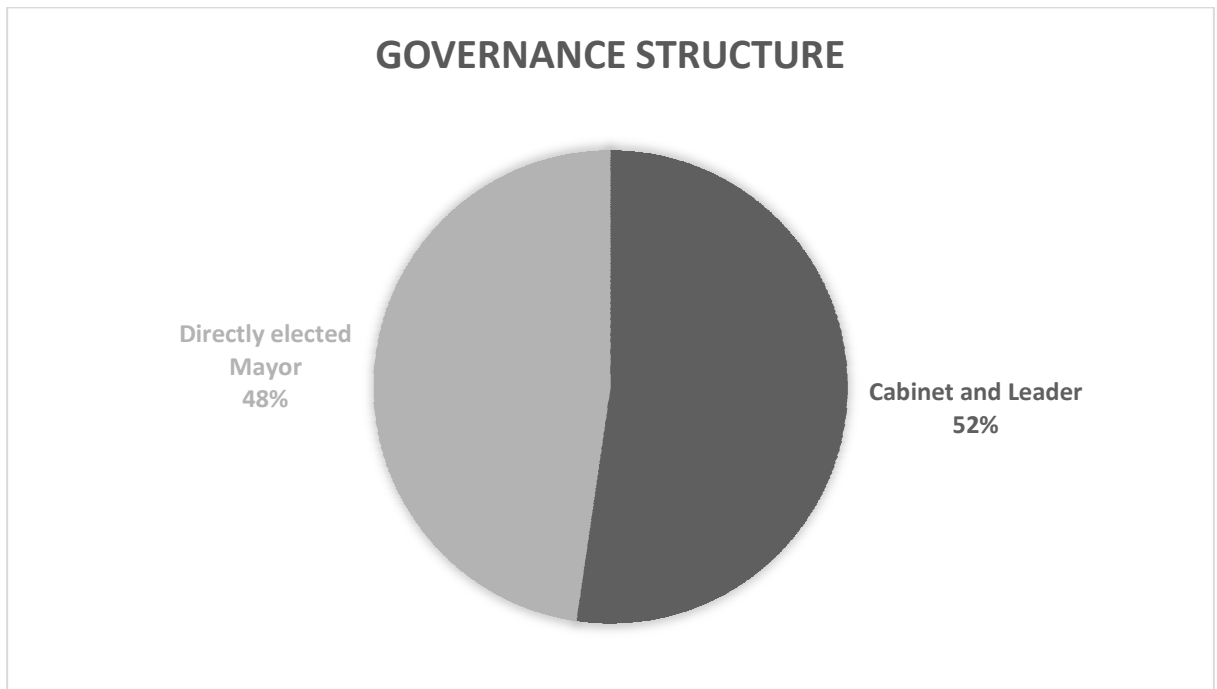
13. It is also worth noting that a small number of respondent suggested an alternative option of elections every two years.

14. Whilst the key issue for consultation was the frequency of elections the Council was also keen to seek views regarding governance structure and the number of councillors in the City. It is important to note that a decision on changing the Council's governance structure to an elected Mayor cannot take place without a referendum on the issue, and a reduction in the number of members would require a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission and the agreement of Parliament. Views have been sought on these issues to help Council consider if these are changes that they would like to pursue further.

15. The second question in the survey related to governance structures:

- Do you think Southampton City Council should continue with the Cabinet and Leader model or replace this with a directly elected Mayor?

This question produced the most divided opinion with 740 respondents in favour of keeping the Cabinet and Leader model while 675 were in favour of a directly elected Mayor.



16. The most frequent reasons given for supporting the Cabinet and Leader model included:

- A directly elected Mayor might not be in agreement with majority of councillors;
- Too much power in one person if there was a directly elected Mayor;
- The cost associated with having a directly elected Mayor (including the referendum).

“A directly elected mayor could find himself in a position where he could not form a workable cabinet because a majority of councillors were opposed to his policies.”

“The cost of implementing this change is likely to be huge. Giving too much power to one person is unwise.”

17. Those who supported a move towards a directly elected Mayor most frequently commented:

- Less political and decisions could be more focused on the good of the city;
- More democratic with more accountability to residents;
- A directly elected mayor would have a higher profile both within and outside the City.

“A directly elected mayor gives the electorate more involvement in who is going to represent our city.”

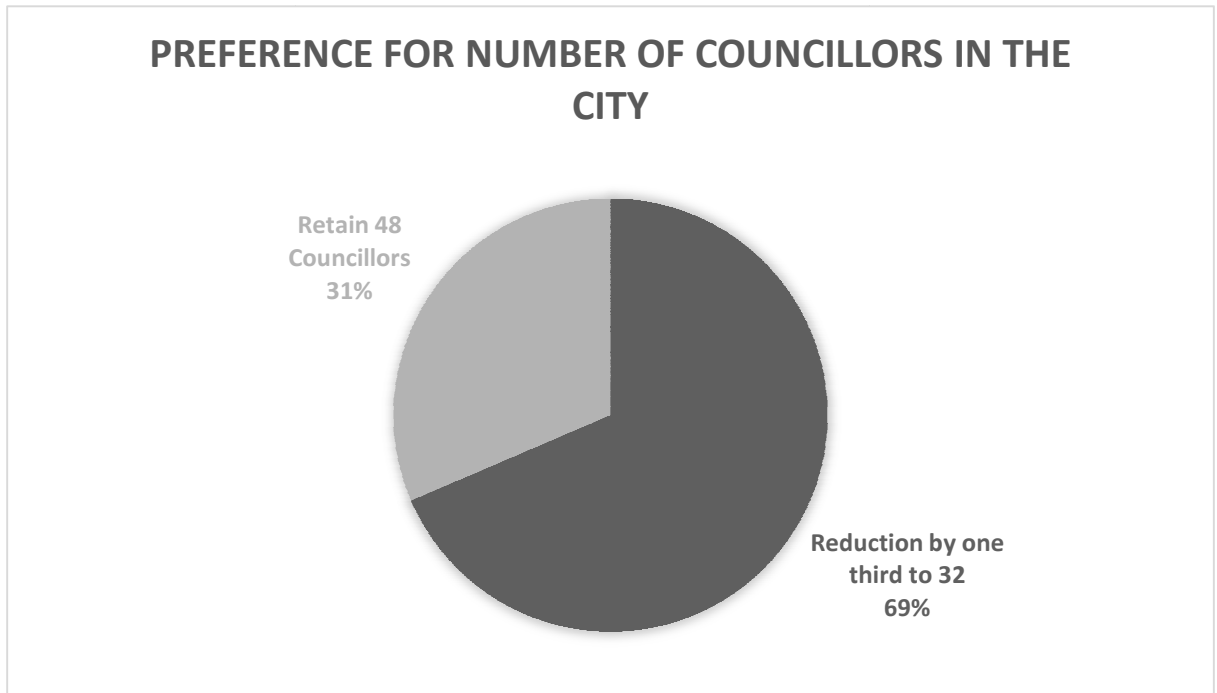
“I simply believe that a directly elected Mayor would be more accountable than a political leader. Voters don't elect the leader - this is decided by the party in charge and therefore isn't very democratic.”

“It would be good to have a high-profile Mayor, someone really energetic & charismatic, who can act as an advocate for the city in the way that Boris acts for London.”

18. The final question in the survey related to the number of councillors in the City:

In relation to the number of councillors on the Council, do you think they should remain the same at 48, or be reduced by one third to 32?

This question produced the most consensus with 959 favouring a reduction by one third to 32 councillors and 440 preferring to retain 48 Councillors.



19. The majority of respondents who favoured a reduction by 1/3 to 32 Councillors cited cost reduction as the reason for this choice.

20. Other frequently made points included:

- Given the size of the City/wards there was no need for more than 2 councillors per ward;
- Reduction would help improve communication and decision making;
- The reducing size of the Council should be reflected in the number of councillors;
- The suggestion that some councillors do not work hard enough.

“Save the council money by reducing the spend on their allowances. It would create a greater visibility to residents if there are only two representatives in each ward as they would know who they are!”

“it seems that other cities have a higher ratio of constituents to Councilors, it would reduce costs and it might be simpler to have a smaller, more focused, group of members”

“Reducing Councillors by one third is a huge reduction in city finances at a time the city as a whole has had to make a lot of cut backs. Councillors have been largely unaffected whilst emphasis has been given to services & Council employees. Two councillors per ward are more than enough”.

21. Respondents who favoured retaining 48 councillors mostly focused their comments around the workload of remaining councillors if the number was reduced and the assertion that

having more councillors made them more representative of City residents. Other issues raised included

- The current numbers seem about right
- Less people willing to stand as a councillor
- More chance of cross party representation
- Allowance rather than councillors should be cut

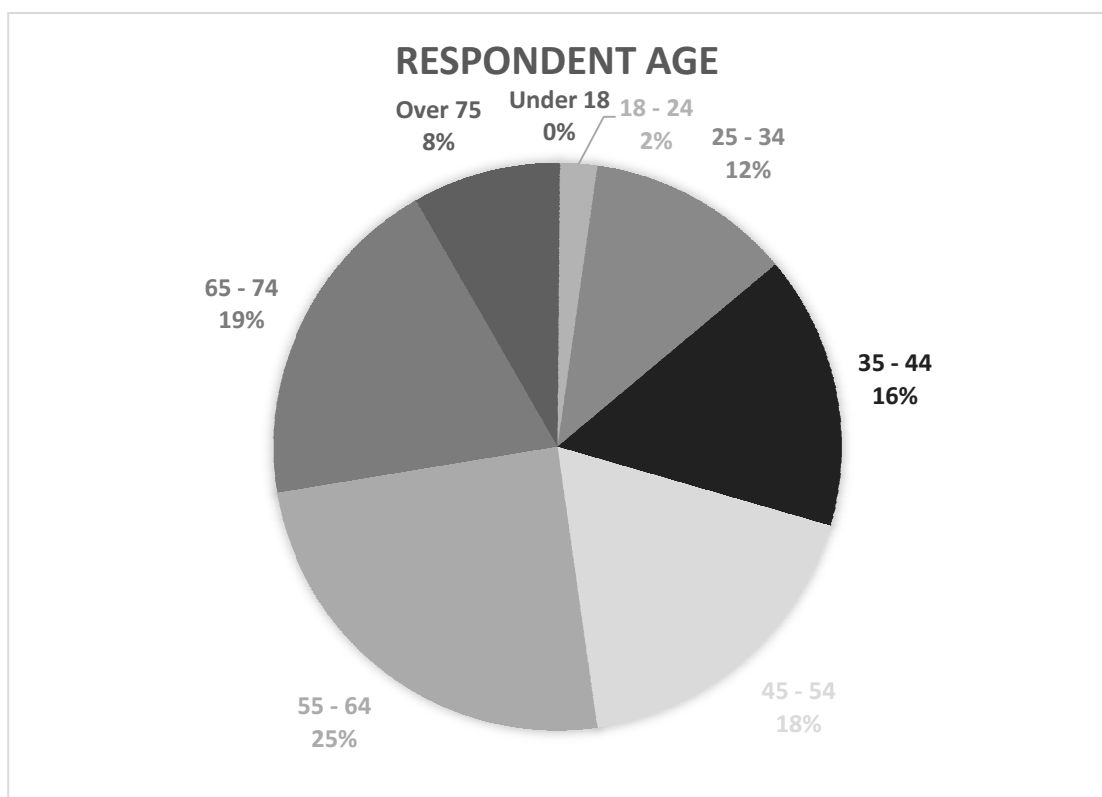
"It's difficult to get hold of Councillors & reduction would add to problem. They would also have to heavy or spread of responsibility if reduced in number."

"More councilors ensures a better represented population. Less councilors would mean individual influence is increased."

"Southampton is a big vibrant city, as such should have the right number of councillors, 32 is way too few. 48 is prob about right."

22. However, it is important to note that several respondents, particularly in those who selected retain 48 councillors, felt that they needed more information on how this would work and what the effects would be in order to make an informed decision.

23. In terms of the demographic makeup of respondents to the survey, 1349 gave a Southampton postcode compared to 88 who did not. There were 95 paper responses and 1342 online submissions. The age profile of respondents was as follows:



Other responses

24. The Council also received one written response on behalf of the Hampshire Chamber Of Commerce – Southampton, who discussed the consultation at their Business Board. The chamber favoured

- Electing all city councillors at the same time every four years.
- Reducing by one third the number of councillors on the council (if time allows and to achieve this quickly).
- Replacing the Cabinet and Leader model with a directly elected Mayor for the City as stage 2, once the above have been achieved.

25. Their reasons for this, in addition to savings involved, were to give more consistency in leadership and direction by local politicians and in the long term decision making by the Council concerning the economy. They also felt the results from whole council elections are simpler and more easily understood by the electorate, so may increase turnout at local elections. Whole council elections would be more compatible with any decision to adopt a directly elected Mayor for the city, as Mayors are also elected on a four yearly cycle and there would be a clearer opportunity for the electorate to change the political composition of the Council once every four years, instead of yearly as now.

Conclusion

26. The consultation on local elections and governance issues elicited a far greater response rate than the last consultation on the subject which was undertaken in 2010 and is clearly a subject that residents and stakeholders have a keen interest in.

27. The main question the survey relating to the frequency of the electoral cycle for Southampton City Council showed that slightly more respondent (55%) were in favour of moving to a four year election cycle over the status quo of election by thirds every three out of four years.

28. In relation to the other two questions on which the council was keen to seek views, there was also a split opinion in relation to future governance models with 52% preferring to retain a Leader and Cabinet Model and 48% in favour of moving towards and directly elected Mayor.

29. The final question, which related to the number of councillors in the City, showed the strongest consensus among respondents with over two thirds (69%) of respondents favouring a reduction in number to 32, while 31% of respondents were in favour or maintaining the current number of 48 councillors.

Elections (Local and governance issues)

Southampton City Council has 48 councillors representing 16 wards across the city (three councillors per ward) and holds elections 'by thirds'. There are three councillors in each ward who are elected for a four year term of office. One of the three seats in each ward is up for re-election in three of the four years of the cycle. There are no council elections in the fourth year.

An alternative is 'whole Council' elections. This would mean that the election of all 48 councillors would take place in one election and then every fourth year after that.

What is your preference for the frequency of the electoral cycle for Southampton City Council?

- Electing one third of city councillors for three years out of four (ie. keep it the same as it is now).
- Electing all city councillors at the same time every four years.

Please use this space if _____
 you would like to explain _____
 the reason for your _____
 answer (max 500
 characters).

Other Matters we would like your views on

While consulting on the electoral issue, we would also like your views on two other matters:

Directly elected Mayor

For each local authority there is an executive - a group of people who are in charge of what the Council does. This can be organised in one of two ways. In Southampton we follow the Leader and Cabinet model. Under this arrangement, following the Council election, the 48 councillors elect one of their number to be the Leader. He/she then appoints their Cabinet.

The alternative is a directly elected Mayor who is elected by all the voters in the Council's area to be the head of the Council's decision-making body in addition to the 48 councillors. Moving to a directly elected Mayor would require a local referendum. At this stage we are seeking your views on this option.

Do you think Southampton City Council should continue with the Cabinet and Leader model or replace this with a directly elected Mayor?

- Cabinet and Leader
- Directly elected Mayor

Please use this space if you would like to explain the reason for your answer (max 500 characters).

Reduction in the number of councillors

The Council is currently made up of 48 councillors but this could be reduced by one third to 32. In order for this to be pursued, the Local Government Boundary Commission would need to conduct an electoral review and make recommendations to Parliament who would then make the final decision. At this stage we are seeking your views on whether this is something you would support.

In relation to the number of councillors on the Council, do you think they should remain the same at 48, or be reduced by one third to 32?

- Reduction by one third to 32
- Retain 48 Councillors

Please use this space if you would like to explain the reason for your answer (max 500 characters).

What is your postcode?

How old are you?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 - 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45 - 54 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 - 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 - 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35 - 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 - 64 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 75 |

Thank you for your time. The closing date is: 6th November 2014
The results will be made available on the Council's website the following week.
Any personal information you give to us will always be processed in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 1998. We will only use the personal information you provide to deliver the services you have requested, or for our lawful, disclosed purposes. We will not make your personal details available outside our organisation without your consent, unless obliged by law.

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