



## COUNCIL

**MEETING** : Thursday, 27th March 2014

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. Chatterton (Mayor), Hansdot (Sheriff & Deputy Mayor), James, Wood, Dallimore, Organ, Patel, Hilton, Haigh, Gravells, Durrant, Tracey, Hobbs, McLellan, C. Witts, Smith, Lugg, Noakes, Ravenhill, Hanman, Lewis, Wilson, Bhaimia, S. Witts, Field, Williams, Llewellyn, Brown, Dee, Porter, Taylor, Beeley, Mozol, Randle, Toleman and Gilson

### **Others in Attendance**

Peter Gillett, Corporate Director of Resources

Martin Shields, Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods

Sue Mullins, Head of Legal and Policy Development

Marcus Grodentz, Communications and Marketing Service Manager

Tanya Davies, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Sonia Tucker, Democratic Services Officer

## **86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

86.1 There were no declarations of interest.

## **87. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)**

87.1 Ms Eva Langrock-Bircher asked the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources how the Council ensured that the majority of the electorate were made aware of the consultation on electoral arrangements and how the Council ensured that the result was not manipulated by individuals casting more than one vote.

87.2 Councillor Wood (Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources) explained that the decision to go out to consultation was taken at the Council meeting on 23 January 2014 and that it was both important and necessary to do so before considering changing the Council's electoral arrangements. He advised that the consultation ran from 10 February to 7 March 2014 and was communicated widely by the Council and by individual Councillors in their wards, and that use was made of social media, the Council's website and local media. He advised that the timing and length of the consultation was planned to ensure that the Council could make a decision in advance of the forthcoming boundary review. With regard to the outcome of the process, he explained that the consultation sought views and was not a voting process.

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87.3 Ms Langrock-Bircher asked what percentage of the electorate responded to the consultation.

87.4 Councillor Wood advised that the outcome of the consultation would be reported during debate on the substantive item.

**88. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)**

88.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

**89. THE COUNCIL'S ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS**

89.1 Council considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the electoral arrangements for the City.

89.2 Councillor Wood set out the options contained within the report and moved the following recommendation:

**2.1 That Council implements whole council elections in May 2016 and every four years thereafter.**

89.3 Councillor Wood noted that the Council had agreed to take account of the public view and that, although the response rate was low with a total of 36 responses received, 92% were in favour of implementing whole Council elections. He advised that the Administration acknowledged the merits of the current system of elections by thirds and of the whole Council elections and proposed that a free vote take place. He stated that he was in favour of whole Council elections, not only because the consultation supported it and the savings it offered, but because it would result in a stronger mandate and offer consistency for a longer period of time.

89.4 Councillor James (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture) seconded the motion and stated that he supported a move to whole Council elections. He noted the savings, but advised that consistency and the time to implement policies as key benefits. He also advised that whole Council elections would allow greater freedom in the forthcoming boundary review to put forward ward boundary proposals that reflected the City's natural communities.

89.5 Councillor Hilton (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group) stated that whole Council elections would be beneficial for the governance of the Council and allow more flexibility when drawing up proposals for the boundary review. He noted that elections to other bodies took place almost every year and that Councillors would continue to be visible to their constituents at all times.

89.6 Councillor Haigh stated that whole Council elections were better for democracy and for the governance of the Council, providing stability and avoiding long periods each year during which decisions could not be made. She welcomed the opportunity to engage residents in elections and echoed the comments made in respect of increased flexibility for the boundary review process.

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- 89.7 Councillor Hobbs spoke in support of whole Council elections. He noted the savings and the importance of stability and preventing voter confusion.
- 89.8 Councillor Porter stated that whole Council elections would be detrimental to the stability of the Council because they could result in a significant number of new Councillors with no experience being elected at one time. He stated that canvassing at election time was important and that the electorate appreciated seeing Councillors and candidates during this time.
- 89.9 Councillor Wilson explained that he had been in favour of retaining elections by thirds, but that it was clear that whole Council elections would offer the Council the greatest flexibility when drafting its submissions and this was of primary importance when determining the electoral arrangements.
- 89.10 Councillor Smith advised that Councillors would be working in their wards irrespective of whether there was an election in any given year. She stated that, while the likelihood of a completely new Council was small, new Councillors with fresh ideas were to be welcomed.
- 89.11 Councillor Taylor advised that retaining elections by thirds would ensure a level of continuity for the Council. He noted the savings to the Council, but advised that taxpayers would ultimately still pay for the elections to other bodies that would take place in intervening years.
- 89.12 Councillor Gravells expressed concern at the consultation response rate. He stated that it was essential for the Council to find ways to engage with the electorate and that moving to whole Council elections was contrary to that aim.
- 89.13 The motion was put to the vote and names recorded at the request of Councillor Haigh.

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>
Chatterton	Gravells	Tracey
Hansdot	Noakes	
James	Ravenhill	
Dallimore	Dee	
Organ	Porter	
Patel	Taylor	
Wood	Randle	
Haigh		
Hilton		
Durrant		
McLellan		
Smith		
Hobbs		
Lugg		
Witts. C		
Hanman		
Lewis		
Wilson		
Bhaimia		

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Witts. S  
Field  
Llewellyn  
Williams  
Brown  
Beeley  
Gilson  
Mozol  
Toleman  
(28)

(7)

(1)

89.14 The motion was carried.

89.15 **RESOLVED** - That Council implements whole council elections in May 2016 and every four years thereafter.

**Time of commencement: 19:00 hours**

**Time of conclusion: 19:40 hours**

**Chair**