

APPENDIX C - NOTICE OF REFERENDUM (INFORMATION STATEMENT)

In the Matter of Plymouth City Council and a Petition to Change the Council's Constitutional Arrangements

In the Matter of The Local Authorities (Conduct of Referendums) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice of Referendum under Regulation 4(1)

Notice is hereby given that, following receipt of a valid petition seeking a referendum on whether Plymouth City Council's executive arrangements should change, a referendum will be held on Thursday 17 July 2025 and will be conducted in accordance with procedures similar to those used at local government elections.

The question to be asked in the referendum as prescribed by regulations is as follows:

“How would you like Plymouth City Council to be run?

By a leader, who is an elected councillor chosen by a vote of the other elected councillors. This is how the Council is run now.

or

By a mayor, who is elected by voters. This would be a change from how the Council is run now.”

The Council has drawn up proposals under Regulation 17 (2) of the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions) (England) Regulations 2011 for the operation of the form of governance that is the constitutional change proposed in the petition.

The main features of these proposals are as follows:

- The Elected Mayor would be directly elected by the local government electors of the city of Plymouth.
- Any person can stand for election as Elected Mayor, provided he/she satisfies the eligibility and qualification requirements for standing as a councillor (which also apply to an elected mayor). It is possible for an existing councillor to stand for election as elected Mayor, but if elected this would create a casual vacancy in the Council on taking office.
- Unlike the Leader of the Council, an Elected Mayor cannot be removed from office or required to resign as a result of any vote or resolution of the Council, during their term of office.
- Like the Leader of the Council, the Elected Mayor would be required to appoint at least two and not more than nine councillors, one of whom must be designated “Deputy Mayor”, to be members of the Executive with the Elected Mayor. This is known as a mayor and cabinet executive.
- The Elected Mayor would be responsible for all executive decisions of the authority and would be able to delegate Executive functions to the Executive collectively, to individual members of the Executive, to committees of the Executive, to area committees, or to officers as they see fit.
- The Executive will present a budget each year and, periodically, major plans and strategies to the Council. The budget and major plans and strategies could be approved by a majority of councillors. However, any changes proposed by councillors would need to have the support of at least two-thirds of voting members.

- The Council would continue to be required to have at least one overview and scrutiny committee and the current arrangements for the discharge of non-Executive functions by committees and officers would continue.
- The Elected Mayor would be entitled to receive an allowance, the amount of which would be approved by the Council after recommendations by its Independent Remuneration Panel in the same way as allowances are approved for the Leader and other elected members.
- The Council currently has a Lord Mayor, which is a ceremonial title bestowed by Royal Charter. This role is separate from that of an Elected Mayor and will remain whether or not the proposals for an Elected Mayor and Cabinet Executive are approved in the referendum. A decision as to whether or not the Elected Mayor is to hold the Royal Charter title will be taken at the first ordinary meeting of the Council following the referendum along with a decision as to the title that will be used by the Elected Mayor in the event that the two roles are to remain separate.
- An Elected Mayor may appoint one assistant, who would be employed by the Council at the Council's cost. Other Executive and Democratic Service resources may be allocated to support the delivery of Executive functions and responsibilities, included as part of the budget presented by the Elected Mayor each year in the budget setting process. The requirement to have certain statutory officers in place (e.g. Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Director of Children's Services) would remain unchanged.

If the Elected Mayor model is introduced following a referendum, the Council is effectively locked into that model for ten years from the date of the referendum and may only change it at a subsequent referendum.

A copy of the proposals to adopt a form of governance with an Elected Mayor may be viewed on the Council's website (www.plymouth.gov.uk) or inspected by members of the public at the Council's principal office at Ballard House, 26 West Hoe Road, Plymouth, PL1 3BJ between the hours of 10am and 4pm on weekdays, in both cases free of charge. A copy of the proposals, free of charge, may be obtained from the Council's website or by emailing electoral.referendum@plymouth.gov.uk

The following referendum expenses limit (as defined in Regulation 6 (1) of the 2012 Regulations) will apply in respect of this referendum:

The aggregate of £2,362 and the amount found by multiplying by 5.9 pence the number of entries in the register of local government electors that has effect on the day on which the referendum period begins (198,075 electors). Applying this formula, the referendum expenses limit for this referendum will be **£14,048.43** which will be applicable from the start of the Referendum Period on the 28 April 2025.

Where any referendum expenses are incurred in excess of the referendum expenses limit, a person who knew or ought reasonably to have known that that limit would be exceeded, or who, without reasonable excuse, authorises another person to exceed that limit, is guilty of an offence.

The address of the principal office of the Council (referred to as the authority in the Regulations) is Ballard House, West Hoe Road, Plymouth PL1 3BJ.

Tracey Lee
Proper Officer
Chief Executive
28 April 2025