

CITY OF PLYMOUTH

Subject: Changes in Executive Arrangements
Committee: Council
Date: 6 December 2010
Cabinet Member: Council Leader
CMT Member: Director for Corporate Support / Monitoring Officer
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Ref: TH
Part: 1

Executive Summary:

The main report sets out the framework for decision making following the consultation into the required changes to the Council's executive arrangements resulting from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The main report only included information which was available at the date of writing the report. The results of the consultation and the consequent formal recommendation, are set out in this supplementary report.

Corporate Plan 2010 – 2013 as amended by the four new priorities for the City and Council:

See main report

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

See main report

Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.

See main report

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

Obviously it is a matter for the Council to determine what is proposed however on balance the following recommendations may be something that Council may wish to consider.

It is recommended:

1. That the Council adopts the Leader and Cabinet model of governance as set out in the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended).
2. That the Council do not undertake a referendum on the adoption of those arrangements.
3. That the Council instructs the Monitoring Officer to draw up the proposed changes to the Constitution, the timetable for implementation and any transitional arrangements to give effect to the above decisions. Further, once those proposals have been drawn up, to make them available to the public and advertise that they are available.

The reason for this recommendation is that taking into account the consultation results, the Council's recent performance, costs and likely future options for changes to executive arrangements and other matters, this model would be most likely to assist in securing continuous improvement in the way the Council's functions are exercised giving regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

The alternative options are set out in the body of the main report.

Background papers:

The legislative requirements (forming the background to this report) are set out in the main report.

Sign off:

Fin	DJN 101 1.01 0	Leg	1032 0/DV s.	HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member : Tim Howes											

1. Consultation

- 1.1. The Council was obliged to take reasonable steps to consult the local government electors for, and other interested persons in, the authority's area. There is no prescription on what form that consultation should take.
- 1.2. In October 2010 the Council agreed to consult on proposals for these new executive arrangements. The preferred option to put out for consultation was the Leader and Cabinet model. In advance of the Council meeting, the Herald had already reported on the recommendations from Cabinet and therefore brought the matter effectively into the public domain. This avoided the need for a separate public advertisement. The publication and consultation that has been undertaken is:
 - Public reports to both Cabinet and Council
 - Issuing of press releases regarding proposals to the local media on the 1st and 12th October 2010
 - Publishing the proposals on the Council's web-site with a "news story" on the 12th October with a link through to the survey.
 - Providing information for articles in the Herald and other media
 - An on-line consultation process
 - Direct consultation with members of the Plymouth 2020 Executive
- 1.3. As stated, a public consultation process was set up on the Council's web-site. Unfortunately, the link to the consultation portal was lost during part of the consultation period. The link was re-established on the 15th November and the consultation process extended to the 5th December. The Herald and other media raised the profile of this public consultation resulting in increased interest in the matter.
- 1.4. In the absence of web-consultation, the public have of course been able to contact the council direct on the matter by e-mail and post.
- 1.5. The results of the public consultation (on-line, by e-mail and post) are that there were 347 responses with 72% in favour of a directly elected Mayor and Cabinet, and 28% in favour of a Strong Leader and Cabinet.
- 1.6. Set out in appendix A, is a summary of the comments made by consultees.

Appendix A

Strong Leader
Mayoral systems do not work and are too expensive
Current model has served City well under Labour and Conservative administrations
We need strong leadership and not conflict between a Mayor and cabinet
The set-up and on-going costs of a Mayor are not justified
The strong leader and cabinet model is cheaper and avoids confusion with Mayor/Lord Mayor
Mayoral systems are too expensive
The leader can be removed, but the Mayor cannot
Mayor model too expensive in the present climate
Mayors are an old-style management/governance model.
May be conflict between Mayor and majority party on the Council
Mayor would most likely be business person with own agenda
Elected Mayors have not been the success that people think.
Council's preference is the least costly, and is most democratic and accountable option
A Mayoral election would be a waste of cost and time, the present system could be improved
The current arrangements work well and the tradition of Lord Mayor should not be lost
Mayoral systems have failed elsewhere in the country
I do not like the idea that an elected Mayor cannot be removed for four years – especially if they are doing a bad job
An elected Mayor could have other interests that do not have the benefits of Plymouth people in mind
Elected Councillors can be removed more easily and are more accountable to the electorate
Possible unsuitable selections for Mayor based on celebrity
Mayoral model would lead to more bureaucracy and two visions for the City
We have already rejected the Mayoral model once, there should be no change without a new referendum
One person should not hold all the power – a career politician only interested in themselves
With a good cabinet and strong leader, decisions are likely to be more sensible
We need egos to be kept in check
More transparency in cabinet, decision making and appointments would give the public more confidence
Cost of Mayor would increase Council Tax and cutting services to pay for this extravagance
Why should we pay for another politician?
If Councillors can't do their job they should be sacked
Mayor would have dictatorial powers and be answerable to no one except every 4 years.
Mayor
A directly elected Mayor is more democratic
The residents would elect the Leader rather than a political party
The City needs someone strong, impartial and politically unchained
This system has worked well elsewhere like Torbay, London, Middlesborough and other cities (including in California).
A Mayor has no "baggage".
A Mayor is responsible to the people a Leader is responsible to the party.
It would stop political bickering and have one honest statement
People should have a "direct" say
It would bring an independence to the authority

Leader and executive are not accountable to the electorate
The Leader and party can hold power indefinitely
This would give the City a real choice and allow the leader to be a suitable person
This would avoid the need for an unelected Chief Executive and top level of management
The Mayor would put the City's interests first and not be dragged down by petty party politics
A Mayor will be able to remain focused and drive a single-vision
One person for the voice of the city
The position of Mayor would offer a fresh start and attract a new type of individual with charisma and talent
An elected Mayor would be easier to remove
The present 3-party in-fighting has made the present system untenable
The Mayor can pick a Cabinet from all the parties' not just one.
It concentrates power in executive hands and avoids party and locality conflicts undertaken at the expense of the City.
This new and vibrant model may re-energise people and increase engagement in local democracy
This would bring "fresh blood" and a new perspective
Political parties have failed to engage local voters resulting in low turnout
A Mayor that is elected can keep on winning if they deliver for the people of Plymouth
I think that this model has worked well in other cities and should help drive regeneration and improvement of the city
We need a strong business approach to running the city
More accountability with the electorate able to vote on a proper mandate
Present system has petty arguments and empire building
A Mayor would have to accept responsibility for the outcome of their decisions
Install someone with knowledge and ability to move us from being a provincial backwater
Would like to see someone more accountable
We need an experienced and successful business person to run the city in the same way
Current system of governance and decision making is obviously not working
Current arrangement is unresponsive, relatively anonymous and unaccountable
Leader is elected by local ward, but influence and decisions affect us all
Elected Mayors are incredibly effective, much more independent in terms of scope
Directly voting in the person to lead us is a fantastic chance for democracy in the city
Mayor embodies the place and gives it a face and be a champion
I want to have a say as to who leads my city
An opportunity to inject gravitas, personality and perhaps stability into strategic development of city
Since the national coalition, good to expand cooperative working to local government
We are too entrenched in party politics, need clear vision of thought and action from a Mayor
Mayor selected on passion and love of city with less political bias than a party leader
Better opportunity to drive through difficult issues which may be fudged by party pressure on leader