

Date of meeting:	21 March 2022
Title of Report:	Public consultation regarding the Council's electoral cycle
Lead Cabinet Member:	Councillor John Riley
Lead Strategic Director:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Author:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Contact Email:	Giles.perritt@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	Electoral Cycle 2022
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

To seek the Council's endorsement of a public consultation using powers available under Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003, between June and August 2022. This consultation will engage with stakeholders across the city on the issue of moving from the current electoral cycle of elections 'by thirds' to whole council elections.

The use of powers under Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003, does not in any way bind the authority to seeking a resolution to amend the election cycle. The result of any consultation or advisory poll conducted under the act is advisory in nature, and does not commit the council or any other entity to a particular course of action.

Recommendations and Reasons

1. That Council resolves to undertake a public engagement consultation using its powers under Section 116 of the Local Government Act 2003 between June and August 2022 on the issue of moving from the current electoral cycle of elections to 'whole council' elections once every four years.
2. That Council delegates to the Audit and Governance Committee approval of the planned implementation of the consultation, in particular who will be consulted/engaged with and how.

Reason:

To better understand public and stakeholder views on either retaining the current arrangements of elections 'by thirds' taking place in three years out of four, or on moving to a cycle of 'all out' elections once every four years.

Alternative options considered and rejected

To not undertake a public consultation. This would mean that the Council would not have the benefit of a formal record of public and stakeholder views about the Council's electoral arrangements to inform future consideration of the matter.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

The Corporate Plan commits the Council to engaging with and listening to our residents, businesses and communities. The Council's values include a commitment to Plymouth being a place where people can have their say about what is important to them, and where they are empowered to make change happen. The recommendations of this report seek to deliver these commitments in respect of a key element of the Council's democratic arrangements.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The costs associated with a public consultation and analysis of the results, likely to be in the region of £26k will be met from within existing revenue resources. The financial implications of any change to the Council's electoral cycle are referenced within the accompanying briefing report, but do not arise as a result of the recommendation of this report, as the results of the consultation exercise would not be binding on the Council, and any decision about changing the electoral cycle would be a matter for future consideration by the Council.

Financial Risks: None directly arising from the recommendations of this report as referenced above.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Subject to the decision of Council in June 2022, the consultation will take place largely on-line, reducing reliance on printed media, although paper copies will be available where necessary.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

An equalities impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the consultation will be carried out with due regard to facilitating participation by those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Subject to the recommendations of this report being agreed, this would be considered by the Council in June 2022.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Briefing report							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)
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	<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)

Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes

Date agreed: 18/03/2022