



Moving to a four-year election cycle

Overview & Scrutiny briefing

Report of the Policy and Consultation Officer

1 Background

- 1.1 The recent Local Government White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, proposes that future Council executives will be elected for a four year term. In addition, the white paper also has proposals to make it easier for an authority to move to whole Council elections once every four years in order to facilitate the four year term of an executive, encourage longer term strategic thinking and also increase electoral turnout.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Deputy Internal Performance and Service Improvement took a paper to cabinet on 23 January 2007 outlining proposals for a public consultation on the proposed shift from a two-year cycle to a four-year cycle (attached for information).
- 1.3 This consultation exercise will be targeted at parish, borough and county councillors, and also be placed on the CBC website and hard copies made available for anyone that requests one. Press releases will be set out in the weeks leading up to the consultation exercise to raise public awareness. However, it is unlikely that the consultation will be targeted to stakeholders (using the community planning/LDF stakeholder list) or to the viewpointonethousand citizen's panel due to the resource and cost implications.

2 Proposed approach

- 2.1 A survey has been designed using the Snap survey software that can be put online and printed out hard copy. A link to the online survey will be emailed to all targeted consultees, with hard copies being put in borough councillor pigeon holes.
- 2.2 An information sheet setting out some background information and the arguments for and against moving to a four-year cycle will be included with all surveys.
- 2.3 Hard copies of the survey and information sheet will be provided to anyone that requests them. The consultation will take place throughout March 2007. It is recommended that the consultation exercise lasts for four weeks, with a deadline of Friday 30 March 2007.

Copies of the draft survey and information sheet are included with this report.

- 2.4 It is important that the information given and the structure of the survey itself is such that it allows people to make a balanced decision based on the information they are provided with. Any feedback on the draft documents provided would be welcome.

3 Next steps

3.1 The proposed consultation exercise will need to be communicated to all borough councillors to inform them that the consultation exercise will be taking place. This may involve the Cabinet Deputy Internal Performance and Service Improvement taking a paper to Full Council.

3.2 I welcome any comments on these proposals.

4 More information

4.1 Contact:

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