



Derby City Council

**CORPORATE SCRUTINY AND
GOVERNANCE BOARD**
20 April 2015

Report of the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny and
Governance Board

ITEM 6

Electoral Cycle Consultation Scoping Report

SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its meeting on 26 November 2014 Council resolved that:
'A consultation process is undertaken by the Corporate Scrutiny and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Board into a four year election cycle'
- 1.2 This report proposes a process for consultation on the four yearly election cycle.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To discuss the draft scoping report and suggest a programme of engagement for consulting on a four year cycle.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The scoping report enables the Board to establish a clear and concise consultation programme on the electoral cycle.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Members have been considering changing to four yearly electoral cycle for a number of years but have yet to debate it at Council.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	Janie Berry, Director of Legal & Democratic Services
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	N/A
Other(s)	Phil O'Brien, Head of Democratic Services

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Consultation on Electoral Cycle

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Conducting a comprehensive consultation into four year election cycle will incur costs. However, these can be contained within the overview and scrutiny budget.
- 1.2 Changing to four yearly election cycle is anticipated to save the council £350,000 over four years.

Legal

- 2.2 Any debate on change of cycle requires two thirds of those present to vote in favour, for change to be effected.

Personnel

- 3.1 None arising directly from this report.

IT

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Effective scrutiny benefits all Derby people and the very nature of the Board looks in depth at equality in all its investigations.
- 5.2 The consultation will include consulting with our Diversity Forums, including the Deaf People's Forum

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising directly from this report.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management

- 9.1 None arising directly from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 The Council Plan 2015- 18 makes the following pledges over the next three years:

- A safe and pleasant environment for you to live and work.
- A strong community where we feel empowered and businesses are supported to grow.
- An ambitious and forward looking city with good prospects for everyone.
- A resilient Council, focusing on how we as a Council can deliver our services going forward.

Draft Consultation programme on the Electoral Cycle

This is a significant piece of work and therefore requires careful thought in advance to ensure effective deployment of limited resources. A guiding principle is the legislation which enables a change of electoral cycle to be considered because, unlike boundary changes or re-warding, it is in the gift of Council.

At any debate on change of cycle requires two thirds of those present must vote in favour for the change to be effected. With all Members present this amounts to 34 in favour.

For any consultation to be effective it must provide dialogue between individuals and groups based on genuine exchange of views and be able to influence policies and decisions. The Chair of the CS&G Board met with the Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager to discuss categories of consultees and how best to engage with them.

It is envisaged that the consultation process will include:

- Events to which specific groups are invited
- Attendance by Board members at existing events/meetings
- Interviews with key leaders from the community
- Surveys of the public and engaged citizens
- Evidence gathering panels
- Attendance at the Council's Diversity Forums and Deaf People's Forum

Key groups to engage

Commerce/Business Community

Marketing Derby and Derby Chamber of Commerce run occasional business gatherings for subject specific discussions and Richard Williams, Director of Regeneration feels that the Chamber and MD could be approached to host a joint event on the electoral cycle.

Major employers

Depending on which local companies attend the above event, we should also have specific conversations with major employers including:

- Roll Royce
- Bombardier
- Toyota

Renaissance Board

The Chair has already attended a meeting of the Renaissance Board and arranged for a discussion on the electoral cycle at their meeting on 23rd February.

Third Sector

Direct input into the review should be sought from the leaders of the third sector

Diverse Communities

Engage with Diversity Forums including Voices in Action Youth Council, Derby 50+, Disabled People's, Minority Communities and Gender and Sexuality Forums, Deaf People's Forum and other relevant groups

Our engaged citizens -Neighbourhood Boards

Members of our Neighbourhood Boards are amongst our most engaged citizens and their views on our electoral cycle will be informed by personal experience of our elections by thirds system. A request could be made to place this on the agenda of every board during the period of the consultation, with a survey/facilitated session led by either a member of the scrutiny board or a neighbourhood manager/officer (to ensure neutrality).

The public

Reach out to the public through:

- Link to survey on monthly email email subscribers
- Reach out panel engagement?
- Survey on council website

Existing evidence and research

To invite other Councils that are ahead of us in this process to inform our recommendations.

Bob Kerslake Review of Chief Civil Servant at DCLG, Sir Bob Kerslake, in his independent review of corporate governance at Birmingham City Council, recommends a change in the electoral cycle from 'by thirds' to 'whole council every four years.' He argues that this would allow councillors to better focus on the long-term vision for Birmingham and improve engagement in elections by residents.

Invite DCLG official to give evidence on strengths and weaknesses of thirds and four yearly election cycles.