

**Extract from the Minutes of the Meeting of the General Services Committee
held on 3 May 2017 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill, Shane Hebb, Mark Coxshall, Barbara Rice, Elaine Sheridan (Substitute for Roy Jones) and Graham Snell

Apologies: Councillors John Kent and Roy Jones

In attendance: Mr Roger Hirst, Police Crime Commissioner for Essex
Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager

22. Review of Electoral Arrangements - Outcome of Public Consultation

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report stating it represented the outcome of the twelve week public consultation. The Chair noted that 60% of respondents were in favour of the change to four yearly elections with 40% favouring the current system of election in thirds. Councillor Rice and Snell both highlighted that the response rate was incredibly low and if the responses of councillors and their close contacts were removed, then the response was even lower.

The committee recognised this fact but Councillor Coxshall suggested that governance and elections would not be a popular or engaging subject for the electorate and only those specifically interested in it may engage in the consultation.

Councillor Rice felt four yearly elections could lead to political parties struggling for quality candidates but other Members felt this was an issue for the parties and that the electorate would ultimately decide the quality of the candidate through the vote. There was discussion on whether four yearly elections could result in a large inexperienced body of Members gaining office at once but it was counter argued that there was always Members who held onto their seats and therefore there would always be an experienced element in the chamber.

Councillor Hebb highlighted the cost savings in changing electoral arrangements while Councillor Snell stated that a four yearly election did not guarantee an efficient decision making process as the election could still return a hung council.

In light of the varied nature of opinion the Chair requested a recorded vote on the recommendations. Councillors Snell, B. Rice and Sheridan voted in favour of elections in thirds (the current system) while Councillors Coxshall, Gledhill and Hebb voted in favour of four yearly elections. Cllr Gledhill cast his deciding vote as Chair in favour of four yearly elections.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The Committee note the result of the public consultation and recommend to a special Full Council the preferred option of four yearly elections.**
- 2. The Committee note that a special meeting of Full Council will need to be convened in the next few months and no later than November 2017 to consider the Committee's recommendations and the results of the consultation for Full Council to determine any change in its electoral governance arrangements.**

The meeting finished at 8.22 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**