

NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Consultation Summary

What are we consulting about?

New legislation requires Oxford City Council (and all local authorities) to consult upon which one of two forms of executive decision making arrangements will follow after our local elections in May 2012. The Council needs to have reached a decision on this, following consultation, by the end of December 2010.

What are the Council's existing decision making arrangements?

At present the Council has a leader and executive style of decision making. The Council elects the Leader for a one year term, decides upon the size of the executive (the City Executive Board) and appoints members of Council to the City Executive Board. Those members have specific areas of political responsibility for executive functions and these are allocated by the Leader. Most decisions that the Council takes are executive decisions but planning, licensing and all regulatory matters are not. Changes are not required to non-executive decisions by the new legislation. Executive decisions reached by the City Executive Board may be "called in" or reviewed within certain timescales.

Some decisions (e.g. agreeing the Budget, agreeing some plans and policies) may only be reached by full Council.

Options Upon Which Local Authorities are Being Asked to Consult

Leader and Cabinet

This is similar in some respects to our current arrangements. However, under this form, Council elects the Leader for a four year term and the Leader then decides upon the size and composition of the executive and upon the allocation of executive responsibilities. The Leader is responsible for appointing a deputy leader, also to serve for a four year term.

The leader can be removed from office by resolution of the Council if the Council's Constitution permits this.

Elected Mayor and Cabinet

Under this form, the Mayor would be elected by the Oxford electorate. The person elected would serve in office for four years and could not be removed

by full council. Once elected, the elected Mayor would decide upon the size and composition of the executive (which would consist of elected members of Council) and upon the allocation of executive responsibilities.

Has the Council got a preferred option?

Full Council on 12th July 2010 decided that its preferred option was the *leader and cabinet model*. *Council felt that this option was better suited to the circumstances of the City. In its present form this model has stood the Council well for nearly 10 years. The leader and cabinet model provides the links between councillors, their wards and the electorate. The elected Mayor and cabinet model introduces the politics of personality into local politics which the city council does not believe is conducive to good and sound and rational decision-making. The link between councillors, their wards and the electorate is less distinct with this model.* *The words in italics will be deleted from this document but re-inserted if/when Council decides that its preferred form of governance is the leader and cabinet model.*

Consultation

This consultation will run for a period of 12 weeks ending on 8th October 2010. A summary of public responses will be presented to the City Executive Board and to Council at the expiry of the 12 week period.

If you have any views or would like any further information then please send your comments to _____ (date) to arrive by no later than Friday 8th October. If you have any questions relating to the consultation, or to the options, please contact _____.