



SWINDON BOROUGH COUNCIL
Municipal Year 2019/20

Thursday, 21 November 2019

**COUNCIL CHAMBER
CIVIC OFFICES
SWINDON**

13 November 2019

Dear Councillor,

Summons to attend an Extraordinary Council Meeting

AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING of the **Council**, which you are requested to attend, is to be held at the CIVIC OFFICES, SWINDON, on **Thursday, 21 November 2019** at **7.00 p.m.**

The business to be transacted will be as follows:-

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Communications

To receive any communications or letters which the Mayor or Chief Executive may have to bring before the Council.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

4. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below.

5. The Frequency of Council Elections in Swindon (Pages 3 - 28)

6. Councillors Question Time

Questions (if any) of which notice has been given by Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 15.

Yours faithfully

Lisa Hall

Chief Legal Officer

Questions by Members of the Public in accordance with Standing Order 11

Swindon Borough Council remains committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters, and matters relating to planning and licensing applications). We will give priority to those who submit questions in writing at least two days before the meeting. Questions must be relevant, clear, and concise. You may not use Public Question Time as an opportunity to make speeches or statements.

Questions in writing should be sent to the Committee Officer Shaun Banks (07980752047 sbanks@swindon.gov.uk) or to the Chief Legal Officer, we will publish it, along with the answer, alongside the Minutes. The process associated with asking a public question is set out in the "Public Question Time at Council Meetings Protocol and Guidance" available on the Council's Website (<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13338&path=0>) or from the Committee Officer named above.

Access Arrangements - The venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you have any special requirements to enable you to attend the meeting or would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size, please contact the Committee Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.

The frequency of Council elections in Swindon

Council

Date: 21st November 2019

Author: Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer)

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform Members about the outcome of the consultation taken as to whether to retain the current cycle of elections by thirds or adopt all-out/whole council elections. The requirement to undertake this work came from Council's resolution in April 2019 (Minute 99, 2018/19 refers).
- 1.2 This report also sets out the recommendation to the Extraordinary Council meeting from the all-party Corporate Governance Review Working Group meeting on 5th November 2019.
- 1.3 The main piece of legislation to which this process relates is the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act").

2. Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the outcome of the consultation.
- 2.2 Change the cycle for electing councillors to Swindon Borough Council from 'elections by thirds' to all-out/whole council elections, to commence in 2022.
- 2.3 Authorise the Chief Executive and Chief Legal Officer to issue the necessary public information as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and undertake any further actions necessary to give effect to Council's resolution.
- 2.4 Authorise the Chief Executive to make a formal request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to review Swindon's ward boundaries to achieve greater numerical parity of electors in each ward and to create boundaries that better reflect Swindon's communities to be included in the 2020/21 LGBCE review programme.
- 2.5 Authorise the Chief Executive and Chief Legal Officer to make the order to harmonise all town and parish council elections with the Borough Council's electoral cycle, as permitted by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, providing that a further consultation with those councils confirms that a majority of them are in favour of such a change.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

The frequency of Council elections in Swindon

Council

Date: 21st November 2019

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 On 4th April 2019, Council approved the following resolution (Minute 99, 2018/19 refers):

“A consultation exercise be commenced immediately to explore the merits of the two systems.

An All Party Group of Members be established to oversee the consultation with residents, businesses and partner agencies.

An Extraordinary Council Meeting takes place following consultation in the new municipal year to formally consider the findings of the consultation and to put forward a proposal based on the recommendations of the All Party Working Group.”

- 3.2 The Corporate Governance Review Working Group reviewed and approved a consultation strategy on 25th June 2019, which included providing a steer about how the different strands of the proposed consultation with residents and stakeholders should proceed. The consultation commenced on 2nd September 2019 and ended on 25th October 2019. Details of the different elements of the consultation are set out in the report to the Corporate Governance Review Working Group on 5th November 2019, which was circulated to all Members. A copy is attached at Appendix One and the key findings are set out below.

Consultation process and findings

Household consultation

- 3.3 A consultation form and letter was posted by Civica Election Services (formerly Election Reform Services Ltd.) to 98,502 postal addresses in Swindon with 18741 being returned. Of these, 101 were blank and three were rejected as duplicates. To allow households to participate, up to four responses could be submitted on each form, which resulted in 34,255 valid preferences being expressed. The response rate was 19.03%. The outcome was as follows:

	Total responses (n)	Total responses (%)
Option 1: “I would prefer to elect councillors by thirds”	10722	31.3
Option 2: “I would prefer to elect all councillors once every four years”	23533	68.7
Total	34255	100

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

The frequency of Council elections in Swindon

Council

Date: 21st November 2019

- 3.4 The table below shows the response rate in comparison with two other unitary councils that consulted on changing their electoral cycles.

Council	Response rate (per 10,000 population on 2018 mid-year data)	Outcome
Swindon – elections by thirds or all-out	1543.05 (34,255 responses)	To be determined on 21 st November 2019.
Bristol – elections by thirds or all-out (consultation and citizens' panel)	30.41 (1,409 responses)	The Council voted for the change.
Derby – elections by thirds or all-out	4.98 (231 responses)	The two-thirds vote at Council required was not achieved.

Web survey

- 3.5 Residents were invited to participate in a web survey to provide more detail about why they supported either option 1 or 2. Stakeholders, including town and parish councils, were also invited to contribute further details on their choice via the web survey. The responses are set out in greater detail at Appendix One.
- 3.6 The key findings from the web survey were:
- 55% of residents that responded to the web survey stated that they supported electing councillors every four years (40 responses).
 - 94.1% of interested stakeholders, groups and businesses stated they would prefer to elect councillors every four years (17 responses).
 - Nine Parish or Town Councils responded through the web survey and one via an email. All were in support of electing all Borough councillors once every four years.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.7 Two meetings for stakeholders to attend if they wished to learn more about the consultation were advertised. In addition, two meetings were held with Town and Parish council chairs and clerks on 2nd September and 1st October 2019 and also Haydon Wick Parish Council on 15th October 2019 at the parish's invitation.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

The frequency of Council elections in Swindon

Council

Date: 21st November 2019

- 3.8 The responses from town and parish councils are reported above through the analysis of the web survey. One issue that emerged from this engagement was whether the town and parish council elections should all be held on the same day if the Borough moves to whole council elections.

Recommendations from the Corporate Governance Review Working Group

- 3.9 The Corporate Governance Review Working Group met on 5th November 2019 to review the consultation findings. The opposition group Member requested a retention of the current system of elections by thirds, while the majority and minority group Members supported a move to all out/whole council elections.
- 3.10 The Working Group also considered the issue of changing the cycle of town and parish council elections, which the Council could alter at the same time as changing its elections. If unchanged, the 15 town and parishes would bear the whole cost of their elections, the largest element of which is the number of polling stations. If the dates are altered to coincide with the Borough's elections, then a proportion of these costs will be shared. The majority and minority group members noted that the legislation would permits the Council to impose change, but that the view of the meeting is that there should be further engagement and consultation with the town and parish councils. Members indicated that change should only occur if a majority of those councils were in agreement, but then the change would apply to all.
- 3.11 Therefore, in accordance with Council's resolution, the Working Group has submitted the following recommendation to Council by majority vote.
- 3.12 "That Swindon Borough Council agrees to:
- 1. Note the outcome of the consultation.
 - 2. Change the cycle for electing councillors to Swindon Borough Council from 'elections by thirds' to all-out/whole council elections, to commence in 2022.
 - 3. Authorise the Chief Executive and Chief Legal Officer to issue the necessary public information as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and undertake any further actions necessary to give effect to Council's resolution.
 - 4. Authorise the Chief Executive to make a formal request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to review Swindon's ward boundaries to achieve greater numerical parity of electors in each ward and to create boundaries that better reflect Swindon's communities to be included in the 2020/21 LGBCE review programme.
 - 5 Authorise the Chief Executive and Chief Legal Officer to make the order to harmonise all town and parish council elections with the Borough Council's electoral cycle, as permitted by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, providing that a further consultation
-

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

The frequency of Council elections in Swindon

Council

Date: 21st November 2019

with those councils confirms that a majority of them are in favour of such a change.

- 3.13 For the recommendation to take effect, two thirds of councillors present would have to vote in favour of it (S. 33, the 2007 Act). The number of Members required to reach this threshold at each level of attendance is attached at Appendix Two. Should the recommendations fail to achieve the two-thirds threshold, the Council's electoral cycle would remain by thirds.

Next Steps

- 3.14 If Council were to approve the change, Officers would proceed to implement the decision as set out in Sections 35 and 36 of the 2007 Act. This would include:

3.14.1 Producing an explanatory document for the public and notifying the public and other stakeholders how and where they may obtain this document.

3.14.2 Giving notice of the change to the Electoral Commission.

- 3.15 In addition, Members and Officers would commence an engagement process with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). This would ensure that the first all out elections in May 2022 would be held on new ward boundaries. A copy of an indicative timetable from the LGBCE confirming that this is achievable is attached at Appendix Three. As directed by any resolution from Council, Officers would also commence a further consultation with town and parish councils about the possibility of changing their electoral cycle.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 Members could choose not to support the proposal, in which case the frequency of elections would remain unaltered. A ward boundary review is still probable within the next two to three years; however, the timing of this would lie solely with the LGBCE. In addition, current legislation would require a pattern of three-member wards, which would over-ride the duty to reflect communities.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 Over a four-year period, the cost of elections by thirds would be £650,000 while the anticipated cost for an all-out election could be £360,000. This assumes that one election by thirds would be combined with a Police and Crime Commissioner Election but that the all-out election would stand alone. Therefore, changing to all-out elections could generate in the region £300,000 cash savings every four years.

The frequency of Council elections in Swindon

Council

Date: 21st November 2019

- 5.2 The cost of any notices and consultation would have to be covered within existing departmental budgets.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 Legal and human rights implications have been taken into account in preparing this report.
- 5.4 The Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) has considered the pre-election publicity guidance and concludes that it acceptable for this matter to be considered.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.5 None at this time

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.6 No Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken as this change would be the exercise of a process regulated by statute.

Risk Management

- 5.7 None at this time.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix One: Report to the Corporate Governance Review Working Group, 5th November 2019.
- 8.2 Appendix Two: Votes required to give effect to meet the two thirds criterion.
- 8.3 Appendix Three: Indicative ward boundary review timetable.

Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

Author: Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer)

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report seeks to inform Members about the outcome of the consultation taken on whether to retain the current cycle of elections by thirds or adopt all-out/whole council elections.
- 1.2 This report also invites Members to state the proposal that they wish to submit to the Extraordinary Council meeting, as set out in Council's resolution in April 2019.
- 1.3 The main piece of legislation to which this consultation relates is the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act").

2. Recommendations

The Working Group is recommended to:

- 2.1 To note the findings from the consultation.
- 2.2 To agree the proposal that is to form the recommendation to be submitted to the Extraordinary Council Meeting as set out in draft form in favour of retaining thirds (para 3.13) or adopting all-out/whole council elections (paras 3.14 and 3.19).

3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 On 4th April 2019, Council approved the following resolution (Minute 99, 2018/19 refers):

"A consultation exercise be commenced immediately to explore the merits of the two systems.

An All Party Group of Members be established to oversee the consultation with residents, businesses and partner agencies.

An Extraordinary Council Meeting takes place following consultation in the new municipal year to formally consider the findings of the consultation and to put forward a proposal based on the recommendations of the All Party Working Group."

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Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

- 3.2 Officers presented the draft consultation strategy to the Corporate Governance Review Working Group on 25th June 2019 on which Members provided a steer about how the different strands of the proposed consultation with residents and stakeholders should proceed. The consultation commenced on 2nd September 2019 and ended on 25th October 2019.
- 3.3 Members are reminded that under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, councils that elect by thirds can choose to move to whole-council elections by passing a resolution at a special meeting of the Full Council. The resolution would only be deemed carried if two-thirds of the Members present were to vote in favour of a proposed change to the electoral cycle. Should Council pass such a resolution, this Act also enables the Council to make an Order to change the electoral cycle of parish and town councils.
- 3.4 There are statutory arrangements that must be met should the Council resolution be passed including a requirement to publicise the fact that a resolution has been passed and produce an explanatory document; and to notify the Electoral Commission of the resolution.

Consultation process and findings

Communications programme

- 3.5 A communications campaign, as presented to the Corporate Governance Review Working Group, both preceded and ran alongside the consultation process to maximise engagement from residents and other interested parties.
- 3.6 A wide range of channels and messages were used to achieve the objective. Social media posts and adverts were seen over 399,000 times in the run up to, and across, the period of the campaign. A media briefing, two media releases and providing a spokesperson for interview resulted in 23 stories covering the consultation across local print, radio and online media channels and over 10,000 people visited the consultation web pages. Over 400 community groups, businesses, care homes and other stakeholders were contacted during the campaign to inform them of their options and encourage feedback.

Household consultation

- 3.7 A consultation form and letter was posted by Civica Election Services (formerly Election Reform Services Ltd.) to 98,502 postal addresses in Swindon with 18741 being returned. Of these, 101 were blank and three were rejected as duplicates. To allow households to participate, up to four responses could be submitted on each form, which resulted in 34,255 valid preferences being expressed. The response rate was 19.03%. The outcome was as follows:

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Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

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- 3.8 The table below shows the response rate in comparison with two other unitary councils that consulted on changing their electoral cycles.

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Web survey

- 3.9 Residents were invited to participate in a web survey to provide more detail about why they supported either option 1 or 2. Stakeholders, including town and parish councils, were also invited to contribute further details on their choice via the web survey. The responses are set out in greater detail at Appendix One.
- 3.10 The key findings from the web survey were:
- 55% of residents that responded to the web survey stated that they supported electing councillors every four years (40 responses).

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Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

- 94.1% of interested stakeholders, groups and businesses stated they would prefer to elect councillors every four years (17 responses).
- Nine Parish or Town Councils responded through the web survey and one via an email. All were in support of electing all Borough councillors once every four years.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.11 Two meetings for stakeholders to attend if they wished to learn more about the consultation were advertised. In addition, two meetings were held with Town and Parish council chairs and clerks on 2nd September and 1st October 2019 and also Haydon Wick Parish Council on 15th October 2019 at the parish's invitation.
- 3.12 The responses from town and parish councils are reported above through the analysis of the web survey. One issue that emerged from this engagement was whether the town and parish council elections should all be held on the same day if the Borough moves to whole council elections. This is discussed further below in paragraphs 3.20 to 3.25.

If Members prefer to retain elections by thirds

- 3.13 After considering the consultation, Members of this Working Group may conclude not to change from the present electoral cycle. Since Council's Minute requires a proposal to be submitted to an Extraordinary Meeting, Members are invited to comment on the following draft report recommendation:

3.13.1 "That Swindon Borough Council agrees:

1. To note the outcome of the consultation
2. Having considered the consultation responses, to retain the system of elections by thirds."

If Members prefer to change to all-out/whole council elections.

- 3.14 Should Members wish to propose to Council that the Borough should adopt whole council elections, a resolution would be needed to authorise this change, as set out in relevant sections of the 2007 Act. Any such resolution for change would need the support of two thirds of the councillors present. Alongside this, officers would need specific authorisation to prepare information to the public, to inform the Electoral Commission and to draft the necessary Orders to give effect to Council's will. Therefore, Members are invited to comment on the following draft report recommendation:

3.14.1 "That Swindon Borough Council agrees to:

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Douglas Campbell, 07779 413886, docampbell@swindon.gov.uk.

Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

1. Note the outcome of the consultation.
2. Change the cycle for electing councillors to Swindon Borough Council from 'elections by thirds' to all-out/whole council elections, to commence in 2022.
3. Authorise the Chief Executive and Chief Legal Officer to issue the necessary public information as required by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and undertake any further actions necessary to give effect to Council's resolution."

Additional issues

- 3.15 The consultation process with Members and stakeholders identified two other activities that could be initiated if Council were to move to all-out/whole council elections – 1) a ward boundary review and 2) to change the dates of town and parish council elections. These issues go beyond Council's resolution but if Members prefer to change to all-out elections then there is an opportunity for Council to make these two additional options.

Ward Boundary Review

- 3.16 At the meeting of this Working Group on 25th June 2019, Members expressed concern that were the Council to have all-out elections in 2022, there could be another set of all-out elections on different ward boundaries as early as 2023. The LGBCE has confirmed that should the Council move to all-out elections it would then undertake a ward boundary review that would be completed in time for elections in May 2022. An outline draft timetable from the LGBCE showing how this would be achieved is attached at Appendix Two.
- 3.17 Members are reminded that under elections by thirds, the LGBCE would draft proposals that aimed to give all wards three members, unless a strong case could be made for an exception. Should Council move to all-out/whole council elections, the LGBCE would be able to consider a range of single and multi-member wards that may better reflect communities.
- 3.18 If Members wish to confirm this desire for a boundary review, Members are invited to comment on the following draft recommendation that could form an additional proposal submitted to Council.
- 3.18.1 "Authorise the Chief Executive to make a formal request to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to review Swindon's ward boundaries to achieve greater numerical parity of electors in each ward and to create boundaries that better reflect Swindon's communities to be included in the 2020/21 LGBCE review programme."

Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

Town and Parish Council Elections

- 3.19 As stated above, were Council to agree to change to all-out/whole councils elections then Council would also be able to adopt a resolution to change parish and town councils electoral cycles. The current pattern of elections is set out in the table below:

2020	2021	2022	2023
Bishopstone	No Parish or Town Council Elections	Castle Eaton	Central Swindon South
Blunsdon		Hannington	Chiseldon
Central Swindon North		South Marston	Haydon Wick
Covingham		Stanton Fitzwarren	Highworth
Liddington			Stratton St Margaret
Nythe, Eldene, and Liden			West Swindon
St Andrews			Wroughton
Wanborough			

- 3.20 At the consultation meetings with parish and town council chairs and clerks, the issue of election costs were raised if parishes were not aligned to the Borough. Officers indicated that the preferred approach would be for the Borough to work with councils that wanted to harmonize their electoral cycles should the Borough change to all-out/whole council elections.
- 3.21 As requested at the 2nd September 2019 meeting, officers circulated outline indicative costs for stand-alone town and parish elections, for which the most costly element is the staffing of each polling station, even where two or more of these share a polling location. Currently, town and parish councils only pay a proportion of the election costs if polling day is shared with the Borough Council.
- 3.22 Subsequently nine parish councils out of seventeen indicated through the web survey response that they supported the Council adopting all-out/whole council elections. A tenth parish council indicated its support in an email submitted as part of the consultation.

Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

3.23 Should Borough Council resolve to change the electoral cycle, there are three options for town and parish council elections.

3.23.1 Option 1: The Council resolution includes a delegated authority to allow use the provisions in the 2007 Act to change the cycle for all town and parish council elections.

3.23.2 Option 2: The Council resolution includes a delegated authority to allow use of the provisions in the 2007 Act to change the cycle for all town and parish council elections provided that prior to exercising this power the Council consults all those councils.

3.23.3 Option 3: The Council does not include a delegation to exercise this power and the cycle of parish council elections would remain unaltered. If there are no other elections on the same day, parish and town councils would have to bear the full costs themselves. Any changes to the electoral cycles would have to be as a consequence of a Community Governance review.

3.24 If Members prefer to follow options one or two, it is suggested that they request the Chief Legal Officer draft an appropriate additional recommendation for the report to Council to reflect the steer from this meeting.

4. Alternative Options

4.1 Council's resolution does not permit any alternative but to proceed with a consultation and to bring a report recommendation to a special council in the 2019/20 municipal year.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

5.1 Over a four-year period, the cost of elections by thirds would be £650,000 while the anticipated cost for an all-out election could be £360,000. This assumes that one election by thirds would be combined with a Police and Crime Commissioner Election but that the all-out election would stand alone. Therefore, changing to all-out elections could generate in the region £300,000 cash savings every four years.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

5.2 Legal and human rights implications have been taken into account in preparing this report.

Possible change to the election cycle – consultation outcome

Corporate Governance Review Working Group

Date: 5th November 2019

- 5.3 The Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) has considered the pre election publicity guidance and concludes that it acceptable for this matter to be considered.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 None at this time

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 No Diversity Impact Assessment has been undertaken at this time as the working group is not a decision making body.

Risk Management

- 5.6 None at this time.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix One: Responses to the web-survey
8.2 Appendix Two: LGBCE Swindon Review draft timetable.

Swindon Borough Council – Election Cycle Consultation

Online Response

This survey was designed for use by staff in customer services to submit responses on behalf of Swindon residents over the age of 18 that had received a postal consultation but were unable to return their response by post, or wished to return their views through customer services rather than returning by post.

There were no responses collected via this survey, therefore the only responses to be counted in the final numbers will be from the postal responses received by ERS.

Resident and Stakeholder Feedback

This survey was designed for use by Swindon residents who had returned their response and wish to provide comments and for interested stakeholders, groups or businesses to share their views on the consultation.

There were 56 responses collected via this survey. We also received an email directly from one Parish Council with their views, for the purposes of this analysis, their response will be included in the total numbers to make a total of 57 responses.

Breakdown of respondents:

Respondent	Count	%
A resident of Swindon over the age of 18 that has received the postal consultation paper and wish to provide additional comments	40	70.2%
An interested stakeholder, group or business and wish to provide your views on this consultation	17 ¹	29.8%
Grand Total	57	

Summary

- 55% of residents that responded to the survey stated that they supported electing councillors every four years
- 94.1% of interested stakeholders, groups and businesses stated they would prefer to elect councillors every four years
- 10 Parish or town Council's responded and all were in support of electing councillors every four years
- The main reason for both residents and stakeholders supporting whole council elections was that it would result in savings

¹ One respondent did not answer the first question, however then stated that they were an 'other interested stakeholder' so will be included in the stakeholder group rather than residents

Residents

- Residents - Please tell us which option you supported in the consultation:

Option	Count	%
I would prefer to elect all councillors once every four years	22	55%
I would prefer to elect councillors by thirds	18	45%
Grand Total	40	

Whole Council elections

- What reason best explains your choice to change to the 'whole council' elections:

Reason	Count	%
Holding whole council elections once every four years would result in around £300,000 savings per four year election cycle	10	45.5%
Would deliver a clear mandate from the electorate once every four years	6	27.3%
Would give a controlling political party group time to set a clear four year vision, enabling longer term strategic decisions making and accountability	3	13.6%
Other (please explain below)	3	13.6%
Grand Total	22	

- Other Responses:

Swindon Borough is the second worst council in the whole of the SW to properly represent its electorate. Only 36% of those who voted actually voted for the party in power with 63% of the seats. Never mind 'whole council elections' the real issue is the 'first past the post' electoral system itself. In order to have a democratically elected council CHANGE THE VOTING SYSTEM so the the council actually represents its resident.

More 'stability' in Council - with fewer 'distractions' around elections.
Too many elections 'devalues' them (in my opinion) and people get fed up with them - so don't vote! Thus they become a 'waste of time and money'.
I would also like to add that there is too much 'Party Politics' in Local Government. So, ALL committees, including any 'cabinet', should include members from ALL parties - with the members being chosen for their individual interests or skills.

This only makes sense if the councillors are elected through some sort of proportional representation. I live in a ward where all my three representatives are of the same party because the elections are separate; yet of course there is no such numerical separation between the parties (i.e. a party with > 70%). This is a quasi-medieval system. I would suggest PR over the whole of Swindon, or failing that, at least PR within each ward. Otherwise any such change is just a form of accounting without any real democratic intent.

- Additional Comments:

Local polling station is primary school with around 600 pupils. All out elections would reduce the number of data the school needs to close. I ahah agree with the point about the controlling party having more time to make progress.

I am actually undecided which way to vote because the consultation raises questions. The leaflet implies that there will be fewer elections, but this won't be the case unless parish councils adopt the

same changes. This isn't made clear. Counting multiple votes every 4 years is harder as demonstrated by the Highworth fiasco. Is it sensible to change the system at a time when confidence in the Returning Officer is very low. The form cherry picks certain benefits but doesn't list the negatives, eg. under the four year system, some younger voters won't have a say in local elections until they are 22.

This would also mean schools would not be continually disrupted for elections. If it is illegal for parents to take children out of school during school time, why is it acceptable to close for voting. There are many alternatives - churches, community rooms, libraries, sports halls.

Elections by thirds

- What reason best explains your choice to continue with the 'by thirds' elections:

Reason	Count:	%
Provides regular opportunities for the public to vote and decide on how the council should be run	9	50%
Keeping the current system would retain a large proportion of existing councillors with their knowledge and experience	3	16.7%
One councillor is elected for each ward at a time, allowing the electorate to focus on the aptitude of particular candidates	1	5.6%
Other (please explain below)	5	27.8%
Grand Total	18	

- Other responses:

Why am I allowed to submit multiple votes? This is a very poor survey.
Instead of voting for one councillor in each ward. Hold polls where all councillors in the ward at once but wards elections are done in a cycle. 20 wards perhaps split into 3 groups (North, Central & South) Year 1 North councillors are elected. Year 2 Central councillors are elected. Year 3 South councillors are elected. Year 4 no elections. This would make savings compared to current system as polling stations are only active once in the cycle rather than multiple time at present.
You mention a saving of £300,000 but surely a bigger saving would result from reducing the number of councillors to two per ward i.e.40 in total.
The form is badly worded when explaining 'by thirds'. It reads 'all councillors are elected for a term of four years, with one third being elected for three consecutive years....' which can easily be misunderstood and lead to an incorrect conclusion. It would have been better to say that in a four year cycle, one third of the seats are contested in the first year, another third in the second year etc.
ALL apply - why force me to make a preference??

- Additional Comments

This should allow for multiple selections and is a poorly written survey. The council would retain more stability if retained as thirds.
If elected in thirds the council should be more responsive to the wishes of the electorate.
If you want to save money get rid of bodies with no useful function that have been foisted on the public at great expense and to no discernable benefit such as South Swindon Parish Council and Police and Crime Commissioners

I believe elections once every 4 years will lead to the Council's electoral services team/capabilities becoming deskilled and ineffective. Everyone from counting staff and polling station staff to the Borough's officers will have very few opportunities to put elections to practice, increasing mistakes of the sort seen in 2019. Many authorities that currently elect "all out" are either two tier authorities or have a wide range of parish/town/city councils on different cycles. Even with the increased parish councils in Swindon, I don't believe a compact unitary like Swindon will be able to organise sufficient elections every year to retain vital skills and experience.

Interested Stakeholders, groups or businesses

- If you are an interested stakeholder, group or business, please tell us whether you are a:

Stakeholder	Count	%
Parish or Town Council	10	58.8%
Other interested stakeholder	4	23.5%
Community Group	2	11.8%
Business	1	5.9%
Grand Total	17	

- We would be interested to know the name of the stakeholder you represent (this is not required however if you provide a response your information may be quoted in the published report to Councillors). Please do not provide any personal information.

Parish or Town Councils – 9 left details:

Blunsdon Parish Council
Liddington Parish Council
Covingham Parish Council
Covingham Parish Council
St Andrews Parish Council
Chiseldon Parish Council
Bishopstone Parish Council
Wroughton Parish Council
Haydon Wick Parish Council

Other interested stakeholders – 2 left details:

Community Groups – 2 left details:

Hindu Samaj Swindon
Swindon Night Shelter

Business – 1 respondent did not leave details

- Stakeholders - How often would you prefer to elect councillors for Swindon Borough Council?

Option	Count	%
I would prefer to elect all councillors once every four years	16	94.1%
I would prefer to elect councillors by thirds	1	5.9%
Grand Total	17	

All Parish/ Town Councils, Community Groups and Community Groups would prefer whole council elections. 1 of the Other Interested Parties supports whole council elections and 1 supports election by thirds.

Whole Council Elections

- What reason best explains your choice to change to the 'whole council' elections:

Reason	Count	%
Holding whole council elections once every four years would result in around £300,000 savings per four year election cycle	6	37.5%
Would give a controlling political party group time to set a clear four year vision, enabling longer term strategic decisions making and accountability	3	18.8%
Would deliver a clear mandate from the electorate once every four years	1	6.3%
Other (please explain below)	6	37.5%
Grand Total	16	

- Other responses:

This response is more about the Parish Council falling inline with whatever the decision is and it is happy to accept a change to its current election cycle. As individuals they may have different views, but this is best for the Parish Council
Covingham Parish Council is ok falling in line and accepting that there will be a shorter term of office from the 2020 election and another one will be held in 2022
If SBC changes to a 4 year cycle St Andrews Parish Council would be happy to have their elections at the same time.
The Parish Council voted on whether to fall in line with a proposed change to a "whole Council" election or retain their own 4 year cycle at additional costs to the PC. The PC voted that if SBC moved to a whole election cycle it would make sense for CPC to do likewise.
Members RESOLVED to respond to the Swindon Borough Council consultation as follows: Wroughton Parish Council are in support of Swindon Borough Council amending their election cycle to an 'all out' regime every four years in order to provide a more cost effective election and stable leadership for the Borough Council. Wroughton Parish Council realise that this will impact upon either our election cycle or election costs should Swindon Borough Council approve this method for their elections.
This Council will fall in line with the proposed all-out SBC election cycle, with effect from 2026 election, to provide continuity of service to our electorate and assuming that the Electoral

Commission will allow for a seven-year term for Parish Councillors. If this is not possible, and a change is imposed upon us, then we will fall in line from 2022.

- Additional Comments:

There is significant voter fatigue with seemingly endless local elections. This would allow one consolidated election every four years, which allow for greater emphasis for residents and the local media. It would also allow the Local Authority to focus on delivery between the elections and the welcome saving of £300,000.

Elections by thirds

- What reason best explains your choice to continue with the 'by thirds' elections:

Reason	Count
Provides regular opportunities for the public to vote and decide on how the council should be run	1
Grand Total	1

Swindon: Electoral Review Timetable. (Draft: October 2019)

Stage	Review Stage	Council	LGBCE	Key Dates
Preliminary	Initial meetings	Leader, Chief Executive	Chair, Chief Executive	18 th December
	Officer Briefings	Council officers involved in review	Review Manager, Review Officer	May/June 2020 (after election) (officers/group leaders/ full council all to take place on the same day)
	Group Leader Briefings	Council group leaders	Lead Commissioner, Review Manager, Review Officer	
	Full Council Briefings	All councillors	Lead Commissioner, Review Manager, Review Officer	
	Parish/town council/residents Briefings	-	Review Manager, Review Officer	PTCs date tbc
Council Size	Develop council size proposal	Council/groups	-	Submit to LGBCE by 2 November 2020
	Commission Meeting – council size decision	-	Commission	December 2020
Warding patterns	Initial warding pattern consultation	Council / groups / public	-	January - March 2021
	Commission Meeting – draft recommendations	-	Commission	May 2021
	Consultation on draft recommendations	Council / groups / public	-	June - August 2021
	Commission Meeting – final recommendations	-	Commission	October 2021
	Final recommendations published	-	Commission	November 2021
	Order laid	-	Commission	December 2021
	Implementation	Council	-	May 2022 election

NB Key Dates for the local authority are shown in **Bold**

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Councillors present	2/3rds (rounded)	Councillors present	2/3rds (rounded)
57	38	20	13 14
56	38	19	13
55	37	18	12
54	36	17	11 12
53	36	16	11
52	35	15 (quorum)	10
51	34		
50	34		
49	33		
48	32		
47	31 32		
46	31		
45	30		
44	29 30		
43	29		
42	28		
41	27 28		
40	27		
39	26		
38	25 26		
37	25		
36	24		
35	23 24		
34	23		
33	22		
32	21 22		
31	21		
30	20		
29	19 20		
28	19		
27	18		
26	17 18		
25	17		
24	16		
23	15 16		
22	15		
21	14		

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