
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Consultation on Bath & North East Somerset Council's Future Political Management Structure

1. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires Bath & North East Somerset Council to review its executive arrangements and bring in any changes decided upon, from May 2011. 'Executive arrangements' refer to the political management structure under which the Council is run by its elected councillors.
2. Since June 2002, the Council has had what is known as a 'Leader and Cabinet' structure. The Council appoints one of its Councillors as Leader who then appoints up to nine other Councillors to work with the Leader as a Cabinet. The Cabinet takes most of the strategic and key decisions on how local services are provided. Each Cabinet Member has a specific portfolio of services for which they are responsible. Officers advise the Cabinet and implement their decisions.
3. A significant feature of executive working is having one or more overview and scrutiny panels who monitor, scrutinise and review the work of the Cabinet, and assist in shaping policy recommendations.
4. There are also regulatory committees, such as licensing and development control (planning). Some major decisions, such as approving the Council budget and Council tax, are taken by the full Council.
5. The 2007 Act says that, from May 2011, Councils must adopt one of the following two models:
 - Option 1 - a directly elected Mayor and Cabinet
 - Option 2 - an indirectly elected Leader and Cabinet

Option 1 – Directly Elected Mayor

6. A directly elected Mayor is someone elected by the voters in a district-wide election, every four years. Under this option, the directly elected Mayor would appoint a Cabinet made up of councillors, similar to the Leader and Cabinet model.
7. Under this option;
 - The Mayor could be from a political party, or from the wider community

- The Mayor could have wide-reaching individual power, being elected on a personal mandate
- The Cabinet would be appointed by the Mayor, and have individual areas of responsibility allocated to them by the Mayor.

Option 2 – Indirectly Elected Leader and Cabinet

8. The key difference in this model is that it is the Councillors (rather than under Option 1, the public), who elect one of their number as Leader for a 4 year term. The Leader then decides on the membership of the Cabinet in the same way as the Mayor does under Option 1.
9. Under both systems, regulatory committees and overview and scrutiny panels would continue as at present.
10. The Council in May 2010 indicated its preferred option was the indirectly elected Leader and Cabinet model as it is closest to its current structure and would better suit the needs of the community by providing stability and continuity in the current challenging circumstances.
11. However, the Council welcomes your views on which option it should adopt. Written comments should be sent to;

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or e-mailed to Democratic_services@bathnes.gov.uk to be received no later than Friday 29th October 2010. Any comments received will be considered at a Special meeting of the Council on 16th November 2010.