

## More information

This article is intended to give you background information. More information can be found in the following documents:

- a copy of the papers recently considered by councillors –
  - Report to Executive Board
  - main differences between the current Executive arrangements and the new Executive arrangements
  - advantages and disadvantages of the new Executive arrangements
  - Consultation Plan
- a House of Commons briefing note on the subject of Directly Elected Mayors
- a series of three essays discussing the pros and cons of the Directly Elected Mayors published by Localis – an independent think-tank.

Copies of all three documents listed above can be viewed on the Council's website and at the main reception area at the Town Hall, St. Stephen's Road, Bournemouth.



# Council Leadership

## What do you think?

Before making a final decision, the Council is keen to know local residents' views. We would like to start a debate with local people about this issue to find out how important this issue is to them.

Register your views by sending them in writing – using the attached Business Reply envelope – to:

The Democratic Services Manager  
Bournemouth Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Bourne Avenue  
Bournemouth BH2 6DY

or by email to:  
[democratic.services@bournemouth.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bournemouth.gov.uk)

The closing date for comments is  
31st August 2010.

The Government  
wants to make  
council leadership  
stronger . . .



A new law, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, gives two options for how the Council can be run in Bournemouth. These two options are set out here. The Council must choose one of them to take effect after the next local elections in May 2011.

It is important to note that neither option gives the Council more powers or more money to spend on local services. Also, the boundaries of the town will stay the same.

## How it works now . . .

Now the Full Council – all 54 councillors meeting together – elects the Leader of the Council in the town to serve for a year. The Leader then appoints up to nine other councillors to form a Cabinet. Cabinet Members are responsible for making policy and taking decisions. The rest of the councillors are responsible for scrutinising – checking and challenging – the decisions of the Cabinet. At Full Council councillors make decisions on the Council's budget and its major policies. The Mayor chairs the Full Council meetings and has a ceremonial role.



## The new proposals are . . .

### Option A: Leader and Cabinet

The Full Council would elect the Leader to serve for four years. The Leader can then appoint between two and nine councillors to form a Cabinet. The Leader can dismiss this Cabinet at any time. The Leader will have to appoint a Deputy Leader to serve for four years. Other councillors would continue to scrutinise the decisions made by the Cabinet.

#### Choosing Option A would mean:

- remaining with a system that is fairly similar to the current one
- the 54 councillors will elect the Leader every four years
- the Leader can be removed by the Council at any time
- the current ceremonial Mayor will continue to carry out ceremonial duties
- no extra costs.

### Option B: Directly Elected Mayor and Cabinet

The Mayor would be elected by voters in the town to serve for four years. The Mayor is not a councillor. Thus, s/he will work full-time as a Mayor. The Mayor can appoint between two and nine councillors to form a Cabinet. The Mayor can dismiss this Cabinet at any time. The Mayor will have to appoint a deputy Mayor to serve for four years. Other councillors would continue to scrutinise the decisions made by the Cabinet.

#### Choosing Option B would mean:

- a Mayor will be elected by the people of Bournemouth every four years
- the Mayor can make most decisions on his/her own or with the Cabinet
- once elected the Mayor cannot be removed from office by the Council and would serve for a full four year term
- the civic duties and other roles currently performed by the ceremonial Mayor would not be carried out by the Directly Elected Mayor. To avoid confusion it may be necessary to re-name the role of ceremonial Mayor to 'Chair of the Council' or 'Speaker'
- extra cost for an election for the Mayor – about £200,000.

## The Council's preferred option

Option A is quite similar to the system we have in place now. The main difference is that the Leader will be elected for a four-year term and decide what powers to give to the Cabinet Members.

The Council's preference at this stage is that Bournemouth should continue to have a Leader and supports option A as set out above. The Council has operated a Leader and Cabinet model since 2001 and believes that this model has operated well in Bournemouth and will continue to provide stability in the way the town is run. The Council feels that a

Leader appointed by the Council will provide more democratic accountability compared to the Elected Mayor option. Also, the Council is concerned about the extra cost of an election for the Mayor option. In the light of the predicted squeeze on future public sector spending the Council feels that local residents would benefit more from this money being put into local services.

Nationally, only 3% of councils have opted for a directly elected Mayor.