

## **Electoral Arrangements - Briefing Paper for Governance and Audit Committee**

At the 22 March 2016 Full Council meeting, the following motion was referred to the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee for consideration -

### **"Local Elections Once Every Four Years**

Proposed by Councillor Colin Galloway

Seconded by Councillor Julie Swan

With continuing reductions in central government grants and the desperate need to find ways to make our city budget fit the needs of all our people in Portsmouth, this Council ask the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee to consider the possibility of introducing a four year cycle of local elections so that the costs of holding an election every year can be minimised by holding local elections once every four years".

To assist the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee in its deliberations and report back to Full Council, the following information is presented.

### **The process for moving to whole council elections if that was the Council's wish**

1. Full Council resolves to undertake public consultation as the Council thinks appropriate on any proposed change
2. Have regard to the outcome of the consultation before making its decision
3. Convene a Specially convened meeting of the Council
4. Full Council must pass a resolution by a two-thirds majority of those voting at that Special meeting
5. The resolution must specify the commencement year
6. The resolution is the means by which the term of office is reduced for any members whose term would not be completed
7. Any election(s) scheduled to take place before the start date indicated in the Council's resolution would continue as normal
8. An explanatory document on the decision must be published after the resolution is made

9. The Council must notify the Boundary Commission of the scheme adopted and the commencement year
10. If the Council resolves to change to whole council elections, the decision cannot be reversed until five years from the date of the resolution

The relevant legislation is contained in sections 32-36 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

### Future election timetable (current schedule)

	Current scheduled elections
2017	None scheduled
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> </ul>
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> <li>• *European Parliamentary Elections</li> </ul>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> <li>• Parliamentary General Election</li> <li>• Police &amp; Crime Commissioner Elections</li> </ul>
2021	None scheduled
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> </ul>
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> </ul>
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> <li>• European Parliamentary Elections</li> <li>• Police &amp; Crime Commissioner Elections</li> </ul>
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliamentary General Election</li> </ul>
2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Council Elections</li> </ul>

### Financial considerations

- If whole elections were to be introduced, the extent of any potential savings would depend on when such Council elections commenced and whether they were to be combined with another poll.
- \*At this stage no notification concerning future arrangements for the scheduled European Parliamentary elections in 2019, has been received
- There is the potential for a further referendum and/ or other elections.
- Any potential savings would be spread across a number of financial years and not evenly distributed over the four year cycle.
- On the basis of the indicative election costs shown and caveats mentioned above, moving to four yearly elections would save circa £ 172,000 over the four year period (equivalent to an average of approximately £43,000 a year.)

### **Indicative election costs**

Average current cost of a single City Council Election	£153,900
Estimated cost of proposed Whole City Council Election	£179,600
Average cost of City Council Election when combined with Parliamentary Election	£102,200
Estimated cost of City Council Election when combined with Police and Crime Commissioner Election	£95,000

### **Next Stage**

The Committee is asked to consider what it wishes to report back to Full Council. Does Full Council wish to request the Committee to explore this issue further at this stage or possibly review at a later date when the national and regional picture is clearer