

CONSULTATION ON NEW DECISION MAKING ARRANGEMENTS



EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS

At the moment the Council has a system where Committees of Councillors, the Council and officers make the majority of decisions. The Council is now seeking the views of residents of the District, Parish Councils and other key stakeholders on whether it should move to one of two new models - a Leader and Cabinet, or directly elected Mayor and Cabinet – or to retain the current system.

The consultation on this will run from 10 May until 2 August 2010 and, if following this consultation the Council decides to move to a different system, you will get a chance to review the proposal before it is approved. Any new system will not start until after the May 2011 District Council elections.

If the system were to change, Full Council meetings would continue but instead of the current Policy Committees, some decisions would be taken by the Leader and Cabinet (or Cabinet Member) or a directly elected Mayor and Cabinet/ Cabinet Member (“Executive arrangements”), with each Member having responsibility for specific areas of the Council’s services. Most Councils across the country now have these arrangements and such a move would bring the Council in line with its Local Authority partners within the County and others nationally.

The Council would still retain some regulatory Committees like Planning, Licensing and Standards, and there would be an increased role for Overview and Scrutiny.

The Government believes that the Leader/Cabinet, and Mayor/Cabinet systems are both more efficient and more responsive to the electorate. They have made it compulsory for Councils larger than East Cambridgeshire to have one of these systems and many of the smaller Councils have also now adopted these Executive Arrangements. Most legislation from Government is written with Executive Arrangements in mind and it is anticipated that in future the Committee based system will be abolished for all but Parish Councils.

This consultation leaflet is available at the Council offices in Ely, and the Libraries at Ely, Littleport, Soham, Burwell and Library access

points at Bottisham, Haddenham and Little Downham. The Council is seeking the views of residents of the District, and partner organisations on whether to change to Executive Arrangements or retain the existing Policy Committee based system. You can complete this consultation on line/ print off / or use one of the printed copies that can be obtained from the Council or Library offices. Please forward your responses to the Council, but whatever method you use, responses must be received **by Monday 2 August 2010**.

The Council has 3 Options:

1. to change to a Leader and Cabinet system;
2. to change to a Mayor and Cabinet system;
or
3. to keep a Committee system.

Before the Council can change its decision-making processes, it has an obligation to consult with East Cambridgeshire residents to give them the opportunity to express a preference on the different types of executive arrangements, or the committee based system. Read through the options below and **tick the box of the one you prefer, fill in your name and address at the end, and either file on-line or return a copy to the Council.**



Options are:

Option 1 Leader and Cabinet

This is by far the most popular form of Executive arrangement and nearly all Councils in the country operate this system of political management. In Cambridgeshire all of the other neighbouring authorities operate under this system.

Under this form of Executive:

- A Leader is appointed by the Council at the beginning of / and for the new political term. This Leader will be an elected Councillor. The Leader then has the role of political leadership, propose policies of the Council, propose the budget and take decisions.
- A Cabinet of Members is appointed. There can be between 2 and 9 Members in this Cabinet and they will have specific and accountable roles relating to Council Services. These Cabinet Members (sometimes known as Portfolio/ non- Portfolio holders) implement Council policies and take the decisions they have been authorised to take by Council.
- Some decisions will still be taken by Full Council/ Regulatory Committees or officers.

TICK HERE IF YOU PREFER Option 1 Leader and Cabinet

Option 2 elected Mayor and Cabinet

Some of the larger urban authorities have chosen to operate this form of Executive Arrangement.

Under this form of Executive:

- A directly elected Mayor provides political leadership and will propose policies of the Council, propose the budget and take decisions.
- A Cabinet of Members is appointed by the elected Mayor. There can be between 2 and 9 Members in this Cabinet and they will have specific and accountable roles relating to Council Services. These Cabinet Members (sometimes known as Portfolio/ non- Portfolio holders) implement council policies and take the decisions they have been authorised to take by Council.
- Some decisions will still be taken by Full Council/ Regulatory Committees or officers.

OR TICK HERE IF YOU PREFER Option 2 directly elected Mayor and Cabinet

Option 3 Committee based system

A Council of our size can continue to operate a Committee based (“Fourth Option”) system.

Retaining this system, means:

- That strategic decisions will be taken by Committees of Councillors, the Council or officers.
- The Council currently has 4 Policy Committees, each with 9 elected members and all have Chairman and Vice Chairman.
- These Committees undertake the functions of an Executive.

OR TICK HERE IF YOU PREFER Option 3 retaining the Committee based system

Name

Address & postcode

Additional comments can be sent with this form to:

East Cambridgeshire District Council
“CONSULTATION ON NEW DECISION MAKING ARRANGEMENTS”
c/o Head of Legal & Democratic Services
The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely CB7 4EE
Or email these to: Legal@eastcambs.gov.uk