

Have your say on local elections

Consultation Overview

Southampton City Council will soon be deciding whether to move to a four year elections cycle as opposed to annual elections. These proposals have implications for everyone who lives and/or works in the city. The Council will be making a final decision about which options to adopt in November 2014.

What are the current arrangements?

Southampton City Council has 48 councillors representing 16 wards across the city (three councillors per ward). The Council currently holds elections by thirds. Councillors are elected on a four year term of office and one of the three seats in each ward is then up for re-election in 3 of the 4 years of the cycle. There are no city council elections in the fourth year. The Council then elects a Leader and s/he then chooses a small team of councillors usually from among his or her political group to form a cabinet who make decisions about Council policies and services.

What is the alternative the Council is consulting on?

The Council is consulting on a proposal to change its election cycle to whole Council elections. The election of all 48 councillors would take place in one election and then every fourth year after that.

Benefits of a move to a four-year cycle include:

- Political stability, enabling longer term visioning and planning.
- Less cost to the taxpayer
- Less confusion as electors in Southampton would be voting for all councillors at the same time.
- Ability for electors to completely change the political leadership of the Council and therefore its direction at one time.

Benefits of the current system include:

- With only one-third of seats contested each year it ensures experienced councillors remain regardless of the outcome.
- One councillor is elected for each ward at a time, allowing the electorate to focus on the aptitude of particular candidates.
- It is easier for independent and smaller party candidates to stand and be represented when less seats are contested.
- Changes in the political direction of the Council are more likely to happen over a period of time, rather than there being sudden dramatic shifts, contributing to continuity.

We need to know what you think

No decisions will be made without taking into consideration a range of views and opinions. These arrangements are fundamental to local democracy and it is therefore essential that local people and communities are consulted. Please let us have your views by completing the following questionnaire.

Questionnaire

ELECTIONS (Electoral Cycle)

1. Do you think that Southampton City Council's electoral cycle should involve:

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

(a) Electing one third of city councillors for three years out of four.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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(b) Electing all city councillors at the same time every four years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Please use this space if you would like to explain the reason for your answer.
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2. What is your postcode

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ABOUT YOURSELF

You do not need to complete this section, but answering the following questions will help us to see if there are differences between the views of different residents. All the information you give will be kept completely confidential.

3. What is your age?

Under 18	<input type="checkbox"/>	25 – 34	<input type="checkbox"/>	45 – 54	<input type="checkbox"/>	65 – 74	<input type="checkbox"/>
18 -24	<input type="checkbox"/>	35 – 44	<input type="checkbox"/>	55 – 64	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 75	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you for your time

The results of the consultation will be made available on the Council's website. In addition, if you would like to receive feedback on the decisions made, please give your name, postal or email address in the space below, but you do not need to give us your details for your views to be taken into account.

Name:

Postal or email address: