

New Executive Arrangements
Summary of Consultation responses

The consultation programme ran from 9th September 2009 – 9th October 2009. Residents were consulted through a range of channels designed to gather information which will inform the next stage of the process. During the process a commitment was made to all consultees that we would feedback the outcome of the consultation and provide answers to any questions that had been raised during the consultation process. This feedback process has been built into Phase 3 of the communications campaign as outlined in Appendix 6.

A summary of the responses is provided below:

1. Survey responses

Surveys were carried out through the Viewpoint panel and via displays at Municipal Buildings, the Customer Service centre at Thornaby, and the libraries in Ingleby Barwick, Yarm and Billingham.

In total 425 people completed the survey (389 through the Viewpoint panel and 36 through the ballot boxes at the displays in public buildings.) This response rate, whilst slightly lower than usual Viewpoint levels, is statistically valid for the Borough.

- 221 (52%) of respondents said they preferred the 'Council Leader and Cabinet' model.
- 204 (48%) of respondents said they preferred the 'Directly Elected Mayor and Cabinet' model.

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Analysis of the results by age, gender, ethnicity and ward is presented below: When reading this table, please consider the following note:

Only statistically significant (i.e. representative of the Borough's population) results should be considered reliable. Statistically significant, or representative, results are considered to be those which have been provided by ten or more people. Where results to each individual question have been given by fewer than ten people they are considered to be unlikely to be representative of the Borough's population. The basis of this assumption is that responses given by fewer than ten people may simply have arisen by chance.

Considering only the statistically significant results, where there is a difference of 5% more or less than the overall response, or between groups (e.g. between males and females), the difference can be considered to be statistically significant and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

Table of Results

Which model do you think is the right one for Stockton?		Council Leader and Cabinet (Overall Response = 52%)		Directly Elected Mayor and Cabinet (Overall Response = 48%)	
Ward	billingham central	8	61.5%	5	38.5%
	billingham east	6	60.0%	4	40.0%
	billingham north	14	53.8%	12	46.2%
	billingham south	3	60.0%	2	40.0%
	billingham west	10	50.0%	10	50.0%
	bishopsgarth & elmtree	6	40.0%	9	60.0%
	Eaglescliffe	19	61.3%	12	38.7%
	Fairfield	15	71.4%	6	28.6%
	Grangefield	7	43.8%	9	56.3%
	Hardwick	3	33.3%	6	66.7%
	Hartburn	19	61.3%	12	38.7%
	ingleby barwick east	7	36.8%	12	63.2%
	ingleby barwick west	4	40.0%	6	60.0%
	mandale & victoria	8	66.7%	4	33.3%
	Newtown	7	70.0%	3	30.0%
	northern parishes	6	50.0%	6	50.0%
	norton north	10	50.0%	10	50.0%
	norton south	4	57.1%	3	42.9%
	norton west	13	48.1%	14	51.9%
	parkfield & oxbridge	8	61.5%	5	38.5%
	Roseworth	6	42.9%	8	57.1%
	stainsby hill	3	42.9%	4	57.1%
	stockton town centre	6	46.2%	7	53.8%
	Village	6	46.2%	7	53.8%
	western parishes	9	47.4%	10	52.6%
	Yarm	14	43.8%	18	56.3%
	Missing	0		0	
TOTAL	221		204		
Gender	Male	96	44.0%	122	56.0%
	Female	125	60.4%	82	39.6%
	Missing	0		0	
	TOTAL	221		204	
Age	18-24	7	70.0%	3	30.0%
	25-34	10	45.5%	12	54.5%
	35-44	32	49.2%	33	50.8%
	45-54	49	56.3%	38	43.7%
	55-64	59	49.2%	61	50.8%
	65-74	51	54.8%	42	45.2%
	75-84	11	44.0%	14	56.0%
	85+	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
	Missing	0		0	
TOTAL	221		204		

Table of Results (continued)

Which model do you think is the right one for Stockton?		Council Leader and Cabinet (Overall Response = 52%)		Directly Elected Mayor and Cabinet (Overall Response = 48%)	
Disability	no disability	162	50.8%	157	49.2%
	with a disability	59	55.7%	47	44.3%
	Missing	0		0	
	TOTAL	221		204	
Ethnicity	White	215	52.1%	198	47.9%
	BME	6	50.0%	6	50.0%
	Missing	0		0	0.0%
	TOTAL	221		204	

2. BME Network

Meeting of the BME Network – 30th September 2009

This document provides a summary of the consultation with the BME Network over the New Executive arrangements. The issue was considered at the Network's meeting on the 30th September 2009 which was well attended.

- The BME network requested examples of the new leader model.
- Questions were raised about how much change there would be in the distribution of power, and whether the structure of the council would remain similar with just how the leader was elected changing.
- Questions were also raised about how the changes would affect the decision making process within the council and who would have the final say.
- The BME Network asked which leadership model was the most popular within the Council.
- Concerns were raised over the low representation of BME communities within civic leadership nationally, questioning for example, 'Are there many black female mayors?' The Network was keen to know which model would be better to ensure greater representation.
- There was desire for an 'opt out' mechanism, for example if adopted elected mayor arrangement became difficult the ability to return to another arrangement.
- There was concern that people's views would not be considered.
- It was asked whether an elected mayor would be able to combine the leadership role and management of the council with the responsibilities of Civic Mayor.
- The group questioned whether Stockton residents could be led by neighbouring authority's models, for example, Middlesbrough's elected mayor.
- Some felt that a *proactive* mayor/leader was the most important factor and that it did not matter who they were or what system was in operation as long as they were serving the Borough.
- The argument was raised that the community cannot choose who the leader is whereas an elected mayor is who they want.
- Over the issue of period of tenancy, it was raised that a period of four years would give the leader/mayor time to implement their programme and then they could be judged more effectively at the end of this time. The leader/mayor would have the time to sustain what they did in the first year.
- With regards to the election model and the majority that would have to be achieved by the mayor it was asked whether this would be 50 percent and whether this has

been confirmed. The group were warned that 30 percent could win the election and the idea was raised within the group that it should be 50 percent. It was also felt that if the mayor was popular in the community (more than 50 percent) they would be more likely to be a good mayor.

The concluding point of the meeting was that at this stage the elected mayor model was slightly more popular but that the group will meet again when more information is available to discuss further.

Meeting chaired by and record prepared by Simon Lee (Policy and Development Manager)

3. The Disability Advisory Group

Disability Advisory Group Consultation Meeting

New “strong Council Leader” and Cabinet Model

The group agreed that they want a leader to listen to their opinions and problems, however that this individual must be someone who knows what they are doing. The group expressed that we live in a democracy, emphasising that whoever is elected cannot just say “Right we are going to do this”; it is going to go to a committee.

The group thought that it is imperative that the leader is elected by the Council, so that they know who they are putting in power. They felt they need someone who knows the strengths and weaknesses of the councillors, who is familiar with the situation and knows how the system works. They expressed a deeper trust in Councillors to elect a suitable leader than the public. Adding that they would rather have a leader with Council experience and who has the qualities needed.

However they were concerned about the amount of a power one person would have and the potential for their decisions to be influenced/swayed.

Directly Elected Mayor and Cabinet Model

There was a general consensus that the Mayor will not have to know anything about politics or what people want to be elected as Mayor. The group are worried that a Mayor could be anyone in the community, and could potentially be someone who may only be interested in personal gain or with a hidden agenda. On this basis they were extremely concerned that a Mayor could not be removed.

The group felt that it is a big step to give one person all the power. They felt that an Elected Mayor may lead to a situation like America (New York). There was a concern that the Mayor would need a team of people behind them for canvassing and publicity; they felt that the Mayor may be under pressure from the people who elected them.

However they did feel that a visible Mayor could be a good thing and would encourage people to vote. There was a view that a new mayor may bring new ideas, “new blood” to the borough. They also felt that you do need to have a bit of trust in some people. It was acknowledged that the Mayors in Middlesbrough and Hartlepool have been re-elected therefore they must be doing something right.

It was suggested that we need to have a ‘before and after’ view from people within a council where they have an Elected Mayor (i.e. Hartlepool) to establish what has changed.

Considerations

Money

The recurring issue for the group was money. They felt that the mayoral model would be asking the tax payer to pay more money out. They were concerned that there would be a lot of money spent on advertising, canvassing and salaries which seems to disregard the amount of cuts being made.

The group stated that they were not happy with two more people (Mayor and deputy) getting paid, however in contrast it was felt that perhaps if the Mayor and deputy were being paid they may feel they need to make a good job of it.

Time

They felt that the four year term was a good thing; they said that there is little time to “achieve” anything in a year and they should be given a chance to iron out problems. They also agreed that in a four year term the Mayor/Leader would have time to look at the whole borough.

Future

They shared the opinion that there is a huge challenge facing Stockton, they said that when you see charity shops starting to close down in the High Street it is a worrying sign.

They expressed concerns about the fight that Stockton has to attract businesses and shops. They felt that a lack of fast links to London is a problem. They did not feel there was much incentive for businesses to come to Stockton.

Civic Mayor

The overall agreement was that a Mayor is a good thing for publicising the council. They explained that they see a figure head as important, people can gain a lot through visiting the Mayor. A visit from the Mayor has a big impact on school children, the Mayor handing out awards for groups such as the Scouts is very important to children’s perception of and pride for Stockton. There were mixed views as to whether this vital role would disappear as an elected Mayor would not have the time to dedicate to this.

Questions

The DAG has a number question regarding the process and new arrangements. Specifically it sought further clarification on:

- Will there be a vote on the new arrangements?
- Will this be put to the people?
- Who runs things if the Mayor is ill?
- Will the deputy have to be paid?
- Does this have to be done? Why?
- How has this come around?

Meeting chaired by and record prepared by Simon Lee (Policy and Development Manager)

4. Facebook and Twitter

Conversations were started on Twitter and Facebook, however the threads were not picked up and only one tweet was made which is shown below. A number of attempts were made to start a conversation and several entries were posted on the sites by the communications team to encourage debate.

The one comment received is transcribed below:

“I prefer all who elected to vote and so on, option 1 for me” Sep 21st 2009

(note: option 1 in this case refers to the directly elected mayor and cabinet model)

5. The LSP

Minute/Decision Summary –unconfirmed ⁽¹⁾
Meeting- Stockton Renaissance
Date – Tuesday 22nd September 2009
Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre, Moat Street, Stockton-on-Tees

ITEM/ISSUE	DOI	COMMENTS/ DECISION	ACTION	Does it need Council approval/ Endorsement?	Are any other boards affected ?	CONTACT
<p>5. NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS</p> <p>Neil Schneider took the chair for this item due to a possible conflict of interest for Cllr Lupton.</p> <p>Board members were presented with the requirements regarding new executive arrangements contained within the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which requires Councils to adopt one of two new governance models. Councils such as Stockton Borough Council presently operate an “old style Leader and Cabinet executive” as provided for in the Local Government Act 2000, and as such must make a change in governance arrangements in accordance with the 2007 Act’s requirements. The 2007 Act now allows for only two specific models:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Directly Elected Mayor and cabinet; or 2. Executive Leader and cabinet 		Noted	No	No		Neil Schneider, Chief Executive, Stockton Borough Council

<p>It was noted that an authority must take reasonable steps to consult Local Government electors and other interested parties before it draws up and finalises its proposals for change. There is currently no prescription or guidance about the form any consultation should take, nor in Stockton's case how long the consultation should take.</p> <p>The consultation programme Stockton is currently undertaking consults on both specific models of executive arrangements and asks which model people and interest parties would prefer to see put in place. The outcome of the consultation will be evaluated and, subject to that outcome, a preferred model will be agreed and proposals for change, based on that model, will be drawn up which will then be subject to approval in a referendum at which all local government electors will be entitled to vote, early in 2010.</p> <p>No queries were raised by board members.</p>		Noted	No	No
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- (1) Minutes still unconfirmed as the subsequent meeting of the LSP has not yet been held.
- (2) Renaissance board members had been previously notified of the consultation question and had been asked to seek the views of their sub-groups.