

FULL COUNCIL MOTION – 17th December 2019

“The Need to Scrap Bristol’s Directly-Elected Mayor”

The Council believes that the city’s current governance arrangements of a directly-elected Mayor needs to be brought to an end at the earliest possible opportunity and an alternative form of Administration either Leader & Cabinet or more traditional Committee system reinstated.

Sadly, experience of rule by such Mayors over the last 7 years has failed to deliver many of the falsely promised benefits of a switch to this system – namely significant financial savings, reinvigorating local democracy, more money for BRISTOL, an invitation to Bristol and other Mayors to Downing Street to influence policy. more collaborative working and greater scrutiny/accountability of a single figurehead who was above political infighting.

In addition, developments since that time (for example moving from elections-by-thirds to citywide ward elections in 2016) have largely addressed perceived weaknesses in the former political structure ~~which had led to a series of weak and unstable Administrations,~~ and was a major factor in the narrow public vote to adopt an Elected Mayor in May 2012.

Furthermore, the creation of a Regional ‘Metro’ Mayor and West of England Combined Authority as part of the Government’s devolution agenda has rendered the increasingly expensive post of a City Mayor (and costly attendant office) largely redundant.

When first brought forward by Conservative ministers there was no right for Bristolians to reverse the move to the Mayor System but thanks to an amendment introduced to parliament by Liberal Democrat’s Under Legislation, the earliest Bristolians can vote again on this issue – through a local referendum. This—will be in 2022 and, failing a formal resolution to hold such a poll, it will require a petition for this to take place raised by 5% of registered electors in the city. In the meantime Bristolians will in 2020 have the opportunity to vote for a candidate, who will in advance of the formal abolition, devolve power back to a democratic system.

Council supports the scrapping of this post and any move to initiate a referendum for its removal and calls on the present Mayor to reconsider his own commitment to what has proven in practice to be a profoundly divisive and autocratic Office.”

Motion to be moved by: **Councillor Mark Weston**

Date of submission: **4th December**