

# Extraordinary Full Council

24 May 2022



**Report of:** Director – Legal and Democratic Services

**Title:** Bristol City Council Governance Referendum

**Ward:** Citywide

**Member Presenting Report:** N/A

## Recommendation

That Full Council

1. notes the outcome of the referendum on how Bristol City Council is run;
2. resolves to cease to operate a Directly Elected Mayor model of governance and start to operate a Committee model of governance with effect from 5 May 2024;
3. establishes a cross-party working group to develop the Committee model of governance and which will report back to Full Council before the end of 2022.

## Summary

This report provides Full Council with details of the outcome of the referendum on how Bristol City Council is run and the actions that need to be taken as a consequence of the referendum result.



## **Policy**

1. Following a resolution of Full Council in December 2021 to hold a governance referendum, a referendum was held on 5 May 2022. The Council has a legal duty to give effect to the outcome of the referendum and this report sets out the actions that the Council needs to take as a consequence of the referendum.

## **Consultation**

2. **Internal**  
Party Group Leaders have been consulted as part of the preparation of this report.
3. **External**  
Not applicable.

## **Outcome of governance referendum held on 5 May 2022**

4. On 5 May 2022 a governance referendum was held to determine whether Bristol City Council should be run by a Mayor who is elected by voters or by one or more committees made up of elected councillors.

5. The outcome of the referendum was as follows:

The number of votes cast in favour of A MAYOR WHO IS ELECTED BY VOTERS. THIS IS HOW THE COUNCIL IS RUN NOW: 38,439

The number of votes cast in favour of ONE OR MORE COMMITTEES MADE UP OF ELECTED COUNCILLORS. THIS WOULD BE A CHANGE FROM HOW THE COUNCIL IS RUN NOW: 56,113

6. The outcome of the governance referendum will lead to a change in the way that the Council is run from the current Directly Elected Mayor model of governance to a Committee model of governance.

## **Resolution to give effect to the outcome of the referendum**

7. Under the Local Government Act 2000, the Council must pass a resolution to give effect to the outcome of the referendum at an extraordinary meeting of the Council within 28 days of the result of the referendum.
8. The Council must resolve to move from the currently Directly Elected Mayor model of governance to a Committee model of governance and approve the date from which that change will come into effect. The change will not come into effect until the third day after the date of local elections in 2024.
9. Therefore, the resolution that the Council needs to pass is to cease to operate the Directly Elected Mayor model of governance and start to operate a Committee model of governance with effect from 5 May 2024.

10. It should be noted that the Council will continue to operate a Directly Elected Mayor model of governance until 5 May 2024.

### **Establishment of a cross-party working group**

11. In order to develop the detail of the Committee model of governance it is recommended that a cross-party working group is established. It is recommended that the membership of the working group is as follows:

Labour Group – 4 seats

Green Group – 4 seats

Conservative Group – 2 seats

Liberal Democrat Group – 1 seat

Knowle Community Party Group – 1 seat

12. The working group will be responsible for developing the design principles for the structure of the Committee model. This will include the consideration of the roles and responsibilities under the new model: the functions of Full Council, the Committee structure, the terms of reference of the Committees, the Officer Scheme of Delegation. It will also need to consider democratic engagement and public participation arrangements under the Committee model.
13. As part of its work, it is anticipated that the working group will consider how other Councils have made a transition to the Committee model and what lessons can be learnt from their experience and what examples of best practice can be identified. The working group may also seek advice and support from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and/or the Local Government Association. The working group will also need to consider how to keep all councillors apprised of its work, for example through all-member briefings. The working group may want to consider whether to use scrutiny or audit committees to support its work. Furthermore, OSMB and/or Audit committee may want to consider where they are able to support the work of the working group.
14. Whilst the working group will be Member-led, it will be supported by the Director – Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Democratic Engagement, as well as other officers within the Council as appropriate. It is recommended that the working group meets on a monthly basis.
15. The working group will report back to Full Council with details of the design principles for the Committee model by the end of the 2022.

### **Legal and Resource Implications**

#### **Legal**

As set out in the report.

#### **Financial**

##### **(a) Revenue**

Not applicable

**(b) Capital**

Not applicable

**Land**

Not applicable

**Personnel**

Not applicable

**Appendices:**

None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**Background Papers:**

None