

ELECTIONS WORKING GROUP

9 February 2023

Present: -

Councillor Chapman, Councillor Fox, Councillor Goacher, Councillor Laws, Councillor Rippingale, Councillor Scott-Boutell

Also present: -

Andrew Weavers, Strategic Governance Manager, Sarah Cheek, Elections Manager

Electoral Cycle

The Working Group was constituted following a motion agreed by Full Council at its meeting on 1 December 2022 to consider alternative electoral arrangements following a recommendation made by the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge report.

The Working Group considered a report from the Strategic Governance Manager which provided the background information regarding the options available to the Council (elections by thirds or whole council elections). The report provided details of previous considerations by the Council of considering changing its electoral cycle, the advantages and disadvantages and financial implications of both.

The Working Group discussed the merits of both options and considered the importance of undertaking proper consultation prior to making any decision. The Working Group also discussed the pending electoral review of Colchester by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Working Group noted the timetable and that the Commission would shortly be undertaking a public consultation on its proposals and that if the Council decided to undertake a consultation on changing its electoral cycle now this would potentially cause confusion to the public. The Working Group also noted that Voter ID was being implemented for the May elections and considered that, on balance, now is not the appropriate time to commence the process for moving to whole council elections and that consideration of this should be deferred until the results of the electoral review have been implemented in 2026.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that consideration of changing the Council's electoral cycle be deferred until the forthcoming electoral review of Colchester has been completed and implemented in 2026.