

APPENDIX 1

Change of Executive Arrangements Consultation

Consultation Period: 15 July to 26 August 2009

Respondent

Comment

- 1 1. The Leader and Executive model is more appropriate to cities, where local participation is low and/or large business. 2. I favour a directly elected mayor and a cabinet of councillors. interests predominate. Appointing executives would reduce the ability of councillors to represent and influence. 3. Rather than the clunky and slightly pompous term 'cabinet member' the traditional and dignified term of 'Alderman' should be resuscitated.
- 2 I would favour the Mayor & Cabinet option which provides residents to directly elect the Mayor for a 4 year period. I prefer that there is a standing committee of an agreed prescribed number/forum on the Cabinet, say 5, to always have a minimum of 6 members. I believe 10 is too many.
- 3 The documents outline the fact that the Council would prefer to Change from its current Leader and Executive to a new style Leader and Executive model, rather than move to a Mayor and Cabinet model of governance.

Yet the documents give no explanation as to why they would prefer not to have an elected Mayor. If, as the documents say there is little difference between a Mayor model and a new Leader model apart from the direct elections then what is the Council's reason for not wanting to open up the person in charge to direct democracy?

- 4 Like USA - Mayor should be renamed as Governor of (in this case Brent) and should be chosen by a popular vote.

He should invite winner to elect governments and let the winning party/parties should elect Executive of a particular department whose job should be to see that council work is done according to the law and wishes of the council chamber.

The post of Chief Executive should be absolved as his function is totally wastage of money. All permanent head of department should be answerable to their political head and political head should be a full time paid "Executive" with his own office and staff answerable to council chamber.

General public should also be invited to council chamber so that it can witness how their selected representative, represent them and how they behave and how much they know about Brent and its problems.

Every two years public should be asked to vote through Internet or electronically to deselect and carry on with original selection, of their representative presently call councillor.

- 5 The proposed change looks totally sensible and more secure. I only wonder about the ceremonial and ambassadorial role normally provided by a Mayor – and whether this would be performed by the Leader. The Mayor, chain of office and all, can be welcomed by schools, elderly people's groups etc and, in times of strain or emergency, the appearance of the Mayor on behalf of the Council can be reassuring. e.g. the NW10 tornado.

- 6 The model preferred by the Council, i.e. Leader elected by the Council rather than directly elected Mayor, is better because there is a risk that a directly elected mayor and the council might not have, or might lose, confidence in each other without there being any way of resolving the resulting impasse. Moreover, a person might be elected mayor without having served any kind of apprenticeship relevant to the important executive responsibilities the mayor would have.

The advantages of a Leader outweigh the possibility that the direct election of a mayor might increase the voters' interest. The direct election of the Mayor of London has led to higher voting levels, but this has been largely because the candidates have been well known personalities. In small districts there is a possibility that direct elections will attract candidates well known in their own locality. A London borough like Brent seems to fall between these two, too small and too little known to attract candidates with a national reputation, too large for there to be local candidates known to a significant proportion of the electorate.

PS It is much to be regretted that in this consultation the Council has chosen to follow the Government's dubious practice of putting important proposals out for consultation for a very short period during the summer holidays. This practice suggests that the authors of the consultation are going through the motions of consultation without taking every possible step to make it effective.

- 7 Hello
I Have read the summary of the consultation and agree with the view that Brent should adopt the proposed new style leader and executive model.
With issues surrounding directly elected mayors in other areas nationally I think there is the risk that a 'personality' or 'issue-driven' mayor might hinder the work of the council.
- 8 I'm in favour of the mayor and cabinet structure. This allows us to choose who we want to lead us instead of the council deciding. Seems more democratic and there are a lot of similarities between the 2 systems
- 9 My opinion is strongly for the council to select a leader, preferably on the basis of experience and ability, rather than because they happen to have manoeuvred their way into being a party leader.
- I am very strongly opposed to mayors elected by the populace, because experience, e.g. with London Mayors shows that they are people whose primary concern is their own prestige and popularity. They therefore appeal to the less informed or thoughtful section of the populace - and indeed are self selected on that basis. Whilst they do have to address matters of concern, there is a temptation to select their personal priorities, select people less likely to challenge them effectively as advisors, and thus not have motivation to think what would be best for the Borough, rather than their own glory.
- A major advantage is that a Leader could be removed by a vote of no confidence, which one hopes would be very rare, and not something to be considered lightly for political advantage.