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Monitoring Officer

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Your ref
Our ref AW

Date 24 February 2010

Dear Mr Evans

Consultation on proposal by Colchester Borough Council to move to whole Council elections

The Government has now given Councils the opportunity to look again at their electoral arrangements. The Borough Council is now consulting its electorate and in particular Town and Parish Councils for views on whether we should keep the current arrangements or move to "all out" elections once every four years.

A public consultation will run from 1 March 2010 to 1 May 2010 and the attached information sheet gives more details.

My purpose in writing is to confirm that if Colchester Borough Council did decide to move to whole Council elections this would take effect from May 2011. As a consequence of this, the electoral cycles of all Town and Parish Councils situated in the Borough would be brought into line with that of Borough Council and Town and Parishes would have elections in May 2011.

The next scheduled elections for Boxted Parish Council are May 2011.

There will be a charge if you have a **contested** election for your parish. This covers the *additional* costs the Borough Council incurs in relation to the parish election over and above the cost of the borough ward elections on the same day.

In the event of your election being **uncontested**, a small charge will be incurred. This covers the fee paid to the returning officer for administration of the election up to the point of declaring the candidates elected without a ballot.

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I should be grateful if you could bring this to the attention of your Town or Parish Council and let me have any views by 1 May 2010. Once the public consultation period has closed a report will be submitted to Cabinet in June with the Full Council making the final decision the matter in July.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Weavers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrew Weavers
Monitoring Officer



Election Proposals 2010 and Beyond

We are looking at different arrangements for future Colchester Borough Council elections. We would like to know what you think.

Elections “by thirds” or “all out elections”?

When local government in England was reorganised in 1974, the new Councils were given the choice to hold elections by thirds with an election taking place every year; or to have an arrangement where the whole Council was elected every four years.

All Councillors are elected to serve a four year term.

In 1974, Colchester Borough Council chose to hold its elections by thirds, meaning that a third of the Council's 60 Councillors come up for election each year. The fourth year is when County Council elections take place, as Essex County Council chose to have “all out” elections every four years.

Possible Changes to current arrangements.

The Government has now given Councils the opportunity to look again at their electoral arrangements. And so Colchester Borough Council is now consulting the Council's electorate and organisations for views on whether we should keep the current arrangements or move to “all out” elections once every four years.

Will a change affect Town and Parish Councils?

Currently the 27 Town and Parish Councils in the Borough of Colchester are elected on different electoral cycles. If Colchester Borough Council moved to “all out” elections then all Town and Parish Councils would also move to this and hold elections every four years as well.

Possible future arrangements:

There are a number of points to consider about a potential change in arrangements; we have set some of these points out below.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, or weighed in terms of significance, but it is hoped that it may be useful in helping those who wish to respond to this consultation come to a view.

'All out' elections

- Fewer opportunities for the electorate to 'voice' concerns via the ballot box
- Better opportunities for long term planning
- Likely cost reduction or savings in the region of £80,000 by holding elections once every four years

Elections by thirds

- Elections three years in every four can divert effort into more frequent electioneering
- Administration costs are higher
- Opportunity for voters to make their voice heard more often.

When would any possible changes come into effect?

If there were a decision to change the electoral arrangements, the Council would need to pass a resolution confirming this change by 31 December 2010 with new arrangements coming into force in May 2011.

Would any changes affect Parliamentary, European or County elections?

General elections for the UK Parliament are held at least every five years although not all Parliaments run for the whole five year period. European Parliamentary elections are on a five-year cycle. County Council elections are on a four-year cycle. These would not be affected by local electoral arrangements.

Make your views known – Frequency of Elections

We would like to know how you feel about any possible changes to election frequency for Colchester Borough Council.

How frequently would you prefer to see Borough Council Elections?

Please tick one box

The whole Council every four years - all out elections

Three years in every four - Elections by thirds

Other – please specify _____

Do you have any further comments to make?

Please detail below

Please make send your comments by 1 May, 2010.

You can also provide views by e-mailing electionsfeedback@colchester.gov.uk or by filling in a short questionnaire on the Council's website: www.colchester.gov.uk, a link is visible from the homepage from the 'In focus' section.

Alternatively you can write to us, addressing any correspondence to: Elections Feedback, Post Point 28, Rowan House, 33 Sheepen Road, Colchester CO3 3WG.