

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY MONITORING OFFICER

TO:	COUNCIL		
DATE:	26 FEBRUARY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	FUTURE GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to Minute 83 of the Council meeting held on 27 March 2012, this report sets out the options for the Council to consider changed governance and electoral arrangements under the provisions of Chapter 5 of the Localism Act 2011 (the 2011 Act), and considers their advantages and disadvantages.
- 1.2 Chapter 5 of the Localism Act 2011 is made up of Sections 21 to 24. Sections 21-24 of the 2011 Act, and Schedule 2, make it easier for local authorities to make changes to their governance arrangements. Previously (under the Local Government Acts of 2000 and 2007), local authorities of over 85,000 population had to adopt one of two forms executive governance, ie an elected Mayor, or the Leader and Cabinet. The 2011 Act allows local authorities to choose to operate either executive arrangements (as before) or a committee system.
- 1.3 Section 24 of the Localism Act 2011 amends the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) to make it easier for District Councils to change their electoral schemes to move to all-out elections held every four years.
- 1.4 In both cases, the 2011 Act now allows these decisions to be taken by resolution of full Council. No referendum is required to make either change.
- 1.5 A change of governance can only take effect from the Annual Meeting of the authority in any particular year - ie in May, from the start of the Municipal Year. In addition, once adopted, the authority cannot change its form of governance for five years. This means that if an authority makes the move from an executive arrangement to a committee system, it cannot move back to an executive arrangement for the next five years. However, it can make changes to its committee system within the five year period (and indeed within a Municipal Year).

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The Leader of the Council will move a motion.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The Council resolution, at Minute 83 of its meeting on 27 March 2012, was as follows:

“This Council:

- (1) Notes that, since 1983, there has been consistent, three-party agreement in Reading on the democratic value of elections by thirds and therefore recognises that any alternative arrangements would need to be fully researched prior to public consultations.
- (2) Further notes that the Localism Act provides for locally preferred options for the administration of the Council, including a Committee system, an elected mayor and the current Executive/Scrutiny separation.
- (3) Requests a report to Council outlining the advantages and disadvantages of all options in 1 and 2 above for consideration by the Council during the coming municipal year.”

3.2 Governance

3.2.1 Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2000 (the 2000 Act) required all principal local authorities over 85,000 population to adopt “executive arrangements” in one of three forms:

- Mayor and Cabinet Executive
- Leader and Cabinet Executive
- Mayor and Council Manager.

3.2.2 Within the Leader and Cabinet executive model there was a degree of local choice as to the relative strengths of Council and of the Leader, ranging from a “Weak Leader” pattern in which Council appointed both the Leader and the members of the Cabinet, and in which no delegations were allowed to an individual Cabinet member, so that the Cabinet became the sole member-level executive decision-maker; through to a “Strong Leader” pattern where the Council elected the Leader and then the Leader appointed the Cabinet, and the Leader determined the degree of delegation of powers to individual Cabinet members.

3.2.3 Following a statutory process of public consultation, and like all of the other Berkshire authorities, and at least 95% of local authorities across the country, Reading adopted a Leader and Cabinet model on 19 June 2001. In Reading, this took the form of the “Weak Leader” model, which operated until May 2011.

3.2.4 The position was changed by Part 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This amended the 2000 Act to abolish the “Mayor and Council Manager” model, leave the “Directly-Elected Mayor” model unchanged, and in England to replace the Leader and Cabinet executive model with the “Leader and Cabinet Executive (England)” model (referred to as “indirectly elected Leader”). This is the “Strong Leader” model. The “Weak Leader” model is no longer an option.

3.2.5 The Council went through a further statutory process of public consultation over the summer of 2010, as a result of which it resolved to adopt a Leader and Cabinet executive (“Strong Leader”) from the Municipal Year 2011/12. This form of executive was formally adopted by the Annual Council Meeting on 25 May 2011, and remains in place.

3.2.6 The current statutory models of executive arrangements permit executive decisions to be taken by a single party body. This is a fundamental difference introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. Before then, the method of decision-making in all local authorities was by committees appointed by full Council with functions delegated by full Council, and composed of Councillors from all political groups in proportion to their strength on the Council. This is the statutory provision set out in Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, and before that in the Local Government Act 1933. It is still the statutory basis of committees set up by full Council, such as Planning Applications, Licensing Applications, Audit & Governance, Standards and Personnel, which deal with functions which cannot be exercised by the authority's executive.

3.2.7 In moving from the 1972 cross-party model of decision-making to the 2000 single-party model, the 2000 Act also made it a statutory requirement for local authorities to appoint at least one cross-party Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the executive.

3.3 Electoral Arrangements

3.3.1 The arrangements for holding elections in local authorities are governed by the Representation of the People Act 1983. They vary between types of authority. However, as a Unitary District Council, Reading has three options for holding elections:

- By thirds (ie one third of Councillors retire at a time, giving elections for three years in every four)
- By halves (ie half the Councillors retire every two years)
- By all-out elections (ie all Councillors retire at the same time, every four years)

3.3.2 Elections by thirds was the traditional model for County Boroughs, and work best with multi-Member wards with three Councillors. As a former County Borough, Reading has held elections by thirds since 1884. The only break in this pattern was between 1974 and 1983, ie following the abolition of the former County Borough, and until the Local Government Boundary Commission had completed its review of wards in Berkshire.

3.3.3 Over the past seven years, the authority has made two formal public statements of its support for holding elections by thirds. The first was in November 2005, as part of its response to the Electoral Commission's consultation paper on Periodic Electoral Reviews. This included a summary of the benefits of holding elections by thirds. The Council's response, which was agreed by the then three Group Leaders, considered that elections by thirds have a number of important benefits which are summarised below:

- Continuity of experience and representation - two-thirds of the Council will continue beyond the election.
- Promoting political stability - there will be continuing Councillors on the authority from most parties to provide experience and stability to local government.
- Encouraging participation in local democracy - elections are held most years, the electorate is canvassed, participation is encouraged, politicians are encouraged to keep in touch with and be active for the electorate, there is a built-in annual incentive of losing seats if constituents' concerns are not addressed.

- Keeping the electoral machine 'well-oiled' - both for the authority and for political parties, helping to maintain and refresh the pool of experienced Councillors, party workers and electoral registration staff.
- Political accountability - elections are held shortly after the first new Council Tax bills are received, local parties have to justify themselves to their electors every year for difficult or controversial decisions taken during the year, Councillors are encouraged to keep in touch with their electorate, the electorate has an annual opportunity to comment on the Council's performance, successes and failures.
- Moving from regular, annual elections to elections every four years was likely to be counter-productive in addressing falling turnouts, in particular if it weakened the effectiveness of local party election machines, and broke the routine of annual voting.
- Multi-Member wards have advantages in urban areas where local communities are large, and would require some artificiality to split them into smaller, single-Member divisions.
- Multi-Member wards are better served by a number of Councillors who can specialise in different areas of interest, and are able to represent the diversity of the population they serve. They encourage team working by ward Councillors (especially if all from the same party). In the context of modernised local government and the separation of executive and scrutiny functions, they help ease the potential demands on executive Councillors, Committee Chairs and other office holders of the authority, by giving a broader base of fellow Councillors to share constituency caseload and attendance at community meetings.

3.3.4 The second was at full Council in October 2009, when considering a proposal made by Councillor T Jones to review both the Council's electoral areas and number of wards, and the frequency of elections. This proposal was looking to make savings by moving to all-out elections AND to reducing the number of Councillors by a third. The Council resolution was to note the considerations set out in the report, and because of the (then) impending General Election, to take no action at that stage.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 Permitted Forms of Governance

4.1.1 Schedule 2 to the Localism Act 2011 introduces a new Part 1A to the Local Government Act 2000, to make it easier for local authorities to change their governance arrangements.

4.1.2 Para. 9B of new Part 1A states that a local authority must operate one of the following permitted forms of governance:

- a) executive arrangements, or
- b) a committee system, or
- c) prescribed arrangements (ie a novel form of governance agreed with the Secretary of State)

4.1.3 Under para. 9C on new Part 1A, the executive arrangements must be one of the following:

- elected Mayor and Cabinet

- executive Leader and Cabinet

4.1.4 Therefore the authority has four practical options:

- 1) retain the status quo - executive Leader and Cabinet
- 2) change its form of governance to a Committee System
- 3) change its form of executive to an elected Mayor (and Cabinet)
- 4) propose a novel and different form of governance to the Secretary of State.

4.1.5 This report looks in more detail at options (2) and (3) above. It also looks at the separate but related issue of the form of scrutiny arrangements.

4.2 Change of Governance to Committee System

4.2.1 The 2011 Act allows local authorities to choose to operate either executive arrangements (as before) or a committee system.

4.2.2 A committee system means a governance arrangement which complies with the Local Government Act 1972. This means moving from a single party executive (Cabinet) to a model of executive decision making by service Committees on which all political groups are represented in proportion to their number of Councillors on the Council. This is the current arrangement for Planning, Licensing, Personnel, Audit & Governance and Standards. This will end the artificial separations between executive and non-executive functions, and the executive and scrutiny, made by the Local Government Act 2000.

4.2.3 Service committees will take executive decisions about the functions covered by their service areas and monitor and scrutinise performance. To avoid unnecessary delay in decision-making, there may be a fall-back delegation to a corporate Policy Committee to take decisions on behalf of other committees in between cycles and on grounds of urgency. Full Council will also be able to take any decision on behalf of its committees.

4.2.4 An authority which adopts a committee system of governance will no longer be under a statutory duty to have one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise its executive. However, it may retain such committees. In addition, the statutory duty on the authority to scrutinise health, community safety, and (now) flood prevention will remain.

4.2.5 A change of governance arrangement, from an executive arrangement to a committee system, will require the following steps:

- A resolution of full Council (simple majority) confirming what the new arrangements will look like and when they will be introduced
- A public notice advertising the decision to change the authority's governance arrangements

There is no requirement to consult formally on the resolution, or to consider any responses received from the public notice.

4.2.6 The resolution could require making the implementation of the change of governance subject to a local referendum, but need not do so. If there is a referendum, then a second resolution will be required, to be passed at a special meeting of Council held following the referendum.

- 4.2.7 Any decision taken through this process cannot be changed for five years, unless the change is triggered by a referendum held following a public petition during that period.
- 4.2.8 Once full Council has passed the necessary resolution, the new form of governance will start at the first Annual Meeting of the local authority to be held after the resolution has been passed (unless the resolution specifies a later Annual Meeting). It cannot start during a Municipal Year.
- 4.2.9 Given the steps required by the 2011 Act, as set out in para. 4.2.4 above, the earliest date from which the authority could adopt a committee system as a new form of governance would be the Annual Council Meeting in May 2013 (without a referendum), and before then the following timetable would have to be followed:

26 February 2013	Council	Resolution to change form of governance from May 2013
w/c 4 March		Publish notice of proposal on website and in local media
26 March 2012 (optional)	Council	Review any public reaction to resolution and notice
22 May 2013	Council AGM	Implement new committee system

4.3 Change of Executive Arrangements to Elected Mayor

- 4.3.1 As an alternative to a different form of governance, the authority may choose to change its form of executive arrangement, from the Leader and Cabinet model first adopted in 2001, to that of elected Mayor and Cabinet.
- 4.3.2 Under Section 9C of new Part 1A of the 2000 Act (Chapter 2 of Schedule 2 to the 2011 Act), this option consists of a directly elected Mayor, and a Cabinet composed of between two and nine Councillors appointed by the elected Mayor.
- 4.3.3 It would appear that Section 9H of new Part 1A also has the effect of removing the legal requirement for local authorities to hold a referendum on any proposal to move to an elected Mayor form of executive (see under Legal Implications below on the application of Section 9M). Therefore, it would follow that a decision to move to an elected Mayor form of executive may also be taken by Council resolution.
- 4.3.4 Section 33 of the 2000 Act (as amended by the 2007 Act) sets out the process for implementing a change in executive arrangements. Under Section 33A, a local authority may vary its arrangements to provide for a different form of executive. The process for doing this is set out in Section 33E, and involves the following stages:
- Draw up proposals for change - including a timetable for implementation, and any necessary transitional arrangements
 - Take reasonable steps to consult with local electors, and other interested persons in the authority's area

- Consider the extent to which the proposals will assist in securing continuous improvement in the exercise of the authority's functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
 - Make the proposals available for public inspection, and publish a notice in a local newspaper
- 4.3.5 The decision to vary the form of executive arrangements must be taken by a resolution of full Council (Section 33F). The authority may - but need not - make the decision subject to a local referendum (Section 33M(3)).
- 4.3.6 Having passed the resolution, the local authority must then repeat the process of making the proposal available for public inspection and publishing a notice (Section 29(2)).
- 4.3.7 The election for the elected Mayor will take place on the same day as the first ordinary elections for Councillors held after the resolution is passed (Section 33G(5)(b)). The new executive arrangements will come into effect three days later.
- 4.3.8 The Mayor's term of office will be for four years (Section 9H(7)). Mayoral elections will take place on the ordinary day of the local election in each of the authority's relevant election years (Section 9H(6)).
- 4.3.9 The election for the Mayor will be held under the supplementary vote system, if there are more than two candidates (Section 9HC). The electorate will be that for local elections.
- 4.3.10 The Secretary of State may make Regulations providing for the dates and years on which Mayoral elections must take place; the intervals between elections; and the term of office of elected mayors (Section 9HB).
- 4.3.11 Section 9R(2) of new Part 1A to the 2000 Act (Schedule 2 to the 2011 Act) gives a definition of "relevant election years". It is not clear how this applies to a Unitary Authority. In a Non-metropolitan District, the relevant election years are 2011 and every fourth year afterwards. This is the electoral cycle for District Councils which hold all-out elections. Therefore the next round of all-out District Council elections will be held in 2015.
- 4.3.12 In the absence of further Regulations from the Secretary of State, the provisions of Section 33 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) may be taken to apply. On this basis, the earliest practical date for holding Mayoral elections in Reading would not be until May 2014, which is the next date (after May 2012) when the authority will be holding its ordinary local elections. These elections are likely to coincide with those for the European Parliament. The elections in 2015 should coincide with the next General election.

4.4 Overview and Scrutiny

- 4.4.1 The operation of the authority's overview and scrutiny function is related to the form of governance arrangements adopted by the local authority. However, there are not the same statutory timing constraints. Therefore a local authority may change its internal scrutiny arrangements during a Municipal Year, and does not have to wait until the Annual Meeting to do so.
- 4.4.2 Under Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000, and Para. 9F of new Part 1A (Schedule 2 to the 2011 Act), a local authority which has adopted a form of executive

arrangements must also appoint one or more overview and scrutiny committees, to undertake a wide range of functions including to scrutinise the discharge of functions which are the responsibility of the executive. The 2000 Act, as amended by subsequent legislation, now includes a growing volume of legislation relating to the operation of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which has been reflected in this authority's constitution.

4.4.3 Under Para. 9JA of new part 1A (Schedule 2 to the 2011 Act), a local authority which has adopted a committee system may appoint one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees, but is not required to do so. Such local authorities must ensure that their internal arrangements are compliant with existing legislation, in particular Parts 5A and 6 of the Local Government Act 1972 (which deal with access to information, and the discharge of functions), and Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 (which is Schedule 2 to the Localism Act 2011).

4.4.4 The Local Authorities (Committee System)(England) Regulations 2012, issued under Schedule 2 of the 2011 Act, clarify that the Act does not prescribe how committee system local authorities should operate themselves but allows them choice over whether they should have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is because, in a committee system, decisions will not be taken by individual executive members or single party committees, but by committees and sub-committees set up under the provisions of Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972, which in turn will be appointed in proportion to the political composition of the authority as a whole, and will allow a spectrum of views to be heard when the decision is taken. However, if the local authority does choose to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, then that committee will have the same powers and functions as any Overview and Scrutiny Committee set up in an authority exercising executive arrangements.

4.4.5 The general functions of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in para. 9F of Schedule 2 to the 2011 Act, are as follows:

- To review or scrutinise decisions made, or action taken, on functions which are the responsibility of the executive; to make reports or recommendations to the authority (Council) or the executive (Cabinet) on these matters; and to recommend that individual executive decisions be reconsidered, or taken by the authority (call-in).
- To review or scrutinise decisions made, or action taken, on functions which are not the responsibility of the executive, and to make reports or recommendations to the authority (Council) or the executive (Cabinet) on these matters
- To make reports or recommendations to the authority or executive on matters which affect the authority's area or inhabitants
- To review and scrutinise matters relating to the health service in the authority's area, under S244 of the National Health Service Act 2006
- To scrutinise crime and disorder matters under S19 of the Police & Justice Act 2006
- To review and scrutinise the exercise of flood risk management functions by the lead local flood authority under Section 9FH of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by Schedule 2 of the Localism Act 2011).

4.4.6 To put these more succinctly, and in relation to the Council's current arrangements:

- pre-scrutiny of executive decisions
- call in decisions of Cabinet - Internal Commission only
- scrutinise implementation of policy
- scrutinise other organisations providing services locally
- Health scrutiny - External Commission
- Crime & disorder scrutiny - External Commission
- Flood risk management - External Commission

4.4.7 A local authority operating an overview and scrutiny committee must designate one of its officers to discharge the functions of the Scrutiny Officer as defined in Section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by Schedule 2 to the Localism Act 2011). This currently is the Head of Policy, Performance and Community.

4.4.8 The Borough Council has had a scrutiny or performance review committee since at least April 1974. However in 1999, in anticipation of the passage of the Local Government Act 2000 and the introduction of executive arrangements, the Council adopted a streamlined Committee system (see para. 4.5.3 below) together with five scrutiny committees on a part-thematic and part-Directorate basis, as follows:

- Best Value & Audit (from 2000 - Audit & Corporate Services)
- Housing, Education & Social Services
- Leisure & Environmental Services
- Agenda 21 and Sustainability
- Social Exclusion

4.4.9 The authority has operated three different models of overview and scrutiny since it adopted executive arrangements in 2001, which are set out below. Up to 2010, a scrutiny committee also oversaw the audit functions of the authority.

2001-02 Thematic scrutiny committees:

- Audit & Overview (with call-in)
- Green City
- Learning & Leisure
- Social Inclusion

2004-11 Directorate-based scrutiny committees:

- Corporate, Community and External Affairs (CCEA) (with call-in, audit, and also crime & disorder scrutiny)
- Community Care, Housing & Health (with health scrutiny)
- Culture & Sport
- Education & Children's Services
- Environment

2011-12 Commissions linked to task-and-finish groups:

- Internal Commission (with call in)
- External Commission (With crime & disorder, and health scrutiny)

Plus Audit & Governance Committee

4.4.10 The authority's scrutiny arrangements were the subject of an extensive review during the Municipal Year 2010-11, undertaken under the auspices of the (then) Group Leaders and the (then) CCEA Panel. The Commissions model was the recommended outcome of this review. This model was adopted at the Council Annual Meeting in May 2011, for the Municipal Year 201-12, and was continued forward into the 2012-13 Municipal Year at the Annual Council Meeting in May 2012.

4.4.11 Subject to the authority having at least one Committee to exercise the overview and scrutiny functions set out in para. 4.4.5 above, including health, crime & disorder and flood risk management, there is no statutory limitation on an authority operating executive arrangements from changing its scrutiny arrangements and structure during the Municipal Year. Any such change will require a resolution of full Council, passed by a simple majority.

4.5 Committee System Models

4.5.1 The authority operated a committee system until 2001 when (as required by the Local Government Act 2000), it adopted a form of executive arrangement (Leader and Cabinet).

4.5.2 The authority re-structured its committee system in 1997, in anticipation of becoming a unitary authority in 1998, to include an Education and a Social Services Committee, both of which where statutory requirements for local authorities exercising these functions at that time (upper-tier authorities). The Committee system in operation in the first Municipal Year of the unitary authority - 1998-99 - therefore had the following 19 committees and sub-committees:

- Policy & Resources Committee
 - Grants Sub-Committee
- Arts & Leisure Committee
- Community Services Committee
- Consumer Services
- Education Committee
 - School Transport & Appeals Panel (Sub-Committee)
- Economic & External Affairs Committee
- Housing Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Personnel & Equal Opportunities Committee
 - Appointments Committee
- Performance Review Committee
- Planning Committee
- Standards Committee
- Social Services & Health Committee
- Transport Committee
 - Traffic Management Sub-Committee
- Urgency Committee

4.5.3 In 1999, in anticipation of the adoption of executive arrangements, the Council restructured its committee system to make it more streamlined, and to focus responsibility for decision-making on one cross-party committee covering all executive functions, which was called the Policy & Implementation Committee. This presaged the Cabinet model set up in 2001. A Social Services Committee was retained, as a continuing statutory requirement for upper-tier authorities at that time, but this had the same membership as Policy & Implementation, and met on the rising of the latter. In addition, five scrutiny committees were set up, on a mixed Directorate and thematic basis, again in anticipation of the new statutory arrangements. The streamlined structure was as follows:

- Policy & Implementation Committee
 - Social Services Committee
 - Education Appeals, Awards, and School Transport & Appeals Panels
 - Personnel Panel

DSO Management Panel
Licensing Applications Committee
Planning Applications Committee
Standards Committee
Traffic Management Committee

Scrutiny Committees

Best Value & Audit (from 2000 - Audit & Corporate Services)
Housing, Education & Social Services
Leisure & Environmental Services
Agenda 21 and Sustainability
Social Exclusion

- 4.5.4 The key features of the above structure, and the post-executive arrangements structures adopted from 2001 onwards, is that the Policy and Implementation Committee had the same role as Cabinet, but with all political groups represented proportionately in its membership. It took responsibility for the discharge of all functions which from 2001, under the Local Government Act 2000 became the responsibility of the authority's single-party executive. Separate cross-party committees were retained to deal with non-executive functions which under the 2000 Act would remain with the authority as a whole to exercise, such as Licensing, Planning and Personnel; and also to deal with appeals. A Standards Committee was also retained (which became a statutory requirement under the 2000 Act).
- 4.5.5 A particular challenge then, as now, was traffic management. Under the 2000 Act, this became a function of the executive (Cabinet). However, in Reading, the view has consistently been taken that local traffic management decisions are assisted by the involvement of councillors from all groups. Therefore in 2001, the long-standing Traffic Management (Sub-)Committee was continued as a cross-party body, albeit without the legal ability to make decisions, called the Traffic Management Advisory Committee, which makes detailed recommendations to Cabinet.
- 4.5.6 From 1 April 2013, under Section 194(1) of the Health and Social Care Act 2012, it will be the responsibility of every upper-tier local authority to establish a Health and Wellbeing Board as a Committee of the local authority under Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972.

4.6 Options

- 4.6.1 Four local authorities took advantage of the Localism Act 2011 to move in May 2012 to a committee system. These are Brighton & Hove, South Gloucestershire, London Borough of Sutton, and Nottinghamshire County Council. With the exception of Notts CC, all are single-tier authorities.
- 4.6.2 The following common themes have been identified:
- they all have a Policy / Strategy committee
 - They all have other main committees with delegated decision-making functions from full Council:
 - they all have a committee dealing with children
 - they all have a committee dealing with adult care - in 3 cases this also includes health
 - they all have a committee dealing with environmental matters
 - they all have regulatory committees
 - audit

- licensing
 - development control
 - they all have a standards committee
- 4.6.3 They vary in their treatment of scrutiny - only 2 have scrutiny committees for the authority, the other 2 incorporate the internal scrutiny function into the work of their main committees but have a separate committee for external scrutiny, i.e. health, community safety, flood protection and partners
- 4.6.4 Three of the 4 authorities are Metropolitan Boroughs or Unitary authorities, and therefore comparable with RBC. Nottinghamshire CC - as a county - does not have the broad range of local services (including housing, leisure, environmental health, licensing and development control), and its committee structure is more aligned to traditional county functions. Sutton, as a London Borough, does not have the same range of strategic planning and transport functions (which are with the Greater London Assembly)..
- 4.6.5 Of the three non-county authorities, two have a separate highways / transport committee, but one combines this with its environment committee. Two have a separate committee for housing; the third combines this with adult care, but then has a separate Health Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.6.6 All have a Health and Wellbeing Board: this is a new statutory requirement, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (from April 2013)
- 4.6.7 All have a separate audit committee.

4.7 Advantages and Disadvantages

- 4.7.1 Democratic Services Officers attended a workshop on committee systems at the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV), at the University of Birmingham, in December 2012. This produced a SWOT analysis of committee systems, as follows:

STRENGTHS OF COMMITTEE SYSTEM

- All Councillors are involved or feel involved in part of the process of running the Council - especially backbench Councillors from all parties
- It draws on all the talents and interests of Councillors
- It is open - decisions are taken in public after questioning and discussion
- Experienced Councillors develop near-professional knowledge and competence
- New Councillors learn quickly
- It is flexible - a Leader or Committee Chair who loses the confidence of members can be replaced
- It takes pressure of individual Lead Councillors
- It enhances Member:officer working

WEAKNESSES OF COMMITTEE SYSTEM

- Some Councillors are more involved than others
- It is open on the surface, but decisions in reality may be taken by a ruling group behind closed doors
- It can be hard to know who is responsible for decisions
- Committees can re-enforce silos
- Councillors can be bamboozled by officers
- Weak chairs are not always replaced
- Committees may avoid taking responsibility for difficult decisions
- Need to address evolving partnership working

STRENGTHS OF LEADER AND CABINET SYSTEM

- It is clear who is responsible
- Quicker decision-making
- Better co-ordination of cross-cutting issues
- Can challenge silos
- Usually involves a large amount of delegation to officers
- Can empower non-executive councillors through the scrutiny process - but this requires goodwill at all levels

WEAKNESSES OF LEADER AND CABINET SYSTEM

- Not always clear who is responsible - Leader, Chief Executive, Lead Councillor, Chief Officer
- Decision-making is not always quicker, or for the better - can be rushed
- Coordination of cross-cutting issues may not always be from a point of full knowledge
- The system can reinforce the Lead Councillor : Chief officer axis
- Too much can be delegated to officers
- Too much power in the hands of too few people
- Loss of contact between Councillors and officers (except at Lead Councillor / Chief officer level)
- Overview and Scrutiny - variable examples of working

4.7.2 As with any SWOT analysis, the strengths and weaknesses can be mirror images. They also relate to the political and managerial culture of the individual authority.

4.8 Participation

4.8.1 The authority has well-established provisions for Member and public participation in its Standing Orders (SO) for Council, Committees, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees. Many of these pre-date the Local Government Act 2000 and have continued to apply to the authority's public meetings. Some have been developed specifically for Cabinet or the Scrutiny Committees.

4.8.2 The key provisions are summarised below:

COUNCIL

- Right to move motion for debate at meeting (SO7 - Councillors)
- Right to present petition at meeting (SO8 - public)
- Right to ask questions at meeting (SO9 - public; SO10 - Councillors)

COMMITTEE

- Right to attend and make a statement at meeting where not a member (SO32 - Councillors)
- Right to ask questions at meeting (SO36 - Councillors and public)

CABINET

- Right to present petition at meeting (Cabinet Rule 8(b) - public)
- Right to ask question at meeting (Cabinet Rule 8(b) - public)
- Ability to speak on individual agenda item (with notice and at Leader's discretion) (Cabinet Rule 8(b) - public)
- Right to call in executive decisions for further consideration by Cabinet (Scrutiny Rule 16 - non-executive Councillors)

SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS

- Right to attend and make a statement at meeting where not a member (SO32 - Councillors)
 - Right to ask questions at meeting (SO 36 - Councillors and public)
 - Right to add items to committee agenda (Scrutiny Rule 8.1 - Members of Commission)
 - Right to refer matter to relevant Commission for consideration (Scrutiny Rule 8.3 - Councillors)
 - Right to request review of response to petition to Council or Cabinet (Scrutiny Procedure Rule 9 - Councillors)
 - Facility for local people and stakeholders to be invited to attend and speak on relevant items (Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15.1 - public by invitation)
 - Ability to speak on individual agenda item (Scrutiny Rule 15.2 - public, by invitation)
- 4.8.3 In addition, the Cabinet Procedure Rules allow individual Lead Councillors, Scrutiny Panel Chairs and Group Leaders to request that items are put on a future Cabinet agenda.
- 4.8.4 Different Standing Orders apply to public speaking and petitions at Planning and Licensing Committees. There are also local conventions about petitions and public speaking at the Traffic Management Advisory Panel, where the first part of each meeting replicates the former Transport Users' Forum and facilitates general public participation.
- 4.8.5 A number of these provisions were developed, or required, to address the artificial separation between executive decision-making and scrutiny made by the Local Government Act 2000. Therefore the adoption of a committee system would mean that they were no longer required in their current form. By way of example, the Cabinet call-in facility would no longer be relevant - nor a statutory requirement - because there would no longer be a separate executive; and individual decisions would be taken by Committees comprised of Councillors from all political groups, proportionate to party strength, and not by a single party body.
- 4.8.6 In addition, the authority has a very long-standing practice of setting up and working with advisory and consultative groups and partnerships, to engage with local stakeholders and target groups. These operate informally, and without recourse to the authority's formal Standing Orders. These bodies have an accepted ability to raise and refer matters to the Council, which in some cases is stated explicitly in their terms of reference. Up to 2010, their minutes were routinely submitted to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for discussion; this long-standing practice ended with the establishment of the two Scrutiny Commissions in 2011/12.
- 4.8.7 If the Council were to resolve to change its form of governance and to move to a committee system, particular care should be taken to maintain and build on these long-established provisions where they remain relevant. In particular, the following should be continued and expanded:
- Public right to present petitions to Council and committees
 - Public and councillor right to ask questions at Council and committee meetings
 - Councillor right to attend a committee meeting where not a member and make a statement on an agenda item (with notice)
 - Councillor right to request relevant committee to review a response to a petition given at full Council
 - Facility for Committee members to request relevant items on committee agendas; and for Group Leaders to request items on any relevant committee agenda

- Public ability to speak on individual agenda items at committee meetings (with notice and at Chair's discretion)
 - Facility for local people and stakeholders to be invited to attend and speak on relevant items (at Chair's discretion)
 - Facility for partners and advisory / consultative panels to make recommendations to relevant committees and to attend and speak to the agenda item
 - The minutes of partnerships and advisory / consultative panels to be submitted to the next relevant committee meeting.
- 4.8.8 As a further move to encourage public attendance and participation, a number of local authorities have experimented with holding Cabinet and committee meetings outside their Town Hall, at community venues which may be relevant to items on the meeting agenda. There is nothing in the authority's Standing Orders to prevent this.
- 4.8.9 A move to a committee system, and away from the artificial separation between executive decision-making and scrutiny made by the Local Government Act 2000, would also end the current inability of full Council to modify or cancel any decision taken by the executive. At present, under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000, all decisions of the authority must be taken by the executive unless they concern a function listed in one of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities)(England) Regulations issued under the 2000 Act. These functions are set out in Part 3 of the constitution: they primarily concern development control, individual licences and regulations; health and safety at work; elections; constitutional and governance matters; public rights of way; and staffing.
- 4.8.10 Under a committee system, all functions of the authority would be for the authority as a whole to exercise, either by itself (full Council), or by delegation to a committee or an officer. Therefore any decision which could be taken by a committee or an officer could instead be taken by full Council. This could be by choice. However, it would also bring into play Standing Order 23 - "the six month rule" - which allows full Council, subject to 23 Councillors voting in favour, to give permission to pass a motion cancelling any decision taken by a Committee within the previous six months.

4.9 Meeting Numbers

- 4.9.1 As mentioned in Financial Implications below, an authority's democratic decision-making process carries a cost in terms of staff and Councillor time and involvement. This is particularly relevant when the authority is looking to make significant budget savings. Therefore in considering any change to the Council's governance arrangements, the starting point should be the number of public meetings scheduled for the current Municipal Year, with the objectives of no extra meetings and no extra cost.
- 4.9.2 The 2012/13 diary includes 92 public meetings of Council, Cabinet and committees (including the Scrutiny Commissions). In this regard it is important to note that the Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings, including TMAP, make up only 33 (36%) of the total of 92 meetings. The regulatory and other committee meetings, together with full Council, make up the remaining 59 public meetings (64%). Therefore a move to a committee system form of governance would only affect just over one third of the authority's present public meetings.
- 4.9.3 The Planning and Licensing Committees between them have 40 scheduled meetings. In particular, there are 30 scheduled Licensing Committee meetings, making up nearly 33% of this year's current meeting total. There may be scope to review existing

officer delegations with regard to operating licenses (Sub-Committee 3), to reduce the number of taxi licences coming to committee for determination.

5. ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Section 24 of the 2011 Act amends the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) to make it easier for District Councils to change their electoral schemes.

5.2 District Councils may choose to hold local elections on one of three bases:

- All-out elections - every 4 years
- Elections by halves - every 2 years
- Elections by thirds - 3 years in every 4

5.3 Reading has traditionally adopted the model of elections by thirds - ie one third of Councillors standing down at a time. This model works best if an authority has wards with three Councillors.

5.4 The 2007 Act made it easier for authorities to move to all-out elections. This now can be achieved through passing a Council resolution, with a majority of two thirds of the members present and voting on it, at a full Council meeting specially convened for the purpose. In addition, before the resolution is passed, the Council must take reasonable steps to consult "such persons as it thinks appropriate" on the proposed change.

5.5 The 2007 Act required the resolution to be passed by set dates, in order that the all-out elections coincide with a set national timetable, in which all-out District Council elections occur in 2011, 2015, 2019 etc. By this, the resolution had to be passed by 31 December 2010 for the all-out elections to occur in 2011, and any resolution passed after this, up to December 2014, would not come into effect until the next round of all-out elections in May 2015.

5.6 The 2011 Act changes this, to allow an authority to hold all-out elections to a local four-year timetable, as specified in the resolution. The only constraint for a Unitary Authority is that the elections must take place on the first Thursday in May of the years in question.

5.7 Therefore, if the Council were to pass a resolution now to move to all-out elections, before 31 December 2013, this could come into effect from May 2014 (which is when the authority will hold its next round of local elections). After these dates, the following round of all-out elections would then be in May 2018.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 The governance arrangements and decision-making structure adopted by the authority are integral to the delivery of all of the Council's strategic aims. These are:

- To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley
- To establish Reading as a learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit
- To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

6.2 They should also link into the Sustainable Community Strategy (Reading 2020) and its delivery themes.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".
- 7.2 As mentioned above, the Local Government Act 2000, as modified by the 2007 Act and the 2011 Act, place varied requirements on consultation with regard to making changes to the authority's governance and electoral arrangements.
- 7.3 With regard to governance, the 2000 Act made the adoption of the authority's form of executive arrangements subject to consultation with local electors and other interested persons in the authority's area. Any proposal to adopt an elected Mayor form of executive was also subject to a local referendum. The 2007 Act modified the latter to remove the requirement to hold a local referendum, but retained the requirement to take reasonable steps to consult with local electors and interested persons. The 2011 Act has not repeated the requirement to consult, but has retained the duty to publish a public notice and to make the proposals available for public inspection at the authority's principal office (Civic Offices).
- 7.4 With regard to electoral arrangements, the consultation requirements are specified by Section 32 of the 2007 Act, and are stated in detail in para. 9.5.5 below.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.2 In considering this report, you must consider whether the decision will or could have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief.
- 8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. This is because it is not considered that there will be an adverse impact arising from changing from one form of governance to another. The key consideration will be how decision-making in any form of governance takes into consideration the interests of and impact of decisions on any of the groups listed in para. 8.2 above. In this regard, the Council should note:
- The Lead Councillor Portfolios, as set out at Part 3 of the Council's constitution, include a general responsibility on all Lead Councillors to promote equal opportunities in relation to the provision of the Council's services and the delivery of services in Reading by other agencies
 - The standard report template - as here - includes an Equality Impact Assessment paragraph

- The Council has set up, or participates in, the following advisory and consultative working parties, panels and forums which have a direct interest in equalities matters and provide an opportunity for interested organisations to express their views to the Council:
 - Access Forum
 - Ethnic Minorities Forum
 - Older Persons' Working Group
 - SACRE

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The legal implications of making a change of governance and/or executive arrangement are significant, and underpin the legality of the authority's subsequent decision-making. Therefore they need to be understood and considered carefully. They are referred to in the text above. They are outlined in more detail below.

9.2 Governance

9.2.1 Section 21 of the Localism Act 2011 gives effect to Schedule 2, which introduces a new Part 1A to the Local Government Act 2000 (the 2000 Act). Section 21 and Schedule 2 came into effect on 15 January 2012 [SI 2012 / 578 - Localism Act 2011 Commencement Order No. 2].

9.2.2 Schedule 2, and new Part 1A to the 2000 Act, require a local authority to operate either executive arrangements, or a committee system, or prescribed arrangements [Section 9B(1)].

9.2.3 Chapter 2 of Schedule 2 deals with local authority executives. Under Section 9C, these can take one of two forms: Mayor and Cabinet, or Leader and Cabinet.

9.2.4 Chapter 4 of Schedule 2 deals with Changing Governance Arrangements. Under Section 9KA of the 2000 Act (as amended), a local authority which operates executive arrangements may:

- Vary the arrangements to provide for a different form of executive (9KA(1))
- Vary the arrangements whilst providing for the same form of executive (9KB)

9.2.5 Sections 9K and 9KA are made subject to Section 9NA - which relates to requiring a referendum on a change to a Mayor and Cabinet executive.

9.2.6 A move from the Council's form of executive - Leader and Cabinet executive - to a Mayor and Cabinet form of executive would be a move to a different form of executive. Therefore Sections 9KA and 9NA will apply.

9.2.7 Section 9KC of the 2000 Act (as amended) requires a resolution of the authority to make a change in governance arrangements [Section 9KC(1)]. There is no requirement for this resolution to be passed by anything other than a simple majority at an ordinary Council meeting.

9.2.8 Section 9KC relates to a change in governance arrangements. Earlier in Chapter 4, under the general heading "Changes to governance arrangements by local authorities: general provision", a separation is made between changing from one form of governance to another (Section 9K) and changing executive arrangements to a different form of executive (Section 9KA). However, Section 9K(3) states that Section

9K(4) applies if an authority passes a resolution which makes a change in governance arrangements as set out in Section 9K or 9KA. Therefore the inference can be drawn from 9K(3) that a change to a different form of executive arrangement under 9KC is a change of governance arrangement.

9.2.9 Section 9O later states that a local authority may only cease to operate a form of governance, or vary its executive arrangements, in accordance with Chapter 4 of Schedule 2.

9.2.10 Under Chapter 5 of Schedule 2, and in particular Sections 9R(6) and (7), the function of passing a resolution must be exercised by full Council and cannot be delegated to a Committee or officer, or exercised by the executive.

9.2.11 When the resolution required under Section 9K is passed, Section 9KC(2) requires the authority to do the following:

- o Make copies of the resolution available for public inspection at its principal office
- o Publish a notice in one or more local newspaper:
 - o Stating that the authority has resolved to change its governance arrangements
 - o Stating the date on which the change will have effect (see 9.2.12, and from 9.3 onward, below)
 - o Describing the main features of the change
 - o Making copies of the documents that will give effect to the resolution available for public inspection at its principal office
 - o Giving the address of its principal office

9.2.12 Section 9L determines the starting date for the new form of governance OR executive. Section 9L(5) applies to Reading, which is not currently operating a Mayor and Cabinet executive. This is called the “relevant change time”. It will be as follows for an authority, like Reading, which is not currently operating a Mayor and Cabinet form of executive:

- a) To move to a committee system - the first Annual Meeting of the local authority held after the resolution has been passed (S9L(4)(a)), or a later Annual Meeting as specified in the resolution (S9L(4)(b)).
- b) To move to an elected Mayor and Cabinet, the third day after the declaration of result of poll at the first election of the Mayor.

9.2.13 Under Section 9K(4), the authority may not pass another resolution that makes a change in its governance or executive arrangements for five years from the date the first resolution was passed, unless the second resolution is passed as the result of a referendum.

9.3 Consideration of whether a Referendum will be required

9.3.1 This is important because the 2000 Act made the adoption of an elected mayor model of executive arrangement subject to a local referendum. Local referendums can also be required by the Secretary of State, or triggered by a local petition.

9.3.2 Section 33 of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) set out the process for implementing a change in executive arrangements. Under Section 33A, a local authority may vary its arrangements to provide for a different form of executive. The process for doing this is set out in Section 33E, and involves the following stages:

- Draw up proposals for change - including a timetable for implementation, and any necessary transitional arrangements
 - Take reasonable steps to consult with local electors, and other interested persons in the authority's area
 - Consider the extent to which the proposals will assist in securing continuous improvement in the exercise of the authority's functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness
 - Make the proposals available for public inspection, and publish a notice in a local newspaper
- 9.3.3 The decision to vary the form of executive arrangements must be taken by a resolution of full Council (Section 33F). The authority may - but need not - make the decision subject to a local referendum (Section 33M(3)).
- 9.3.4 Having passed the resolution, the local authority must then repeat the process of making the proposal available for public inspection and publishing a notice (Section 29(2)).
- 9.3.5 Section 9M of Schedule 2 to the 2011 Act sets out the arrangements for referendums. Under Section 9M(1), a change of governance arrangements made by resolution is subject to approval in a referendum in any of the following cases specified in Section 9M:
- (2) Either where it involves a change from one form of governance to another under Section 9K, or where it involves a change to a different form of executive (under Section 9KA),
 - (3) The authority's resolution has made implementation subject to approval in a referendum
- 9.3.6 With regard to 9M(2) above, Section 9M(2)(b) states that the case for holding a referendum applies where the implementation of the authority's existing form of governance was approved in a referendum held under Chapter 4 of Schedule 2.
- 9.3.7 It would therefore follow that Section 9M does not apply to changing any form of executive that was not subject to a referendum (eg a Strong Leader and Cabinet executive, as in Reading).
- 9.3.8 Section 9MB deals with the requirement to hold and give effect to a referendum. Section 9MN(1) states that the Section applies where the change in governance arrangements is subject to approval in a referendum under Section 9M. However, Section 9MA does not appear to apply to a change of executive arrangements in an authority like Reading, where the current executive arrangements (Leader and Cabinet) were approved by Council resolution.
- 9.3.9 As mentioned above, it would follow from this that a decision to move to an elected Mayor form of executive may also be taken by Council resolution.

9.4 Election of Mayor

9.4.1 The legal implications are set out in 9.3 above.

9.5 Electoral Arrangements

9.5.1 Section 85 of the Local Government Act 2000 provides principal authorities with three options for local elections, as follows:

- all-out elections - every 4 years, with all Councillors retiring
- elections by halves - every 2 years, with half of the Councillors retiring on each occasion
- elections by thirds - 3 years in every 4, with one third of the Councillors retiring on each occasion.

9.5.2 Councillors are elected for terms of office of four years.

9.5.3 All of the above models can be operated with single member or multi-member wards. However, the traditional model of elections by thirds, as applied in former County Boroughs and in Metropolitan Boroughs (but not London Boroughs), is to have three-member wards, so that there is an election held in each ward in each year where there is an election. This remains the model in Reading, with the exception of Mapledurham.

9.5.4 Chapter 2 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 modified the provisions of the 2000 Act, to make it easier for principal authorities to change their electoral arrangements, in the following ways:

- Under S32, in an authority which is subject to elections by halves or by thirds, the full Council may resolve to be subject to whole Council elections (see para. 9.5.5 below)
- Under S55 (which amends S14 of the 2000 Act), an authority which currently has multi-member wards may request the Electoral Commission to direct the Boundary Commission to review the authority's area with a view to recommending single member wards

NB - the 2007 Act was intended to encourage authorities to move to single-member wards and all-out elections, and does not contain provisions to make it easier to change electoral arrangements from elections by thirds to election by halves, or indeed from all-out elections to elections by halves or thirds. Therefore such a move would continue to require an Order by the Secretary of State under S86 of the 2000 Act.

9.5.5 An authority that wishes to pass a resolution for whole-Council elections under Section 32 of the 2007 Act must follow the following processes:

- it must first take reasonable steps to consult with such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed change;
- it must then pass a resolution at a meeting of Council specially convened for the purpose, by a majority of at least two thirds of the Councillors voting
- it must pass the resolution before 31 December to allow all-out elections to be held in the following May (S34).
- It must then produce an explanatory leaflet to publicise the change (S35)
- It must give the Electoral Commission notice that it has passed the resolution (S36)

9.5.6 Section 24 of the Localism Act 2011 has amended the provisions in the 2007 Act relating to the timetables for changing District Councils' electoral cycles in England. Under Section 24(3), the resolution to move to whole-Council elections must now specify the year in which the first round of elections will be held. Districts which are in a County Council (ie not Unitary Authorities) cannot specify the year in which County Council elections are to be held (2013). Therefore it follows that for Reading, as a Unitary Authority, there is now no restriction on the year and cycle in which all-out elections may be held.

9.5.7 The consequence of Council passing a resolution to move to all-out elections from a specified year will be that the terms of office of all Councillors will come to an end in May of that year, irrespective of the Councillors' length of service at that time.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 These are potentially significant, in both positive and negative terms, and should be considered carefully.

10.2 Governance

10.2.1 Committee meetings have resource and time implications for officers from services across the authority; and also for Councillors attending them and supporting informal meetings. The objective of no extra meetings and no extra costs has been mentioned above. The Council's budget estimates for 2013/14 does not include any additional funding for Democratic Services.

10.2.2 The annual budget for the Committee service is £357,300 in 2013/14. The service has a staff establishment of 7.5FTE posts, compared with 10 FTE posts in 2000. The Service employs 3.5FTE posts on supporting the executive and Committees, such as Planning, Licensing and Personnel as well as boards and political groups. This would therefore be the staffing resources available to support the new Committee structure.

10.2.3 Since 2001, the Committee Service has taken on significant additional work, including education appeals and more recently the scrutiny officer function. These areas of work account for the other 4FTE posts in the establishment.

10.2.4 There has been a major increase in the number of school admission appeals serviced by the Committee team. The unprecedented recent demand for school places in Reading has meant that significant staff time has had to be diverted to this activity. The work currently accounts for the equivalent of 2FTE posts to handle, in comparison with a single part-time post in the mid-2000s.

10.3 Electoral Arrangements

10.3.1 The cost of running a stand-alone local election each year is c £180k. The saving in not holding a stand-alone local election would be in the order of £90k in the year in question (because some budget provision is held back for by-elections and other contingencies). However, before 2012, the last time the Council held stand-alone local elections was in 2008, as the local elections in 2010 and 2011 coincided with the General election and AV referendum, and attracted Government funding.

10.3.2 There are no local elections in Reading in 2013. The election timetable and costs in Reading over the next few years, on the current elections-by-thirds, looks like this:

2013 - fallow year (County Council elections)

2014 - combined local and European elections - £90k *
2015 - combined local and General elections - £90k *
2016 - fully-funded local election - £180k.
2017 - fallow year
2018 - fully-funded local elections - £180k
2019 - combined local and European elections - £90k *
2020 - combined local and General elections - £90k *
2021 - fallow year
2022 - fully-funded local elections - £180k

* Half costs recovered from the Government in respect of combined election

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Localism Act 2011

The Local Authorities (Committee System)(England) Regulations 2012