

**SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS ACT – CHANGE OF VOTING SYSTEM**

**MEETING: Democratic Services Committee**

**DATE: 21 November 2022**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: N/A**

**1. PURPOSE:**

To agree methodology for reviewing and gauging members appetite for a change to the voting system for local elections.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Councillors agree to the process set out below for sharing the information on the change with all councillors and determine whether the item should be put to full council.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2022 (*the Act*), included provisions to enable local authorities to change its voting system from first past the post to a system of single transferable vote. Those provisions took effect following the elections in May 2022 and local authorities can consider the issue ahead of the next local elections scheduled for 2027. The voting system would be in place for County Council and Community/Town Council elections.
- 3.2 Local authorities have until 15 November 2024 to agree to change their voting system however a number of administrative processes are required, including a full electoral review for all of Monmouthshire, following the decision to change the system and ahead of the next election.
- 3.3 In order for Council to agree to the change, a special meeting of full council is required giving at least 21 days notice of the meeting and the vote will need a two thirds majority in favour of the change for it to be approved. Local authorities are also required to consult with voters, community and town councils and anyone else it deems appropriate on the changes.
- 3.4 If a change to the voting system is agreed, the Council is unable to revert to first-past-post for two full terms of council.
- 3.5 Given the current political balance of the Council, it may be difficult for the decision to gain a two-thirds majority. Therefore it is proposed that a survey of all councillors is undertaken to ascertain the level of support for the change before determining whether or not the decision should be put before full council.
- 3.6 To assist councillors with the change, an all members seminar will be held providing further information on the change to the voting system, the processes involved and the impact the change will have.

3.7 Once the seminar and survey are complete and an indication of the level of support for the change is gathered, a timetable will be drafted to conduct the relevant consultation and notice period for the full council meeting to be held to consider the change.

**4. REASONS:**

To consider the implications of the changes within the Act and identify the level of support for the change in the voting system.

**5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

None

**6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no sustainable development or equality impacts arising from this report.

**7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications associated with this report.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

Democratic Services Committee

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Local Government and Elections Act 2021

**10. AUTHOR:**

John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager

**CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Tel:** 01633 644212

**E-mail:** [johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk)