

Notice of Motion

Councillor Mark Townsend will move that:

“This Council respects the call by 5% of residents to hold a referendum to decide the Council's governance model and will work positively to implement a directly elected Mayor if that is the preference of residents as determined by the referendum result.

This Council however expresses its concern about the financial, accountability and ceremonial implications of a directly elected Mayor for the Borough.

At a time of massive government cuts being imposed on this Council the petition compels the Council to spend £80,000 on a referendum in 2017/18. If the referendum decision is to have a Mayor this increases to £240,000 in 2017/18. The estimated additional annual cost to the Council thereafter is estimated to be £117,000 per annum which equates to a 2% increase in Council Tax. This Council would much rather be spending residents Council Tax on essential services than using it to establish an unneeded additional politician that carries with it an estimated annual salary of £50,000. A £40,000 increase on current Council Leader allowances.

This Council also believes that an elected Mayor weakens democratic accountability within the Council with Ward Councillors only able to change major policy decisions if 2/3 of Councillors are in agreement.

A directly elected Mayor would also require a new position of Chairman of the Council to be created which could replace the traditional role of a ceremonial Mayor. This Council supports the current arrangements of appointing a politically neutral Mayor to Chair the Council who would also carry out the popular ceremonial duties across the Borough.

This Council believes its current leadership model of governance is cost effective and provides best value for residents for both the civic and ceremonial functions of the Council.”