

Report of the Chief Executive

Future political management arrangements at the City of York Council

Summary

1. This report asks the Executive to consider and endorse an Agreement entered into by Leaders of the four political groups represented on the Council following the elections in May 2007, and to commission appropriate action to implement that Agreement.

Background

2. Following local elections held in May 2007, no one political group gained overall control of the Council. The Liberal Democratic Party won 19 seats, the Labour Party 18, the Conservative Party 8 and the Green Party 2.
3. Leaders of the four political groups represented on the Council met in advance of the Annual Council meeting to discuss and agree future political management arrangements for the Council. In doing so they recognised the need for the City to have a workable, durable, speedy and inclusive decision making process based on an agreed set of policy objectives and milestones, and identified a number of constitutional changes, policy reviews and changes to the allocation of seats on Council decision making bodies to facilitate this.
4. The Agreement was set out formally in a letter from Cllr Steve Galloway to the other three Group Leaders, Cllrs David Scott, Ian Gillies and Andy D'Agorne. The full text of the Agreement, together with responses from Cllrs Scott and Gillies, is appended to this report.

Consultation

5. This was a political matter and did not involve officers of the Council. Consultation took place within political groups.

Corporate Priorities

6. The Council's corporate priorities will remain the basis for officer action unless and until they are changed as a result of the policy review reports set out at Annex 2 of the Leaders' Agreement. Any review of the corporate priorities will be subject to an officer report to the appropriate Member panel or the Executive.

Implications

7. Implications arising from the policy prospectus and those constitutional changes where an officer report is required, will be included in individual review reports as they are brought forward.

Recommendations

8. Members are invited to:
 - 8.1 (Relating to the overall Agreement between party Leaders set out in the Appendix to the report)
 - a) Endorse the principles for future political management arrangements set out in Cllr Galloway's letter to Group Leaders;
 - b) Instruct the Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services to put in hand an early, independent review of member allowances with a view to any new rates coming into effect as soon as they have been agreed by full Council, but not backdated.

Reason: To recognise and support an effective system of political management for the Council and implement action as required by the Leaders' Agreement.
 - 8.2 (Relating to Annex 1 to the Agreement – Constitutional Changes)
 - a) Instruct the Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services to exercise her delegated authority to implement those changes to the Constitution set out at paragraph 1 of Annex 1 of the Agreement which command the unanimous support of all party groups;
 - b) Note the "constitutional changes to be subject to officer report and review during 2007" set out at paragraph 2 of Annex 1 to the Agreement and instruct the Head of Civic, Democratic & Legal Services to put in hand a programme of work to complete the reviews, report to full Council and implement agreed changes no later than May 2008 at the latest.

Reason: To implement agreed changes to the Constitution as required by the Leaders' Agreement.

8.3 (Relating to Annex 2 to the Agreement – Policy prospectus for a new York Council)

- a) Approve the policy prospectus set out at Annex 2 to the Agreement;
- b) Instruct Directors to note and implement the actions contained within the policy prospectus, subject to seeking appropriate Member authority as may be necessary;
- c) Instruct Directors to confirm on the Council's forward plan, dates on which the review reports specified in the prospectus will be brought forward for consideration by the Executive.

Reason: To implement Members' Agreement on policy issues.

8.4 Request that the Chief Executive provides a full update report to the Executive on actions arising from the Agreement by March 2008.

Reason: To allow Members formally to review progress.

Contact Details

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Chief Executive

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) None.

Wards Affected: All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Appendix: Letter from Cllr Steve Galloway to Group Leaders. This document includes:

- Annex 1: Constitutional Changes;
- Annex 2: Policy prospectus for a new York Council.