



OPEN REPORT ANNUAL COUNCIL

Annual Council – 23 May 2024

ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 2024/25 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Report of Director of Corporate & Customer Services and Monitoring Officer

Report Author and Contact Details

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Wards Affected

District Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider the election of the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2024/25 municipal year.

Recommendations

1. That a Member be elected Leader of the Council for the 2024/25 municipal year.
2. That a Member(s) be elected Deputy Leader(s) of the Council for the 2024/25 municipal year.

List of Appendices

None

Background Papers

Council Procedure Rule 3.4 – Part 4 of the Constitution

Consideration of report by Council or other committee

No

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from Press or Public

Yes

Election of Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2024/25 Municipal Year

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council has historically appointed a Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council by the convention that the posts would be filled by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest political group on the Council.
- 1.2 In 2022, the Council authorised the Monitoring Officer to insert a provision in the Council Procedure Rules (Part 4 of the Constitution) for the election of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
- 1.3 The Council Procedure Rules now state:

At the Annual Meeting, the Chairman will ask for nominations to the position of Leader of the Council for the ensuing municipal year. Once proposed and seconded, the Chairman will call for votes on the nominees.

If two or more people are nominated and there is not a clear majority of votes in favour of one person, then the name of the person with the least number of votes will be taken off the list and a new vote taken. The process will continue until there is a majority of votes for one person. The same process will be followed for election of a Deputy Leader of the Council.

At the conclusion of this process, the Leader of the Council will address the Annual Meeting.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Following the recent by-elections, the political groups of the Council have appointed the following Leaders and Deputy Leaders:

Political Group Name	Number of Members	Group Leader	Group Deputy Leader
Conservatives	10	Councillor Susan Hobson	Councillor Stuart Lees
Green Party	4	Councillor Neil Buttle	Councillor Laura Mellstrom
Labour and Councillor O'Brien	8	Councillor Bob Butcher	Councillor Lucy Peacock
Liberal Democrats	12	Councillor Steve Flitter	Councillor Peter Dobbs

- 2.2 No political group commands an overall majority of seats on the Council. As such, there is no default recommendation for the election to the roles of Leader and Deputy Leader.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

- 3.1 The Chairman of the Council will invite nominations from political groups for a councillor to be elected as Leader of the Council for the 2024/25 municipal year. The nominations must be proposed and seconded before any vote may take place.
- 3.2 In the event that there is more than one nomination for the position, the Chairman will call votes for and against, as well as abstentions, in respect of each councillor nominated. If more than two councillors are nominated, in each round of voting, the councillor with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated until a candidate secures a majority of votes from those councillors present. The same process will be followed for the election to the role of Deputy Leader of the Council.
- 3.3 Following the election of the Leader of the Council, the Chairman will invite the newly elected Leader to address the Council meeting.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 There has been no consultation in the preparation of this report as it is submitted to support a procedure of the Council to elect the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

5. Timetable for Implementation

- 5.1 The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader of the Council will take office immediately upon their election at the Annual Council meeting.

6. Policy Implications

- 6.1 The political leadership of the Council is a critical part of the authority's good governance, which enables the delivery of the Corporate Plan and our strategic priorities.

7. Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme makes provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances to the Leader and Deputy Leader. The approved budget for Special Responsibility Allowances for 2024/25 is £54,631, which reflects the Scheme of Members' Allowances approved by Council in January 2023 plus the indexed increases that are set out in the scheme. This budget includes provision for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances of £13,910 for the Leader and £6,260 for the Deputy Leader. As there is budgetary provision for these allowances, it is considered that the financial risk associated with these proposals is low.

8. Legal Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report beyond the provisions of the Constitution which are detailed elsewhere. The law requires that the Council make arrangements for the election to such positions but places no further rules or restrictions how these offices are to be filled.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

10. Climate Change Implications

10.1 There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

11. Risk Management

11.1 Failure to appoint a Leader and Deputy Leader would remove the interface between the political leadership of the Council and its officers. This may impact on the good governance of the Council and could be considered to weaken the ability of the authority to act in the best interests of residents and businesses in the district.

Report Authorisation

Approvals obtained from:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Paul Wilson	15/05/2024
Director of Resources/ S.151 Officer	Karen Henriksen	14/05/2024
Monitoring Officer (or Legal Services Manager)	Helen Mitchell/	14/05/2024