

**ELECTORAL CYCLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE
(Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Panel of the outcome of an internal consultation exercise on the Council's future electoral arrangements.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Panel held on 27th August 2008, Members were informed of legislative changes introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 enabling the Council to resolve to change its electoral cycle at certain fixed periods of time and to implement certain consequential changes. A copy of that report is attached for ease of reference.
- 2.2 Members were acquainted with details of an opportunity available to the District Council to move from elections by thirds to whole Council elections and the associated financial implications of such a move.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Arising from the last meeting of the Panel, Members agreed that an initial consultation exercise be undertaken with District Councillors in order to establish their views as to whether the Council should continue to hold elections by thirds, where elections for one third of District Council seats are held three years out of every four, or move to whole Council elections every four years. The Panel also requested that Members' views be sought on any other suggestions on the Council's electoral arrangements.
- 3.2 Few responses were received from Members but the consensus of opinion was to make no change to the existing electoral arrangements. No further suggestions were made for any other change to the Council's electoral arrangements.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As part of the exercise to identify savings in 2006, the Council agreed to include whole council elections in the schedule of reductions in expenditure.
- 4.2 If the Panel is minded to make no change to the existing electoral arrangements, it will be necessary for provision to be made in future budgets to accommodate the status quo.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Having regard to the comments received by Members following an initial consultation on changes to the Council's electoral arrangements, the Panel are invited
- (a) to consider whether to change the existing electoral arrangements or if the status quo is retained, to continue to hold elections by thirds; and
 - (b) recommend that the Cabinet and Council make the necessary budgetary variation in the forthcoming Medium Term Plan to meet the associated costs of continuing to hold elections by thirds.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Elections Panel - 27th August 2008.

Contact Officer: Lisa Jablonska, Central Services Manager ☎ 01480 388004.