

EX72. Community Council Elections 2021

The Executive considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which proposed that the 2021 Community Council elections were postponed to spring 2022.

The aim of the election process was to establish all of the 23 Community Councils in the area. The results from the most recent election process, in 2017, showed that interest in standing as a Community Councillor was, in the majority of wards, low. A series of workshops were held with the Community Council Forum in July and September 2021 to better understand why this might be. The main reasons were:-

- public indifference towards standing for office
- a lack of engagement with the community ahead of the election process
- a lack of understanding within communities of the role and value of Community Councils
- a perception within communities of a lack of success by Community Councils in achieving results
- a lack of support from the Council once established
- the timing of the election process

An engagement strategy had been developed in conjunction with the Forum that would allow the first five points to be addressed. However, the timing of the election was an issue which gave the Forum the most immediate concern as the engagement work which should have been carried out by now had been delayed due to covid. The Forum also strongly considered that holding an election in October/ November would be a mistake which would result in minimal interest. This view concurred with officers' views that engagement at this point in the year would not generate public interest.

It was proposed to postpone the election to allow the Council and Community Councils to work together to engage with their communities and allow the election to be held at a more suitable time for communities. The proposed postponement was to spring 2022.

Decision

The Executive agreed to postpone the 2021 Community Council elections to a date following the Local Government elections in May 2022.