

ITEM 6

DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES WORKING GROUP

20 OCTOBER 1999

A FEW PROPOSITIONS

Group Leaders have agreed to propose that the Council should determine its new democratic structures in accordance with the proposals in the draft bill 'Local leadership - local choice' in the current Council year for introduction by the beginning of the new Council year 2000/2001. A timetable for this work is included on the agenda for this meeting.

In order to take the discussion forward, the following seven propositions are put forward for the Working Group's consideration:

1. The Council will consider proposals for new democratic structures within the current municipal year for introduction by the next municipal year.
2. The options which will be put to the Council will be consistent with the expectations of the draft bill.
3. Any new structures adopted by the Council in the current time period will be interim in that they will need to be reviewed once new legislation is enacted.
4. The Council will therefore not consider the introduction of any system which involves a directly elected Mayor until new legislation has been enacted.
5. Therefore, the options which will be put to the Council for implementation in the current period will be based on the Assembly/Leader and Cabinet (Executive) model.
6. The basic elements of this model will be:
 - (a) An Assembly consisting of:
 - the Full Council;
 - the 'Council in Committee';

- scrutiny bodies including scrutiny boards and select committees; and
- committees covering the Council's quasi-judicial functions.

(b) An Executive:

- consisting of a maximum of eight Members, each with defined executive responsibilities; and
- supported by ratification arrangements for constitutional purposes until legislation is enacted.

7. Separate units of staff should support the Assembly and the Executive, each led by a senior manager reporting direct to the Chief Executive.

The Working Group is invited to consider these propositions and, in the light of its conclusions, to instruct officers to prepare further discussion documents exploring the choices available to the Council.