

### Detailed overview of alternative approaches to civic leadership

#### Elected Mayors

- A number of local authorities, in particular cities, operate under an Elected Mayor, which is a very different role to a civic mayor. Elected mayors have full decision making powers and provide corporate governance, strategic and operational leadership as well as the figurehead role. This is a significantly different governance approach to the current leadership arrangements within Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
- Under the Local Government Act 2000, there is a power for the community to petition the council to hold a referendum on whether local people should elect a mayor to lead the council. In order to call a referendum, a petition must be raised which is signed by 5% of local government electors for the area. In these circumstances, once appointed, the directly elected mayor is the head of the council's decision making body. For example, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has an elected mayor who has been elected by the public as the head of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and has the power to make decisions on aspects of policy and strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- An average cost for holding a referendum is in the region of £200k, (please note that this figure is based on the cost of running a standalone election because there are many similarities in the approach and thus the costs are likely to be comparable).
- There are 16 elected Mayors nationally and these are shown below;
  1. Dave Hodgson (Liberal Democrat), Mayor of Bedford (Bedford Borough Council)
  2. Martin Reeves (Labour), Mayor of Bristol (Bristol City Council)
  3. Mike Starkie (Independent), Mayor of Copeland (Copeland Borough Council)
  4. Ros Jones (Labour), Mayor of Doncaster (Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council)
  5. Peter Soulsby (Labour), Mayor of Leicester (Leicester City Council)
  6. Joe Anderson (Labour), Mayor of Liverpool (Liverpool City Council)
  7. Katie Allsop (Independent), Mayor of Mansfield (Mansfield District Council)

8. Dave Budd (Labour), Mayor of Middlesbrough (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
9. Norma Redfearn (Labour), Mayor of North Tyneside (North Tyneside Council)
10. Paul Dennett (Labour), Mayor of Salford (Salford City Council)
11. Gordon Oliver (Conservative), Mayor of Torbay (Torbay Council)
12. Peter Taylor (Liberal Democrat), Mayor of Watford (Watford Borough Council)
13. Phillip Glanville (Labour), Mayor of Hackney (Hackney London Borough Council)
14. Damien Egan (Labour), Mayor of Lewisham (Lewisham London Borough Council)
15. John Biggs (Labour), Mayor of Tower Hamlets (Tower Hamlets London Borough Council)
16. Rokhsana Fiaz (Labour), Mayor of Newham (Newham London Borough Council)

### **Leicester – A Case Study**

The City Mayor leads on all matters of constitution and governance, emergency planning and resilience, the Council's responsibilities for economic development, transport and re-generation. They are elected for a four year period.

The City Mayor's role, as set out in the constitution, is to be responsible for all of the Council's executive functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Council. Some of the key responsibilities include;

- Appointing the Deputy City Mayor and the Assistant City Mayors;
- Determining the scheme of delegation for the functions of the City Mayor and Deputy City Mayor and Assistant City Mayors and to maintain a written record of delegations;
- Publishing the Forward Plan;
- Chairing meetings of the City Mayor & Cabinet.

They are supported by nine members who form the executive team, comprised of deputy and assistant mayors.

The Deputy City Mayors support the City Mayor and have portfolios that include culture, leisure, sport and regulatory services, children and young people and the environment, public health and health integration.

There are a number of Assistant Mayors, with the following portfolios; adult social care and well-being, neighbourhood services, housing, communities and equalities, voluntary and community sector and supporting the entrepreneurial agenda.

The City Mayor has a website for more information;  
<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/city-mayor-peter-soulsby>.

### **Charter Trustees**

- In 1974, there were some areas where a former borough council was subsumed into a larger district council, and that larger district council did not apply for a borough status. The former borough council areas that were not “parished” were then required to appoint Charter Trustees (usually the District Councillors representing that area), who oversaw the civic office and recommended a mayor annually for the former borough area. This practice existed until recently in Lowestoft, but in 2017, Lowestoft formed its own Town Council and the responsibility of the Charter Trustees passed to the newly formed Town Council. There could not be a Charter Trustee approach for west Suffolk because it is a fully parished area.

### **Lord Mayors / Sheriff**

- The right to appoint a [Lord Mayor](#) is a rare honour, even less frequently bestowed than [city status](#). Lord Mayor status is granted by the Monarch, and generally as a mark of commemoration. The last time such status was awarded was in 2012, to mark the Queen’s Jubilee. It is understood that 12 places applied for the status through submission of formal bids and only Amagh, in Northern Ireland, was successful. Bids from Peterborough and Cambridge were both rejected.
- Currently, 23 cities in England have Lord Mayors:  
[Birmingham](#), [Bradford](#), [Bristol](#), [Canterbury](#), [Chester](#), [Coventry](#), [Exeter](#), [Kingston upon Hull](#), [Leeds](#), [Leicester](#), [Liverpool](#), [London](#), [Manchester](#), [Newcastle upon Tyne](#), [Norwich](#), [Nottingham](#), [Oxford](#), [Plymouth](#), [Portsmouth](#), [Sheffield](#), [Stoke-on-Trent](#), the [City of Westminster](#) and [York](#). ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayors\\_in\\_England#Lord\\_Mayors](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayors_in_England#Lord_Mayors))
- The role of a Lord Mayor is primarily an ambassadorial one, focused on representing the people both at home and abroad and is predicated on political neutrality. There are many similarities to the role of a civic mayor;
  - Presiding over civic functions and social occasions as the ceremonial head of the council;
  - Hosting events, receiving and welcoming members of the Royal Family, dignitaries and visitors, at all times observing the recognised protocol;
  - Taking part in functions as a representative of the people or the council;

- Working proactively for the mayoral charities and supporting many other charities;
- Promoting and raising the profile of many council initiatives and projects of a charitable and voluntary nature that benefit citizens;
- Encouraging active citizenship and participation by all;
- Maintaining good relationships and working with city faith organisations, attending a variety of religious occasions and making visits to groups and places of worship;
- Maintaining close links with the armed forces and veterans' organisations;
- Supporting voluntary activities that benefit local communities and people as a whole;
- Celebrating local success and recognising achievement both internal and external to the Council;
- Joining citizens in community events.

### **Sheffield – A Case Study**

Green Party councillor Magid Mah was elected as the youngest ever Lord Mayor of Sheffield in May 2018. A former child refugee, he is particularly popular with young people, with a strong presence on social media and has been welcomed as the “coolest” Mayor. He has strong political views and has gained lots of media attention since he was elected.

The post is a ceremonial role, meaning the Mayor must represent the Council and the city, speaking at a range of functions and undertaking ceremonial duties but this has not stopped him in being vocal to make changes in the way the Council operates or in advocating views.

The role of the Mayor is separated in the constitution under ‘Ceremonial’ and ‘Chairing the Council meeting’. The ceremonial role is undertaken through promoting public involvement in the Council’s activities and attending various civic and ceremonial functions.

The Mayor supports three charities in Sheffield; Flourish Sheffield, Sheffield Women’s Counselling and Therapy Service and the Unity Gym Project.

The Mayor also engages with several community groups supporting marginalised groups in the area, and promotes equality and diversity. Some of the events attended this year include, the Somali Celebration Evening and the Caribbean Sports Club Family Fun Day.

- In some councils, historic charters have preserved specific civic roles. For example, in Norwich, as well as the Lord Mayor (who acts as the Council Chairman and performs civic duties), there is a Sheriff. The Sheriff is an eminent “local person of dignity” and is appointed annually by the Council. Past Sheriffs have included professors from the University of East Anglia, Norwich City footballers, and former Council staff. They undertake some elements of the civic role, attending functions and events. Such a role is validated by a historic charter and it

may be difficult to give it such validity if it is was a role the Council itself created.

### **A 'People's Mayor'**

- In theory, there is nothing to prevent the council from creating a form of civic leadership role to act as a figurehead of the council in the community, i.e. a non-elected councillor. A formal process would need to be developed to determine how such a figurehead would be nominated and approved, and what their role would be. However, there are a number of potential challenges to this, as follows:
  - Only the mayor or the chairman should wear the civic regalia, including chains of office. This could cause friction where a "civic figurehead" is attending an event as well as the mayor or chairman; the mayor or chairman would have legal precedence. A parallel example could be in Mansfield, where following a referendum, they changed the role to an Executive Mayor of Governance. The elected mayor did perform some elements of what may be seen as "civic life" and wore the Mansfield chain of office when doing so. This, however, resulted in an argument between the mayor and chairman over the chains of office which required intervention from a government minister to resolve the dispute.
  - Chains of office give the mayor and chairman a degree of gravitas, and recognition from communities, in essence, people like having their picture taken with the mayor or chairman. If a civic leader did not wear a chain, this may not have the same gravitas. This can be overcome, to a degree, for example, the Deputy Lord Lieutenants wear large medals/broches recognising their office.
  - It is expected that the chairman and mayor demonstrate the highest standards of conduct, they are above reproach. Where such a post holder is not a councillor, it could be difficult to hold them to account should they behave in a manner that is not suitable. Similarly, it could also be challenging if the individual expressed views that the council may strongly disagree with.
  - Protocols exist regarding invitations and behaviours for the civic office. There may be concern that confusion could arise regarding invites and statuses, particularly if an informal, unofficial civic leadership role was formed that may not receive appropriate recognition from other civic offices and dignitaries and importantly, from communities.
  - The title of "Mayor of the Council" or "Chairman of the Council" can easily be understood even if residents do not understand exactly what it means. This may become more confusing if there were separate roles and people may not understand the purpose or meaning of a community civic leader.

- Civic offices usually seek to raise money for charity, organise events for the figurehead and may also provide services to support the role holders. Splitting the civic role may lead to questions as to the appropriateness of using public funds for a role that is not an “official” post within the council, and may cause difficulties with audit and governance of the funding if outside the main council financial structures.