

Motion supporting the Committee Model in the Newham Governance Referendum

This Branch notes that:

The Newham Governance Referendum on 6th May 2021 will offer the electorate a choice between confirming the current Directly-Elected Mayor & Cabinet Model and adopting the Committee Model of local governance.

This Branch believes that this is a very different and updated approach from previous old-style Council Committee Models, which a number of Councils have introduced successfully and that:

- with the Committee Model there is much greater equality between council members, with less of a hierarchy, as the council leader and committee chairs are elected by full council and all the councillors belong to a decision-making committee;
- because all the councillors take part in the decision-making process, there are more points of contact through which their party members and the public can influence decisions;
- as all councillors have a role in decision making, there is less reason for in-groups and out-groups to form - with the latter feeling excluded or like second-class councillors;
- with members of committees being obliged to co-operate, there is less likelihood of antagonistic factions developing;
- as every councillor has a role in decision making and seeing decisions enacted, they have collective responsibility for the council's actions and cannot escape accountability to their party members and the public;
- the majority party maintains a dominant position in decision making because councillors are allocated to committees proportionally, according to party representation in the council;
- the council leader has an important role as spokesperson for the council, as facilitator of council business, and as a co-ordinator between the various committees and officers, but is accountable to full council and can be replaced by it;
- full council retains a number of key functions, including responsibility for the overall policy framework, the corporate plan, the budget and the setting of council tax;
- there are provisions for taking emergency measures and avoiding deadlock, so that the council remains fully effective at all times.

This Branch therefore advises its members to campaign and vote for the Committee Model in the Newham Governance Referendum.