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**Media  
Release**

**For Immediate Release**

**Council to consult residents on potential change to how councillors are elected**

Swindon Borough Council is running a public consultation on a potential change to its election cycle, with the option to move away from the current 'by thirds' election model to a 'whole council' model instead.

Residents of the borough will be encouraged to voice their preference between the two proposed models via a postal consultation form sent to every household from 16 September. The consultation will end on 25 October.

The current election cycle used by the Council currently takes place in 'thirds'. In this model, councillors are elected for a term of four years, with one third being elected for three consecutive years which is then followed by a fourth year when there are no elections.

The proposed alternative model, 'whole council elections', would mean that all seats on the Council will be elected at the same time, once every four years. Currently, this model is used by 70 per cent of unitary authorities across the country.

The biggest difference with 'whole council elections' is that there would be no borough elections between the four-yearly elections apart from by-elections, which would be triggered when an elected borough councillor does not complete their four-year term.

At a meeting held by the Council earlier this year, councillors agreed to hold a consultation on potentially changing the Council's election cycle, which will be carried out by council officers independently from politicians.

After the consultation period has finished, councillors will consider all the feedback received from the public consultation and make a decision on which model to use at the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 21 November 2019.

As part of the consultation, every household in the borough will receive an envelope through the door that will contain a letter explaining the consultation along with an explanatory leaflet and a pre-paid envelope to return their opinion on the potential change. The letters will be delivered over a period of a week starting from the 16 September.

All residents who currently meet the criteria to vote in a local election will be asked to take part in the consultation. It will be run independently by election specialists Electoral Reform Services, who will provide the results of the postal consultation to councillors before they make a decision.

Parish councils, local businesses, community groups and other interested parties who engage with the Council will also be asked for their opinions on the potential change and can submit their comments from today (4 Sep) by visiting:  
[www.swindon.gov.uk/electioncycles](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/electioncycles).

Further information about the consultation and how to get in touch with the Elections team can also be found on the Council's website.

Matt Box, Swindon Borough Council's Head of Elections and Democracy, said: "This consultation is an opportunity for the people of the borough to have a say on how they vote for their local councillors in the future and how their local area is run.

"I would encourage everyone to take part in the consultation via the postal forms sent to every household and provide feedback so that councillors can understand the views of residents before making their decision."

**ENDS**