

## Constitution Working Party - Consultation on Prayers - Responses

The Transformation & Resources Scrutiny Committee have a Working Party, whose role is to review the Constitution. One of the elements that the Working Party has been tasked with is to consider is the saying of prayers at Full Council. A questionnaire was issued to all elected members and responses were on the evening of the Full Council meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February.

18 responses were received, giving a return rate of 30%. A simple breakdown for each question is as follows:

What did those responding consider to be the start of each Full Council Meeting:

- After prayers have been said and the announcement of the first agenda item – 7 (38%)
- The entrance of the Mayoral party and prayers being said signified the start of the meeting – 11 (62%)

When asked about whether a reasonable approach would be a distinct session for prayers 15 minutes prior to each Full Council Meeting the responses were similarly split:

- Yes – 9 (50%)
- No – 7 (39%)
- Not answered or No opinion – 2 (11%)

Regarding the effect of a decision being taken about prayers, which the respondent was not happy with extracted a varying response:

- No Effect – 11 (62%)
- Withdrawing Prayers at 7.00pm would have a negative effect – 3 (16%)
- Keeping prayers at 7.00pm would have a negative effect – 2 (11%)
- Not answered – 2 (11%)

Finally, suggestions for other elements for the Working Party to consider included:

- Any minutes silences to be held after the apologies.
- Prayers should not be confined to Christian themes.
- Established Case law
- Human Rights
- Secular Principals of Government
- Working Group established to look at prayer content
- Discrimination – One councillor now unable to attend Full Council as feels discriminated against due to their non-belief