

Councillors at Worcester City Council have backed a proposed switch from major decisions being made by the Leader and the Cabinet to a committee-based system.

A motion brought by Conservative group leader Cllr Marc Bayliss and seconded by Green Party leader Cllr Louis Stephen was agreed at a full council meeting last week.

The new arrangements are to come into force in May 2017. Worcester currently has 17 Conservative members of the council, 16 Labour and two Greens.

The local authority said work would now begin on detailed proposals for how the new system would be set up, what committees would need to be formed and how many members of each party would sit on them.

There will also need to be a review of the council's constitution and a review of members' allowances, it added.

These proposals will be brought to the full council meeting in February and there will then be a public consultation on them.

Worcester said a range of options for committee structures would be considered. "The traditional approach has been to set up a committee to make major decisions for each of a council's main services – for example, housing, economic development, cleaner and greener services. Bigger issues such as the annual budget would still be agreed at a meeting of the full council."

A cross-party scrutiny group is currently investigating the council's governance arrangements.

The city council had a committee system in place until 2001. After a 12-month experimental

period it then adopted the current Leader and Cabinet system in 2002, as required by national legislation at that time.

The Localism Act 2011 gave councils the right to change their governance arrangements. Under the Act, the new system that the council brings in has to remain in place for at least five years.