

Directly elected mayors, local governance, and combined authorities

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- The national context
- Arguments for and against directly elected mayors
- Impacts of mayoral governance in Bristol
- Mayors and combined authorities



The national context

- Mayor of London/Greater London Authority created 2000
- Local Government Act 2000
 - Sixteen authorities adopted Directly Elected Mayors (DEMs) up to 2011
- Localism Act 2011
 - Bristol adopted DEM in referendum in May 2012; first mayor elected November 2012
- Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016
 - Opportunities for localities to bid to Whitehall for additional responsibilities



Combined authorities

- Greater Manchester
- Sheffield City Region
- West Yorkshire (without DEM)
- Liverpool city Region
- North East
- West Midlands (proposed)
- Tees Valley (proposed)
- North Midlands (proposed)



Arguments for directly elected mayors

- Visibility – citizens and others know who the leader of the city is
- Legitimacy and accountability – arising from the direct election process
- Strategic focus and authority to decide (Metro-mayors)
- Better able to wield ‘soft power’
- Stable leadership
- Outward facing leadership
- Potential to attract new people into politics
- A mayor is leader of the place, rather than the leader of the council

Rationale for directly elected mayors

The Government believes that elected mayors can provide democratically accountable strong leadership which is able to instigate real change for the benefit of our largest cities. Mayors will be clearly identifiable as the leader of the city and will have a unique mandate to govern as they will be directly elected by all local electors. People will know who is responsible for a decision and where the buck stops.

Elected mayors would help strengthen the governance of the city. With a four year term of office, and a direct mandate to lead, the mayor would be able to focus on long-term strategic decisions - such as bringing together different agencies to make public services work better, and attracting jobs and investment to the city

A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act 2011

Arguments against directly elected mayors

- Concentration of too much power in the hands of one person
 - Lack of representation of alternative views
 - Overload/bottlenecks
 - Power shifts to advisors and officers
- No power of recall – how to get rid of a bad mayor?
- Focus on personality
- Cost of having a mayor
- Power remains in central government – mayors are a distraction from this much more important debate

The Bristol Civic Leadership Project

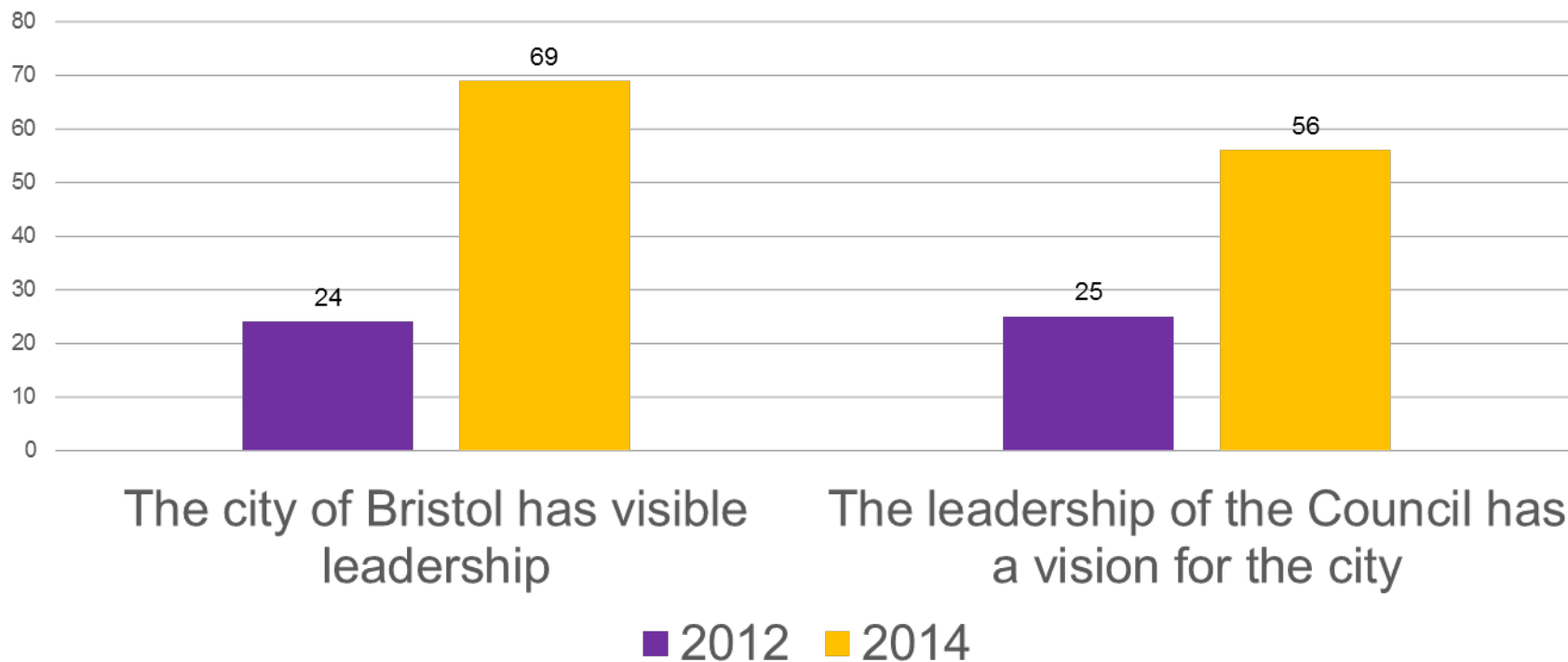
- Two main aims:
 - What difference does a DEM make?;
 - What steps can be taken to ensure that the introduction of a DEM brings about benefits and avoids potential disadvantages?
- Surveys of residents ‘before’ and ‘after’
 - September 2012 and January 2014
- Surveys of civic leaders ‘before’ and ‘after’
 - September 2012 and December 2014
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Focus groups and workshops
- <http://bristolcivicleadership.net/>

🌟 Realms of place based leadership



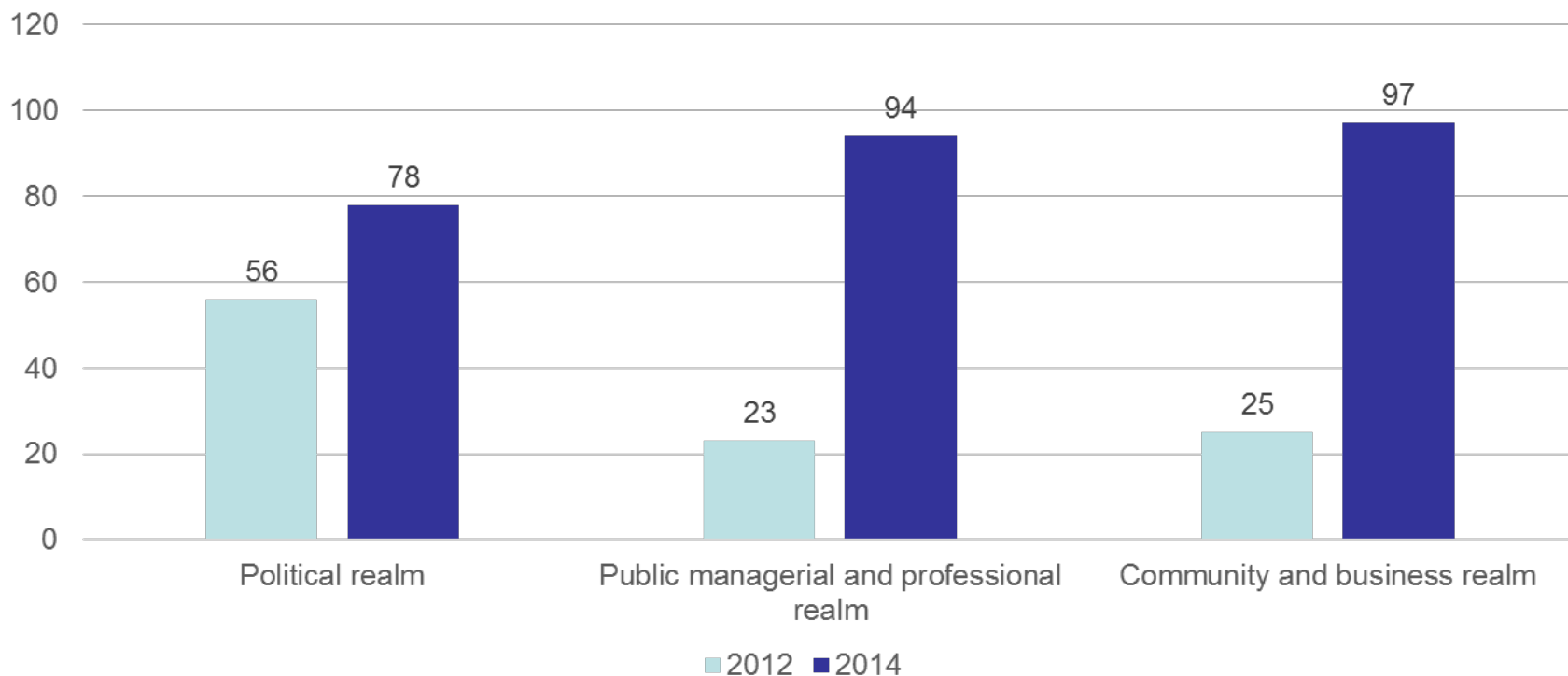
Leadership visibility

Citizens' Panel survey, 2012 and 2014, leadership in the community, per cent agree



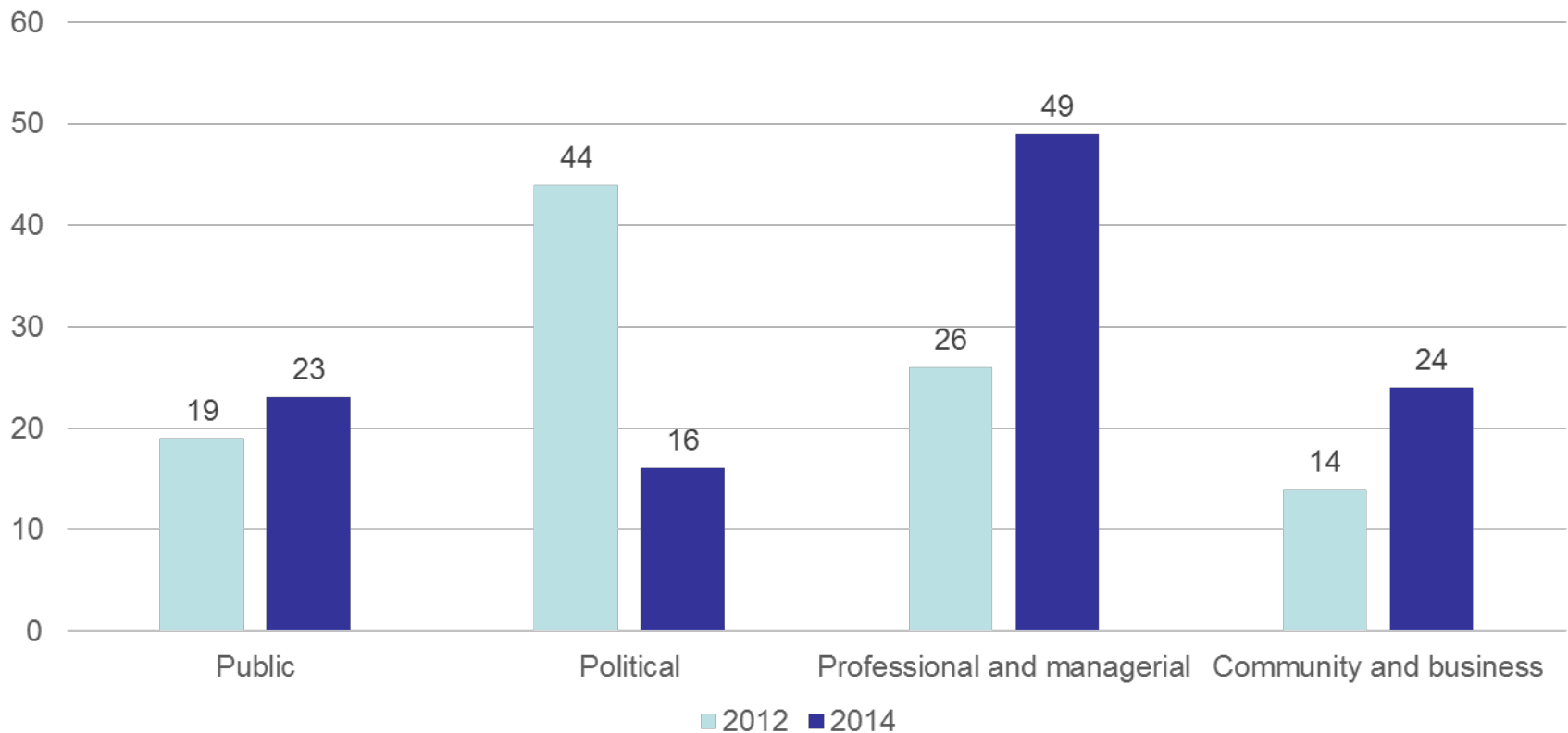
Leadership visibility

Civic leaders' survey, The city of Bristol has visible leadership,
% agree, by realm, 2012 and 2014



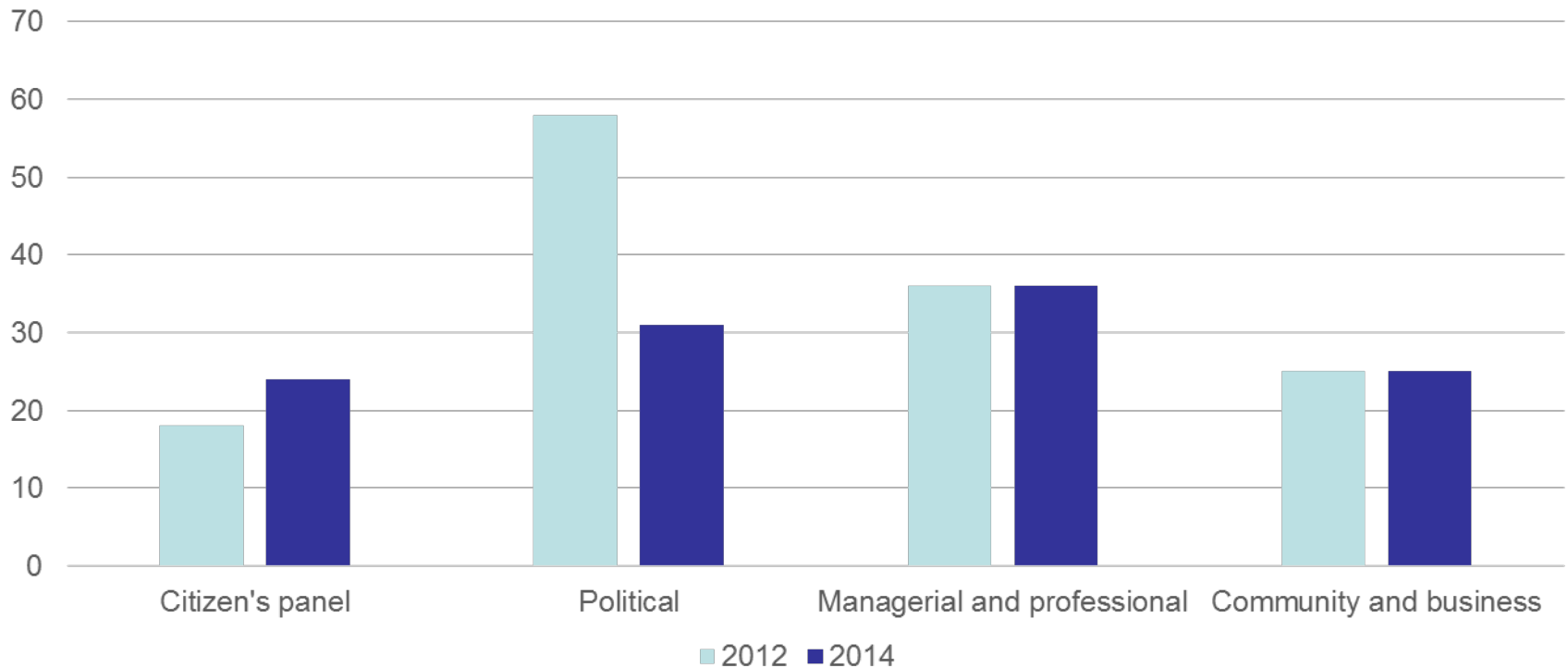
Trust in decision-making

I trust the council to make good decisions, 2012 and 2014,
citizen's panel and realm of leadership



Representation

City wide views are well represented by the council, Citizen's Panel and realm of leadership, 2012 and 2014



Different realms, different views

- ‘Seventy elected councillors can stand up and say “You’ve got it wrong” and legally he or she can turn round and say “I hear what you say but the law says I make the decisions”. And so one person can overturn the will of an elected council. That is not democracy.’ (Councillor)
- ‘We wanted someone who would not worry about what people thought of him and would love the city enough to do things that might not be popular.’ (Business representative)

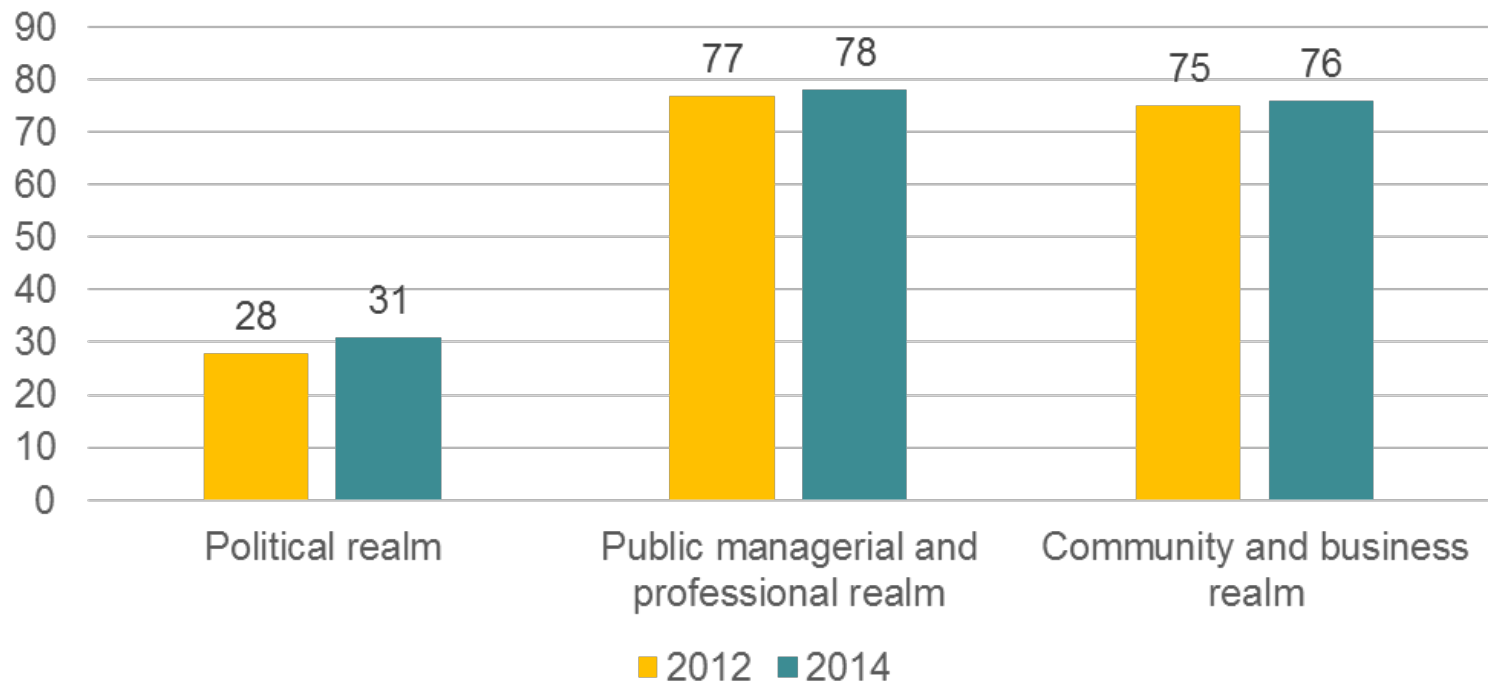
Different realms, different views

- ‘From some points of view, it has been a very freeing and liberating experience. Officers still work closely with members, but there is a clearer line of sight re decision-making, and more clarity about where we are going.’
(Council Officer)



🌟 Different realms, different views

Civic leaders' survey, A directly elected mayor will/has improve/d the leadership of the city, by realm, 2012 and 2014



Features of CAs

- Existence of directly elected mayor
- Make up of cabinet
- Overview and scrutiny
- Powers



Reflections and issues

- Representation across and within an area
- Links to LEPs
- Sufficient powers
- Relationships with PCC
- Popularity with different realms

