

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Governance Review Member Group

held on Monday, 5th October, 2009 at East Committee Room - Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe, CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillor A Kolker (Chairman)

Councillors D Cannon, R Cartlidge, R Parker and R West

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ranfield.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cannon declared a personal interest in the proceedings as a Crewe Charter Trustee and by virtue of voting for a single Town Council for the urban area of Crewe during the consultation process.

Councillor Cartlidge declared a personal interest in the proceedings on the following grounds; he was a Crewe Charter Trustee, he lived in the un-parished area of Crewe, had signed the petition calling for a single Town Council and had voted for the same during the consultation process.

Councillor Parker declared a personal interest in the proceedings on the basis that he was a Crewe Charter Trustee and because his details had been included on Crewe Community Governance Review material circulated by the Conservative Group.

19 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

In accordance with Procedure Rules No. 11 and 35, a total period of 10 minutes was allocated for members of the public to address the Sub Committee on any matter relevant to its work.

Mr Peter Kent representing the Voice for Crewe Campaign indicated that those seeking the creation of a Town Council for Crewe were not politically motivated. He stated that although the Campaign had originated from discussions at a meeting of the local Labour Party, it had gained cross party support and had been bolstered by individuals who had had no association with local government in the past. It was his view that it was incorrect to consider the Campaign as political in nature; rather it was a tool for constitutional change.

Councillor Dorothy Flude referred to the stakeholder responses reported on the agenda, drawing Members attention to the seventeen which had supported the call for a single Town Council. Two of those respondents had subsequently contacted her to question why there had been no opportunity for the organisations to identify themselves on the questionnaires. She also referred to the statutory guidance which the Sub Committee would adhere to; stating that at no time during any of the meetings held in respect of Crewe Community Governance Review, had the matter of community identity been discussed: an issue which she intended to raise with the Borough Solicitor outside the meeting.

Councillor Terry Beard stated that in many people's opinion the voting paper had been flawed which had resulted in numerous constituents questioning him on how they should respond to the consultation in order to accurately record their vote. In his view, the results had shown that the four-parish proposal was not supported and he asked the Sub Committee to disregard this option and focus on whether the case for a Town Council had been proven, which he felt it had.

Councillor Westwood commented that whilst there had been an intensive campaign in favour of a single Town Council, the same could not be said for the four-parish proposal. However, a significant number of individuals had voted for this option and it could not, therefore be dismissed at this stage. He anticipated that support for the option would have been greater had it been given the same level of publicity.

20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2009 be approved as a correct record.

21 CREWE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FORMULATING THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

The Sub Committee considered a briefing paper based on the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government which set out the points that needed to be taken into consideration in formulating the Council's draft recommendation.

RESOLVED: That the procedures to be followed in conducting the Review based on the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government be noted.

22 CREWE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FIRST STAGE CONSULTATION

Stage 1 of the consultation process had concluded on 30 September 2009. The results and the feedback received from stakeholder organisations were submitted to Members for consideration i.e.

- a) The petition signed by 10% of the electorate requesting a Town Council for Crewe;
- (b) Results of the consultation with electors;
- (c) Results of the consultation exercise with stakeholders;
- d) Other representations received;
- (e) Notes of the two public meetings held on 1 September 2009; and

- (f) Feedback from the Crewe Charter Trustees meeting held on 24 September 2009.

The Sub Committee was invited to consider the report and forward its views to the Governance and Constitution Committee on 15 October 2009 in accordance with the recommendation set out on page 17 of the agenda.

Clarification was sought on the options now before the Sub Committee. The Borough Solicitor explained that Members could make specific recommendations to the Governance and Constitution Committee in respect of the creation of a town/parish council for Crewe or some other form of community governance, or it could conclude that it was unable to reach a decision and defer the matter to the Committee for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That

(a) the matter be remitted to the Governance and Constitution Committee together with the results of the Review without any recommendation from the Sub Committee; and

(b) information be garnered on other alternatives for community governance for discussion by the Governance and Constitution Committee.

23 NEXT STEPS AND STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

The final report on the agenda contained a project plan which set out the various steps to be completed as part of the Community Governance Review. Members were invited to note the proposed timescale for the remainder of the process and agree the format for the Stage 2 Consultation exercise.

RESOLVED: That the timetable for the Stage Two Consultation process put before the Sub Committee be accepted and that the consultation process proposed (i.e. Council Website, electronic feedback form, public notices, press releases and correspondence with stakeholders) be agreed.

24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That the date of the next meeting be held on 10 November 2009 at Crewe commencing at 2pm.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.40 pm

Councillor A Kolker