

COUNCIL MEETING – 16TH DECEMBER 2010

Extract from the Minutes of the Constitution Committee Meeting on 18th November 2010

31 NOTICE OF MOTION

The Committee considered the following Motion which had been proposed by Councillor D Flude and seconded by Councillor T Beard at the Council meeting on 14th October 2010 and had been referred to the Committee for consideration:

“Following the resolution of this Council on 25th January 2010 when it was resolved :-

“To accept the vote from the people of Crewe and to reject a Town Council for Crewe at this time”;

in the light of the passage of time and the proposed Special Expenses Community Charge for the Town Crewe;

will this Council now return to the matters considered on the 25th January and ask the Constitution Committee to undertake a further Community Governance Review for Crewe.”

In considering this matter, Members were conscious that if the Committee were to undertake a further review within a very short timescale of the conclusion of the last review (in January 2010) for the unparished area of Crewe, the Council could receive public criticism for the use of further financial resources for this purpose, particularly in the current financial climate. In addition, given the wording of the Council's previous decision in accepting the vote of the people of Crewe, another review at this time could be seen as ignoring the democratic outcome of the previous, recent review, which may also leave the Council open to criticism.

Careful consideration would also need to be given to the staff resources required and the timing of such a review, so that no risk was introduced to the efficient conduct of other key democratic processes such as the May 2011 elections; the anticipated Alternative Vote referendum; the implementation of significant ward boundary changes as a result of the pending outcome of the Cheshire East Boundary Review by the Boundary Commission; and the statutory review of all Polling Places by November 2011.

The Wilmslow Community Governance Review was also still ongoing and may not conclude until February 2011, due to the implications of the Cheshire East Boundary Review. It was considered sensible to conduct only one review at a time, which allowed for the most efficient use of resources and allowed time to incorporate lessons learnt and experience gained.

The Committee also needed to bear in mind that if a further petition were received in the near future, then the Council would be under a duty to conduct and complete a Community Governance Review within a timescale of 12 months. This would be very difficult to manage if the Council was mid-way through another review at that time.

Rather than conducting Community Governance Reviews in a piecemeal fashion, it was suggested that the Committee may wish to take a more holistic approach by considering the needs of the Borough as a whole.

RESOLVED

That Council be recommended to defer any further consideration of the subject matter of the Motion until after the May 2011 elections, at which time Council also be asked urgently to consider undertaking a holistic Borough-wide review of community governance arrangements in Cheshire East.