

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the
Community Governance Review Sub-Committee
held on Tuesday, 13th March, 2012 at Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings,
Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillor D Marren (Chairman)
Councillor P Groves (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors G Baxendale, R Cartlidge, B Murphy and P Whiteley

In attendance

Councillors D Flude and S Hogben

Officers

Brian Reed, Democratic and Registration Services Manager
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services Officer
Rose Hignett, Senior Electoral Services Officer
Jamie Oliver, Communications Officer

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

32 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Honorary Alderman Peter Kent expressed his thanks for the way in which the ballot of Crewe electors had been conducted. He went on to say that he had written to the Registration Service and Business Manager with suggestions for the warding of a new Crewe Parish in the event that this was created. His suggestion was that the existing Borough wards be used for the parish wards, with two parish councillors for each Borough councillor, but that the unparished area of Leighton comprise a separate parish ward with one parish councillor. This would result in a parish council of 21 members, which was broadly in line with official guidance. He also suggested that elections to the parish council could be held in November, 2012 at the same time as the election of Police Commissioners. Finally, he urged Cheshire East Council to arrange a seminar for prospective parish councillors for Crewe and asked that the Council consider what support it could give to the parish council in the initial stages.

33 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th December 2012 be approved as a correct record.

34 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 process to be followed in conducting the Community Governance Review and the matters to be taken into consideration by the Council in formulating a draft recommendation.

RESOLVED

That the procedures to be followed in conducting the Community Governance Review, and the matters to be taken into consideration in formulating a draft recommendation, be noted.

35 CREWE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FIRST STAGE CONSULTATION

Members considered the outcome of the Stage 1 consultation which had concluded on 29th February 2012. The Sub-Committee now had to determine its advice to the Constitution Committee on the formulation of the Council's draft recommendation. The Constitution Committee would be meeting on 22nd March 2012 and would consider the Sub-Committee's advice at that meeting.

In addition to the briefing paper considered earlier in the meeting, Members had before them the outcome of the ballot of local electors and other representations received from the public and stakeholders during the first round of consultation.

The initial phase of consultation had included written representations received in response to public notices, specific invitations, a website tool and information leaflets. Two public meetings had been held in September to give members of the public the opportunity to learn more about the review and to express their views in a public forum. Further opportunities had subsequently been provided to provide information at various community events during November and December 2011. The Council's website had also been used as a source of information and as a tool for people to use to record their views. Finally, a voting paper had been sent to electors in Crewe to be returned by 29th February.

The ballot of local electors had taken place throughout the month of February 2012 and the result was as follows:

Area	No of voting papers received	'Yes'	'No'	Rejected
Crewe	12,135	10,741	1,381	13
Leighton (unparished)	78	69	9	0
TOTAL	12,213	10,810	1,390	13

There was therefore a clear majority in favour of a single town council for Crewe, both within the unparished area as a whole and in the unparished area of Leighton taken separately.

The vote represented a 32% turnout and Members of the Sub-Committee were satisfied that this was sufficient to represent the views of the electors of Crewe.

Members also had before them a summary of other public and stakeholder responses to the initial stage of consultation. These also showed a clear preference for a single town council.

Members then considered whether the potential cost implications of setting up and running a town council had been adequately highlighted and addressed in the consultation publicity and were satisfied that they had been.

Finally, reference was made to a potential mechanism under the Localism Act 2011 which would allow the introduction of a form of community governance known as a community trust. Members considered whether it was appropriate to include this option in the current review. It was noted that there was insufficient information on community trusts at present and that guidance was awaited. Indeed, the option of a community trust was neither contemplated nor available when the community governance process began and it could be considered inappropriate to include it as an option at a point when the review was well advanced. Given this, and the fact that the consultation response so far had not favoured any form of governance option other than a single town council, Members concluded that it would be inappropriate to consider community trusts as part of the current review.

In considering the results of the Stage 1 consultation and formulating its recommendations, the Sub-Committee had regard to the need to ensure that community governance within the area under review would be:

- Reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
- Effective and convenient.

Members considered the detailed electoral and warding arrangements for a parish council. It was suggested that the number of wards for the new parish should be six and that the existing Borough ward areas could be used for this, except that the unparished area of Leighton could be included in the St Barnabas parish ward. It was further suggested that the number of parish councillors for each ward could mirror that of the respective Borough ward. This would produce a parish council of 10 councillors.

Members agreed that the new parish council should be recommended to consider its designation as a Town Council.

It was suggested that the first formal elections to the new parish council should take place in May 2015, the date of the next ordinary parish elections throughout the Borough. Members had regard to the fact that the Council had powers to appoint a temporary parish council up to 2015 and it was suggested that the members of the Crewe Local Service Delivery Committee could be appointed as the members of the temporary parish council. A temporary parish council would have all the legal powers of an elected parish council in that it could appoint a clerk and other staff, exercise powers, provide services and raise a precept.

Subject to the outcome of the consideration of this matter by the Constitution Committee and full Council, the Stage 2 consultation would take place over a three week period in May. A further meeting of the Sub-Committee would be arranged to consider the arrangements for the Stage 2 consultation.

RESOLVED

That the Constitution Committee be advised that pursuant to Section 87 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; and having regard to the provisions of the Department for Communities and Local Government and Electoral Commission Guidance, issued in April 2008, for the conduct of Community Governance Reviews:

1. Having taken into account
 - a. the results of the consultation with the electors of the unparished area of Crewe which shows that a majority of those who returned their ballot papers were in favour of a new parish council for their area;
 - b. the results of the consultation exercise with stakeholders and the representations from other interested persons;

- c. the outcomes of the public meetings held in Crewe and subsequent publicity and consultation arrangements; and
- d. the information on existing community governance arrangements in the area concerned and the alternative forms of community governance which might have been appropriate for the area in question;

2. Council be advised

- a. that the interests of effective and convenient local government and community identities in the area would be served by the creation of a new parish with a parish council for the unparished area of Crewe and that parish council be advised to consider its designation as a Town Council;
- b. that the parish should be divided into 6 wards for the purposes of election to the Parish Council, such wards to be coterminous with the existing Borough wards except that the unparished part of Leighton (Polling District 3FJ5) be incorporated into the St Barnabas parish ward, and that each ward should have the same number of parish councillors as Borough Councillors as follows:

St Barnabas (inc part of Leighton)	1
Crewe Central	1
Crewe North	1
Crewe South	2
Crewe East	3
Crewe West	2
TOTAL	10

- c. that the first year of elections to the new parish council should be 2015;
- d. that in the intervening period, as soon as the community review governance process allows, a temporary parish council be appointed by the Borough Council, to comprise the members of the Crewe Local Service Delivery Committee; and
- e. that these proposals form the basis of a second stage of public consultations and that the Boundary Commission be informed of these proposals.

36 NEXT STEPS AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

Members gave further consideration to the project plan which set out the remaining stages of the review. Members noted in particular the timetable for conducting the Stage 2 consultation which would take place over a three week period in May.

RESOLVED

That the project plan be noted and updated further as appropriate.

37 MACCLESFIELD COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members gave preliminary consideration to the timing of the next community governance review, which would relate to the unparished area of Macclesfield.

RESOLVED

That a draft project plan be submitted to the next meeting for consideration.

38 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To be agreed with the Chairman following consultation with Members.

The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and concluded at 4.50 pm

Councillor D Marren (Chairman)