

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the
Community Governance Review Sub-Committee
held on Thursday, 22nd November, 2012 at West Committee Room -
Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe, CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

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

Councillors S Hogben (for Cllr Jackson) and B Murphy

Officers

Lindsey Parton, Registration Service and Business Manager
Rose Hignett, Senior Electoral Services Officer
Paul Mountford, Democratic Services Officer

Apologies

Councillors G Baxendale, J Jackson and P Whiteley

62 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

63 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

64 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of 4th September 2012 be approved as a correct record.

65 RE-ORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE (CREWE) ORDER 2012 AND MINI REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PARISH OF LEIGHTON

The Sub-Committee considered a report on the outcome of the mini-review for the Parish of Leighton.

Council at its meeting held on 11th October 2012 had agreed that the draft re-organisation of Community Governance (Crewe) Order 2012 be updated as required and submitted to Council on 13th December for approval following a mini-review of the electoral arrangements for the

Parish of Leighton arising from the proposed boundary change to the Leighton Urban Ward.

Paragraph 10 of the Order related to the area of Leighton parish and stated:

"The area of the Leighton parish shall be varied to include within the Leighton Urban Ward of that parish the unparished part of the borough ward of Leighton (polling district 1FJ4) as indicated by the red line on the map."

The Sub-Committee was asked to consider advice from the Boundary Commission that it was the usual practice for alterations to parish boundaries to co-incide with the parish council elections. In the case of Leighton Parish, 407 electors would be added to the Leighton Urban Ward as a result of the re-organisation order, which meant that those electors would be required to pay a parish precept for two years, without having had a vote on who was representing them, as the next ordinary elections were not scheduled until May 2015.

There are 8 seats for the Leighton Urban Ward (Leighton Parish), only 3 of which had been filled by election on 5 May 2011. There were 4 seats currently vacant. The Grouped Parish Council had a total of 22 seats.

Minshull Vernon and District Parish Council had been consulted on the proposed boundary change and at a meeting on 12 September 2012 had agreed its support of the proposal that the unparished area comprising polling district 1FJ4 form part of the existing Leighton Parish (Leighton Urban ward).

On 24th September, the Parish Council had considered the current level of elector representation and the potential impact of 407 additional electors being added as part of the Crewe Community Governance Review. The Grouped Parish Council was of the view that no additional representation, over and above the current 22 parish councillors, was required. Members of the Grouped Parish Council had also discussed the possibility of elections in the Leighton Urban Ward in April 2013 and had asked the parish clerk to convey their hope that the cost of such an election would not be passed on to the Parish Council on the basis that the governance review was an initiative by Cheshire East Council and therefore it should be the Borough Council which ought to bear the cost.

Based on the feedback from the Parish Council, and given the relatively high levels of electoral representation, it was proposed that no increase in the number of parish councillors was required.

In respect of the cost of elections, the Council's policy was for Cheshire East Council to fund the cost of parish elections when these were held at the same time as the Ordinary Borough elections. In the case of all other parish elections, the cost was recharged to the parish council concerned.

RESOLVED

That having considered the outcome of the mini-review of the electoral arrangements for the Parish of Leighton, the Sub-Committee recommends the Constitution Committee to recommend to Council that

- (1) the change to the boundary of the Leighton Parish take effect from 1st April 2013;
- (2) no parish elections be held until 2015 but Cheshire East Council take steps to advertise the current vacancies on the Parish Council;
- (3) the number of parish councillors for Leighton remain unchanged at the present time but the number be reviewed when Cheshire East Council conducts its community governance review of parish councils;
- (4) accordingly, paragraph 10 of the draft order be retained in its present form; and
- (5) the draft reorganisation order be approved.

66 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held in December on a date to be agreed with the Chairman following consultation with Members.

The next meeting would consider:

1. DCLG consultation on community governance reviews of parish councils; and
2. progress with, and preparations for, asset transfers, budget arrangements, the appointment of an interim clerk and other matters relating to the proposed Crewe parish council; Jackie Weaver of ChALC would be invited to attend the meeting. Relevant officers would also be asked to attend.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 11.45 am

Councillor D Marren (Chairman)