Minutes of the meeting of the
Crewe Community Governance Review Member Group
held on Tuesday, 19th January 2010 at West Committee Room, Municipal Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe

PRESENT

Councillor H Davenport (Chairman), Councillors R Bailey, D J Cannon, R Cartlidge, R Parker and R West

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors T Beard, D Bebbington, J Jones, A Moran and J Weatherill

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Kolker; Councillor Rachel Bailey attending the meeting as the substitute Member.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Cannon and Cartlidge declared a personal interest in the proceedings by virtue of their position as Crewe Charter Trustees and as respondents to Stage Two of the Consultation process.

Although not Members of the Sub Committee, Councillors Beard, Bebbington, J Jones, A Moran and Weatherill all declared personal interests in the proceedings by virtue of their position as Crewe Charter Trustees and as respondents to Stage Two of the Consultation process.

35 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.

Councillor Moran, who declared his membership of the Council's Governance and Constitution Committee, indicated that he wished to address the meeting before the debate commenced.

In his opinion, Stage One of the consultation process had been confusing and was flawed; a view which he felt had been vindicated from the public responses received during Stage Two Consultation. He considered that the whole of the borough of Cheshire East should be parished to ensure equality and prevent the raising of precepts (which he referred to as 'double taxation') in some areas but not others. His final point referred to the Crewe Charter Trustees; a body which had the authority to raise taxes but was not, unlike a Town Council, accountable to the public as it was not a directly elected.

36 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 2009 be approved as a correct record.

37 RESPONSES TO STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

37.1 Opening Remarks

The Sub Committee considered the report of the Borough Solicitor which set out the responses received under Stage Two of the consultation process in respect of the Crewe Community Governance Review.

In introducing the item, the Elections and Registration Team Manager drew Members attention to the summary of responses set out on page 10 of the agenda, the Sub Committee noting that three further responses had been received following the expiry of the deadline which had not been included in the analysis. Members were reminded that, when reaching a decision, the Sub Committee had to take into consideration the representations received during the process, to ensure that the model chosen for community governance in Crewe reflected both the identity and interests of the community.

Before the debate was opened, a Member requested that it be recorded that any criticism which might had been levied at Council Officers in respect of the way the review had been conducted was wholly unjustified and that the process had been handled fairly and equitably under difficult circumstances. The Sub Committee unanimously supported the comments made.

37.2 Discussion

A Member began the debate by speaking in favour of a Town Council arguing that the responses received had indicated that there was still an appetite for this option amongst the public. He then turned his attention to other bodies such as Local Area Partnerships, dismissing their capability to deliver the governance arrangements required. In his opinion, to manage risk and support the needs of

the locality, the only viable option for Crewe was the introduction of a Town Council.
Having discussed the arguments for, an opposing view was then expressed which considered that the number of respondents to the consultation exercise could not be considered to be representative of the electorate of Crewe and that there was insufficient support to justify the setting up of a Town Council at this point in time.

A Member reminded the Sub Committee of comments made on previous occasions that the Stage One Consultation process had been flawed. He stated that, in the responses received during Stage Two, a number of individuals had confirmed that they had voted for the wrong option due to the wording used on the voting paper. As the driver for the process had been the number of people supporting the option for 'no change', he considered that this cast doubt on the validity of the proceedings and as a result, the Sub Committee was not in a position to make a recommendation to Governance and Constitution Committee.

The Chairman considered that the concerns raised had been debated fully on previous occasions and would not prevent the Sub Committee from reaching a reasoned conclusion. Having considered the arguments put forward, he was of the opinion that insufficient evidence had come forward to disregard the Council's draft recommendation to reject the notion of a town council for Crewe at this time and he invited Members to move to the vote.

38 RECOMMENDATION

RESOLVED:

That, having taken into account all consultation responses made during the Second Stage of consultation and having regard to the need to ensure that Community Governance within the area reflects the identities and interests of the Community and is effective and convenient, the Crewe Community Governance Member Group recommends that the **Governance and Constitution Committee** recommends to **Council** that the draft recommendation of Council of the 15 October 2009 be reaffirmed i.e. "To accept the vote from the people of Crewe and to reject the notion of a Town Council for Crewe at this time".

(Note: Councillors Cannon and Cartlidge voted against the motion which has been recorded in accordance with Procedure Rule 31.4)