

# **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the  
**Wilmslow Community Governance Review Sub-Committee**  
held on Friday, 19th February, 2010 at Committee Suite 2/3 - Westfields,  
Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

## **PRESENT**

Councillors G Barton, R Cartlidge, J Crockatt, S Jones, D Stockton and  
P Whiteley

## **Officers**

Brian Reed – Democratic Services Manager  
Lindsey Parton – Elections and Registration Team Manager  
Paul Mountford – Legal and Democratic Services

### **1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED**

That Councillor J Crockatt be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Crockatt in the chair.

### **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

#### **RESOLVED**

That Councillor P Whiteley be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

### **4 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **5 BRIEFING PAPER – WILMSLOW COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Members received a paper which set out the details of three petitions received in respect of community governance reviews for the Handforth, Wilmslow and Styal area. The paper also outlined the process for conducting a community governance review.

On 21<sup>st</sup> September 2009 the Council had received a petition which called for a Community Governance Review and identified the following recommendations arising from a Review:

- (1) That a new parish be constituted under Section 87 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- (2) That the new parish should have a parish council to be known as Handforth Community Council.
- (3) That members of the Council will not be affiliated to any political party.
- (4) That the area to which the review is to relate be defined as being the electoral ward of Handforth as known in 2007.
- (5) That the Council will not precept the area, only use moneys granted, delegated, awarded or given for the benefit of the area.

Recommendations (3) and (5) were outside the scope of any recommendations which could be considered by the Council as part of the review. The petition had been validated as having been signed by at least 10% of the electorate. On the recommendation of the Committee, Council had agreed to extend the remit of the review to encompass the whole of the unparished area of Wilmslow.

A petition had also been received on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009, calling for a community governance review and identifying the following recommendations arising from a Review:

- (1) That a new parish be constituted under Section 87 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- (2) That the new parish should have a parish council to be known as Wilmslow and Handforth Town Council.
- (3) That the area to which the review is to relate comprise the Electoral Wards of dean Row, Fulshaw, Handforth, Hough, Lacey Green and Morley & Styal.

The petition had since been validated and Council, on the recommendation of the Committee, had agreed to extend the Community Governance Review to cover the whole of the unparished area of Wilmslow (i.e. the former Electoral Wards of dean Row, Fulshaw, Handforth, Hough, Lacey Green, and Morley and Styal).

On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010 the Council had received a petition which called for a Community Governance Review and identified the following recommendations arising from a Review:

- (1) That a new parish be constituted under Section 87 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- (2) That the new parish should have a parish council to be known as Styal Parish Council

- (3) That the area to which the review is to relate to be defined as shown on the attached map, being a part of the Electoral Wards of Morley and Styal.

The Governance and Constitution Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010 agreed that the petition be dealt with as part of the Community Governance Review for the whole of the unparished area of Wilmslow. The petition had been validated as comprising the requisite number of signatures.

Members had before them a paper setting out the process for conducting the Community Governance Review, based on statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Electoral Commission.

In broad terms the process would follow a number of phases:

1. Determine viable options for community governance in the area under review.
2. Draw up a Consultation Plan focused on consulting on those viable options.
3. Stage 1 Consultation on the options.
4. Evaluation and analysis of responses.
5. Draft recommendation for Governance & Constitution Committee to consider for recommendation to Council.
6. Draft Proposal advertised
7. Stage 2 Consultation on the Draft Proposal
8. Council to decide on the outcome of the review.

The Review had to be completed by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010, i.e. within twelve months of receipt of the first petition from the residents of Handforth.

The key element of the Review would be the consultation process. The Sub-Committee needed to agree the list of consultees, the methods of consultation to be used, and the timing of the consultation process.

The consultation process was central to the Review and had to include:

- Local government electors in the area under review
- Local businesses, local public and voluntary organisations, schools, health bodies
- Residents and community groups
- Area working arrangements

The organisers of the three petitions would also be asked to participate in the consultation process.

The initial phase of consultation would be based largely on written representations received in response to public notices and specific invitations. Three public meetings were envisaged to give interested parties the opportunity to express their views in a public forum; these would be held in Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal. A postal ballot of the electorate was also proposed. The Sub-Committee would need to consider

the format of the ballot paper, and whether a single ballot paper or ballot papers comprising different questions would be required for different parts of the review area. The website would be a key facility, allowing people to obtain information and post their views online.

An initial list of consultees had been identified:

- Local political parties
- National Association of Parish Councils
- Cheshire Association of Parish Councils
- Neighbouring Town and Parish Councils
- Cheshire East Borough Councillors
- Petition organisers
- Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT
- Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Local Area Partnership
- Community Groups
- Community Forums
- Residents Groups
- Local Schools
- Voluntary organisations
- Faith Groups
- Wilmslow Trust

Members were asked to forward any proposed additions to the Elections and Registration Team Manager.

It was also proposed that an explanatory leaflet about the review and the options be prepared for distribution to consultees.

In considering the results of the consultation, and in formulating recommendations, Members would be required to ensure that community governance within the area under review reflected the identities and interests of the community in that area and was effective and convenient.

Key considerations in meeting the criteria included:

- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion.
- The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.
- That parishes reflected distinctive and recognisable communities of interest with their own sense of identity.
- The degree to which the proposals offered a sense of place and identity for all residents.
- The ability of the proposed authority's ability to deliver quality services economically and efficiently and to provide users with a democratic voice.
- The degree to which a parish council would be viable in terms of a unit of local government providing at least some local services

that were convenient, easy to reach and accessible to local people.

The guidance also required that recommendations be made with respect to the following:

- The need to ensure that community governance reflected the identities and interests of the community in the area and was effective and convenient.
- Any other arrangements that had already been made for the purposes of community representation or engagement.
- Any representation received should be supported by evidence which demonstrated that the community governance arrangements would meet the criteria.

The Review could make a recommendation which was different from that which the petitioners sought. The Review could conclude, for example, that the proposals were not in the interests of the wider local community or could impact negatively on community cohesion.

Finally, the Review had to give consideration to the electoral arrangements that should apply in the event that a parish council was established, in particular:

- The ordinary year of election – if a parish council were established, the first year of election would be 2011.
- Council size – the number of councillors.
- Parish warding – whether the parish should be divided into wards; the number and boundaries of such wards; number of councillors per ward and the names of wards.

An outline map showing the area under review was circulated.

## **RESOLVED**

That

(1) the list of consultees be agreed in principle subject to Members of the Sub-Committee forwarding to the Elections and Registration Team Manager the names of any further bodies which they feel should be added to the list;

(2) the form of Stage 1 consultation comprise:

- (a) Three public meetings to be held at the end of April, the meetings to be held at 7.00 pm at venues in Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal respectively.
- (b) An explanatory leaflet, inviting a written response. A draft leaflet should come before Members for approval and should be designed to be readable, engaging and informative, including appropriate contextual background information; it should also be

written in clear English and should avoid unnecessary use of specialist terminology, providing definitions where appropriate.

(c) A postal ballot of all electors in the area of the Review.

- (3) public notifications be made in the local press, on the Council's website, on Council notice boards and in libraries;
- (4) the Government Guidance on Community Governance Reviews be noted;
- (5) additional funding of £15,000 be requested to cover the cost of conducting the Community Governance Review;
- (6) the Partnership Unit be asked to produce, for the next meeting, a briefing paper on options for Community Governance and Local Area Partnership arrangements.

## **6 BRIEFING PAPER – INITIAL OPTIONS EVALUATION**

In conducting the Review, the Council had to consider how to respond to the proposals contained in the three separate petitions. The petitions and the proposals they contained had to be assessed in terms of the criteria and the key considerations as set out in the Guidance.

The guidance also indicated that as part of the review, other viable options should be considered to determine if they represented a better way of addressing the criteria. The Sub-Committee would need to gather further information to make an initial evaluation of the following options:

- Area Committees
- Neighbourhood Management
- Tenant Management Organisations
- Area/Community Forums
- Residents' and Tenants' Associations
- Community Associations
- Multiple Parish Councils

The Review could decide that multiple parish councils would best meet the community cohesion criteria. The presence of geographic boundaries would need to be considered, for example whether they formed natural communities.

## **RESOLVED**

That the requirement to consider other viable options as part of the Community Governance Review be noted and discussed further at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

## **7 WILMSLOW COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW PROJECT PLAN**

Members considered a Project Plan for conducting the Community Governance Review which set out the tasks involved, responsible officers, timetable and the decision-making process.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Project Plan be approved subject to amendment to reflect changes to the consultation timetable agreed at the meeting.

## **8 FUTURE MEETINGS**

### **RESOLVED**

That the next meeting be held on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at 10.00 am, if possible at the Oakenclough Children's Centre, Wilmslow.

Note: Following consultation with Members of the Sub-Committee, the next meeting would now be held on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 at 3.30 pm at the Oakenclough Children's Centre, Wilmslow. This was to allow further time for draft documents for the Stage 1 consultation to be prepared for consideration by the Sub-Committee.

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and concluded at 12.20 pm

Councillor J Crockatt (Chairman)