

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Wilmslow Community Governance Review Sub Committee

Date of Meeting: 27th September 2010
Report of: Borough Solicitor
Subject/Title: Wilmslow Community Governance Review

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the background in relation to the Wilmslow Community Governance Review under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, following receipt of three valid petitions from electors in Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal calling for a review to be undertaken. The report provides details of the outcome of stage two of the public consultation on the Council's draft recommendation for the review, as made by the Council on 22nd July 2010.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the responses from the Stage 2 consultation and to recommend to the Constitution Committee that it makes an appropriate recommendation to Council, having regard to the results of consultation on the draft proposal formulated by Council on 22nd July 2010.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The second stage of Consultation for the Wilmslow Community Governance review took place from 11th August to 15th September 2010 and following this meeting the results will be considered by the Constitution Committee on 30th September 2010. The recommendation of the Constitution Committee for the final outcome of the Review will then be reported to the Council meeting for approval, including approval of any Reorganisation Order required for the formation of new parishes as may be determined. The date of the Council meeting is yet to be confirmed, as the final outcome of the current Cheshire East Boundary Review has not yet been determined, and this will have an impact upon the Council's final decision for the outcome of the Wimslow Community Governance Review, in particular the detail of warding arrangements for the Wilmslow area.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Wards covering the areas of Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal.

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 As above

6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate change - Health

6.1 None

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)

7.1 The Council has a statutory duty to conduct and meet the costs associated with undertaking the Community Governance Review. These costs will be met as far as possible from within existing budget provision.

7.2 In the event that parish councils are established, there will be costs associated with the administration of the elections, which will be met by the Borough Council, as they are proposed to be held on the same day as elections for Cheshire East Councillors on 5th May 2011. The cost of any future by-elections would be met by the Parish Councils.

7.3 Parish precepts will need to be raised for any new Parish Councils created, to cover the administration costs for the municipal year 2011/12.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

8.1 With effect from April 2008 the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements was devolved from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 to local authorities under Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 The Council has followed the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the Electoral Commission and the Department of Communities and Local Government. There are no other risk management issues.

10.0 Background

10.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 permits the Council to undertake a community governance review of the whole or part of the Borough Council area.

10.2 The Review

Cheshire East Council in accordance with Section 83(2) of the Act is undertaking a community governance review following receipt of three valid petitions which called for community governance reviews and for the creation of parishes and parish councils in the areas of Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal.

In conducting the Review, the Council has responded to the proposals contained in the petitions, but in accordance with the guidance, has also considered other viable options for other forms of community governance including Area committees, Neighbourhood Management, Tenant Management organisations, Area/ Community forums, Residents and Tenants Associations, Community Associations and whether people would prefer a single parish Council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal or separate parish councils for these three areas to be created.

An explanatory leaflet about the community governance review was prepared and used as a basis for the first phase of consultation which ran from 10 May to 4 June 2010.

This community governance review has provided the Council with an opportunity to examine and review existing community governance arrangements and to consider whether or not new arrangements were required to best meet the needs of local people.

The first stage of consultation sought views from all electors by way of a voting paper delivered to each elector with the explanatory leaflet. A letter and explanatory leaflet about the review was sent to various stakeholders including local public and voluntary organisations, schools, health bodies and resident and community groups. Three public meetings were held in April 2010 at venues in Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal. The Cheshire East Council website was also used to allow people to record their views online.

Consideration was given to the comments and representations received from this first phase of consultation and on the basis of those representations the Council's draft recommendation was published on 11th August 2010.

10.3 Criteria and aim of the Review

Section 93 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires councils to ensure that community governance in the area under review will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient. In considering this criteria the Council is required to take account of a number of influential factors including the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion.

The Guidance on community governance reviews published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in April 2008 sets out in detail the factors for consideration to help inform the Council's judgement against the statutory criteria.

10.4 Previously Unparished Areas

The Council is required by law to consider other forms of community governance as alternatives or as stages towards establishing parish councils. The Council has noted the existing arrangements in place in the area for community representation and community engagement, including the Wilmslow Local Area Partnership, the Colshaw Community Development Group, Community Groups and Working Groups and the extent to which they were creating opportunities for engagement, empowerment and co-ordination in local communities.

10.5 Consultation

In reaching its draft recommendation in this review, the Council took into account the representations received having regard to the criteria in the Local Government and Public Improvement in Health Act 2007.

10.6 Result of consultation with electors

Just over 25, 000 voting papers were issued and 6876 were returned (27.48%). Electors were invited to respond to two questions on the voting paper and the results were as follows:-

For Wilmslow Residents

Question 1
1. Do you want a parish council? Yes/ No
Question 2: If yes, please tick the option you agree with below
A. I want a single parish council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal
B. I want a separate parish council for Wilmslow

In relation to Question 1 – the results were:

2894 electors indicated that they want a parish council.

2144 electors indicated that they did not want a parish council

In relation to Question 2 – the results were:

1090 electors expressed a view for a single parish council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal

1846 electors expressed a view for a separate parish council for Wilmslow

For Handforth Residents

Question 1
1. Do you want a parish council? Yes/ No
Question 2: If yes, please tick the option you agree with below
A. I want a single parish council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal
B. I want a separate parish council for Handforth

In relation to Question 1 – the results were:

1023 electors indicated that they want a parish council.
534 electors indicated that they did not want a parish council

In relation to Question 2 – the results were:

415 electors expressed a view for a single parish council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal

619 electors expressed a view for a separate parish council for Handforth

For Styal Residents

Question 1
1. Do you want a parish council? Yes/ No
Question 2: If yes, please tick the option you agree with below
A. I want a single parish council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal
B. I want a separate parish council for Styal

In relation to Question 1 – the results were:

219 electors indicated that they want a parish council.
23 electors indicated that they did not want a parish council

In relation to Question 2 – the results were:

25 electors expressed a view for a single parish council for Wilmslow, Handforth and Styal

201 electors expressed a view for a separate parish council for Styal

10.7 Submissions received to Stage 1 consultation

In addition to the responses to the voting paper, the Council received a further 40 representations.

10.8 Draft Recommendation

The second stage of consultation ran from 11 August 2010 to 15th September 2010 and sought views on the Council's draft recommendation. There were two proposed options for warding arrangements for Wilmslow which were

dependant upon the outcome of the current boundary review of Cheshire East Council wards by the Boundary Commission.

The draft recommendation of the Council for the outcome of the review, as agreed at the Council meeting held on 22 July 2010 was as follows:-

RESOLVED

1. That :-

(1) 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; and having received three valid petitions signed by the required number of electors calling for the constitution of new parishes for the three areas of (1) Handforth; (2) Wilmslow and Handforth; (3) Styal which triggered the Community Governance Review process:

Having taken into account

- the petitions;**
- the results of the consultation with the electors in each of the areas concerned which show in each case that a majority of those who returned their ballot papers were in favour of a new parish council for their area;**
- the results of the consultation exercise with stakeholders and the representations from other interested persons;**
- the outcomes of the public meetings held in each of the review areas; and**
- the information on existing community governance arrangements in the areas concerned and the alternative forms of community governance which might have been appropriate for the areas in question :-**
 - a. that the interests of effective and convenient local government and community identities in these areas would be served by the creation of new parishes with a parish council for each of Handforth (not including polling district 8EE1 so as to recognise historic and traditional boundaries in the area), Wilmslow (including polling district 8EE1) and Styal, all as shown on the map appended to the minutes of the Constitution Committee held on 24 June 2010, with each parish comprising the polling districts indicated below; such parish councils to be called: Handforth Parish Council, Wilmslow Parish Council**

and Styal Parish Council respectively, and that Wilmslow Parish Council be advised to consider its designation as a Town Council;

Handforth Parish

Polling districts: 8EF1, 8EG1, 8EH1, 8EJ1

Wilmslow Parish

Polling districts: 8EA1, 8EB1, 8EC1, 8ED1, 8EE1, 8EK1, 8FA1, 8FB1, 8FC1, 8FD1, 8FE1, 8FF1, 8FG1, 8FH1, 8FJ1

Styal Parish

Polling district: 8FK1

- b. that in Styal the election of parish councillors should be from the area of the parish as a whole;
- c. that given the substantial size of the proposed Wilmslow parish and in order to reflect longstanding community identities, the parish should be divided into wards for the purposes of election to the Parish Council;
- d. that the first year of elections to the new parish councils should be 2011; 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;

2. That :-

(1) having regard to comparator information for Parish Councils in Cheshire East, and having regard to electoral equality, the number of Councillors to serve on each of the new Parish Councils should be as follows:

- a. Handforth: 7 Councillors
- b. Styal: 5 Councillors
- c. Wilmslow: 15 Councillors

(2) dependent upon the outcome of the Boundary Review, and bearing in mind the need to achieve overall electoral equality (i.e. the number of electors per councillor) as far as possible:

- a. if no changes are made to the current Cheshire East Council Ward boundaries, five wards should be created for the Wilmslow Parish and named as follows:

- i. Morley (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8FH1, 8FJ1, 8FG1);
 - ii. Lacey Green (comprising 2 Councillors: polling district 8EK1);
 - iii. Dean Row (comprising 4 Councillors: polling districts 8EA1, 8EB1, 8EC1, 8ED1, 8EE1);
 - iv. Hough (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8FC1, 8FD1, 8FE1, 8FF1); and
 - v. Fulshaw (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8FA1, 8FB1)
- b. if the anticipated final recommendations of the Boundary Committee in respect of Cheshire East Council boundaries are implemented, four wards should be created for the Wilmslow Parish and named as follows, to provide coterminous boundaries for electoral purposes:
 - i. Wilmslow West (comprising 5 Councillors: polling districts 8FH1, 8FJ1, 8FG1, 8FC1, 8FA1(part), 8FB1(part), 8FD1(part);
 - ii. Lacey Green (comprising 2 Councillors: polling districts 8EK1, 8EA1(part), 8FD1(part);
 - iii. Dean Row (comprising 4 Councillors: polling districts 8EA1(part), 8EB1, 8EC1, 8ED1, 8EE1); and
 - iv. Hough (comprising 4 Councillors: polling districts 8FD1(part), 8FA1(part), 8FB1(part), 8FE1, 8FF1)

(3) three wards should be created for the Handforth Parish and named as follows:

- i. Handforth West (comprising 3 Councillors: polling districts 8EG1, 8EJ1)
- ii. Handforth East (comprising 2 Councillors: polling district 8EH1); and
- iii. Handforth South (comprising 2 Councillors: polling district 8EF1)

and accordingly, the previous recommendation by the Sub-Committee and the Constitution Committee in relation to this matter should be disregarded; and

- (4) subject to consultation initially with the Chairman of the Wilmslow Community Governance Review Sub-Committee, the Borough Solicitor be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make any amendments required to electorate figures, polling district boundaries, or the proposed Wilmslow Parish ward boundaries, should this be required as a result of the final outcome of the Boundary review.**

Representations were invited from all interested persons, organisations, stakeholders and the public. Interested parties were encouraged to submit their views, together with any relevant supporting information, in writing, by email, or via a feedback form on the Council's website.

10.9 Submissions received to Stage 2 Consultation

Copies of all responses received to the Second stage of consultation are attached as an appendix to this report.

10.10 Key Issues

In making its final decision on the outcome of the Community Governance Review for Wilmslow, the Council must take into account representations received. The Council is also required to have 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.

As soon as practical after the Council has decided to what extent it will give effect to the recommendation made in the review, it must publish the decision and the reasons for making that decision. The Council must also take steps to ensure that people who are interested in the review are informed.

Should the decision be taken to establish Parish Councils, electoral arrangements would need be put in place and a formal Order made to give effect to the new arrangements which would then enable elections to take place in May 2011. The final outcome of the current Cheshire East Boundary Review has not yet been determined, and this could have an impact upon the Council's final decision for the outcome of the Wimslow Community Governance Review, in particular the consideration of the detail of warding arrangements for any parishes ultimately proposed.

12.0 Access to Information

The following background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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- Guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the Electoral Commission and the DCLG
- Explanatory Leaflet and Notice of Publication for the first stage of consultation
- Notice of Publication of Draft Recommendations arising from the first stage of consultation

Appendices - Representations received from the Stage 2 consultation ending on 15th September 2010.