

Summary of Key Points Arising from Public Meetings (raised by the public and by Local Cllrs)

Introduction

7 public meetings were held from 3-12 July at Hurdsfield Community Primary School, Weston Community Centre, Broken Cross Club, Ivy Bank Primary School, Tytherington Club, Puss Bank Primary School and Macclesfield Library. A further meeting was then arranged at Macclesfield Library on 22 July.

The meetings varied in levels of attendance and in total 114 members of the public attended the events along with various local ward Councillors.

The following key points arose from the discussions which may be helpful to aid future discussions of the MSDC:

- If the review resulted in a Town Council being created – it would not recreate the role of the former Macclesfield Borough Council.
- A Town/ Parish Council(s) would be a statutory consultee for Planning but would not have a decision making role on planning applications. Could put money aside to fund expert opinion for public inquiries.
- Macclesfield LSDC – has a limited role. Not able to discuss issues & no powers.
- Parish / Town Council would provide better local representation/ influence than currently the case. The only option which provides for democratically elected members.
- Town Council would need to raise a precept to run services. Unclear what this cost would be, as dependent upon services provided. There would be no corresponding reduction in Cheshire East Council Tax. Special Expenses Levy a future possibility for Macclesfield residents.
- Localism Act – enhanced powers for parishes – power to trigger referenda; create neighbourhood plans; general power of competence etc. in addition to existing wellbeing powers.
- Markets, Car Parking, Parks, Open Spaces, Heritage Centre and Allotments and community grants considered to be assets appropriate for transfer to a Town Council and should be pursued.
- All other areas in Cheshire East have Parish Councils.
- LSDC – should have a clear view of services provided by Cheshire East in Macclesfield and their cost and an over view of what assets

- could/should be recommended to transfer to a Parish/ Town Council if created.
- Risk that discretionary services would be cut by Cheshire East due to budget pressures. In other areas Town / Parish Councils given the opportunity to run to prevent closure / ceasing of service provision.
- Suggested at meeting on 4 July (Weston Community Centre) that a public meeting with the LSDC members would be useful to develop a working model of what could be achievable for a Town Council “with teeth” or an enhanced role for a LSDC.
- Not all of the Macclesfield Cllrs are involved in the LAP.
- Need a clearer indication of what services “will potentially be handed down” from Cheshire East and their associated costs.
- Concerns locally over Town Centre redevelopment, Green Belt, Roads. Concern that a Town Council will have the power needed locally. Strategic decision making will still be remote. Town Council would be inadequate in that respect.
- An Area Committee model if adopted could provide for local decision making on planning issues (but not currently Cheshire East Policy)
- Bollington Town Council – good example of an effective Town Council.
- West Park Museum – should be operated by Town Council (as placed in Trust)
- Macclesfield not consistent with other Towns such as Congleton and Knutsford – they have hanging baskets etc and appear to have better services.
- Need better say on Highways, Planning, community safety, car parks. Need Town Council “with teeth”. Cheshire East need to discuss what they are prepared to hand over to a Town Council to run.
- Macclesfield Town Hall is a Cheshire East Asset and a Town Council if formed would need to hire rooms for meetings. (Charter Trustees have an agreement to use the Council Chamber 4 times per year).
- Would Leisure Centres and Libraries be an option for a Town / Parish Councils to run?
- What would a Town Council do from day one?

- The Crewe Model would suit Macclesfield – next logical step to create lower tier of local government in Macclesfield – would provide democracy
- Difficult to assess merits of Parish / Town Council when costs are unknown. Understanding how Crewe Town Council set their budget may be helpful.
- Cheshire East Council may cease to provide discretionary services – e.g. flower beds, hanging baskets. Discussion would then take place with Parish Council to see if they wished to take over the function. Budget would not be devolved from Cheshire East in the case of discretionary services.
- How many councillors would there be on a Macclesfield Town Council?
- Could a Cap be put on a parish precept? – as costs to taxpayers should not be excessive?
- How many staff would be employed by a Town Council? – would staff transfer from Cheshire East?
- Could car parking transfer from Cheshire East to a Town Council?