

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting3rd December 2015

1. Title of Item/Report

Community Governance Reviews - Billingham Town Council and Elton Parish Council

2. Record of the Decision

The report presented feedback from consultation with stakeholders and all local government electors in the areas of Billingham Town Council and Elton Parish Council and invited comments on next steps.

Following receipt of a petition which called for the abolition of Billingham Town Council, a Community Governance Review commenced. The opportunity was also taken to conduct a Community Governance Review in relation to Elton Parish Council.

A community Governance review enabled a principal council to review and put in place new arrangements, making changes to current community governance systems and structures, for example by creating, merging, abolishing or changing parish or town councils in the review area.

The Government had emphasized that the aim of a review should be to bring about improved community engagement, more cohesive communities, better local democracy, and result in more effective and convenient delivery of services.

The timetable approved by Cabinet and Council recognised that a review must conclude within 12 months from receipt of a valid petition (received 26 June 2015).

The key stages of the reviews were as follows:-

Consultation with all Local Government Electors in the area 17.9.15 – 31.10.15 complete

Consideration of the wider forms of Community Governance in the area 17.9.15 – 31.10.15 complete

Initial findings are considered and draft proposals presented for consideration by CMT 09.11.15 complete

Cabinet meeting 03.12.15 will consider findings.

Draft recommendations to Council 20.1.16

Consult on draft proposals 21.1.16 to 17.2.16

Final recommendation to Cabinet 17.3.16

Final recommendation to Council 27.04.16

Final Recommendations and reasons for the decision published and stakeholders informed on 28.04.16

Recommendations implemented from 28.04.16

Implementation of any proposed abolition of Billingham Town Council and Elton Parish Council would be dependent upon the time it would take to finalise and publish a re-organisation order.

An integral part of the review was to consult with the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body, including a local authority (i.e. the Town Council) who appeared to have an interest in it.

The consultation feedback was detailed within the report. Whilst there was support for abolition in both cases, there was support for retaining both Councils. In relation to Elton, a number of individuals had expressed an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor.

Following Cabinet's consideration, Council at their meeting on the 20.1.16 would consider Cabinet's draft proposals prior to consultation during the period 21.1.16 – 17.2.16. Final recommendations would be reported to Cabinet 17.3.16 and Council on 27.4.16. Decisions would be published and stakeholders informed on the 28.4.16.

The lead petitioner for the petition which called for the abolition of Billingham Town Council; a Billingham resident and a Ward Councillor were in attendance at the meeting and were given the opportunity to address Members.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. Billingham Town Council be retained.

2. Elton Parish Council be retained and a process to elect Members be commenced, following final Council approval, but that if this process and any necessary co-option does not deliver a Parish Council that is quorate then the required action should be taken to secure the dissolution of Elton Parish and the abolition of the Parish Council.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To respond to the community governance petition and feedback from consultation.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Mrs McCoy declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 17 – Community Governance Reviews - Billingham Town Council and Elton Parish Council as she was a member of Billingham Town Council. Councillor Mrs McCoy withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

N/A

Proper Officer
07 August 2015