

Appendices: 5



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

20th January, 2020

Agenda Status: Public

Chief Executive

Report Title	Community Governance Review and results of consultation
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To report to Full Council on the results of the consultation exercise carried out by Opinion Research Services (ORS) for a proposed town council for Northampton and the separate consultation exercise in respect of the proposed new parish council for Kingsthorpe and community council for Far Cotton & Delapre. In addition, to also consider the results of the consultation exercise in respect of the proposal by Duston Parish Council to extend its boundaries (see appendix 1 for all the results of the consultations referred to above).
- 1.2 To consider the recommendations made to Full Council by the Cross Party Working Group on 13th January, 2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council:
- 2.2 Consider the report of ORS on the second and final stage of the consultation on a proposed town council for Northampton (Appendix 1)
- 2.3 Consider the results of the separate consultation exercise in respect of the proposals to create a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre and this to include the separate consultation in respect of Duston Parish Council's proposal to extend its boundaries. (Appendix 1)
- 2.4 Approve the following recommendations of the Cross Party Working Group at its meeting on 13th January, 2020, namely:

- a) That having considered the results of the ORS consultation exercise it accepts option 'A' as the preferred option for a town council in Northampton minus the area of Kingsthorpe and Far Cotton & Delapre which are now recommended as separate parish and community council's (see Appendix 2 for option A and B plans as per the ORS report)
- b) That it accepts the results of the consultation in respect of Far Cotton & Delapre and recommends the establishment of a community council for the said unparished area of the Borough Council with the boundaries as shown on the enclosed plan (Appendix 3)
- c) That it accepts the results of the consultation in respect of Kingsthorpe and recommends the establishment of a parish council for the said unparished area of the Borough Council with the boundaries as shown on the enclosed plan (Appendix 4)
- d) That discussions between the Whitehills & Spring Park Residents Association and various other voluntary groups etc in the Kingsthorpe area begin as soon as possible to ensure both cohesion and joint working in the setting up of the new parish council for Kingsthorpe
- e) That Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils are appointed to carry out work on the establishment of a town council for Northampton and any agreed ancillary work on the establishment of a new parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Delapre & Far Cotton in the unparished areas of the Borough Council, and to commence work on these proposals as soon as possible, once a final decision has been made by Full Council on the 20th January, 2020.
- f) That after consideration of the results of the consultation, the proposal made by Duston Parish Council to extend its boundaries is not approved (Appendix 5)
- g) That it approves the principle and method of initial financing by way of grant funding from the Borough Council and any necessary reports on this proposal be brought back to future meetings of the Cross Party Working Group and/or Full Council
- h) That it delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Cross Party Working Group to oversee the process of implementing the decisions of Full Council and the Cross Party Working Group which includes the appointment of any necessary consultants to assist the process of implementation and/or any required support
- i) That it notes the need for further additional meetings of Full Council and the Cross Party Working Group in respect of a number of issues that will require future approval such as agreeing statutory orders to set up a town council for Northampton, a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Delapre & Far Cotton and issues relating to the number of town and parish councillors etc

- j) That Full Council agree an additional budget of £100,000 to cover the period to the end of the financial year 2019-2020 which will include costs already incurred on the consultation exercises and the implementation of decisions taken by Full Council at today's meeting
- k) That a financial statement be submitted to the next Cross Part Working Group on the costs of the community governance exercise and the estimated required funds which will be needed for the period 2020/21

3 Issues

- 3.1 The Cross Party Working Group at its two meetings on the 17th December, 2019 and 13th January, 2020 gave careful consideration to the results of the consultation exercise carried out by ORS into the proposal for a town council for Northampton. As shown in the ORS report there were two options, A & B put forward for consideration (see Appendix 2). After careful consideration at the said two meetings, the Cross Party Working Group opted for option A, minus the two proposals for a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre. As stated the Cross Party Working Group gave consideration to the results of the ORS consultation and in particular noted that while there was support for a town council, there was no overall majority for either option A or B.

The Cross Party Working Group in its deliberations considered that option A (minus the two proposed parish/community councils) would be a more realistic option to proceed with on the basis of giving better representation to the whole of the remaining unparished area of the Borough Council and also provided a better basis for delivering local community services. It was also cognisant of other issues such as an appropriate tax base, and cohesion between the communities and the extension of the mayoralty.

It was also recognised that within the next two to four years there could be a further Community Governance Review to reconsider the position after the appropriate consultations. This demand for a further Community Governance Review could of course, come from the communities themselves.

In addition, the Cross Party Working Group, after careful consideration of the outcomes of the consultation and debate, opted to accept the results of the consultation in respect of Kingsthorpe, Far Cotton & Delapre and Duston and recommend the establishment of a parish council for Kingsthorpe, a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre and to reject the proposal to extend the boundaries for Duston Parish Council.

It was felt that in respect of Kingsthorpe there had to be more discussion and interplay between the various residents and voluntary groups to ensure better cohesion and joint working to achieve a successful implementation of the new parish council. It is always important that all the communities that make up a parish council area are confident that such a council can represent their interests and the issues they care about and this can be facilitated by joint discussion and working.

4. Matters for Consideration

- 4.1 The following are a number of pointers (not exhaustive) which the Working Group considered when they discussed the proposal for a town council for Northampton and a community council for Kingsthorpe at their meeting on 13th January 2020:
- i) Size of the proposed town council/community council and social cohesion between different communities, common interest etc.
 - ii) Tax base for any proposed town council/community council precept and likely services to be delivered.
 - iii) What would the communities within a new town council/community council expect of such councils. Their priorities, aims, improvements etc.
 - iv) Boundary issues and community cohesion between different areas within a new town council and/or community council.
 - v) Building upon existing community areas and organisations i.e. local residents associations, community groups who already provide support to their communities, such as support for the elderly and disabled,

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has advised that every option for a town council for Northampton, a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Delapre & Far Cotton has to be considered on its own merits and consideration given to issues such as geography, population and the various communities involved in these areas. Consideration also has to be given as to what kind of services might be delivered and the need to fill parish/community council vacancies.

In the end it is for Full Council to reach its decisions as based on every elected members knowledge of their communities and the wide and varied contacts they have in those same communities.

5. Appointment of the Northampton County Association of Local Councils (NCALC)

- 5.1 Full Council is recommended to approve the appointment of NCALC to assist in setting up the proposed town council for Northampton and further assistance in respect of the proposed two new parish/community councils for Kingsthorpe and Delapre & Far Cotton. Time is very short with only a six to eight week period to prepare for nominations etc to the proposed new councils and their elections in May 2020.

NCALC's involvement covers intensive work and support, including interim clerking support, councillor and clerk recruitment, training and induction for the new council. The aim is to ensure that the new council will be positioned to become fully embedded within their role over the next 15 months. NCALC have extensive local knowledge of Northamptonshire and provides advice and

assistance to all the parish/community councils in the County area. They also have experience in assisting in the creation of new parish and town councils.

Financial reports will be submitted to future meetings of the Cross Party Working Group in order that costs can be monitored and further reports made to Full Council as and when necessary.

6. Resources and Risk

- 6.1 In July 2018 Council agreed to delegate a budget of up to £30k to undertake any specialist activity associated with undertaking a community governance review. It is recommended in this report to agree an additional budget of £100k to cover the period to the end of 2019/20. This would give an overall budget of £130k to the end of 2019/20. Total spend to date on the community governance review, covering both 2018/19 and 2019/20, is £111k. This money will come from the Council's reserves.
- 6.2 In addition, this report recognises further budget will be required in 2020/21 for the community governance review. No estimate is currently available for these additional costs, but it is proposed that the next Cross Party Working Group will review these planned costs. Any additional funding required in 2020/21 will also need to come from the Council's reserves.
- 6.3 This report proposes that any new parish councils would initially be funded by a grant from Northampton Borough Council, until the new parish/community councils are in a position to set their own precept. Any additional funding required for Northampton Borough Council to provide this grant will also need to come from the Council's reserves.

7. Legal

- 7.1 There are no legal issues at this stage except the need to comply with the requisite legislation

8. Environmental Implications (including climate change issues)

- 8.1 None

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 Need to achieve the initial establishment of a town council for Northampton, a parish council for Kingsthorpe and a community council for Far Cotton & Delapre in time for the nominations of councillors to be received for elections to these new councils.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 As enclosed.

George Candler
Chief Executive