

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2013

Present: Councillors Mike Gilbert (Chairman), Dr Gurdip Samra (Vice-Chairman), Alison Austin, Mark Baker, Paul Gleeson, Paul Goodale, Yvonne Gunter, Paul Kenny, Tiggs Keywood-Wainwright, Bob McAuley, Derek Richmond, Stephen Woodliffe and Mary Wright

Portfolio holders: Councillors Peter Bedford and Raymond Singleton-McGuire

Officers in attendance for the flood recovery update only: Strategic Director & Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Housing, Health & Community Services, Principal Community Safety Officer, Principal Officer (Street Scene) and Communications and Marketing Manager

Other officers: Head of Financial Services, Senior Accountant and Senior Democratic Services Officer

Observer: County Councillor Sue Ransome

23 FORMATION OF A NEW TOWN COUNCIL

The Leader presented a report by the Chief Executive, concerning proposed changes to the procedure for the formation of a town council, which would be implemented by September 2014.

The Chief Executive's report of 13 February 2013 had set out the current procedure, which the Government wished to simplify to encourage more parish councils to be formed in line with the localism agenda. Consultation had run from October 2012 to January 2013. The Government's response was published in September 2013.

Currently, the number of signatures required from a community in a petition to the local authority to begin the process was between 10-50% depending on the number of electors. On receipt of the petition the local authority would agree terms of reference for a Community Governance Review and there was no time limit set for this. Once terms of reference were agreed the authority would have to complete the review in a 12-month period.

Proposed changes included timescales being limited to 12 months from receipt of a petition and the number of signatures required on the petition reduced to 7.5% of electors for all but very small communities. Legislation would clarify the proposals.

If necessary, the Chief Executive would report to the Cabinet about the matter. The review would require 2 full time employees to complete it in 12 months and, with consultation, would cost around £70,000, which the Council would meet.

Some Members welcomed the changes as the way forward; BTAC needed to change and democracy would be improved in line with the Localism agenda and public engagement,

EXERPT FROM MINUTES

particularly as, in 2015, more people outside the town would set the precept than those inside the area. Others felt BTAC did not need to change at all and the public would not want to spend this amount of money on an extra layer of government. Some then contended that there would not be additional cost; the same precept would be incurred and it would be the same layer of local government as the parish councils.

The issue of Members not having to live within the town area to become Members of BTAC was compared to parishes. It was clarified that people did not need to live within a parish to become a parish councillor; they had to live within 3 miles of the boundary or own land or a business within the parish. It was remarked that Members living outside the town area still represented the people who lived there.

The Chairman stated that the process was intended to benefit larger areas than Boston town; to introduce it here would result in the Council's demise.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.	RH
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