

SWT Special Full Council - 19 October 2021

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Richard Lees, Ian Aldridge, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Simon Coles, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Tom Deakin, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Steve Griffiths, Roger Habgood, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, John Hunt, Dawn Johnson, Marcus Kravis, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Andy Milne, Derek Perry, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Sarah Wakefield, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Paul Fitzgerald, Alison North, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Jo Comer and Kevin Williams

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

47. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors P Bolton, S Buller, N Cavill, A Hadley, B Hall, C Morgan, C Palmer, M Peters, A Pritchard, F Smith, F Smith-Roberts, A Sully, R Tully, T Venner and K Wheatley.

48. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Deakin	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC &	Personal	Spoke and Voted

		Wellington		
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & Bishop's Hull	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Johnson	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Nicholls	All Items	Comeytrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke
Cllr N Thwaites	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

49. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

50. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

Special Council observed a minute's silence on behalf of the late MP, Sir David Amess.

51. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

No announcements were made by the Leader of the Council.

52. **To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions were received in relation to Procedure Rule 13.

53. **Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillor Lisgo presented the report as Chair of the Working Group. She highlighted the following:-
 - The Group had worked hard to investigate many different options.
 - The work had been a challenge as not many Authorities had gone through the same process before.
 - There was one clear driver from the Group and that was, no action would be the worst option.
 - Option 2a was the most popular option of the Group, however, it had not received unanimous support. Most of the Group agreed that option 2a was the most pragmatic of all the options and would likely achieve the establishment of a Town Council to help the area through into the Unitary Authority.
 - Some support was given to a wider review being carried out, which would include the surrounding parishes.
 - Not much support had been shown for the latter options detailed in the report, this was due to concern being raised that it would lead to no action being taken.
- Councillor Lisgo proposed option 2a within the recommendations (which was endorsed by the members of the Working Group), which was duly seconded by Councillor Weston.
- Councillors requested clarification on the procedure to follow on which option was being debated first.
- Councillors were advised that option 2a was being debated first unless any amendments were received.
- Councillor Rigby proposed an amendment to option 2b:-
 - To commence a Community Governance Review of the Unparished Area of Taunton and the adjoining Parish areas with the intention to implement a town council for all or part of that area.
- Concern was raised that councillors did not want the review to 'drift' and they wanted to ensure that action was taken to create a Town Council for Taunton and its residents.
- Councillors requested clarification on which option was being debated.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that an indicative vote could be taken to see which option, 2a or 2b, would be preferable. If option 2a was carried, the report could be brought back to Full Council at a later date, to request a wider review.

- Councillor Wakefield proposed that option 2b was debated first, which was duly seconded by Councillor Booth.
- Concern was raised that the option proposed by the Working Group was not being debated first.
- Councillors again requested clarification on which option was being debated first.
- The Chair of Council advised that option 2b would be debated first because the work carried out under option 2b, would cover option 2a as well.
- Councillors agreed that they wanted to ensure the best option was carried out for the residents of the town.
- Councillor Stock-Williams joined the meeting at 7pm, so would not be able to take part in the vote.
- Councillors agreed that they wanted the review carried out properly in time for the creation of a Unitary Authority in 2023.
- Some councillors did not want a wider review to be lost in the work to create a Unitary Authority.
- Concern was raised on the impact the Unitary Authority timetable would have on the work to carry out the Community Governance Review (CGR). *The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the amendment proposed for option 2b was not proper and was essentially option 3 from the report. The Deputy Monitoring Officer gave information on the timescales of the CGR and the creation of a Unitary Authority.*
- Councillor Lithgow left the meeting at 7.10pm. *The Deputy Monitoring Officer gave information on the CGR process.*
- The Chair queried whether the amendment to option 2b could be allowed.
- The meeting was paused at 7.20pm.
- The meeting resumed at 7.40pm. *The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised on what the current position was with the debate and further advised that there would be a motion put forward which would become option 2c.*
- Councillor Rigby proposed option 2c, which was duly seconded by Councillor Hunt:-
 - To commence a Community Governance Review of the Unparished Area of Taunton and the adjoining Parish areas with the intention to implement a town council for all or part of that area.
- Councillors thanked the Working Group for all their hard work investigating all the options for the CGR.
- Councillors agreed that action needed to be taken to form a Town Council and that they wanted what was best for the residents of Taunton.
- Concern was raised on the way the debate had been carried out.
- Some councillors expressed some concern on option 2a not being debated first, as it was the option the Working Group had proposed.
- Members of the Working Group highlighted that their task had been to focus on the unparished area of Taunton.

- Concern was raised on the areas covered by option 2c and councillors further queried whether paragraphs a-g would be included in option 2c as per option 2b.
The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that paragraphs a-g were included in option 2b to guide what would be covered in the Review and requested that the proposer and seconder advise on what details, would be included in option 2c and that they needed to name the parishes to be included in option 2c.
- Councillor Rigby would draft the paragraphs and discuss the detail later in the debate.
- Councillors expressed their disappointment that Taunton had not had a Town Council before and that the residents had not had proper representation on many important issues.
- Councillors highlighted the importance of the work of a Town Council for when the Unitary Authority had been established.
- Some councillors agreed that the CGR should be carried out on the unparished area first and then a wider review could be carried out once a Town Council had been established. Whereas some councillors believed that if a wider review was not carried out now, then it would be severely delayed in the work to create the Unitary Authority.
- Concern was raised that option 2c was too similar to option 3 and that the work would get lost in a boundary review and then the CGR would be halted.
The Deputy Monitoring Officer compared options 2c and 3 and gave information on the differences. He further explained the implications on the May 2022 elections if the consultation was not completed by mid-January 2022.
- The proposer and seconder closed the debate and explained why they supported a wider review be carried out, which included giving the surrounding parishes an option to be part of a Town Council and to give the local residents a better representation.
- Councillor Rigby detailed the paragraphs to be included in option 2c.
- Councillor Lisgo proposed a recorded vote be taken and recorded in the minutes, which was duly seconded by Councillor Habgood.

The recommendations, which are detailed below, were put and were **CARRIED** with twenty Councillors in favour, eighteen against and one abstaining:-

Resolved that Special Full Council approved:-

2c: To commence a Community Governance Review of the Unparished Area of Taunton and the adjoining Parish areas with the intention to implement a town council for all or part of that area.

- a) A community governance review be undertaken of the unparished area of Taunton and surrounding parishes (Trull, Bishop's Hull, Comeytrove, Norton Fitzwarren, Staplegrove, Kingston St. Mary, Cheddon Fitzpaine, West Monkton) with a view to the creation of a parish or parishes and council(s) to serve all or part of that area.
- b) The Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review be delegated to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and Monitoring

- Officer or Deputy, after consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group and the Leader of the Council for later publication.
- c) The first round of consultation wording be delegated to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer for use as the basis for the first round of communications in respect of the Community Governance Review with authority delegated to the Specialist in Governance and Democracy to make minor amendments to the text if required, after consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group and the Leader of the Council.
 - d) The Communications and Consultation Plan set out at Appendix 10 to this report be approved, with authority delegated to the Specialist in Governance and Democracy to make minor amendments to the text if required, after consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group.
 - e) To authorise a general delegation to the Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer, after consultation with the Community Governance Review Working Group to take such action as necessary to progress the community governance review and amend the timetable in accordance with legislation and the statutory guidance.

Those voting **FOR** the **MOTION**: Councillors I Aldridge, L Baker, C Booth, S Coles, D Darch, T Deakin, C Ellis, H Farbahi, E Firmin, S Griffiths, J Hassall, R Henley, J Hunt, D Johnson, M Kravis, S Nicholls, D Perry, M Rigby, S Wakefield and D Wedderkopp.

Those voting **AGAINST** the **MOTION**: Councillors M Barr, M Blaker, H Davies, A Govier, R Habgood, M Hill, R Lees, S Lees, L Lisgo, J Lloyd, D Mansell, A Milne, H Prior-Sankey, S Pugsley, N Thwaites, A Trollope-Bellew, B Weston and L Whetlor.

Those **ABSTAINING** from the vote: Councillor G Wren.

(The Meeting ended at 8.55 pm)