

## **STATEMENT TO THE CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR TAUNTON**

### **Item 5 - Draft SWT Council Report - Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton**

The draft Council report on the Community Governance Review for the Unparished Area of Taunton originally timetabled to go before SWT Full Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> July sets out proposals from the Community Governance Review Working Group for a CGR in relation to Taunton. The Council is minded to pause an immediate decision on this report and instead bring a revised report back to Full Council in September. The reasons are set out below and have been discussed and agreed with the Acting Chair of the Working Group;

The Council has received legal advice that it is required to formally consult the County Council on the intention to conduct a Review and of their terms of reference. Such formal consultation has yet to take place. Procedurally it would be better to undertake such consultation and take any representations into account before proceeding further. The Report should reflect such steps.

In addition, a ministerial decision on local government changes in Somerset is due to be made this week. Such a statement has implications for an intervention by the Boundary Commission and a potential electoral review. The statutory guidance on CGR's makes clear that councils should avoid starting a community governance review, if a wider electoral arrangements review, is being, or is about to be undertaken. It would be sensible to pause and consider the implications of paragraph 28 of the Guidance and whether, in the light of the ministerial statement, a preliminary discussion with the Boundary Commission would be beneficial. There may be no implications but, at least the report would be better to include such matters.

Finally, the council needs to review the reasons for the extent of the planned review area and the terms of reference of the community governance review before it places such before full council. The reasoning for the extent of the review, or any variation of such, needs to be set out with clarity and follow the statutory guidance, or if not, set forth reasons for any departure.

Mr Marcus Prouse     Mr Kevin Williams  
Somerset West and Taunton Council  
[governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)