

**MEETING OF THE
GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2009
AT THE DEAF BLIND UK CONFERENCE CENTRE, HAMPTON**

Present: Councillors Benton and JR Fox.
Also present: Councillors North, Scott and Seaton
Ian Dewar, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Association of Local Councils
Officers present: Sally Crawford, Community Governance Manager
Lisa Emmanuel, Neighbourhood Manager, South
Lindsay Tomlinson, Senior Governance Officer

1. Appointment of Chairman

Councillor Benton was appointed chairman for the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillors Goodwin and Swift. Councillor JR Fox attended as substitute for Councillor Swift.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

4. Procedure

The Community Governance Manager outlined the reason for the meeting, explaining that a petition had been received requesting that a parish council for Hampton be established. A consultation and publicity exercise had been undertaken culminating in the meeting of the Governance Arrangements Committee which would hear the views of the residents of Hampton.

5. Consultation

5(i) Public Questions

Residents queried the status and purposed behind the newly formed neighbourhood councils. There was confusion as to the powers of the neighbourhood councils and parish councils, queries about the funding for neighbourhood councils and a request for information about the membership of neighbourhood councils.

Officers advised residents that the neighbourhood councils were not intended to replace parish councils, but were a new initiative to act as a link between the Town Hall, the parish councils and the community. Decision making was being taken into the community via delegations from the Cabinet and Cabinet members in areas such as the programme of works under the Highways Act. They had separate powers from parish councils and were intended to strengthen the relationship between the city council and the parishes. Membership would be restricted to the elected city councillors but representatives of community organisations would be invited to attend. At present there was no direct funding allocation for the neighbourhood councils.

A resident queried the relatively small turnout at the meeting and asked if sufficient notice had been given.

Officers assured residents that although there had been a slight delay because of issues in confirming the venue for the meeting, Access to Information legislation had been complied with and there had been publicity about the meeting in the local media.

There was a query about the timeline for a decision and the work that would be necessary in forming a parish council, including funding arrangements.

Officers advised that there would be a further public meeting of the Governance Arrangements Committee which would consider all the representations received before deciding whether to make a recommendation to Full Council on 2 December 2009 as to whether a parish council should be established. If a parish council was established then in theory it could be set up in time for the local elections in May 2010. In response to a question about applying for funding prior to a parish council being established officers advised that they would look into the matter and report back.

5(ii) Ward Councillors

Councillor Scott: It was the duty of elected members to reflect on the wishes of the people who elected them. The response rate of approximately 14% was surprisingly high and indicated support for the establishment of a parish council. Residents had raised issues about the formation of the new neighbourhood councils but this is just an accident of timing and it was a matter for Peterborough City Council to decide how the neighbourhood councils would work.

Residents who felt strongly against the establishment of a parish council also had the opportunity to make their views known.

Councillor North: This was about democracy and the people of Hampton had demonstrated that they wanted a parish council, therefore they should have one.

Councillor Seaton: It would be helpful to debate the difference between neighbourhood councils and parish councils as this was proving confusing for residents. If a parish council was established it would be useful to have Hampton parish councillor supporting their local neighbourhood council.

(There was a further short debate on the status of neighbourhood councils, their relationship with parish councils and councillors and the reason behind their establishment.)

5(iii) Representations in Favour of Establishing a Parish Council

Mr T. Loutit – Resident: Mr Loutit, a resident of 10 years, explained that he was the Chair of the Hampton Parish Council Steering Group and was passionate about creating a safe and thriving community. In his opinion, the establishment of a parish council would play a vital role in giving the community a voice, helping to deliver services tailored to local needs. Issues such as anti social behaviour, littering, parking, the lack of youth facilities and the maintenance of green spaces all needed to be addressed. There was a large number of community groups already established in Hampton and they would benefit from a parish council.

To sum up, a parish council would deliver service to the local community, represent local residents and improve their quality of life.

5(iv) Representations Against the Establishment of a Parish Council

There were no representations against the establishment of a parish council. However Councillor North, although not opposed to a parish council, pointed out that residents may raise objections when their council tax was increased.

Residents debated the issue of a need for a community centre in Hampton. Officers advised that community action plans were being drawn up and that issues such as this would be addressed as part of that process.

There was some discussion about funding of a parish council and the type of decisions that may be passed down to it from the city council, for example street lighting maintenance.

6. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 17 November 2009 at 7.00pm at the Town Hall, Peterborough.

Meeting began at 7.00pm and closed 8.05pm.

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