

**MEETING OF THE
GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE
HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2009
AT THE TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Present: Councillors Benton, Goodwin and JR Fox.
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

There were no apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 October 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2009 were approved.

5. Community Governance Review – Hampton Hargate & Hampton Vale

A petition had been submitted to the Council requesting the formation of a local government parish council for the neighbourhood of Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale. The local authority had a statutory duty to undertake a community governance review for the purpose of making recommendations with regard to creating, merging or abolishing parishes and the Committee received a report on the views and comments received during the recent community governance review for Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale.

The comprehensive consultation process had included a leaflet drop to all properties in the relevant areas, advertisements in Your Peterborough and the Hampton Gazette, information placed on Peterborough City Council's and the Hampton websites along with a table at Hampton's autumn fair. A public meeting had been held in Hampton at which residents and ward councillors had been given an opportunity to ask questions and present their views.

Overall 462 responses had been received of which 413 (89%) supported the establishment of a parish council. The members queried whether the response rate of around 13% was typical and were advised that responses to this type of consultation tended to be between 10-20%. The review had been well publicised and everyone had been given an opportunity to make their views known. Members considered all comments on their merits and particularly acknowledged concerns expressed regarding the increase in council tax.

There was some discussion about the geographical extent of the area covered by the requested parish council and the likely numbers of parish councillors. It was confirmed that currently it was proposed for the Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale areas only, the population of that area being around 6,000 which equated to North Bretton which had 15 parish councillors. There was a feeling that, as Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale were roughly the same size, each area should have a proportionate number of parish councillors.

Members of the Hampton Parish Council Steering Group were present at the meeting and in response to questions from the committee regarding their motives they confirmed the reasons behind the request for a parish council centred on the desire for local involvement in issues affecting the area and the wish to maintain Hampton as a pleasant place to live. They explained that residents felt somewhat in limbo as the developers, O&H Hampton still had control over some aspects of local provision and that this was presenting difficulties for residents in getting any improvements made. It was also felt by the steering group that a parish council would be more able to attract funding than a less formal community group. The steering group had been working with Mr Dewar from the Peterborough Association of Local Councils and he had provided much advice. They were committed to a proper training programme for parish councillors and already had a prospective parish clerk.

RESOLVED

That, following consideration of the responses received during the consultation exercise, the impact on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of the proposal, a report be presented to Full Council on 2 December 2009 recommending that it approves the establishment of a parish council for Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale comprising 14 councillors in total, split equally between the two areas to ensure equal representation from the two villages.

REASONS

The Committee made their decision based on the following reasons:

1. Parish Councils have an important role to play in the development of their communities
2. Parish Councils can perform a central role in community leadership and will have a standing invitation and participate in the new neighbourhood councils.
3. Setting up a Parish Council offers the opportunity to strengthen community engagement and participation and generate a positive impact on community cohesion.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was acknowledged that some residents were not in favour of paying an increase in council tax to fund the precept for a parish council which could be between £10 and £30 per annum and the Committee could have decided to recommend against a parish council being established. However, this would be in contradiction to the majority of the responses received.

Meeting began at 7.00pm and closed at 7.30pm.