

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 30th January 2019

Present: Councillor Russell Roberts (Chair)

Councillors Lloyd Bunday, Maggie Don, Ian Jelley, Clark Mitchell,
Mark Rowley and Mike Tebbutt

Also Present: Martin Hammond (Executive Director)

Lisa Hyde (Executive Director)

David Pope (Committee Administrator)

18.LGR.09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lesley Thurland and Mick Scrimshaw. It was noted that Cllr Tebbutt was acting as substitute for Cllr Thurland, with Cllr Don acting as substitute for Cllr Scrimshaw.

18.LGR.10 MINUTES

The meetings of the meeting held on 17th January 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18.LGR.11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

18.LGR.12 PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Cllr Andrew Dutton (KBC) and Cllr Pat Scouse (Broughton PC) attended the meeting and indicated a wish to speak in relation to Agenda Item 7.

18.LGR.13 CIVIC ISSUES

A report was submitted which asked the Committee to consider how best to treat the various civic features of KBC in light of the possible transition

to a North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority. Members were asked to consider this report in relation to the following partially related agenda item and make recommendations to Council in respect of both.

It was heard that the Mayoralty had a variety of civic features and insignia including the mace and chain of office both for the Borough of Kettering and historic items dating from pre-1974 re-organisation. From a Kettering town perspective, it could be possible to resurrect the pre-1974 insignia should there be a view to do so. It was noted that the current KBC Coat of Arms would cease to exist at the same point that KBC was dissolved.

Also under consideration was the future vesting of the town's Market Charter. The meeting heard that should the charter lapse the right to hold on-street markets in the town would end.

The Committee was advised that in time, decisions would need to be made as to:

- What body should the existing Borough Mayoral insignia and assets be transferred?
- What body should the market charter be assigned?

In each case the options were:

- a future town council for Kettering
- a future charter trustees body on a geography to be determined
- the new unitary authority.

It was confirmed to members that it was unclear at this stage whether any new unitary authority would want Borough status or a mayor.

Following discussion, as well as consideration of Agenda Item 7, the Committee made the following recommendations to Council:

RECOMMENDED

that:

- i) all Borough mayoral insignia and Kettering Market Charter be transferred to a future Kettering Town Council should one be created as a result of a Community Governance Review; and
- ii) Should no Kettering Town Council be created then all Borough mayoral insignia and Kettering Market Charter be vested to a future Charter Trustees

18.LGR.12 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - PROCESS

Members received a report that set out the process for any potential Community Governance Review (CGR) and asked members to comment on the desirability and timing for any review and make a recommendation to Council should they be minded to proceed.

The Committee was also asked if it wished, at the right time, to encourage an independently facilitated wider debate with town and parish council across North Northamptonshire with regard to their future role once unitaries had come into being.

It was noted that the only unparished area in the Borough was Kettering town itself. It was further noted that Wellingborough had recently concluded a CGR process regarding the parishing of its principle town and Corby had just commenced the process for the same purpose. Members heard that should a CGR be agreed by Council, the process would take approximately 6-9 months to conclude.

Elements for consideration as part of any CGR would include the number of elected members for any new town council, warding arrangements and the boundaries of any new town council compared to adjacent parishes. It was heard that the development of East Kettering crossed a number of existing parish boundaries. The CGR undertaken in 2014 had agreed in principle that Cranford parish western boundary pull back to the Allege Brook to take account of the East Kettering development and this should be considered as part of the CGR process.

Were members minded to recommend to Council that a CGR take place, it would be possible to start the process from February, if agreed by Council, to conclude by the end of 2019/early 2020. Should a Kettering Town Council be created following the CGR process, an initial year's precept level would need to be set for it by KBC.

Details of the range of parish functions were provided, although members noted that the only statutory function a parish had was a duty to provide allotments should there be a demand.

Members heard that across the borough, because there was a relatively short history of parish precepting, the average parish undertook fewer functions than comparable parishes around the country. It would be for any new unitary authority to decide what role town and parishes would play in service delivery and there needed to be a discussion with all parties across the whole of North Northamptonshire as to this potential future role.

Members unanimously agreed that a CGR was needed for Kettering, and discussed whether the current time was the most appropriate point for this to happen, or whether the decision be left to any potential unitary authority.

Members considered that there had been no stated appetite among parishes locally to take on additional service provision, with parishes having concerns about their capacity to deliver such services. Similar views were expressed by those in the public gallery at the meeting.

Following discussion the Committee made the following recommendations to Council:

RECOMMENDED

that:

- i) A report be submitted to the February meeting of Council to formally ask for the approval of the commencement of a Community Governance Review to consider the possibility of parishing Kettering town and to fix its boundaries and
- ii) To recommend to any future Shadow Authority that it consider the best time to have a conversation with town and parish councils across North Northamptonshire as to their future role

18.LGR.13 KETTERING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S SERVICE OFFER – WHAT WE DO DIFFERENTLY

Members were presented with a report that sought to set out for members those areas of activity carried out by KBC which were considered to be unusual within North Northamptonshire and asked the Committee which of these features they would ideally like to see preserved, as far as was possible, should a new unitary council be created.

An additional point captured following publication of the report was the Saturday opening of KBC's customer service centre.

Members commented that the report successfully distilled the essence of the culture of KBC and that they would like to see all aspects incorporated into any new North Northamptonshire Unitary Authority, however the following aspects of KBC's service offer were of greatest importance to them as a Committee:

- KBC's personalised approach to customer service, with wrap around services tailored to individuals and cross-sectoral working
- A preference for an in-house delivery model
- Within Housing, housing support initiatives such as HomeMove, LifePlan and Silver Service
- Partnership initiatives such as Kettering Futures Partnership

18.LGR.14 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A tentative date of 5th March was suggested for the next meeting of the committee to allow for the recommendations outlined above to be taken to Council on 27th February. A finalised date would be communicated to members outside the meeting.

(The meeting started at 5.00pm and ended at 6.24pm)

Signed:

(Chair)

DJP