

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 19th June 2019

Present: Councillor Russell Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Lloyd Bunday, Ian Jelley, Clark Mitchell, Mick Scrimshaw and Lesley Thurland

Also Present: Councillors James Hakewill, Shirley Stanton and Mike Tebbutt

Graham Soulsby (Managing Director)
Martin Hammond (Executive Director)
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

19.LGR.01 APOLOGIES

None.

19.LGR.02 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held on 10th April 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19.LGR.03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

19.LGR.04 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – GOVERNMENT DECISION AND UPDATE

Members received a report, supplemented by a presentation from the Managing Director explaining the Secretary of State's (SoS) decision in relation to Local Government Reform in Northamptonshire published on 14th May. The report outlined the next steps in the reform process and sought Members' views.

The Managing Director reported that the only modification to the reform proposals was to alter the implementation date of the proposed unitary authorities so that the new councils would be fully operational from 1st

April 2021. It was noted that this decision was subject to the parliamentary legislative process and the establishment of a Children's Trust spanning the two unitary authorities. It was anticipated that the final version of the Structural Change Order would be ready around November 2019.

The decision letter received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) requested the views of the council, specifically in regard to whether it supported the idea of the shadow authority arrangements coming into being after the elections had taken place in May 2020. Informal discussions between the eight local authorities had concluded that this proposal appeared a sensible way to proceed.

Members were also asked to consider what their preference was should there be a need for a by-election between May 2020 and March 2021. The current statutory rules meant that no bye-election would take place in the last six months of the outgoing authorities. Members of the Committee considered this issue and were happy for the current situation regarding by-elections to be retained going forward.

Cllr Scrimshaw stated that there had been a great deal of uncertainty to date in relation to local government reform in the county and noted the importance of clarity in the process. The timescale for implementation of reform as currently set out needed to happen without further delay.

RECOMMENDED that:

- i) The Committee recommended the suggested approach in regard to shadow authority arrangements contained in the letter from MHCLG (dated 14 May 2019);
- ii) That the Committee recommended the continuation of the current statutory rules with regard to any KBC member vacancies that may occur in the period May 2020 to March 2021.

19.LGR.05 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – TIMETABLE

A report was submitted which sought agreement for a timetable for consultation in relation to the Community Governance Review (CGR) for Kettering town as well as agreement of the potential start date for any new Town Council for Kettering.

Members were reminded that at the previous meeting of the Committee the announcement of the European Election had thrown the original CGR timetable into question and it had been agreed to bring a revised

timetable back to this meeting. Since that meeting a further complication had arisen in that the commencement date for the new unitary authorities has been moved back a year until 2021 as set out in minute 19.LGR.04 above.

As a consequence the Committee was asked to consider whether it wished to see the suggested changes proposed within the CGR to come into effect in May 2020, as originally expected, or in May 2021. Although the decision could impact the timetable for the CGR consultation process, the review would still require conclusion within twelve months of its start date, that being March 2019.

The Committee considered two alternative consultation timetables as follows:

Stage	May 2020 start	May 2021 start
Consultation plan submitted to Council	24 th July 2019	24 th July 2019
Consultation period	29 th July to 15 th September 2019 (7 weeks)	1 st September to 31 st October 2019 (8 weeks)
Results of consultation reported to Council	25 th September 2019	11 th December 2019
Publish draft recommendations for further consultation	1 st October to 15 th November 2019	15 th December to 15 th February 2020
Final recommendation to full Council	11 th December 2019	28 th February 2020
Council fixes precept for town council	26 th February 2020	February 2021

Members noted that the May 2021 start date would allow an additional week for the initial consultation and a longer period for the second consultation.

Councillor Jim Hakewill addressed the committee and expressed his preference for a 2020 start date for any new Town Council for Kettering.

Members were also provided with an initial draft consultation document and were requested to provide feedback on the design and content outside of the meeting, and by 5th July 2019. It was noted that the consultation would be available online and as a hard copy.

RECOMMENDED that the start date for any new Town Council for Kettering be May 2021 with the relevant Community Governance Review timetable detailed above being recommended to Council.

(The meeting started at 5.00pm and ended at 5.35pm)

Signed _____
(Chair)

DJP