

Regulatory & Appeals Committee Minutes

Date: 11 February 2019

Time: 7.00 - 8.20 pm

PRESENT: Councillor J A Savage (in the Chair)

Councillors: M Clarke, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, C Etholen, R Gaffney, M Hussain JP, I L McEnnis, R Raja, D A C Shakespeare OBE and Ms J D Wassell.

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from A Collingwood and D Knights.

26 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee held on 4 December 2018 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Upon seeking advice, Councillors M Clarke, A Green and Ms J Wassell were informed that it was not necessary for them to declare an interest in agenda item 4 unless they felt they had already predetermined the matter under consideration.

All Members concerned remained in the meeting and took full part in both the discussion and voting on the matter.

28 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - MICKLEFIELD & TOTTERIDGE

A report was considered which requested Members` feedback with regard to the Community Governance Review of the Micklefield and Totteridge wards and any other areas identified as appropriate for review for example Sands, and/or whether a Community Governance Review of any other unparished area within High Wycombe should also be carried out. In doing so, the wording for the Terms of Reference for the reviews would also need to be considered and agreed which in accordance with statutory requirements necessitated for them to be published. This in turn would trigger a 12 month period in which the review was to be completed.

The proposed terms of Reference for the Totteridge/Micklefield wards was set out at (Appendix A) to the report. A further part of the appendix laid out the terms of reference with regard to the creation of one or more parishes for the unparished area of High Wycombe. The presenting officer highlighted that a consultation would

be required to be undertaken with the local government electors in the areas under review and other relevant interested parties as determined by the Council.

The report stated that a decision was now required to be made following the receipt of 2 petitions which had been validated and which had therefore triggered a community governance review of the wards of both Micklefield and Totteridge. It was brought to the Members` attention that a further petition had also been received for a review of the whole of the unparished area within High Wycombe, and also for that of the Sands ward. However at the present time the latter two had not yet been validated but work was underway to establish whether the review of these areas was also triggered. In the event that the petitions were valid the resultant CGR would be joined to the existing review, for completion within the 12 month time limit.

The report further explained that it was the District Council which had the power to undertake CGRs and make changes to local community governance arrangements. Such reviews could consider a number of things including creating merging abolishing parishes, electoral arrangements for parishes and altering the number of councillors and parish warding. In addition councils had the discretion to voluntarily conduct reviews every so often and was considered good practice to do so in order that parish councils could continue to contribute to community empowerment and to the development and coordination of support for citizens and community groups.

It was noted that any review which was started now was likely to be completed during the transition period and would therefore fall to be determined by the shadow authority.

Following consideration of the report before them, Members were requested to consider and recommend whether a community governance review should be conducted in;

- (a) Micklefield and Totteridge wards only.
- (b) Sands – and/or any other appropriate identified areas
- (c) The whole of the unparished area of High Wycombe

A report to Council would be submitted at its next meeting scheduled for 21 February 2019, which would seek endorsement of the recommendations made by this Committee. Members considered the information before them and proceeded to have an in depth discussion and debate on the matter. Members posed a number of questions.

A question was raised as to the process of conducting the review and how this was likely to be taken forward. It was explained that although Officers would undertake a significant amount of work, it would be in collaboration with Members who`s involvement would most likely take place through the establishment of a working party in order to provide relevant steer and direction.

Another Member wished to congratulate the presenting officer on the production of a detailed and comprehensive report. Some Members felt that there needed to be

further clarifications on the report and terms of reference and that there were errors in the report which needed to be corrected before a decision could be taken.

Discussion then took place on the scope that the review should take. It was suggested by a Member that it should be a comprehensive review covering all areas within the unparished area. Another member raised the question of whether it should include the area beyond the unparished area where there were existing parishes within the area of the Town.

Some Members wished to delay the decision process until the April Council meeting in order to allow time for the report to be amended/re-written to include further clarifications and a through and more detailed terms of reference. However it was stated that this option would not be viable, as the review was already triggered and would need to be carried out within 12 months in order for it to be completed by 31 March 2020 after which time, if the reorganisation went ahead, WDC would be abolished. Moreover the authority was expected to conduct and proceed with the review within a timeframe from the time at which the petitions had been presented to Council back in December 2018. It was confirmed that any minor errors within the report would be amended in the time available prior to Full Council on 21 February.

After much deliberation Members,

RESOLVED: That the report be returned to officers in order to provide a fuller and more complete terms of reference and to correct the references to all appropriate documentation.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Ian Hunt	- Democratic Services Manager
Iram Malik	- Democratic Services Officer
Matt Rae	- Electoral Services Manager
Catherine Whitehead	- Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy.