

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	4 December 2017
Report of the	-	Executive Director of Resources
Subject	-	Community Governance Review of Bexhill – Final recommendations.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 November 2017, considered a report on the Community Governance Review of Bexhill - Final Recommendations. The recommendation and minute arising is reproduced below.

Recommendation to COUNCIL: That the following four options be fully debated and for the final recommendation to be determined:

- i. Option 1: no change;
 - ii. Option 2: the creation of one Parish Council for the whole of Bexhill (to be styled a Town Council);
 - iii. Option 3: the creation of an Area Committee for Bexhill; and
 - iv. Option 4: the creation of four Parish Councils, North, East, South and West Bexhill, based on the current (May 2017) East Sussex County Council Divisional boundaries.
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OSC17/32. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW FOR BEXHILL**

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director of Resources that set out the background, progression and consultation results of the Community Governance Review (CGR) of Bexhill-on-Sea, as well as the recommendations of the Community Governance Review Steering Group (CGRSG) to full Council via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and Cabinet.

The following four options were proposed for the OSC to consider:

- i. Option 1: no change.
- ii. Option 2: the creation of one Parish Council for the whole of Bexhill (to be styled a Town Council).
- iii. Option 3: the creation of an Area Committee for Bexhill.
- iv. Option 4: the creation of four Parish Councils – North, East, South and West Bexhill, based on the current (May 2017) East Sussex County Council Divisional boundaries.

It was noted that should a consensus view not be reached, Members had the provision to submit one “minority report” to Cabinet from the Committee, setting out an alternative recommendation. Cabinet would then consider both recommendations. Members noted that a minority report would need to be submitted to Democratic Services by no later than Wednesday 29 November for consideration by Cabinet at its meeting scheduled to be held on Monday 4 December 2017.

Due to the large response to the consultation and the overwhelming support of responders for a Town Council, Councillor Mrs Prochak proposed an amendment to the Motion, seconded by Councillor Earl that only Options 1 (no change) and 2 (the creation of one Parish Council for Bexhill to be styled a Town Council) be put forward as the recommendation to Cabinet and full Council.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5 a vote by roll call was taken on the amendment to the Motion.

FOR (5): Councillors C.A. Clark, S.H. Earl, Mrs S.M. Prochak, G.F. Stevens and M.R. Watson.

AGAINST (5): Councillors J. Barnes, G.S. Browne, C.G. Curtis, S.D. Elford and J. Potts.

ABSTAIN (1): Councillor R.V. Ellison and P.N. Osborne.

The Chairman exercised his casting vote and the amendment to the Motion on being put was declared **LOST**.

Consideration was given to the option of referring the recommendation directly to full Council. Following officer advice and confirmation that the CGRSG was originally established by Cabinet and that its Terms of Reference stated that recommendations would be made to the OSC, then Cabinet and full Council, it was agreed that the original process be adhered to.

Members noted that approximately 80% of Bexhill residents had not responded to the Stage 2 Consultation process. Concerns were raised that costings identified within the report for a Town Council were only estimated. The Executive Director of Resources advised that a basic model for a Town Council had been used to arrive at these estimates. Until a Town Council was established and devolved services agreed, the true figures would be unknown at this stage. Precepts would be dependent on the amount of services a Town Council was delivering and could fluctuate year-on-year.

At the conclusion of debate and given the importance of the decision, which included the potential to establish an additional tax raising body, on a permanent basis for the residents of Bexhill-on-Sea, Members agreed that all four options be put forward to Cabinet and full Council to enable a full and thorough debate without any steer or influence from the OSC or Cabinet. Therefore the original recommendation was put to the Committee and **CARRIED**.

The Chairman thanked Robin Patten, the CGR Steering Group Members and supporting officers for the excellent work they had undertaken.

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 5.1).

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director of Resources