

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW STEERING GROUP

27 January 2020

Minutes of the Community Governance Review Steering Group meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea on Monday 27 January 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Steering Group Members present: Councillors J. Barnes, C.A. Bayliss (Chairman), T.J.C. Byrne, J.J. Carroll, P.J. Gray, L.M. Langlands, P.N. Osborne, R.B. Thomas and H.L. Timpe.

Other Members present: Councillors Mrs M.L. Barnes, S.J. Coleman, P.C. Courtel, B.J. Drayson, C.A. Madeley and D.B. Oliver.

Advisory Officers in attendance: Executive Director (MJ), Assistant Director Resources, Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer, Marketing and Communications Account Manager, Consultation Officer and Business Support Assistant.

Also Present: seven members of the public.

CGR19/15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CGR19/16. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the Minutes as indicated below:

Councillors Mrs Bayliss, Byrne, Coleman, Courtel, Drayson, Gray, Madeley, Langlands and Thomas each declared a Personal Interest in so far as they were former members of Democracy4Bexhill and supporters of a Town Council for Bexhill-on-Sea.

CGR19/17. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 19 DECEMBER 2019 - MATTERS ARISING

It was raised that a discussion at the last meeting had highlighted the desire to remove the question in the online consultation questionnaire regarding the 'parishing' of certain areas of Bexhill. Members were advised that whilst consideration needed to be given to other forms of governance the Council was not obligated to ask the question in the consultation.

It was moved by Councillor Thomas that the minutes be amended to specify that it was agreed that the question regarding parishing certain areas of Bexhill be removed from the online consultation questionnaire.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be amended to specify that it had been agreed that the question regarding parishing areas of Bexhill be removed from the online consultation questionnaire.

CGR19/18. CONSULTATION MATERIALS AND TIMETABLE

The Chairman advised Members that the online consultation questionnaire was yet to be updated with the recently revised text. This would be completed in due course and Members were to keep this in mind during the discussion.

Consideration was given to the Executive Director's report which updated the Community Governance Review Steering Group (CGRSG) on the proposed consultation materials, public information and revised timetable for the Community Governance Review (CGR) for Bexhill-on-Sea. At the last meeting, the CGRSG requested that further work be undertaken by Officers on the proposed draft consultation materials. The Marketing and Communications Account Manager, along with three members of the Steering Group, had redrafted the consultation materials.

The Chairman led members through the individual materials.

Leaflet and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

A copy of the proposed leaflet and FAQs was appended to the report at Appendices A and B respectively. Confirmation of costs and timetable to leaflet drop to all residential properties in Bexhill was still awaited from the Post Office.

Clarification was sought regarding a discrepancy in figures mentioned in the leaflet and FAQs. The Assistant Director Resources clarified that the figures quoted within the FAQs were correct. Officers would ensure that the figures quoted in the various materials would be consistent.

Members considered whether either a response postcard or tear-off slip should be included with the leaflet, given that the reduced text of the leaflet now provided the opportunity to include a tear-off slip. It was thought that, although a postcard may encourage a higher response rate, it would be detrimental to the Council's ambition to reduce paper consumption as part of becoming carbon neutral. Although online responses would be highly encouraged, another response method would be needed for those without internet access. It was agreed that a tear-off slip be included within the leaflet, for those who were unable to respond online; it would need to be made clear to those responding via the tear-off slip not to also respond online.

Consideration was given to the content of the leaflet and FAQs. Members discussed whether more specific costs could be included regarding which services would be transferred to a Town Council. However, as the exact services would be decided by a Town Council itself, it was thought that giving specific costs at this stage was likely to become confusing and misleading the public. The Chairman was keen

to ensure that residents would know that the creation of a Bexhill Town Council would cost them more money.

It was agreed that wording of the leaflet would need further revision prior to the start of the consultation. A number of suggestions were made to improve the leaflet, including making it clear that residents already paid Bexhill special expenses; this and further amendments would be incorporated and a further version circulated for approval.

It was agreed that further work was also required on the FAQs in terms of possibly re-ordering and it was agreed that an additional FAQ regarding eligibility to stand as a Town Councillor should be included. It was also suggested that a contact telephone number be included in case residents had any queries or questions that were not included within the FAQs.

On-line Questionnaire:

The on-line questionnaire had not been updated to reflect the new text of the leaflet. It was agreed to add another question for those responders who did not favour the introduction of the Town Council to ask why not. It was suggested that the on-line questionnaire perhaps include a picture on the first page to make it more appealing, if possible.

Video:

A link to the final version of the video would be circulated to Members in due course.

Marketing Material:

It was agreed to produce A5 flyers and 5 pop-up banners as well as the leaflet and FAQs to help promote the consultation. All Bexhill Members would be provided with a quantity of A5 leaflets to disseminate within their Wards. It was hoped that the pop-up banner could be located within the Bexhill Library.

Timetable:

As the consultation materials were still being finalised and details from the Post Office with regard to delivery timescales was still awaited Members agreed that officers work with the Chairman to establish the earliest practical timetable as possible.

RESOLVED: That officers finalise the leaflet, on-line questionnaire, FAQs, marketing materials and timetable in consultation with Councillors Mrs Bayliss, Timpe and Thomas.

CGR19/19. **BEXHILL TOWN FORUM 2020 - FIRST FORUMS "A TOWN COUNCIL FOR BEXHILL"**

The Chairman advised that she had been invited to attend two Bexhill Town Forum meetings and take part as a Panel Member on 21

February and 6 March which would hopefully fall within the consultation period. The Chairman was not able to attend the meeting on the 21 February due to a prior engagement and sought volunteers from the Steering Group. A number of Members indicated their willingness to attend although no formal attendee was agreed and appointed.

CGR19/20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business proposed.

CGR19/21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be at the conclusion of the consultation period and Members would be contacted in due course when the timetable had been established.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 3.20 pm