

Extract from Council Minutes – 21 March 2018

555 SHEERNESS COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The Leader introduced the report; congratulated residents of Sheerness in having their say on local governance; and proposed the recommendations in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Gerry Lewin.

The Leader of The Swale Group spoke in support of the report, praised all those involved in the review, but questioned whether there should be more than nine councillors on any new town council.

The Leader of the Labour Group advised that he was happy to go to the next stage of the consultation; and asked for clarification on the next stage of the process, asking whether Sheerness residents would be asked to vote on it?

The Leader of the Independent Group said he was surprised and delighted with the level of consultation response, given the low response in the previous community governance review.

Discussion ensued during which Members referred to the high volume of consultation responses; referred to Appendix I and expressed concern that some people might not understand that the town council would not replace Swale Borough Council, and that there may be misapprehensions and misunderstandings; asked whether the next stage of consultation would be a full postal ballot; that further consultation should be clear and should correct misunderstandings; and that Members should make sure that residents were aware of the facts.

The Leader referred to the previous report to Council which contained the timetable for the Community Governance Review; drew attention to paragraph 5.7 of the report that set out details of the next phase of consultation; and considered that nine Members would be the correct number of Members for a new town council as it would allow for a contested election.

Resolved:

(1) That Council notes the consultation response to the Community Governance Review.

(2) That given the consultation responses, the following draft recommendations be agreed for further consultation:

(a) that a new parish area is created for Sheerness (this is to be the same areas as the Borough Ward of Sheerness);

(b) that the new parish area should have a parish council;

(c) that the new parish council should be an alternative style and be known as Sheerness Town Council;

(d) that Sheerness Town Council comprises of 9 Members, with the first elections to take place in May 2019.

(3) That in making draft recommendations, the Council considers that the

establishment of the Town Council would meet the criteria in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, in that it will be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and effective and convenient, and will have a positive impact on community cohesion.