

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**  
**SUTTON COLDFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**  
**STEERING GROUP BUSINESS MEETING**  
**MONDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2015**  
**AT**  
**1520 HOURS**  
**THE CRUSH HALL**  
**SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:-**

Group Chairman: Cllr Anne Underwood  
Group Vice Chairman: Ken Rushton  
Group Members: Cllr David Barrie, Cllr Lyn Collin, Paul Long, Cllr David Pears, Cllr Rob Pocock, Stephen Smallwood

**IN ATTENDANCE:-**

Beverly Edmead – Community Governance Manager, BCC  
Ifor Jones – Service Director, Localisation, BCC  
Gary Ladbrooke, District Head, Sutton Coldfield, BCC  
Olive O’Sullivan – Community Governance Support Officer, BCC

**NOMINATED COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE**

Elizabeth Allison – Chairman, Sutton Coldfield Civic Society

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1.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Meirion Jenkins, Ewan Mackey, Claire Spencer and Ken Wood.

**Action: All to Note**

2. **NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Referring to Agenda item 6 and the discussion regarding the staffing arrangements for the Interim Parish Council, Paul had suggested that the Interim Parish Clerk could also take on the role of Responsible Finance Officer if appropriately qualified.

Noting Paul's comment, the Notes from the meeting held on 13 October 2015 were agreed by the Group.

3. **STEERING GROUP COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

**(i) Nominations to Join Group**

The Chairman advised of the following nominations received:-

- Sutton Coldfield Civic Society
- Sutton Coldfield YMCA, Clifton Road

Whilst welcoming the nominations, Ken felt that the inclusion of the Chairs from the respective Neighbourhood Forums across the district on the Steering Group was equally valid, given how actively involved each Forum was in their respective neighbourhoods. Cllr Pocock, Paul and Stephen also supported the request for the inclusion of Neighbourhood Forums representatives, and that they would be a useful addition to the Steering Group.

Cllr Collin advised that only two wards in the District had active Neighbourhood Forums, and the areas covered by these forums were not representative of the whole ward. Cllr Barrie felt that the size of the Steering Group had to remain manageable, and suggested the inclusion/involvement of Neighbourhood Forums for specific resident led/wider consultation issues that would need to be undertaken as programme for the implementation of the Parish Council developed.

Cllr Pears felt the inclusion of the YMCA would provide the input/involvement and views from young people.

Gary agreed to map out and provide details regarding where the Neighbourhood Forums were established across the four wards.

**(ii) Election Of Nominees**

The Chairman proposed the following:-

(i) That the nominations for the Sutton Coldfield Civic Society and the Sutton Coldfield YMCA were accepted by the Group

(ii) That the Neighbourhood Forums were engaged for specific roles on resident led consultation/feedback issues as the work programme for the Steering Group developed.

Paul stressed the importance of the nominees accepting their position and active participation on the Steering Group.

The nominations were accepted by the Group.

**Action:**

**All to Note:-**

**(i) That Sutton Coldfield Civic Society and Sutton Coldfield YMCA were elected to the Steering Group.**

**(ii) Gary to provide details of the active Neighbourhood Forums within the four Wards.**

**(iii) Neighbourhood Forums to be incorporated in the community engagement network.**

**4. OPEN/PUBLIC STEERING GROUP MEETINGS**

Referring to the agreement made by the Group at the last meeting, Ifor gave details of a number of lengthy emails from residents/interested parties requesting that future Steering Group meetings were held in public. Ifor advised that the meeting documents were already in the public domain through CMIS (Committee

Management Information System), and holding the meetings in public would provide the openness and transparency that residents were requesting.

Whilst welcoming the suggestion, Cllr Barrie advised that residents/interested parties attending the meeting must be made aware they were unable to contribute/participate in the meeting.

Paul also welcomed the suggestion and stressed the need for all Group Members to remain focussed and continue to actively work together to deliver the work programme.

The Chairman concurred with the comments made and sought assurances from the Group this would continue to be the case and that in view of these comments and Group Members agreement, future meetings would be held in public.

All Group Members confirmed their agreement with the request.

It was agreed also that matters relating to contracts and personnel in line with BCC exemption policy would apply and such matters would not be for discussion in public.

The Chairman further proposed that a joint statement with the Vice-Chairman should be released accordingly.

Paul sought clarity regarding the availability of the Minutes and action points from the meeting and when these would be made available to the public, albeit in draft form.

The Community Governance Manager advised that the Minutes/Notes from the meeting were produced in line with the current City Council deadline of 10 working days; the Minutes/Notes of the meeting were circulated to the Steering Group members along with the Agenda and associated paperwork before the next meeting, which was also in line with City Council practice.

Cllr Barrie expressed some concerns that draft Minutes/Notes of the meetings could be circulated in the public domain before they had been made available to Group Members, particularly if there were amendments to be made.

The Chairman advised that the sign off and confirmation of Minutes/Notes from the Steering Group meetings remained the responsibility of the Group, and that the Minutes/Notes should clearly be marked 'draft' if they were made available to the public before the next meeting.

**Action:**

- (i) All to Note the agreement made in relation to meetings.**
- (ii) The Chairman and Vice Chairman to release a joint statement regarding future Steering Group meetings.**

**5. RESIDENTS SOUNDING BOARD/CITIZENS PANEL**

Ifor advised that permission had been obtained from BMG to access their database which held relevant contact details for the Citizens' Panel.

Arrangements were being made to put together a panel to seek their views/feedback on the Draft Reorganisation Order.

Interest from Residents'/Community/Voluntary Groups/Neighbourhood Forums was also being sought as part of a wider consultative forum.

A number of suggestions were made, including the use of the Sutton Coldfield Observer, Neighbourhood Forums and Community Organisations websites to obtain residents views/comments. It was also suggested that a generic website for Steering Group/Interim Parish Council with the appropriate links to the Forums/Referendum Group/Community organisations would be useful.

Ifor agreed to look into this and to advise the Group accordingly, and further advised that the appropriate procedures must be followed regarding the procurement of services.

It was suggested that a small task group was set up to pursue this further as a priority. Paul and Stephen volunteered to work with Ifor on this matter.

**Action:**

**A Task Group of Olive, Paul and Stephen to look into the setting up of a generic website as detailed above.**

**6. DRAFT REORGANISATION ORDER**

Ifor presented the Community Governance Review – Draft Reorganisation Order report to be submitted to Council Business Management Committee (CBM) on 17 November 2015.

(Paper 1)

Referring to sections 7-9 of Appendix 1 (Birmingham City Council Reorganisation of Community Governance Order 2015), Paul queried if these could be changed by the Parish Council at a later date, and sought further information on Transitional Provision outlined at section 13.

Ifor advised that the Boundary Commission would determine the number of Parish Councillors and Wards for Sutton Coldfield. The Transitional Provision had been determined by the City Council.

The Chairman advised that the Draft Reorganisation Order must be submitted to CBM on 17 November 2015 for approval as outlined in the recommendations of the report, and strongly advised against the circulation of the contents of the Order on social media/Sutton Coldfield Observer prior to that meeting.

All Group Members confirmed their agreement.

**Action: All to note the contents of the report and the agreement made regarding this.**

7. **CITIZENS PANEL FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ON DRAFT ORDER**

Volunteers from the Group were needed to support the meeting and topic arrangements being made by Olive.

Cllr Pocock volunteered to support with Olive with the arrangements.

**Action: All to Note/Olive to advise on final arrangements.**

8. **SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN HALL**

Ifor briefly advised of the severe financial pressures facing the Town Hall.

The facility had been operating at a loss for a number of years and the income generated continued to be insufficient to cover its running costs.

Discussions were ongoing with the Deputy Leader regarding the proposals and outline business case submitted by the campaign group SCART (Sutton Coldfield Arts and Recreation Trust). Further discussions would be had regarding the viability of the business case and representatives from SCART were to be interviewed in the near future regarding their proposals.

Ifor further advised that consideration would need to be given by the Steering Group on the way forward for the Town Hall; this could include a commissioning role of the facility by the Interim Parish Council; the full retention of the premises or an alternative proposal; however, it must be borne in mind that any further financial support from the City Council would not be available from April 2016/17.

Thanking Ifor for the update, the Chairman commended the efforts of SCART and the officers who had provided help and support to the campaign group. It was hoped the business case would be viewed favourably by the Deputy Leader, however it was acknowledged and accepted by those involved that due process must be followed in determining the future of the Town Hall.

Commenting on the update, Cllr Barrie advised that a robust and sustainable business case was essential if the Town Hall was to be retained.

Cllr Pocock felt that the Interim Parish Council must give full consideration to the long term future of the Town Hall, including its ownership and day to day running. Cllr Pocock further advised that SCART may not wish to own the premises, but to manage/facilitate the day to day running on behalf of the Parish Council.

Cllr Pears sought further clarity on the costs of the essential repairs required to maintain the fabric and structure of the building which had been estimated at approx. £1.4million at the District Committee meeting earlier in the year, and queried whether the business case included income generation targets for the long term viability and sustainability of the premises.

Gary advised that further details would be provided to the Steering Group following the meeting with the Deputy Leader.

Paul felt that every effort should be made to retain the Town Hall for use by the Interim Parish/established Parish Council, and that whilst it was acknowledged the facility was currently operating at a loss, it's retention and future should be determined by the Parish Council given its historical and cultural heritage. He added that other community groups should be encouraged to come forward with proposals and suggestions to safeguard the future of the Town Hall.

Ifor further advised it was the responsibility of Council Officers to minimise financial losses and the current position was unsustainable. The final decision by the City Council would have to be made by 1 April 2016; however, a decision by the Steering Group would need to be made no later than January 2016.

Elizabeth suggested that consideration should be given to having the Town Hall listed as a Community Asset Interest which would afford more time to determining its future.

Whilst acknowledging Elizabeth's suggestion, Cllr Barrie felt this would offer little or no protection to the retention of the Town Hall; it would mean the facility would need to be offered to the wider community prior to being



offered for sale on the open market, and these options had already been explored.

Cllr Collin queried if the business case submitted included the costs needed for the immediate repairs to the fabric of the building, and expressed concerns that the Interim/established Parish Council would actively seek to retain the Town Hall given the financial support and investment it clearly needed.

Ifor confirmed that SCART had been made aware of the fabric condition survey report and it was expected these costs would need to be included in the business case. Gary further advised that the internal facilities in the Town Hall were in need of upgrading and this would also need to be taken into account.

**Action:**

- (i) The Chairman and Vice Chairman to meet with the Deputy Leader.**
- (ii) A Task Group to be set up following the outcome of the meeting and discussions with the Deputy Leader.**
- (iii) Note pending appraisal of the SCART business case.**

**9. DISCUSSIONS ON LIST SUBMITTED BY THE REFERENDUM GROUP**

Ifor reminded the Group of the exercise that had been carried out earlier in the Away Day which looked at a number of these services and the priority order for the Interim Parish/established Parish Council.

Referring to the items on the list submitted by the Referendum Group, the Group Agreed that the appointment of an Interim Parish Clerk remained the key priority, and proposed that advice and information was sought from Helen Ball regarding sourcing and procuring these services as a matter of urgency.

Elizabeth suggested the Sutton Coldfield Town Centre Regeneration Framework Document produced by Broadway Malyan could be looked at by the Parish Council, particularly the issues relating to the annual review of signage.

Paul advised of the work being undertaken by Boldmere Future Partnerships around Neighbourhood Planning, and felt it would be useful to include this on the agenda for a future meeting, given that the Parish Council would automatically have the right to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and the Planning Gains that would result from this.

Cllr Pocock suggested that the Birmingham Development Plan 2031 and the Opportunities from this for the redevelopment of Sutton Coldfield Town Centre should be considered as the medium term action plan for the Parish Council.

Ifor also drew the Group's attention to the examples of Local Authorities Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and suggested that a Work Programme for the Steering Group was developed to look at the SLA agreements, and the City Council contractual arrangements for Wyndley Leisure Centre; school playing fields, parking enforcements/school crossings/Amey Highway maintenance as well as the other items in more detail.

All Group Members confirmed their agreement.

In response to further questions and concerns from Paul regarding the allocation of future funding to Sutton Coldfield and any subsequent funding cuts/reductions, Ifor advised that all council services across the city were currently subject to a spending review; however there should not be any difference to the level of services provided in Sutton Coldfield by the City Council.

**Action: Ifor to develop a Work Programme to be developed for the Steering Group**

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None raised.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Agreed as Monday 16 November, 6pm, The Bedford Suite, Sutton Coldfield Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 1700hrs