

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – WHITEHAVEN PHASE 1 CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Peter Kane

LEAD OFFICER & REPORT AUTHOR Tim Capper, Democratic Services Manager

Why has this report come to the Panel?

To consider the results of the first phase of consultation and to decide whether or not to move to a second phase.

Recommendation: That the Panel considers the response from the first round of consultation and whether or not to proceed to a second phase.

1 Introduction

1.1 Council on 5 December 2013 decided to conduct a Community Governance Review under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 into the unparished area of the Borough, namely Whitehaven and Sandwith. The purpose of the Review is to establish whether or not there is public support for establishment of a parish tier of local government in the area. Council delegated powers to this Panel full powers to consider and determine all stages of the Review except the making of a Community Reorganisation Order – the final stage of the Review.

2 Consultation

2.1 A principal authority undertaking a Community Governance Review is required to consult local government electors in the area under review and other persons or organisations they consider to have an interest in the review.

2.2 The meeting of the Panel on 14 January 2014 agreed to undertake an initial phase of consultation consisting of:

- (i) A number of drop-in sessions where local residents would have the opportunity of airing their views on whether or not they supported a new parish tier of governance in Whitehaven. Drop-in sessions were held at the following locations:

Tuesday 21 Jan	2pm to 5pm	Mirehouse Community Centre.
Monday 27 Jan	5pm to 8pm	Red Lonning Community Centre.
Tuesday 28 Jan	5pm to 8pm	Bransty Primary School.
Thursday 30 Jan	10am to 1pm	Richmond Pensioners Social Club.
Wednesday 5 Feb	2pm to 5pm	Greenbank Community Centre.
Saturday 8 Feb	10am to 1pm	United Reformed Church Hall.
Monday 10 Feb	9:30am to 12:30pm	Kells ARLFC Social Club.
Tuesday 11 Feb	10am to 1pm	Dog & Partridge, Sandwith
Wednesday 12 Feb	2pm to 5pm	St Andrew's Church Hall, Mirehouse
Friday 14 Feb	10am to 1pm	Bainbridge Room, Copeland Ctr.

A total of 35 people attended the drop-in sessions. About half were in favour of establishing a town council in Whitehaven. Of the remainder around three were opposed to a new town council, the remainder expressing no firm view.

- (ii) A questionnaire was issued both electronically on the Council's website and in paper format at the drop-in sessions and at the main reception desk. A total of 149 questionnaires were returned, all either paper copies or web-based. No responses were received via the dedicated consultation e-mail address. An analysis of the returned questionnaires shows that a considerable number were not completed sufficiently to give any meaningful information, and a further quantity give clear preference. Significant identifiable trends among factors favouring perishing are:

- Additional funding from precepts and other funding sources
- Local decisions on services
- Take up of services principal councils cannot provide

The main trends for factors against are:

- Additional costs/precepts
- Another tier of bureaucracy

Further information on the analysis of returned questionnaires will be given at the meeting.

3 Next Steps

3.1 The Panel will recall that the following indicative timescale for the Review was suggested in the Council report on 5 December:

Action	Timescale
Pass Resolution to conduct Review and appoint Panel	Council, 5 December 2013
First Panel Meeting	w/c 16 December
Publish Terms of Reference	8 January 2014
Undertake Initial Consultation on Proposal to Establish Parish Council(s)	8 January – 18 February
Analyse Consultation Responses & Prepare Detailed Proposals	18 February – 9 April
Undertake Second Consultation on Detailed Proposals	9 April – 21 May
Analyse Response to Second Consultation & Draft Final Proposals	26 May – 30 June
Council Considers Final Recommendations	July or September 2014
Community Reorganisation Order made	After Council
Any New Parish Council comes into Existence	1 April 2015
First Elections to New Council	May 2015

This timescale has slipped by one week by a delay in starting the first phase of consultation. The indicative timescale has substantial leeway for slippage and the only constraints are the statutory requirement for a Review to be completed within 12 months of publication of the Terms of Reference; and the obvious need for any Community Reorganisation Order to be made a reasonable period before the associated new parish council comes into existence.

3.2 The Panel is asked to consider whether, in the light of the consultation responses from the first stage, the Review should proceed to a second consultation on a specific proposal and if so what form a further consultation should take.

4 Conclusions

4.1 The proposals in this report move the process for conducting a review of governance in Whitehaven to the next stage.

Consultees: Chief Executive; Section 151 Officer; Lead Executive Member

Monitoring Officer comments: Included in report

S151 Officer comments: The transformation fund has a balance which currently stands in excess of £600K so there are resources available to fund this work.

EIA comments: No groups are advantageously or disadvantageously affected by the proposals in the report.