

REPORT TITLE: REQUEST FOR GOVERNANCE REVIEW

23 JANUARY 2025

REPORT OF CHAIR OF WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

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WARD(S): TOWN WARDS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to invite the Winchester Town Forum to consider making a request that a community governance review should be undertaken to explore the options for establishing a Town Council for central Winchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Winchester Town Forum is asked:

1. To agree to make a request to Winchester City Council to consider undertaking a community governance review with a view to establishing a Town Council for central Winchester.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District
- 1.2 As this report seeks consideration of a request for a community governance review there are no direct consequences to this aspect of the Council plan at this time.
- 1.3 Homes for all
- 1.4 As this report seeks consideration of a request for a community governance review there are no direct consequences to this aspect of the Council plan at this time.
- 1.5 Vibrant Local Economy
- 1.6 As this report seeks consideration of a request for a community governance review there are no direct consequences to this aspect of the Council plan at this time.
- 1.7 Living Well
- 1.8 As this report seeks consideration of a request for a community governance review there are no direct consequences to this aspect of the Council plan at this time.
- 1.9 Your Services, Your Voice
- 1.10 As this report seeks consideration of a request for a community governance review there are no direct consequences to this aspect of the Council plan at this time.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 If a community governance review proceeds the cost would be met by Winchester City Council ('WCC') as has been the case historically. However, Winchester Town Forum has its own resources and reserves and may wish to consider making a contribution towards the costs of the review.
- 2.2 At this point in time it is not possible to provide an estimate of the likely cost of any review.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Community governance reviews within the borough can only be undertaken by WCC (in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the Act')).

- 3.2 Under the Act a community governance review can only be instigated by means of a community governance petition to WCC or directly by Winchester City Council at any time it deems necessary.

#### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

#### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct asset or property implications stemming from the recommendation contained in this report.

#### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1. If a community governance review is undertaken there will be consultation and communications to support the review.

#### 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 There are no environmental considerations stemming from the recommendation contained in this report.

#### 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 8.1 None

#### 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 None

#### 10 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 10.1. This report recommends a request be made to undertake a governance review. The risks in relation to considering that request will be assessed by WCC.

#### 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 11.1. The English Devolution White paper published on 16 December 2024 sets out proposals for local government reorganisation. This provides the context for a request for the consideration of a community governance review which could lead to the creation of town or parish councils.
- 11.2. If a review is undertaken, it will be in accordance with the duties outlined in the Act.
- 11.3. If a review proceeds section 93 of the Act requires WCC to consult with local government electors for the area under review; and any other person or body (including another local authority) which appears to have an interest in the review. Consultation must take place with local government electors,

appropriate local authorities and other relevant persons including political parties and local community interest groups.

WCC would be legally obliged to publish the terms of reference of the review, any proposals made as a result of the conduct of the review and any recommendations made on its website. WCC would have regard to the need to secure that any community governance review for the area under consideration reflects the identities and interests of the local community in that area and that it is effective and convenient. Relevant considerations will include the impact on community cohesion and the size, population and boundaries of the proposed area.

- 11.4. Elsewhere on this agenda, report WTF336 sets out the proposed budget for the Winchester Town Forum in 2025/26 and recognises the increased risk that is presented to the forum from the English Devolution White Paper. Unlike other governance reviews Winchester Town Forum is in a relatively unique position of having the ability to set a precept and provide services, although not formally operating as a separate town council.

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 12.1. Winchester Town Forum could decide not to request a community governance review. This course of action is not recommended as in the context of the English Devolution White Paper a review if undertaken, could mitigate risk for the future of the Winchester Town Forum.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:

#### Other Background Documents

English Devolution White Paper: power and partnership foundations for growth

### APPENDICES:

None