

Parishes Liaison Meeting – 22nd October 2014

Working group to strengthen community representation and civic governance within Bath

1. Aim of this Briefing

Bath & North East Somerset Council resolved in May to establish a cross-party working group (with a membership proportionate to the make-up of the Council) to report back on options to strengthen community representation and civic governance within Bath. This report updates the meeting with the progress of this as well as identifying next steps and opportunities to engage with the work of the group.

2. Update

The member working group identified a wide range of initial options through its work over the summer and issued an Interim Report for public comment, prior to preparing a final report to Council. This contained a smaller number of options based on the detailed work undertaken by the group. These were:

- No Change
- A “Voice for Bath” committee (to include co-opted stakeholders as well as B&NES elected members)
- The parishing of Bath - either as a single parish for the City or multiple parishes for different parts of the City. This would require a Community Governance Review

The working group considered the public comments received and agreed that a more detailed “evidence base” was required before a preferred option could be drawn up. Council in September therefore agreed that the working group continue to build this evidence base through continuing to encourage feedback from parish councils, residents and other interested parties (the report can be viewed [here](#)). Through this process, the Council’s aim is to provide a robust foundation for the newly-elected Council in May 2015 to determine its approach to this issue

3. Next Steps

The working group recognises that this issue has implications for the whole of Bath & North East Somerset not just the unparished area. Parish Councils will continue to receive minutes of meetings and comments/views expressed will be reported to the Working Group. In addition, a wider session is being planned which will see presentations from other areas (such as Winchester) which have sought to address these issues.

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