

**Report of the Manging Director**

**Options for the transfer of services to Wellingborough Town Council**

**1 Purpose of report**

This report details the work undertaken to date to form Wellingborough Town Council and gives options for the transfer of services from the Borough Council of Wellingborough to the town council from 1 April 2020.

**2 Executive summary**

The report details the cost implications of the transfer of various services to Wellingborough Town Council in year one of its operation from 1 April 2020.

**3 Appendix**

**Appendix A: Branding for Wellingborough Town Council**

**4 Proposed action: Council is invited to RESOLVE to;**

**4.1 Agree to transfer services under Option A; or**

**4.2 Agree to transfer services under Option B; or**

**4.3 Agree not to transfer any services in year one and allow the town council to decide what services it wishes to undertake once it is formed.**

**5 Background**

5.1 A community governance review was undertaken between 17 May 2018 and 5 July 2018. Following approval by council on 17 July 2018 a consultation on the agreed draft proposals was undertaken between 23 July 2018 and 23 October 2018; the consultation responses were presented to council on 27 November 2018 who approved the recommendation to create a town council for Wellingborough.

5.2 The Borough Council of Wellingborough (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2019 was made at the council meeting held on 26 February 2019. The order creates a town council for Wellingborough with 23 councillors over nine wards, to commence from 1 April 2020, with elections taking place on 7 May 2020.

5.3 The order does not stipulate the services that the town council will undertake, though the sum of £306,372 is specified for the purposes of regulation 3 of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes)(England) Regulations 2008 in relation to the parish of Wellingborough. This was an estimate last year and the

precept will be updated accordingly dependent on which option is approved by council within this paper.

- 5.4 The order states that, the new parish shall be represented by existing elected borough councillors for the borough wards of Brickhill, Croyland, Finedon, Great Doddington & Wilby, Harrowden & Sywell, Hatton, Irchester, Isebrook, Queensway, Redwell, Rixon, Swanspool and Victoria in a 'shadow council' from 1 April 2020 until the new town councillors are elected on 7 May 2020.
- 5.5 The Wellingborough town council project team was formed in September 2019 and is made up of Director, Shaun Darcy, Assistant Director, Karen Denton, Democratic Service Officers, Carol Mundy, Fiona Hubbard and Samuel Whiteley and Events Officer, Julia Wells and work has been ongoing since then to establish the town council.
- 5.6 Resources committee on 30 October 2019 agreed that £10k, of the current forecast underspend, be utilised to support the creation of the town council, to fund the branding exercise, website and for NALC membership for governance arrangements and the training of new members once elected.
- 5.7 Using this branding a website for the new town council is being created; the project team will be trained to use it so it can be populated prior to going live in April 2020.
- 5.8 In October 2019 both members and the residents' panel, made up of members of the public, were asked to participate in a Survey Monkey consultation. The questions and answers are referenced below, though it should be noted that the impact of the cost of such services was not indicated in the survey.

## **6 Discussion**

The following has been discussed and considered by the Wellingborough Town Council Project Team:

- 6.1 **Election to town council** – The first election to the town council will be held on the next ordinary day of elections to parish councils, which is due to be held on Thursday 7 May 2020. These elections will be held simultaneously with the other parishes in Northamptonshire, alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner election and the elections to the shadow North and West unitary councils in Northamptonshire.

There will be a publicity drive prior to the elections, coinciding with work being undertaken by NCALC, with publicity materials which may be distributed in key public locations in the town. This will be undertaken to encourage local residents and those already active in the community to stand as town councillors, and to ensure as much public awareness as possible prior to the first elections.

Nominations will open by no later than 1 April 2020; the deadline for receipt of nominations will be 4pm on Wednesday 8 April 2020.

The date for the town council count has not yet been specified. A decision will need to be taken by the Returning Officer(s) for the Police, and Crime Commissioner and North Northamptonshire Unitary Council elections as to when those counts will take place before the Returning Officer for the town and parish councils can decide when the count for the town and parish council elections will be, as the PCC and NNUC elections take precedent over the town and parish elections.

Details of the time, date and location of the town and parish counts will be published as soon as possible, once a decision has been made.

- 6.2 Location of town council** - The project team has considered where the town council would be best located. One option is for the town council to be located at Swanspool Pavilion, with the intention that this be gifted to the town council as a legacy from the borough council, along with the tennis courts and bowling greens, thus giving the town council a rental income. The hall could also be hired out for events, such as weddings and parties as well as being used for town council meetings.

Any gift would need to be a decision of the borough council, but such gift would also be a potential financial liability to the town council with upkeep and security of the building and parks and may not be something it wishes to take on. It is felt that if the borough council wishes to gift the pavilion it should be discussed with the town council after it is formed so it can fully assess all the financial implications, and decide whether it wishes to accept such a gift.

In the interim, the pavilion, or a room in the council offices, could be leased to the town council until a future decision is made on what is needed and best suited for the longer term requirements.

- 6.3 Appointment of clerk** - The town council will initially need to recruit and appoint a knowledgeable clerk/responsible financial officer. This will be done after the election of town councillors in May 2020. Assistance with this can be obtained from NCALC, which the town council will then be a member of. Dependent on the services that the town council is responsible for in the future, additional employees, such as a part time events officer, may be required. Office space and adequate equipment such as IT, Internet access, telephones, copiers/printers, desks, public liability insurance, and any other insurance, health and safety issues, together with finance, HR, Payroll and banking support will also be needed and the borough council's finance team can be called upon to assist with aspects of this initially though this may be at a further cost to the town council.

- 6.4 First meeting of the town council** - The first meeting of the town council needs to take place by 20 May 2020 and the Council Chamber at Swanspool House has been provisionally booked for such meeting. It is anticipated that the town clerk won't be in post by this date and therefore consideration will need to be given to alternative clerking and administrative support being offered until such time as the town clerk is appointed. This may need to be via a part-time secondment from the borough council.

6.5 **Safe and legal** - The project team is producing a draft constitution and financial regulations based on the NCALC model version for the initial meeting of the town council who will need to review and adopt at its first meeting.

6.6 **Future unitary authority** - Until the Structural Changes Order (SCO) has been confirmed, expected in early February, and the shadow unitary council elected, decisions on where services will sit are hard to establish. It is difficult to recommend what services, currently undertaken by the borough council, can be transferred to the town council. Some suggestions are made at 6.7 of this report but these are not conclusive.

6.7 **Findings of the survey** - the survey asked residents the following:

**Q1:** Which of the following services below do you expect Wellingborough Town Council to deliver (please select as many as you would like)?

- Car Parks;
- Parks and open spaces;
- Public Toilets;
- Play areas;
- Town Centre management;
- Cemeteries;
- Community Centres;
- Market;
- CCTV;
- Town Centre events;
- Sports Facilities;
- Allotments;
- Memorials;
- Civic and mayoral events;
- Noticeboards;
- Town Twinning;
- Other.

**Q2:** Please rank those suggested services in order of importance to you:

The result of the ranking exercise indicate the services residents' feel to be of most importance with car parks, parks and open space, community centres, CCTV, cemeteries, the market, play areas, public toilets, town centre management and sports facilities rating the highest and town centre events and civic and mayoral rating much lower down the list.

**Q3:** The town council needs its own branding. The third question gave residents the option for one of two very similar logos – the logo chosen by the majority during the survey is the one shown at appendix A. This logo was designed in house at minimal cost and moves away from the borough council colours and depicts a swan design with magenta and

black colouring - should the town council wish to change this once they are established they can do so.

As previously mentioned costings for the services were not indicated in the survey and this may have changed the results if they had been included. It should also be noted that whilst the results of the survey indicate that car parking was of most importance to residents, this may fall within the remit of the unitary council rather than the town council due to the significant burden this would place on a town council precept. Similarly low rating services, such as town council events, may not be something that the unitary council will undertake or that the town council wishes to do in the future.

6.8 **Cost of services** - The director of resources has costed the services that the town council may wish to consider undertaking. The costings detail the town council precept for such services, which will be a cost to the council tax payer for the town wards, should that particular service transfer.

In year one the following suggested services could be transferred to WTC:

<b>Option A:</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
	Town centre events* (including part/time salary/insurances)	25,000
	Memorials	3,000
	Contingency	10,000
	Town clerk	37,500
	NCALC membership	7,000
	Set up/IT costs, admin and other incidental costs	10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>92,500</b>

<b>Option B:</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
	Town centre events* (including part/time salary/insurances)	25,000
	Memorials	3,000
	Market	58,416
	Contingency	14,092
	Town clerk	37,500
	NCALC membership	7,000
	Set up/IT costs, admin and other incidental costs	10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>155,008</b>

<b>Option C:</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Cost £</b>
	Town clerk	37,500
	NCALC membership	7,000
	Set up, IT and admin and other incidental costs	10,000
	Contingency	10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>64,500</b>

For all the options shown above funding has been set aside for the employment, at minimum, of a full time town clerk, anticipated to be £30k, plus on-costs.

It may also be necessary to employ a part time events officer and this is costed within town centre events in options A and B above\* for the period from September 2020 to March 2021 only. The cost of town centre events would increase in year two to £47,000 for the financial year 2021-2022.

The council tax, taxbase calculation for a band D property in Wellingborough for 2020/2021 is 15,195. Using this, the precept for each option is shown below for each band D council tax payer:

	<b>£</b>
• <b>Option A:</b>	<b>6.09</b>
• <b>Option B:</b>	<b>10.20</b>
• <b>Option C:</b>	<b>4.24</b>

Option C recommends, that in year one no services be transferred to the town council, as the Borough Council of Wellingborough will still exist until April 2021, this would allow the town council to decide what services it wishes to undertake. It would also enable the unitary council to decide on the non-statutory services it will no longer carry out. It is also felt that once councillors have been elected to the town council, it should be those members who decide on the services that fall under it, as this will have an impact on the amount of precept to be levied for 2021-22 and in future years.

## **7 Legal powers**

7.1 Section 111 of The Local Government Act 1972 gives the council power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

7.2 Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives the council the power (subject to certain exceptions which do not apply here) to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the borough.

- 8 Financial and value for money implications**  
These are already included within the report in respect of the town council precept to be levied and dependent on which option is chosen an assessment of any impact on the borough council precept will be made.
- 9 Risk analysis**
- WTC may not wish to take on the services that are being considered in this report;
  - Residents may not wish to pay an additional precept for services they consider should already be provided by BCW or the NNUC when it is in place.
- 10 Implications for resources**  
None at this time.
- 11 Implications for stronger and safer communities**  
None at this time.
- 12 Implications for equalities**  
None at this time.
- 13 Author and contact officer**  
S Darcy, Director of Resources/Section 151 Officer.
- 14 Consultees**  
SMT;  
Finance;  
WTC Project Team.
- 15 Background papers**  
Previous reports to resources committee and council.



Branding design for Wellingborough Town Council (November 2019)



**Wellingborough**  
**Town Council**

