

Constitutional Review - Area Committee

Report of the Cabinet Member for Reform & Governance

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 On 14 March 2017, the Executive gave approval to a package of changes to the Constitution relating largely to the powers and duties of the Council's area committees. This decision was published as Executive Decision ED1899.
- 1.2 This decision was subsequently 'called-in' by Councillors Malcolm Allan, Christine Corris and Lisa Smart which was considered by the Corporate, Resource Management and Governance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 April 2017.
- 1.3 At the Scrutiny Committee the reasons why the decision in had been called-in were outlined – specifically there were concerns that one element of the decision in relation to a proposed change to the names of the Werneth and Marple Area Committees to 'Marple and High Lane Area Committee' and the 'Bredbury, Romiley and Woodley Area Committee' respectively, had not followed the usual practice of consultation with affected area committees prior to a decision being made.
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Committee resolved to refer the decision back to the decision-maker (the Executive) for further consideration.
- 1.5 The Executive at its meeting on 25 April 2017 agreed that the matter should be referred to the relevant area committees for consideration and comment prior to a final decision being made.

2. MARPLE AREA COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The proposal insofar as it related to the Marple Area Committee was to change the name of the Area Committee to the 'Marple and High Lane Area Committee'.
- 2.2 This proposal was considered by the Area Committee at its meeting on 14 June 2017. The following represents an extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Area Committee in relation to this matter:-

"A number of Councillors commented that they did not support the proposal as the current name reflected all of the communities in Marple and the surrounding villages, although there was no overall consensus at this stage. Councillors questioned how the proposal for the name change had arisen and further clarification was sought. It was suggested that if the Cabinet was minded to recommend a name change to the Council meeting, before doing so, they should undertake a full consultation with community groups and associations in the Marple North and South wards explaining the rationale for the proposal and seeking their views.

"RESOLVED – That the comments of the Area Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration."

3. WERNETH AREA COMMITTEE

3.1 The proposal insofar as it related to the Werneth Area Committee was to change the name of the Area Committee to the 'Bredbury, Romiley and Woodley Area Committee.

2.2 This proposal was considered by the Area Committee at its meeting on 10 July 2017. The following represents an extract from the Minutes of the meeting of the Area Committee in relation to this matter:-

- *One member spoke in support of the proposed change of name, and it was commented that area committees should be readily identifiable through their name as representing a clear geographical area and in that regard the current name of the Area Committee was an anachronism.*
- *Four members spoke in opposition to the proposed change of name:-*
 - *it was suggested that rationale for the change of name was flawed in that Werneth had been used as a general description of the locality since 1974 and was represented in the names of local geographical features, road names and schools.*
 - *The proposed change of name did not encompass the wide range of local communities represented by the Werneth Area Committee and was therefore deficient in meeting its principle aim.*
 - *There had been no demand from local residents to change the name of the Area Committee and this was not considered an area of high concern or priority by them.*

"RESOLVED – That the comments of the Area Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration."

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is recommended to

(1) Consider and note the comments of the Marple and Werneth Area Committee; and

(2) To determine what action to take with regard to its previous decision of 14 March 2017 to change to the names of the Werneth and Marple Area Committees to 'Marple and High Lane Area Committee' and the 'Bredbury, Romiley and Woodley Area Committee' respectively.