



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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### **SCRUTINY PANEL 3 -**

### **NORTHAMPTON POST UNITARY**

**20 SEPTEMBER 2018**

### **BRIEFING NOTE: DESKTOP RESEARCH**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 At its inaugural scoping meeting, Scrutiny Panel 3 (Northampton – Post Unitary) agreed that it would receive details of desktop research regarding a number of Town Councils to inform its evidence base.

1.2 In setting its scope (terms of reference), the Scrutiny Panel suggested that the desktop research includes:

- Royal Sutton Coldfield

1.3 In addition, desktop research has been undertaken regarding the following Town Councils:

- Central Milton Keynes
- Shrewsbury

1.4 During August, the Scrutiny Panel undertook site visits to smaller, nearby Town Councils:

- Higham Ferrers
- Raunds

1.5 The findings from the site visits are detailed in a separate briefing note.

## **2 RESULTS OF THE DESKTOP RESEARCH**

### **2.1 SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

#### **Background Information**

Shrewsbury Town Council was established in 2009. Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council was abolished and the Unitary Shropshire Council created. Previously, Shrewsbury had been unparished.

Shrewsbury Town Council has a population of over 72,000. It is the second most populous Parish Council in England. The most populous being Weston Super Mare with a population of 76,143.

### **Councillors and Staff**

2.1.1 It is reported that Shrewsbury Town Council comprises 17 Councillors. Elections take place every four years.

2.1.2 The Town Council is chaired by a Mayor who has the support of a Deputy Mayor. The Mayor is elected each year at Annual Council.

2.1.3 The Town Clerk is the senior Officer of the Town Council and there are around 60 other members of staff, some full time and some part time officers. The staffing structure includes:

- Project Officer
- Technical Officer (Playground and horticultural)
- Technical Officers (Arboriculture and Sports Recreation areas)
- Asset Management Officer
- Administrator and Admin Assistants and Finance Administrator
- Youth Community Worker
- Youth Workers
- Officer Manager
- Committee Clerk
- Communications Officer
- Mayor' Secretary
- Mayor's Officer/Driver
- Facilities cleaner

2.1.4 The Town Clerk is responsible for the day to day management of the services delivered by the Town Council. The Town Clerk is also responsible for ensuring that the decisions made by the various Committees are actioned.

### **Assets and Functions**

2.1.5 The assets and functions of the Town Council include:

- Allotments
- Community Centres
- Public Conveniences
- Churchyard
- Open Space
- Park/Gardens
- Recreation Ground/Play Area/Sporting Facilities
- Woodland

- Bus Shelters
- Street Lighting
- Youth Services

2.1.6 The Town Council is responsible for over 400 street lights in Shrewsbury. They are identified by an 'F' on the lamp. If they have a 'Z' they are the responsibility of Shropshire Council.

### **Partnership Working**

2.1.7 Shrewsbury Town Council partakes in both Shrewsbury in Bloom and Britain in Bloom.

2.1.8 Shrewsbury Town Council is twinned with Zutphen. Since 1977 there were formal twinning links with Zutphen, in the Netherlands. Every year the Mayor, Town Clerk and others from the Town Council go to Zutphen and vice versa. This is organised by the Twinning Committees.

2.1.9 Shrewsbury Town Council is part of Team Shrewsbury. The partnership was launched in 2014 and the partnership leads on a programme that aims to tackle a range of local issues. It is reported that Team Shrewsbury is about equipping and empowering local people to identify and solve local problems.

Team Shrewsbury comprises representatives from:

- Shrewsbury Town Council
- Shropshire Council
- West Mercia Police
- Shropshire Fire & Rescue service
- Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID)
- Shrewsbury Shopping Centres
- Safer Shrewsbury
- Shrewsbury Street Pastors
- University Centre Shrewsbury
- British Transport Police

## **2.2 ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Background Information**

2.2.1 Royal Sutton Coldfield Town Council was established in 2015. It was formed following a consultative postal ballot. 70% of the votes supported the establishment of a Town Council.

2.2.2 An interim Town Council was formally created on 1 March 2016, with the first 24 councillors being elected in May 2016 representing 4 wards. Town

Councillors are elected every four years, with the next election due in May 2018.

2.2.3 In 2011 the census population was 95,901, which had increased by 6.7% since the census in 2001.

2.2.4 The Town Council is entirely funded through a precept on the council tax charge made by Birmingham City Council. The 2018/19 budget sets a total precept of £1,832,982 that equates to a council tax charge of £49.96 on a band D household.

### **Councillors and Officers**

2.2.5 Sutton Coldfield has eight wards with 24 Town Councillors.

2.2.6 The Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor are elected each year at the Annual Town Council Meeting. The Town Council also appoints a Leader whose job it is to assist the Town Clerk in the day to day running of the Town Council.

2.2.7 The Town Council has a Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, Finance and Admin Assistant and Admin Assistant for the Mayor.

### **Assets and Functions**

2.2.8 The Town Council has a variety of powers and duties accumulated over time through legislation and include:

- provision of allotments and cemeteries
- the award of grants to the community
- the promotion of entertainment and the arts
- planning (where the Town Council is a statutory consultee )
- recreation
- traffic calming
- the care of war memorials

2.2.9 Birmingham City Council is responsible for providing most local authority services in the town including:

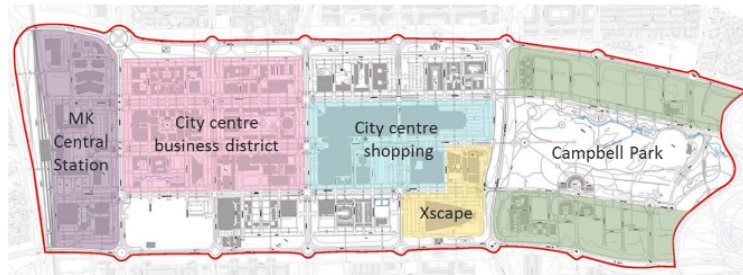
- waste collection
- education
- highways
- transport planning
- social care
- housing
- libraries
- leisure and recreation

- environmental health

## 2.3 MILTON KEYNES TOWN COUNCIL – CMK TOWN COUNCIL

### Background Information

2.3.1 CMK Town Council is the Parish Council for the city centre. The Parish is divided into three Wards:



2.3.2 The parish was created in 2001, and had a population of 1,272 according to the 2001 census. It is now reported to cover over 3,000 residents and 1,000 businesses.

2.3.3 The work of CMK is funded through a parish precept tax. In 2017-18, CMK and Campbell Park households will pay an average of £64.40 precept tax to support its work. It is reported that this is below the average parish precept (£72.38) levied by other parishes of Milton Keynes. This compares with an average of £1,470.75 council tax per household to support of the work of Milton Keynes Council (which also provides most of the local services throughout the borough).

### Councillors and Officers

2.3.4 The Town Council has 8 elected councillors – 3 from the West Ward, 3 from the East Ward, and 2 from Campbell Park Ward. The Town Council is chaired by a Councillor. All CMK Councillors are unpaid volunteers and do not receive an allowance.

2.3.5 The Staffing Structure includes:

- Clerk for the Town Council
- Communications Officer
- CMK Warden – employed jointly by CMK and Milton Keynes City Centre Management. The Officer is responsible for the monitoring of the public areas.

## **Assets and Functions**

- 2.3.6 Milton Keynes Council (MKC) is the council for the whole borough of Milton Keynes, representing about 250,000 residents. MKC provides most of the local services for residents, from street lighting and road repairs to social services and council housing.
- 2.3.7 CMK Town Council's work focuses on influencing the borough council (MKC) to deliver better services and to make better decisions for our residents (on local development proposals and licensing applications, for example). It is reported that it also partners with MKC on a number of projects to improve the quality of life for our residents.

## **3 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 That the information provided in this briefing note informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

Author: Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer, on behalf of Councillor Brian Sargeant, Chair, Scrutiny Panel 3 – Northampton Post Unitary

6 August 2018