

A town so near to Sutton Coldfield?

Consultative ballot and
frequently asked questions

Consultative ballot

The enclosed ballot paper gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on whether a town council should be created for the Sutton Coldfield area. You have been sent a ballot paper because you are on the electoral register for the Sutton Coldfield constituency.

This information booklet explains the background to the ballot and answers some frequently asked questions about town and parish councils. This is to provide you with impartial information to help you make your decision on how to answer the ballot question.

Both the frequently asked questions and answers, and the consultative ballot question, have been reviewed by a group of Sutton Coldfield residents from the Birmingham People's Panel to ensure impartiality. In deciding on the question we have taken into account the Electoral Commission's question assessment guidelines.

Your ballot paper must be returned in the envelope provided and reach us by 3pm on Thursday 16 July 2015.

Why is a consultative ballot taking place?

In October 2013, a petition was submitted to Bir'f(ƒ0k!l(1qq.f(ƒ0k!l(1q

Constituencies, districts and

Frequently asked questions

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No. The principal council for Sutton Coldfield would still be Birmingham City Council who would remain responsible for providing most of the local authority services within its boundaries. You would still elect city councillors on the same basis as in other parts of Birmingham and the city council would continue to have a legal duty to provide specific services in Sutton Coldfield.

A Sutton Coldfield Town Council would not have all the powers and resources of a district council such as Cannock Chase District Council.

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A town council could decide to provide no additional services or it could decide to provide a range of local services in addition to those provided by Birmingham City Council. The services it can provide are legally defined and include the maintenance of local parks and open spaces, recreation grounds and play areas, community centres, crime prevention, traffic-calming measures, markets and tourism activities. (See Appendix 1 of 'Paper 3: Sutton Coldfield Town Council: Initial Analysis' on the council's website at birmingham.gov.uk/ and open c f enanc TIS'Was-BWDe co ndca f l inpersi of servicestat fttown councl galtonedtE pCV

■ **Can a Sutton Coldfield Town Council be consulted on planning matters?**

A Sutton Coldfield Town Council would have the legal right to be consulted on planning matters affecting the town. Birmingham City Council would remain the planning authority and would make the final decision on any planning issue consulted upon.

The town council could also work with Birmingham City Council to develop a neighbourhood plan which would set out detailed policies and priorities for the physical development of an area within Sutton Coldfield. These neighbourhood policies and priorities would need to be compatible with the city's development plan. For example, a neighbourhood plan could not change an area designated as one of housing growth in the city council's development plan.

You do not need to have a town council to be allowed to develop a neighbourhood plan. Any parish council has this power according to national legislation, as do neighbourhood forums.

Town councils can also represent the views of local residents on any issue of concern. They can also organise activity with residents and businesses to improve the quality of life locally, so long as the activity is legal. For example, they could organise community litter picks or voluntary work to improve a park or open space.

■ **How much would a Sutton Coldfield Town Council cost to run?**

We don't yet know, as it would depend on factors such as the number of councillors, the staff employed and the number and nature of the services it provides.

However, a broad estimate can be made by comparing it to Shrewsbury Town Council which costs £448,000 to run annually based on 70,000 residents before the costs of providing services are added. With Sutton Coldfield District

having around 96,000 residents, its basic running costs are likely to be at least £200,000 annually.

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■ **What would be the name of the town council?**

The parliamentary constituency of Sutton Coldfield – which is the same area as Birmingham City Council's Sutton Coldfield District. This is shown on the map earlier in this booklet.

■ **What would be the name of the town council?**

Under current Birmingham City Council devolution arrangements, there would still be a district committee for Sutton Coldfield and ward committees/forums. These would still include the Sutton Coldfield city councillors and they would mail

