



## Sutton Coldfield Town Council – Referendum Ballot

# *Sutton Coldfield says 'YES'!*

After years of lobbying and effort from Sutton Coldfield residents, Birmingham Council have at last agreed to hold a Ballot of all voters in Sutton Coldfield, on whether we want to restore a devolved Sutton Coldfield Town Council for our area. We, the independent Sutton Coldfield Referendum Group, are writing to let you know about this historic success, and to ask your support for the 'yes' campaign.

- Every individual resident elector living in Sutton Coldfield will get a ballot paper in the post. They'll be posted out to you on Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> June. You'll have 3 weeks, till Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> July, to post it back.

At long last, YOU will have the democratic right to a vote. The Town Council may not be all that we might want, but it's the best we can get within the law as it stands – and it's a lot better than we've got now!

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – why vote 'yes' to the Town Council**

**Q: "Would a Sutton Coldfield Town Council be legally independent of Birmingham City Council?"**

**A: YES.** It would be a separate, independent civic authority, with its own boundary (the current Sutton Coldfield Parliamentary Constituency). Birmingham Council have admitted this. We would elect our own Town Councillors, who would be able to get more done than we can get done now. Our elected Sutton Town Councillors would make their own lawful decisions on the services they run covering Sutton Coldfield.

We would also have our own Sutton Town Mayor again to represent us at Sutton civic events. Birmingham Council will stay in charge of the main large scale services such as older people's social care, child protection, special educational needs, major highways and waste disposal, and inputting to the bus services. We would lose none of those wider public services, but would get extra services funded through the Town Council.

**Q. "Isn't a Sutton Coldfield Town Council just basically the same as the existing Sutton District Committee of Birmingham City Council?"**

**A: NO, ABSOLUTELY NOT.** A Town Council would be vastly more powerful than the existing Sutton District Committee, which is still a Committee of Birmingham Council, run by Birmingham City Councillors who are not independent of Birmingham. They have no money of their own. Our Town Council on the other hand, will be legally independent from Birmingham Council and will have its own additional budget.

The Town Council can also use the Localism Act 2012 to agree its own local Neighbourhood Planning policies with Birmingham Council. The existing Sutton District Committee of Birmingham Council does not have the authority to do that. It can't protect us in the same way as our own Town Council could.

Town Councils also have a 'general legal power of competence' to develop additional services people want.

**Q. “What sort of things could we achieve through a Town Council, which we can’t achieve now?”**

**A: THERE ARE MANY.** Here are just a few examples:

- Secure the **future of our Town Hall** by bridging the current £100,000 funding gap
- Expand **litter clearance** and introduce **more litter bins , better street sweeping and parks maintenance** where Birmingham Council is neglecting our area
- Start a community composting project that could **collect garden waste cheaper** than Birmingham CC
- Re-introduce a **free parking pass scheme** for Sutton Coldfield residents using Sutton Park
- Restore the **Ward Community Chest Funding** of £100,000 per Ward – to fund clubs, societies, community groups, local environmental projects, and support small local care charities etc
- Launch a major **‘Sutton in Bloom’ project** across Sutton Coldfield, with better displays in all our local centres like Wylde Green, Walmley, Reddicap, Mere Green, Boldmere, New Oscott and our Town Centre
- Develop a major **tree planting programme** to green-up suburban streets and green space
- And that’s all affordable well within the total budget that’s available. There would still be extra left to spend.

**Q: “How much would all this cost?”**

**A: NOT MUCH.** All these extra services would be funded by a precept of less than £50 per household. That’s barely the cost of a loaf of bread a week. That will generate an annual budget of £1.8million extra to help fund new or improved services for the benefit of residents in Sutton Coldfield.

**Q. “Could Sutton Coldfield Town Council take on other services from Birmingham Council, as well?”**

**A: YES** The law allows for other services to be transferred through a Service Level Agreement, this is common in other Town Councils. All that is required, is a willingness on both sides to do this, and a legal check to make sure it’s good value to do it. Birmingham Council have admitted this in their own documents, and it’s done every day of the week in other Town Councils up and down the land.

**Q: “Won’t we just end up paying twice for the same services?”**

**A: ABSOLUTELY NOT.** Your main Council Tax goes to Birmingham for the services they run. The law stops them from double-counting and the government-approved Independent Auditor keeps an eagle eye on this.

**Q: “Won’t we be paying an arm and a leg for another lot of politicians?”**

**A: NO.** The Sutton Town Councillors work on a voluntary basis like other Town Councillors across the country. Based on other Town Councils, the admin and running costs of the Town Council would be just 12% of the total budget, leaving 88% to spend on extra quality services. Birmingham Council have admitted this. Town Councils are better value for money than over-sized bureaucracies, and have lower running costs.

**WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?**

For more, see our website [www.suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.com](http://www.suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.com) **Want to help support the campaign?** If so just mail us, the Sutton Town Council Referendum Group, on [suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil@gmail.com](mailto:suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil@gmail.com)

***Support the YES campaign***



**Vote ‘yes’ to support a devolved Sutton Coldfield Town Council**

Issued by the Sutton Town Council Referendum Group, all details at [www.suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.com](http://www.suttoncoldfieldtowncouncil.com)