

# Special Advisory Group

## Minutes - 20 October 2015

### Attendance

#### Members of the Special Advisory Group

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)  
Cllr Roger Lawrence  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr John Reynolds  
Cllr Stephen Simkins  
Cllr Paul Singh  
Cllr Tersaim Singh  
Cllr Wendy Thompson

#### Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Jonathan Pearce	Graduate Management Trainee
Martyn Sargeant	Group Manager - Corporate Administration

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Paul Sweet.
- 2 Declarations of interests**  
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (2 July 2015)**  
Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Matters arising**  
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5 Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations**  
The Advisory Group received a report on the responses to the consultations on the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations to be employed for the 2016 city council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

Martyn Sargeant, Group Manager Corporate Administration tabled a revised set of proposals for Tettenhall Regis following recent discussions with Ward Councillors Barry Findlay and Jonathan Yardley.

Cllr Wendy Thompson expressed concern that the tabled proposals were submitted too late to consider; at the need to save a small amount from the review when set against the overall budget; the weight given to factors such as major roads and gradients of roads that residents would have to navigate to get to their polling station, particularly the old and non-drivers; at two polling stations being at University of Wolverhampton and the locations possibly deterring some people from voting. She also reported that she was pleased to see that Ward Councillors' views had been taken on board in the main and that commencing the review process earlier was an improvement on previous years' arrangements.

Cllr Paul Singh commented on the proposals for Penn. He reported that he would be chairing a scrutiny review on participation in elections and that he felt that closing some polling stations would not help the aim of increasing voter turnout at elections. He put forward alternatives for the Penn polling districts QKA and QEA that he asked be explored.

Referring to the St Peter's proposals, Cllr Roger Lawrence explained the rationale as contained in the report that would see two polling stations being located at the University of Wolverhampton.

Cllr Stephen Simkins commented that the removal of polling stations would disenfranchise people from their right to vote and that saving on polling stations should not have been a consideration of the review as the costs for the elections would be met by government.

The Group Manager Corporate Administration reported on the tabled proposal for Tettenhall Regis and on the concerns that the two Ward Councillors had raised and the proposed response to address them whilst ensuring the most efficient use of polling stations for the ward.

Cllr Wendy Thompson reported that the issue of contention in the Tettenhall Regis ward was that residents living on Wergs Road had to travel a distance to their polling station at The King's School, and the number of voters on the roll for the stations at The King's School. She suggested that a mobile polling station or enquiring about the use of the nearby cricket club be explored.

In response to the comments made on the proposals for Penn and Tettenhall Regis, Cllr Andrew Johnson suggested that further consultations take place with Ward Councillors. Cllr Johnson also placed on record his thanks to officers involved in arranging and conducting the consultations on the review which had been an exemplary process.

Resolved:

1. That further discussions take place with the Ward Councillors for Penn and Tettenhall Regis on the proposal for polling stations and thereafter the Chair (Cllr Andrew Johnson) following consultation with Cllr Wendy Thompson and the Director of Governance be authorised to approve the proposals to be presented to Full Council for approval.

2. That subject to (1) above, the proposals arising from the review of polling stations to be employed for the 2016 city council and Police and Crime Commissioner elections be approved and referred to Full Council for approval.

DRAFT