

Special Advisory Group

16 February 2018

Report title	Community governance review	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Kevin O'Keefe, Governance	
Originating service	Democratic Services	
Accountable employee(s)	Martyn Sargeant	Head of Democratic Services
	Tel	01902 555045
	Email	martyn.sargeant@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	n/a	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Advisory Group is recommended to:

1. Agree the action plan arising from the community governance review.
2. Recommend that the Council formally closes the citywide community governance review and delivers the action plan arising from it.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline an action plan identifying the key actions arising from the principal issues identified by the citywide community governance review in 2017.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council received a formal request for a community governance review, specifically in relation to Tettenhall Wightwick and Tettenhall Regis, to which it had a statutory obligation to respond. As the request met the legislative criteria for triggering a review, the Council agreed to undertake a community governance review during 2017. The review was in two parts – a specific review focused on the two Tettenhall wards and a wider review looking at the city as a whole.
- 2.2 A principal authority can initiate a community governance review of its own volition or in response to a petition from local electors. Guidance from the government in 2010 recommended that a community governance review should take place every ten to 15 years. A review should consider the arrangements for parish councils (including, where they are already in existence, whether they should be discontinued) with the objective of ensuring that local government arrangements are ‘effective and convenient’ as well as reflecting ‘the identities and interests of the community in that area’.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 7 July 2017, the Special Advisory group reviewed the outcomes from consultation in Tettenhall about the possibility of implementing a parish council in that area. Its subsequent recommendation to Council was not to proceed with a parish council, which was agreed by the Council at its meeting on 19 July.
- 2.4 At a subsequent meeting on 8 September 2017, the Special Advisory Group reviewed the outcomes from the citywide consultation and requested further work to be undertaken to identify how the Council could most appropriately respond to the issues highlighted by residents. This report details the action plan arising from that work.
- 2.5 The key findings from the citywide review were:
- (1) There was not clear support for ‘harder’ forms of community governance (e.g. a parish council) but there was interest in mechanisms to facilitate engagement with and influence of decision-making processes.
 - (2) There is scope for both the Council and Councillors to improve communication with residents.
- 2.6 The findings from the community governance review were supported by the outcomes from the Local Government Association’s peer review earlier in 2017, specifically that the Council should seek to:
- (1) Strengthen the connection between city leadership and community leadership at a neighbourhood level.
 - (2) Develop a stronger and more consistent communication on the social value outcomes and impact for Wulfrunians.

3.0 Action plan

3.1 The table below highlights a series of actions intended to address the main points arising from the community governance review, and facilitate improved communication and engagement with residents. These will also support the actions arising from the LGA's peer review, as well as the emerging empowering communities work stream under Public Service Reform.

Objective	To facilitate	Lead	Timescale
Commission an independent review of current citizen perception testing ('rep tracker') and make cost-effective recommendations for improvement.	A robust methodology for testing communication with residents and levels of engagement.	Insight and Performance Manager	May 2018
Develop a business case for an annual, independent resident perceptions survey.	A clear understanding of how residents perceive the Council and its activities.	Head of Corporate Communications	April 2018
Develop a new public consultation and engagement strategy, including a one-stop consultation portal.	Enabling local people to engage with and influence decision-making and service delivery.	Head of Corporate Communications	Sept 2018
Exploit the functionality in the new CRM to 'push' engagement opportunities about pertinent issues to residents.	Enabling local people to engage with and influence decision-making and service delivery.	Head of Corporate Communications	May 2018
Develop and deliver a local 'Be a Councillor' initiative (as part of the LGA programme).	Enabling local people to engage with and influence decision-making and service delivery.	Electoral Services Project Manager	July 2018
Consider a scrutiny review or task and finish group on Councillor engagement.	Enabling local people to engage with and influence decision-making and service delivery.	Chair of Scrutiny Board/Head of Corporate Communications	June 2018
Consider scope to incorporate public questions at Council or other meetings.	Enabling local people to engage with and influence decision-making and service delivery.	Leader/Head of Corporate Communications	Sept 2018

Objective	To facilitate	Lead	Timescale
Develop a package of social media training for Councillors, building on the experience of existing champions.	Enabling local people to engage with and influence decision-making and service delivery.	Head of Corporate Communications	Sept 2018
Promote Crowdfund Wolves* as a mechanism for local people to influence and fund local initiatives.	Enabling local people to promote and directly influence local priorities.	Head of Local Economy	April 2018
Develop a business case for the Council to contribute funding to Crowdfund Wolves initiatives (building on the Community First Neighbourhood Match fund**).	Enabling local people to promote and directly influence local priorities.	Head of Local Economy	July 2018
Develop an online 'community offer' to improve information and advice for residents.	Signposting local services and empowering local people to make their own decisions about service delivery.	Head of Strategic Commissioning	April 2019

* Crowdfund Wolves is a crowdfunding platform for civic projects in Wolverhampton. It utilises smart technology to attract funding and support for community initiatives as part of Spacehive, the UK's dedicated civic crowdfunding platform.

Spacehive has streamlined key processes involved in proposing, funding and delivering projects – from checking the viability of ideas to identifying and applying for funding from grant-makers and the “crowd” at the same time and reporting back on the impact they make.

People can pledge from £2 to support projects and the money only leaves their bank account should the project secure their target funding. However it is the first and only tool in the UK to integrate grant funding and crowdfunding and has the support of funders such as Esmee Fairbairn, and Growing a Greener Britain. It can also capture experts' time as match funding. As a result, the success rate for projects on Spacehive is much higher than other basic crowdfunding sites – a 52% project success rate compared to a crowdfunding platform average of 24%.

Crowdfund Wolves launched in November 2017, and work is underway supporting a number of community projects to develop their ideas in order to pitch them successfully.

** The Community First Neighbourhood Match Fund was an innovative small grants programme targeting deprived wards and getting local people involved in funding decisions and delivering projects. The £30m programme was managed by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) for Cabinet Office between April 2011 and March 2015. The programme was independently evaluated by IPSOS Mori and the New Economics Foundation through a combination of surveys of those involved, longitudinal cases studies within a small selection of communities and analysis of administrative data.

The evaluation found that distributing public money using panels of local people is a good model for small grant funding programmes. Nearly 600 communities (594) established panels, and these panels were able to attract bids for local projects in keeping with the needs of the local community. Importantly panels were able to attract matched funding in the delivery of actual projects. In total panels made £27.2 million in funding recommendations to 17,956 projects. This yielded £93 million in matched funding, including just over £15.3 million in cash match and over 5.5 million volunteering hours.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The costs of the community governance review were met from the £50,000 budget set aside for that purpose. At this stage it is expected that any communications costs incurred in pursuit of the action plan objectives will be funded from the £159,000 corporate marketing budget held by Corporate Communications. It is anticipated that funding will be required to support the Crowdfund Wolves initiative. This will be assessed as part of the business case referred to in paragraph 3.1.
[GE/06022018/R]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, decisions on whether to implement parish council arrangements and the associated electoral provisions were delegated to principal authorities, with due regard to the views of local people. This legislation was updated in the Legislative Reform (Community Governance Reviews) Order 2015.
[TS/06022018/Q]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Individual initiatives will be the subject of specific equalities analysis as required. There are no specific equalities implications arising from the report itself.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

Report to the Special Advisory Group, 8 September 2017: *Community Governance Review*

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=7521&Ver=4>

Report to the Special Advisory Group, 7 July 2017: *Community Governance Review*

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s47461/Community%20Governance%20Review.pdf>

Report to the Special Advisory Group, 2 May 2017: *Community Governance Review update*

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s41448/Community%20Governance%20Review%20Update.pdf>

Report to the Special Advisory Group, 13 January 2017: *Community Governance Review – draft consultation document*

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=5971&Ver=4>

Report to the Special Advisory Group, 21 October 2016: *Community Governance Review*

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=165&MId=5968&Ver=4>