

Meeting of the Cabinet

Minutes - 8 June 2016

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Peter Bilson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Andrew Johnson
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Paul Sweet

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Linda Sanders	Strategic Director - People
Martyn Sargeant	Head of Democratic Services
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Roger Lawrence. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
No declarations of interests were made. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting (20 April 2016)
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 April 2016 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 | Resource base provision at Bushbury Hill Primary School
Cllr Claire Darke presented the report on the current position in relation to the resource base designated for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties at Bushbury Hill Primary School. Against the background of a number of challenges the school was facing Cabinet approval was sought to commence Initial Consultation on the proposal to remove this provision. The |

proposal had the support of the School Governing Body and would allow the School to focus on meeting the existing challenges.

Resolved:

1. That the commencement of a period of Initial Consultation on the proposed formal removal of the resource base at Bushbury Hill Primary School for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with the Director of Education, to consider the outcome of Initial Consultation on the proposed formal removal of the resource base at Bushbury Hill Primary School and to determine whether or not to proceed to Formal Consultation (Representation).

6 **Electoral registration and participation scrutiny review**

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Democratic Services gave a verbal update on electoral registration in Wolverhampton to be able to take part in the EU Referendum on 23 June 2016. In light of a crash of the Government on line registration system, it was anticipated that the Government would announce that the deadline for voter registration would be extended to midnight 9 June. The deadline for registering for a postal vote would not be affected.

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented the executive response to the findings and recommendations from a scrutiny review into Electoral Registration and Participation. He reported that the scrutiny review report and recommendations were a good start to what is a difficult area to tackle. The vast majority of the recommendations were sensible measures and some were already being implemented. He suggested that in the coming months the Council would need to consider ways to extend its work with partners such as Wolverhampton University, the Colleges and the NHS to encourage voter registration and participation. He also reported that it was not clear how recommendation five from the review (Undertake scoping work to determine the feasibility of requiring organisations bidding for council contracts to aid work to increase registration in Wolverhampton as part of the Social Value test, in a way that is not burdensome for organisations) could be practically applied. Therefore, he was not supportive of that recommendation.

Cllr Johnson also placed on record his thanks to Cllr Paul Singh, Chair of the scrutiny review group and the review group members for their work and the officers and external witnesses who gave their time to give evidence or support the review.

Resolved:

1. That the report of the scrutiny review of Electoral Registration and Participation including the following recommendations be received and noted:

Recommendation 1: All electors be sent a personalised letter about voting upon reaching the age of 18.

Recommendation 2: Elections / Council should review how we engage with different groups to undertake statutory and non-statutory functions to identify opportunities to promote registration, particularly among those currently under-represented.

Recommendation 3: Work with organisations to encourage clients to register to vote while in triage and/or waiting for a meeting with an adviser.

Recommendation 4: Engage younger people with elections – different job opportunities (e.g. at the count or in polling stations).

Recommendation 5: Undertake scoping work to determine the feasibility of requiring organisations bidding for council contracts to aid work to increase registration in Wolverhampton as part of the Social Value test, in a way that is not burdensome for organisations.

Recommendation 6: Work with local organisations to develop an engagement programme targeting different demographic groups and communities.

Recommendation 7: Develop a programme of engagement with schools, colleges and universities.

Recommendation 8: Provide information about the importance of registering to vote, and how to vote at the citizenship ceremony.

Recommendation 9: Make it clear who is eligible to register and vote at particular elections.

Recommendation 10: Provide information (signpost) to where residents can find out more about the UK political system.

Recommendation 11: Make all information as accessible as possible, such as visually (e.g. infographics) for those that struggle to read/write.

Recommendation 12: Erect posters providing basic information – how to vote, who to contact for more information etc.

Recommendation 13: Actively encourage those producing documents to make the language used (such as manifestos) easy to understand and available in different languages.

Recommendation 14: The council should review the range of communication methods currently used with a view to produce documents for those unable to read/write (such as videos detailing how to vote).

2. That subject to the executive response to the Review Recommendation 5 being amended to read 'not accepted', the Executive response to the review recommendations be approved.
3. That the Cabinet response be referred to the Scrutiny Board for them to monitor the implementation of the agreed recommendations.