

Attendance

Members of the Governance Committee

Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE (Chair)
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Stephen Simkins

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Alice Peacock	Electoral Services Officer
Martyn Sargeant	Head of Governance

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

- 1 Apologies (if any)**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ian Brookfield, Craig Collingswood and Wendy Thompson.
- 2 Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 5 July 2019**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting**
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting that were not otherwise included on the agenda for the meeting.
- 5 Boundary Review**
Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE presented the report on proposals to ensure that the Committee was aware of and able to review the proposed governance and management arrangements for the Council's submission to the boundary review.

The Chair asked for the Committee's views on the plan to appoint a project manager to oversee the Council's work on the boundary review. She felt that the work could be undertaken by existing employees within the Head of Strategy's team. She also queried the proposed cost and funding for the post. In response, some members said that the time limited post would be crucial, as the outcomes from the boundary review would have a major impact on the running of the Council.

A suggestion was made that political oversight of the Council's response to the boundary review should involve Scrutiny Board. Other members noted that the response to previous boundary reviews had not gone through Scrutiny Board and that there would be political oversight of responses through the Committee and at Full Council.

Responding to points made, Martyn Sargeant, Head of Governance explained why the project management support was necessary and the funding arrangements for the post. Regarding the Council's response to the review and outcomes, the Governance Committee would assume primary responsibility for overseeing the work of employees to prepare each of the three submissions in response to the review. There would also be the opportunity for political groups to put in individual submissions.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed governance arrangements for management of the Council's input to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's boundary review in Wolverhampton be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that funding had been identified to provide project management support for the Council's work on the boundary review.

6 **Review of Polling Places and Districts**

Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE presented the report on the outcomes from the statutory quinquennial review of polling places and districts.

Responding to questions, Martyn Sargeant, Head of Governance confirmed that ward councillors had been contacted requesting their views on the proposals. He also explained the priorities for the review and the process followed in formulating the proposals as contained in the report. The Head of Governance also undertook to include in future reports on reviews of polling places and districts, a summary of feedback received from Councillors during the consultations.

Councillor Stephen Simkins registered his objection to the proposals for changes to the polling districts and places in Bilston East and the proposal to change the polling station for district HNA to Rainbow Street Community Centre, which was outside the City of Wolverhampton. He felt that the proposals would disenfranchise the electorate within Bilston East ward.

Other members of the Committee expressed their support for the proposals in so far as they related to the ward they represent.

The Head of Governance also reported that following publication of the report, ward councillors for East Park had contacted him to register their objection to the proposals to merge district KLA with KHB and to move the polling station location so that it was more central to these districts, at Mount Shiloh Apostle Church, Hickman Avenue. The ward councillors supported the proposed merger of the two districts but objected to the proposed location for the polling station. They preferred retaining the polling station at East Park Library and Neighbourhood Centre, Hurstbourne Crescent. For some of the electorate in district KLA, the East Park Library location would be over the recommended guidance of approximately one mile maximum distance residents should travel to a station. For that reason, the Head of Governance reported that he could not support the suggestion put forward by the ward councillors. In light of their feedback he recommended to the Committee that no change be made to polling districts KLA and KHB and their respective polling places.

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to approve the designation of polling places and districts for 2020-2025 with the following amendment:

‘That no change be made to the existing polling districts KHB and KLA in East Park and their respective polling places of East Park Library and Neighbourhood Centre, Hurstbourne Crescent and All Saints Community Centre, All Saints Road.’
2. That Council be recommended to delegate authority to the Returning Officer, following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition, to designate such alternative polling stations or arrangements as may be required for operational reasons.
3. That future reports on the outcomes from the statutory review of polling places and districts include a summary of feedback received from Councillors.
4. That it be noted that this review is separate to the work being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, although these arrangements will have to be reviewed in the context of any changes the Commission may require in 2021.