

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

**Community Governance Review
2016-17**

Terms of Reference

Introduction

The City of Wolverhampton Council is carrying out a community governance review under the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act'). In response to a formal request from the Tettenhall and District Community Council, which is the neighbourhood forum for the Tettenhall area, this will focus on the Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick wards, but will sit in the context of a wider review of the community governance arrangements for the whole city.

The Council is required to have regard to the [Guidance on Community Governance Reviews](#) produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, which has been considered in drawing up these terms of reference. The guidance is provided to support the review process and to ensure that the resulting community governance arrangements reflect 'the identities and interests of the community in the area under review' and are 'effective and convenient'.

What is a community governance review?

Community governance reviews provides the opportunity for councils to review and make changes to community governance in their areas. A review should consider one or more of the following:

- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing town or parish councils.
- The naming of and the style of new town or parish councils.
- The electoral arrangements for town or parish councils (e.g. number of councillors, wards, election frequency, etc.).
- Grouping or de-grouping town or parish councils.

The following extract from the guidance document explains how reviews are expected to work and the impact they can have:

“Community governance reviews provide the opportunity for principal councils to review and make changes to community governance within their areas. It can be helpful to undertake community governance reviews in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population, or in reaction to specific or local new issues. The Government has made clear in the 2006 white paper and in the 2007 Act its commitment to parish councils. It recognises the role such councils can play in terms of community empowerment at the local level. The 2007 Act provisions are intended to improve the development and coordination of support for citizens and community groups so that they can make the best use of empowerment opportunities.

“The 2007 Act is intended to streamline the process of taking decisions about giving effect to recommendations made in a community governance review, such as recommendations for the creation of new parishes and the establishment of parish councils, and about other matters such as making changes to parish boundaries and electoral arrangements. By devolving the powers to take these decisions from central

government to local government, the 2007 Act is intended to simplify the decision-making process and make it more local.

“Parish and town councils are the most local tier of government in England. There are currently about 10,000 parishes in England – around 8,900 of which have councils served by approximately 70,000 councillors. There is a large variation in size of parishes in England from those with a handful of electors to those with over 40,000 electors.”¹

Why is the City of Wolverhampton undertaking a review?

Under the 2007 Act, every principal authority has an obligation to review the community governance arrangements in its area every 10-15 years. However, a review can also be triggered by a valid petition from local residents or a valid application from a neighbourhood forum. The Council has received such an application from the Tettenhall and District Community Council, requesting that a community governance review consider the constitution of a new parish council and that the area to be considered should consist of the wards of Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick.

Given the obligation to conduct a periodic city-wide review, in the interests of effective and efficient governance, and in accordance with the government guidance, the Council review will consider the community governance arrangements across Wolverhampton, but with a particular focus on the Tettenhall area. A map of the Tettenhall wards to be considered is appended to this document.

The review objectives

The review will seek to fulfil the following objectives:

- (1) To satisfy the Council’s statutory obligation to undertake a community governance review in Tettenhall, following receipt of a valid application from the neighbourhood forum.
- (2) To satisfy the Council’s statutory obligation to carry out a periodic review of the community governance arrangements across the city.
- (3) To consider the Tettenhall and District Community Council’s proposal that there should be a parish council for the wards of Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick.
- (4) To enable residents and other relevant parties across the city, and particularly in Tettenhall, to have an opportunity to comment on and shape community governance arrangements through a transparent and accessible process.
- (5) To consider the impact of any potential community governance arrangements in Tettenhall in the context of the wider city.
- (6) To consider the budgetary implications of any new community governance arrangements for the affected area and the city as a whole.

¹ Paras 12-14, *Guidance on Community Governance Reviews*, DCLG and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, 2010

- (7) To consider the implications of differentiated community governance arrangements in terms of delivering the Council's corporate objectives – a stronger economy and stronger communities.
- (8) If a recommendation of the review is the formation of one or more parish councils, to also recommend appropriate associated electoral arrangements.
- (9) To ensure that community governance arrangements in the City of Wolverhampton reflect the identities and interests of the community, and are effective and convenient.

Consultation and information

The Council is required to consult with residents in the area(s) under review, as well as any other relevant individuals (e.g. local business owners) and organisations. Consultation will take place through a variety of mechanisms, including online surveys, open community meetings and, in Tettenhall, a postal ballot. Information about the review will be available online and in hard copy format from key Council premises.

The Council wants the review to be transparent, accessible and informative. The Council's Special Advisory Group, which includes Councillors from the main political groups, will oversee the review process on behalf of the authority. The full Council itself will agree the terms of reference for the review and consider the eventual recommendations arising from it. Reports to both the Special Advisory Group and the Council will be publicly available, and the meetings of both bodies are open to members of the public to attend.

Provisional timetable

The timetable below outlines the provisional timeline for conducting the review. This may be subject to change as the review progresses:

October 2016	Special Advisory Group agrees the draft terms of reference for the community governance review.
November 2016	Council agrees the terms of reference.
November 2016 to January 2017	Development of the detailed project plan, consultation documents, communication plan and financial information.
January 2017	Special Advisory Group approves consultation documents.
February to April 2017	Consultation period in respect of (a) city-wide community governance generally, and (b) Tettenhall community governance specifically.
April 2017	Report on consultation outcomes to the Special Advisory Group.
May 2017	Consultative postal ballot of Tettenhall residents.
June 2017	Consideration of draft final report and recommendations by the Special Advisory Group.
July 2017	Consideration of report and recommendations by Council.

