

Special Advisory Group

Minutes - 21 October 2016

Attendance

Members of the Special Advisory Group

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Mike Hooper	Interim Democratic Services Officer
Colin Parr	Head of Governance
Martyn Sargeant	Head of Democratic Services

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllrs Mary Bateman, Roger Lawrence, Rita Potter and Paul Singh.
- 2 Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 21 April 2016**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 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 Parliamentary Boundary Review**
The Advisory Group considered the report on a proposed Council response to the Boundary Commission's consultation on future parliamentary constituencies.

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Democratic Services reported on the implications of the Boundary Review for Wolverhampton, the key issue being that the city centre of Wolverhampton was going to sit within a Parliamentary constituency that does not bear its name.

Cllr Andrew Johnson commented that the recommendation in the report for the 'Wednesfield and Willenhall' constituency to be renamed 'Wolverhampton North, Wednesfield and Willenhall' was cumbersome. Given that Wednesfield was within Willenhall he suggested that the constituency should instead be renamed 'Wolverhampton North and Willenhall'.

Resolved:

1. That the response to the Boundary Commission for England's consultation on Parliamentary constituencies, specifically recommending that the proposed 'Wednesfield and Willenhall' constituency should be renamed 'Wolverhampton North and Willenhall' be approved.
2. That Council be recommended to authorise the Managing Director to make the consultation response on its behalf via the Commission's online consultation portal.
3. That the proposed changes to the Wolverhampton South-east constituency (to be renamed Wolverhampton South and Coseley) and the Wolverhampton South-west constituency (to be renamed Wolverhampton West) be noted.

6 **Community Governance Review**

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Democratic Services presented a report on a proposed response to a formal request received by the Council on 8 April 2016 for a community governance review, specifically in relation to Tettenhall Wightwick and Tettenhall Regis. The request met the legislative criteria for triggering a review so the Council has a duty to arrange a community governance review and the report outlined the proposed approach for doing so.

Cllr Wendy Thompson commented that the question of a light touch community governance review for other parts of Wolverhampton was a matter for the Council but that the review for the Tettenhall area should continue. She also looked forward to seeing detail on the finances and precept issues as soon as possible if a parish council were formed. She also indicated that she would be grateful if the council's employees could keep both her and the Chair of the envisaged parish council involved.

Resolved:

1. That Council conduct a community governance review for the whole of Wolverhampton but with more detailed work in the Tettenhall area.
2. That the draft terms of reference for a community governance review of the whole of the city, be agreed for consideration by Council.
3. That it be agreed, in principle, subject to Council approval, that the Advisory Group act as the lead committee for the review process, ultimately making recommendations to Council for the city's community governance arrangements.
4. That the proposed timetable for the review be approved, subject to ratification by Council.

5. That it be noted that the costs of the review, to include resourcing the review itself and the associated consultation, have yet to be quantified but would be reported to the Special Advisory Group in due course.

7 **Proposed Revised Petitions Scheme**

Mike Hooper, Interim Democratic Services Officer presented a report on revised petitions arrangements following the dissolution of the Petitions Committee and the adoption of new arrangements for considering petitions from the public. The proposals recommended revised thresholds for petitions to be dealt with by employees, the relevant scrutiny panel and by the Council. Scrutiny Board would have a role to monitor employee compliance with response rates and the outcome of each case.

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal asked that a route be included in the arrangements for Ward Councillors to be involved in petitions. Cllr Andrew Johnson agreed that where appropriate Ward Councillors should be kept informed of petitions relating to their ward.

Resolved:

That the following revised Petitions Scheme be endorsed and recommended to Full Council for approval:

- a. Petitions with fewer than 2,499 signatures be considered and responded to by employees, within 28 days of receipt by the relevant service area. A summary of responses would be reported to Scrutiny Board and the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and where appropriate Ward Members.
- b. Petitions with 2,500-4,999 signatures be considered by the relevant scrutiny panel with recommendations made for action by employees or review by the Executive as appropriate.
- c. Petitions with 5,000+ signatures be considered by the Council as per the existing arrangements.