

Special Advisory Group

Minutes - 17 March 2017

Attendance

Members of the Special Advisory Group

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Colin Parr	Head of Governance

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Roger Lawrence.
- 2 Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (13 January 2017)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Matters arising**
With reference to Minute 6 (Community Governance Review), Cllr Andrew Johnson reported that the two community consultation events in Tettenhall had taken place. Both meetings had been well attended and a wide range of views had been expressed. One issue that had repeatedly been raised by residents was whether there would be a referendum if it became clear that there was support for a parish council. Cllr Johnson had responded by informing the meetings that, if there were a groundswell of opinion for a further vote before a parish council is put in place he would recommend to the Advisory Group that it recommend to Council that there should be a specific referendum vote on the matter.

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal gave his support to the approach Cllr Johnson had expressed at the community consultation events on the question of a referendum.

Cllr Wendy Thompson commented that residents of Tettenhall would want to know about the precept and the services required prior to any vote being taken. Cllr Andrew Johnson replied that the style and functions provided would determine the level of the precept, and the services to be devolved to the parish council would have to be negotiated after the parish council had been established.

5 **Changes to the Constitution**

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal presented the report on proposed changes to the Constitution for recommendation to Council for approval. The changes had been highlighted by the Constitution Review Group. Some related to operational changes within the Council's structures and others reflected changes to regulations and guidance.

Members of the Advisory Group sought clarification of the proposed change to the Councillors Allowance Scheme concerning expenses in relation to the West Midlands Combined Authority (CA). The Advisory Group was informed that it related to travel and subsistence expenses for any city of Wolverhampton Council Councillor required to attend a meeting of the CA, including the Audit Committee and the Scrutiny Committee of the CA. The travel and subsistence costs would be paid for by the CA. In response to requests for further detail on the CA meetings that would be eligible for the travel and subsistence expenses, Colin Parr, Head of Governance undertook to provide the Advisory Group with a schedule of the CA meetings going forward for which the expenses would be payable.

It was noted that, under the change to 'Protocols for Dealing with Petitions at Full Council Meetings', the threshold for the number of signatories to a petition that would trigger a debate on the petition by Full Council was 5000+ and not 52,0500+ as indicated in the report.

Resolved:

That the Council be recommended to note revisions to the Constitution, specifically:

- a. To amend the petitions scheme in line with the revised petitions scheme.
- b. To remove reference to the Petitions Committee following the dissolution of the Petitions Committee.
- c. To amend terms of reference for the Pensions Committee as detailed in Appendix A to the report.
- d. To amend the delegations to the West Midlands Joint Committee as detailed in Appendix B to the report.
- e. To update the delegations for officers to reflect changes in responsibilities.
- f. To amend the Councillors' allowances scheme to state West Midlands Combined Authority related expenses can be claimed.

6 **Development of the Constitution**

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal presented, for information, a report on an outline of the process for developing the Constitution. The work would be carried out in house by Democratic and Legal Services with the majority being carried out over the summer period. It was envisaged that the work would be completed in readiness for Council in November 2017.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Resolved:

That the process for the development of the Constitution be noted.