



# Special Advisory Group

## Minutes - 21 October 2014

### Attendance

#### Members of the Special Advisory Group

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)  
Cllr Roger Lawrence  
Cllr Elias Mattu  
Cllr Peter O'Neill  
Cllr Paul Singh  
Cllr Paul Sweet  
Cllr Wendy Thompson  
Cllr Richard Whitehouse

#### Employees

|                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Dereck Francis  | Democratic Support Officer  |
| David Garner    | Electoral Services Manager  |
| Andrew Harvey   | Graduate Management Trainee |
| Kevin O'Keefe   | Chief Legal Officer         |
| Martyn Sargeant | Head of Democratic Services |

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1        **Apologies for absence**  
An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr Val Evans.
- 2        **Declarations of interests**  
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3        **Minutes of the previous meeting (25 June 2014)**  
Resolved:  
          That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2014 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        **Polling stations review**  
The Advisory Group received a report on the responses to the consultations on the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations.

Martyn Sargeant, Head of Democratic Services informed the Advisory Group that following the publication of the agenda and report on the polling station arrangements for next year's elections, and subsequent to discussions, the proposals had been revised as follows:

**East Park:** the southern polling district (KHA) would be split in two, with the new area (KIA) being served by a joint station with Ettingshall (Memorial Hall), which was just over the ward boundary and would reduce the distance for voters to travel to a station located in the north east of the district.

**Ettingshall:** following complaints about the suitability of the 44 Club for district LKA, which was outside the ward boundary, provisional agreement had been reached to site a polling station at the Elizabeth Arms, a pub at the entrance to the estate.

**Tettenhall Regis:** for clarity, the polling station at the Claregate Pavilion (district SCA), which was marked as 'for deletion', has been removed as this has not been a station for a number of years.

**Tettenhall Wightwick:** the removal of Wightwick Manor as a station had been confirmed (district TGA) following complaints about accessibility and lighting, to be replaced by the reinstatement of Wightwick Hall School.

The Advisory Group went through the proposals for the each of the individual wards within the city and made the following comments and observations:

**Tettenhall Regis** – Cllr Wendy Thompson expressed concern that residents living in the east side of the ward would have a long journey to the station that would serve polling district SJA. She suggested that a temporary polling station be provided as a solution. Martyn Sargeant reported that he had met Cllr Thompson to discuss these concerns. There had been difficulties in terms of siting a temporary polling station. He was not aware of a location where a temporary station could be safely located and that was closer than the proposed location. Data had been collated on voter turnout because of the distance and what it would mean for turnout at an election. The findings were inconclusive as whilst it showed a dip in voter turnout in that part of the ward, the dip was reflected elsewhere in the ward. Martyn Sargeant was asked to make the data available to Cllr Jonathan Yardley

Cllr Mrs Thompson also reported that the new development in Danescourt and further works along the Tettenhall Road would be an ongoing issue. Martyn Sargeant suggested that these points be picked up in the review for the 2016 election.

**Tettenhall Wightwick** – Cllr Wendy Thompson welcomed the proposal to revert to using Wightwick Hall School instead of Wightwick Manor in polling district TGA. She also reported that a huge number of voters use the station at St Columba's Church, Castlecroft Road and she would like to see that there are sufficient polling staff and voting booths deployed at the station. She also highlighted that residents in Ash Hill would have a long distance to travel to their polling station and that parking difficulties are experienced at the station at Henwood Road, Compton

**Bushbury North** – it was reported that the proposed polling station at Northcote Farm was a not conveniently located for the area that it served. There was a lack of community buildings in that area and a lack of easy locations to site a temporary station. The station was not ideal but was a preferable alternative to a temporary polling station. The Chair asked that this be kept under review.

**Bushbury South and Low Hill** – Martyn Sargeant reported that the polling station at Park Village Centre, Cannock Road/Park Lane (BGA) might not be available. He proposed that the Park Village Centre be kept in the plans at this stage but that a provisional option of using the Good Shepherd Centre, Second Avenue as a double station for polling districts BAA and BGA be approved.

**Graiseley** – Cllr Elias Mattu suggested that the polling districts ND and NE should be merged. He also stressed the need to effectively communicate the changes the polling stations to residents in the area in appropriate ethnic languages.

**Heath Town** – Martyn Sargeant reported that some venues for polling stations might no longer be available. In the light of this the following contingency arrangements were proposed:

- (1) polling districts DEA and DFA be merged to be served by the station at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Bushbury Road.
- (2) Woden Primary School, Springfield Road would be retained as a polling station and a small tweak would be made to the polling district boundary.

**Springvale** – Cllr Richard Whitehouse reported that voters who previously used the polling station at 52 Pugh Road would now have to walk up steep hills to their new station. Similarly voters living at the bottom of the new Polling District MJA would have a steep walk to get to the polling station at Hurst Hill Methodist Church. He suggested that those voters would be better served if they could use the polling station in district MFA. He also reported that the rear gates at Hill Avenue Primary School needed to be open during the polling hours otherwise some residents using that station would have a long walk to the station. Martyn Sargent undertook to identify what the suggestions would mean in terms of voter numbers and try to identify whether there were solutions. If so they would be included in the report to Council on 17 December.

**St Peter's** - Wolverhampton Homes has agreed to install a ramp for wheelchairs to address the issue of suitable wheelchair disabled access. It was therefore proposed to reinstate the polling station at the Tenants' Meeting Room, Boscobel Estate.

At the end of the discussion Cllr Andrew Johnson placed on record his thanks and appreciation to all those who had submitted responses to the consultation. He also asked that the thanks of the Advisory Group be passed on to the Council employees involved in the comprehensive review.

Resolved:

1. That the proposals for polling districts, polling places and polling stations be approved and referred to Full Council, where appropriate, for approval subject to the following revisions:

- a. **East Park** - The southern polling district (KHA) be split in two, with the new area (KIA) being served by a joint station with Ettingshall (Memorial Hall) which is just over the ward boundary and would reduce the distance for voters to travel to a station located in the north east of the district.
- b. **Ettingshall** - following complaints about the suitability of the 44 Club for district LKA, which was outside the ward boundary, and subject to agreement, a polling station be located on the car park at the Elizabeth Arms, a pub at the entrance to the estate.
- c. **Tettenhall Regis** – The polling station at the Claregate Pavilion (district SCA), which was marked as ‘for deletion’, be removed as this has not been a station for a number of years.
- d. **Tettenhall Wightwick** – Confirmed the removal of Wightwick Manor as a station for district TGA, to be replaced by the reinstatement of Wightwick Hall School.
- e. **Bushbury South and Low Hill** - Park Village Centre, Cannock Road/Park Lane (BGA) might no longer be available. The Park Village Centre would be kept in the plans at this stage but with the the option of using the Good Shepherd Centre, Second Avenue as a double station for polling districts BAA and BGA.
- f. **Heath Town** - Park Village Centre might no longer be available. Polling districts DEA and DFA would therefore be merged to be served by the polling station at Holy Trinity Church Hall, Bushbury Road.

Springfield Youth Centre might also no longer be available. Therefore the Woden Primary School, Springfield Road would be retained as a polling station and the DAA polling district boundary would be amended to include all of Springfield Road plus Hemmings Close.

- g. **St Peter’s** – Wolverhampton Homes would install a ramp for wheelchair access at the Tenants Meeting Room, Boscobel Estate. Therefore the polling station be reinstated.
2. That the suggestions made by Cllr Richard Whitehouse regarding the Springdale ward be explored further to determine whether there are better solutions and if so they be included in the report to be submitted to Council on 17 December 2014.

## 6 **Health Scrutiny Arrangements**

Cllr Roger Lawrence presented the report on the powers of health scrutiny held by the Council and on proposals as to how the powers should be discharged.

Resolved:

That Standards Committee be recommended to propose to Full Council that:

1. It discharge its Health Scrutiny powers as follows:

- (a) Health Scrutiny be delegated to the Health Scrutiny Panel
  - (b) Responses to consultations by relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers on substantial reconfiguration proposals be delegated to the Health Scrutiny Panel
  - (c) Referral of NHS substantial reconfiguration proposals to the Secretary of State be retained by Full Council.
2. The composition of the Health Scrutiny Panel be increased to include three co-opted members from Wolverhampton HealthWatch and that they be accorded full voting rights.
3. Should a joint health scrutiny committee with another local authority be required the arrangements for this be constituted by Full Council on a need-by-need basis.
4. The process for Wolverhampton HealthWatch or HealthWatch contractors to refer a matter to the local authority be as follows:
  - (a) All referrals should to be sent to the Scrutiny Team
  - (b) All referrals to be acknowledged by the Scrutiny Team within 20 working days
  - (c) The referral be considered by the next available Health Scrutiny Panel
  - (d) A response to the referral be given to HealthWatch or HealthWatch contractors within five working days after consideration by the Health Scrutiny Panel.