

Minutes



Democratic Services Committee

Date: 26 July 2018

Time: 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors C Ferris (Chair), M Evans, Y Forsey, R Hayat, L Lacey, K Thomas and T Watkins

Leigh Jones (Governance Officer)

In Attendance:

Apologies: Councillors C Evans and I Hayat

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **Minutes from May**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 were submitted.

With regards to item 7 (Mayoralty Protocol) there was some discussion over the wording for the revised protocol, which would be presented to Council in September. It was agreed that “divulge reasons” should be changed to “provide reasons”.

It was also requested that the minutes record that the reason does not need to be released to the public. And that a reason is only needed if the deferral is longer than 12 months.

Agreed:

The minutes were confirmed as a true record subject to the revisions above.

3 **Boundary Commission Review of Communities - Verbal Update**

At its meeting in May, the Committee agreed to add this topic to its work programme, and requested a scoping report to start the review.

The Head of Law and Regulation informed the Committee that in the last week The Boundary Commission had advised the Council not to proceed with the above review, as any changes would not have time to be actioned before the Boundary Commission’s review commenced (expected to be in the next year).

It was confirmed that the Committee would be consulted as part of that process and have the opportunity to make any comments on any proposals. The review would be conducted by the Boundary Commission.

Agreed:

Remove item from the Work Programme for 2018-19.

4 **Support for Councillors in their Ward Work**

The Democracy and Communications Manager presented the Report to the Committee.

Background

This Committee had agreed to review “Support for Councillors in their wasd work” as part of its work programme for 2018-19.

The last in-depth research on this area was actually undertaken in 2011, when the old Neighbourhood Committee system was under review, and the Local Service Board was looking at options for partnership engagement. The final report of this review was attached at **Appendix 1**. It was this review which let to the current system of ward meeting support.

While that had been many developments since this review, particularly in technology and the ways people prefer to communicate, many of the themes and issues facing ward-level engagement were still current.

The Democracy and Communications Manager referred to Page 12 that sets out a draft plan for the review for Members to consider and confirm, case management systems – The Democracy and Communications Manager confirmed that she would look into options that may be available.

Members also asked if it was possible to look into tapping into the WIFI on busses to communicate with residents.

It was confirmed that the Democracy and Communications teams were looking at making sure members had equipment that would support their roles e.g. when at ward meeting and having access to WI-FI to be able to answer questions straight away.

Members commented that a toolkit would be useful in terms of what council departments deal with what as there are so many different departments and that maybe a pack or website detailing this would be useful.

Discussions then ensued on engagement and communication with residents.

Head of Law and Regulation commented that the agenda item is to discuss help for Councillors not engagement which will be covered in the Communication Policy; they do overlap but are two distinctive issues.

Discussion then took place around ward meetings, and surgeries and whether certain meetings are political and how a toolkit could help Councillors.

Members suggested having a regular update from departments such as Streetscene, to keep Councillors up to date on what is happening within their departments that would affect residents.

Agreed:

T proceed with the review as outlined in the Report.

5 **Date of next meeting**

Thursday November 8th at 10am

The meeting terminated at 5.49 pm