

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

Report of the meeting of Electoral Arrangements Advisory Group held in the Box 13, Riverside, Chester-le-Street on Thursday, 8 November 2007 at 4.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillor:

G Armstrong	W Laverick
J W Barrett	K Potts
R Court	A Turner
A K Holden	

Officers: K Fletcher (Democratic Services Assistant) and C Turnbull (Democratic Services Officer)

In the absence of Councillor SA Henig, the Democratic Services Officer requested nominations for Chairman for the meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor G Armstrong and seconded by Councillor AK Holden that Councillor A Turner be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor S A Henig.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed and seconded that the minutes be agreed.

RESOLVED: "That the minutes of the meeting held 21 July 2006, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members, were agreed as a correct record."

The Chairman proceeded to sign the minutes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

4. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

Consideration was given to a report from the Democratic Services Officer detailing findings of the review into Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that the Electoral Administration Act 2006 had placed a duty on all local authorities to undertake a review of Polling Districts, Places and Stations by the end of 2007.

He confirmed that the aim of the review was to ensure that all electors had reasonable and practicable facilities for voting and that as far as reasonable and practicable, polling places would be accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled.

The Democratic Services Officer advised of the consultation process carried out for the review and of the responses received, as detailed in paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of the report.

He proposed that Members consider each Polling District, Place and Station in order that they appeared on the schedule attached to the report.

Councillor Barrett commented that there was currently a review being undertaken of all community facilities within the District and that this could impact upon the use of facilities for elections.

The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that contact had been made with the Head of Regeneration in relation to this matter, who had advised that the Democratic Services Team would be kept informed of any potential changes to those facilities which were used for election purposes.

Comments were raised with regard to the use of schools as polling stations and the Democratic Services Officer advised that alternative venues had been found where possible.

Councillor Barrett made reference to the number of mobile units used as polling stations within the Urpeth Ward and the Democratic Services Officer confirmed that alternative locations had been investigated however due to the limited number of buildings available, no alternative could be found.

In relation to comments received from County Councillor J B Walker, it was suggested to Members that an additional Polling Place be included within the Bournmoor Ward at Lambourne Close Communal Room.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that the current Z1 and Z2 registers be amalgamated to create the Z register.

It was proposed and seconded that the schedule attached to the report be agreed and recommended to Council for approval, subject to the additional polling place within the Bournmoor Ward and the amalgamation of the Z1 and Z2 registers.

RESOLVED: "That the schedule of the Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations be agreed and recommended to Council for approval subject to an additional Polling Place being located within the Bournmoor Ward at Lambourne Close Communal Room and that Registers Z1 and Z2 be amalgamated to create the Z register."

The meeting terminated at 5.00 pm

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