

MEETING OF THE ENGAGEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2012 10.30 AM



GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Bob Adams (Chairman)
Councillor Ray Auger
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Ibis Channell

Councillor Jock Kerr
Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Rosemary H Woolley (Vice-Chairman)

OFFICERS

Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Lucy Youles)
Elections and Democratic Services Team Leader (Julie Edwards)
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Woolley declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (Review of Polling Districts and Places) as she was a parish clerk who submitted responses to the consultation.

56. ACTION NOTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 13TH JANUARY 2012

The action notes from the meeting held on Friday 13 January 2012 were noted subject to the deletion of the final paragraph under minute number 50.

57. UPDATES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillors briefly discussed the community engagement drop-in sessions that were held in January 2012. The level of attendance was similar to attendance at the old-style local forums. Members considered the most positive element of the sessions was giving more opportunity to members of the public to discuss issues than they had with local forums.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised PDG members that officers were looking at different ways the sessions could incorporate more

people. Brief discussions ensued on the size of the clusters that were used; different suggestions included holding one event in each Ward, reducing the size of clusters and running more sessions in rural areas. A further suggestion included using public events, like markets, where officers would be able to speak to a wider audience.

Some Councillors suggested the attendance rate was low because of confusion of the sessions' intent. Some features in local papers presented the forums as sessions for bodies like parish councils. A number of parish and town councils had also suggested they needed more notice to better advertise the sessions locally.

Recommendation:

At its meeting on 22 March 2012, the Engagement PDG receive an update report on the community engagement sessions held in January 2012.

58. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The Elections and Democratic Services Team Leader introduced report number LDS053, which summarised a review of polling districts and polling places. Final proposals would be submitted to the annual meeting of the Council for its consideration and approval.

A number of updates and amendments to the circulated report were summarised:

- The mention of DDA on page 3 referred to the Disability Discrimination Act
- Confirmation had been received that, in the event of an election, the council would have exclusive use of Ropsley Village Hall as a polling station
- Pg 18 – no comments were received in relation to Deeping St. James Ward
- Pg 33 – there were no proposed changes for the parish of Carlton Scroop
- In addition to a polling station in Elsea Park Community Centre for residents of Bourne East Ward, a second polling station for Bourne West would be added to accommodate new developments in the town

Councillors were given the opportunity to put forward their comments:

- Pg 25 – The parish name for polling district DK1 should be amended to Careby, Aunby and Holywell
- Pg 19 – Stamford All Saints – two polling stations were sited at one end of the Ward (close to St. George's Ward). For residents' convenience, It was suggested that a second polling station be made available (Waverley Gardens/Chatsworth Road area)

- Pg 30 – residents from Barholm and Stowe have traditionally voted in Greatford. Some residents had queried whether the polling place could move to Uffington
- Pg 26 – Polling stations in Deeping St James were generally well-used, however clear signage was required

Following a question from Councillors, officers reported that schools who hosted a polling station were not required to close on election day; it was a decision taken by school governors.

Action Points:

That the Elections and Democratic Services Team Leader investigate the following proposals:

- ***Consider alternative polling station arrangements for St. Mary's Ward Stamford***
- ***Consider the most appropriate polling place for residents from Barholm and Stowe***

Recommendation

The PDG recommends report LDS053 to Council for approval incorporating (where appropriate) changes made based on Engagement PDG members' comments.

59. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed at 11:07am