

LGBCE (14)2nd Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 18 February 2014, at 09:15am, in Rooms A& B, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Commissioners Present

Max Caller CBE (Chair)

Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)

Dr Peter Knight CBE DL

Sir Tony Redmond

Dr Colin Sinclair CBE

Professor Paul Wiles CB

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill

Archie Gall

Alison Evison

Tim Bowden

Richard Buck

Sarah Vallotton

Michelle vonAhn

Mark Cooper

Nicholas Dunkeyson

Alex Hinds

Simon Keal

David Owen

Mark Pascoe

Lucy Ward

Dean Faccini

Chief Executive

Director of Reviews

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Business & Committee Services Manager

Policy & Research Officer

Review Officer

Business Assistant (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Lynn Ingram, Finance Director.

Declarations of interest

Professor Paul Wiles declared an interest in Sheffield and took no part in the discussion of that item.

Sir Tony Redmond declared an interest in South Buckinghamshire which is mentioned in one of the papers but was not discussed explicitly at the meeting.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 21 January 2014

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Operational Report- LGBCE (14)16

The Director of Reviews presented the Operational Report for February. The Review Programme for 2014-15 had the capacity to take on three additional requested reviews. Expressions of interest in a review, or reports of them, had been received from eight local authorities.

2. Colchester Council Size– LGBCE (14)17

It had been agreed to review Colchester Borough Council at the request of the authority. The review had commenced in August 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 26 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority leaders and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 60 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size changing to 51 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 51 members. As this was a review undertaken under the previous guidance, it would be necessary to consult on this proposal

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 51 be used as the basis for consultation.

3. Sheffield Council Size – LGBCE (14)18

It had been agreed to review Sheffield City Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in August 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, one ward had a variance of over 30 per cent.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority leaders and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 84 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size remaining at 84 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 84 members. As this was a review undertaken under the previous guidance it would be necessary to consult on this proposal.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 84 be used as the basis for consultation.

4. Leicester Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)19

The review of Leicester City Council had commenced in July 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 41 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Spinney Hill, varying by 28%.

At its meeting on 21 May 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 54 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared on the basis of such a council size.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team had taken into consideration both the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 14 three-member wards, and six two-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received. It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented with minor modification to the wording in one section.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Leicester City Council as presented.

5. Darlington Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)20

The review of Darlington Council had commenced in August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 17 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Faverdale, varying by 46 per cent.

At its meeting in June 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 50 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared on the basis of such a council size.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team had taken into consideration both the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 10 three-member wards and 10 two-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received. It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented subject to a small boundary modification between Hummersknott ward and Park West ward.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Darlington Council as modified.

6. Canterbury Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)21

The review of Canterbury City Council had commenced in March 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, three wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Blean Forest, varying by 26%. The Council had requested the Commission undertake a review.

At its meeting in June 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 38 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared on the basis of such a council size.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team had taken into consideration both the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. During this work, the team had investigated the Council's proposed warding pattern based on 39 members and had concluded that such a council size provided a better allocation of councillors across the district as well as resulting in a better allocation of councillors between the coastal towns and rural areas. Accordingly, the Draft Recommendations proposed a

pattern of four three-member wards, 11 two-member wards and five single-member wards in total.

A paper was tabled at the meeting relating to some changes to the 2019 forecast figures. This change was noted but did not materially affect the draft recommendations.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received. It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Canterbury City Council as presented.

7. Newark & Sherwood Final Recommendations – LGBCE (14)22

The review of Newark & Sherwood District Council had commenced in July 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. The District Council had also requested that the Commission undertake a review.

At its meeting in September 2013, the Commission concluded that, in the light of representations and investigation by the team, a council size of 39 would better meet its statutory criteria and provide a better allocation of councillors across the district. It had agreed Draft Recommendations based on that number.

Following publication, 93 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of amendments to the areas of Bilsthorpe, Rainworth and Wellow, and to the creation of three parish wards for Ollerton & Boughton Town Council and to a ward name change of Trentside ward to Trent ward. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of six three-member wards, six two-member wards, and nine single-member wards.

The Commission considered the Final Recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Newark & Sherwood District Council as presented.

8. South Kesteven Final Recommendations – LGBCE (14)23

The review of South Kesteven District Council had commenced in August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 38 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with Grantham St John's and Ringstone wards varying by 26%.

At its meeting in September 2013, the Commission concluded that, in the light of representations and investigation by the team, a council size of 56 would better meet its statutory criteria and provide a better allocation of councillors across the district. It had agreed Draft Recommendations based on that number.

Following publication, 23 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of minor amendments to ward names in respect of Grantham Priory ward reverting back to Grantham Wulfram's, Fenside ward reverting back to Aveland, and Austerby ward changing to Bourne Austerby. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for South Kesteven District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of four three-member wards, 18 two-member wards, and eight single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the Final Recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for South Kesteven District Council as presented.

9. South Ribble Final Recommendations – LGBCE (14)24

The review of South Ribble Borough Council had commenced in September 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with Farington East varying by 26%.

At its meeting in February 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 50. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in September 2013.

Following publication, 18 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in

respect of amendments to the ward boundaries of Walton-le-Dale, Bamber Bridge and Leyland. It was also judged there was sufficient evidence to amend the ward names of Bannister Brook to Leyland Central, Turpin Green to St Ambrose and Wade Hall to Seven Stars. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for South Ribble Borough Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of four three-member wards, and 19 two-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the Final Recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for South Ribble Borough Council as presented.

10. Stratford-on-Avon Final Recommendations – LGBCE (14)25

The review of Stratford-on-Avon District Council had commenced in October 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting in May 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 36. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in October 2013.

Following publication, 29 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of minor modifications to the ward boundaries between Welcombe and Clopton wards, and Shipston South and Shipston North wards. It was also judged there was sufficient evidence to amend the following ward names:

- Studley North ward to be named Studley with Mappleborough Green
- Studley South to be named Studley with Sambourne
- Wellesbourne North to be named Wellesbourne East
- Wellesbourne South to be named Wellesbourne West

These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 36 single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the Final Recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Stratford-on-Avon District Council as presented.

11. North Dorset Final Recommendations – LGBCE (14)26

The review of North Dorset District Council had commenced in June 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Motcombe & Ham, varying by 48 per cent.

At its meeting in May 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 33. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in September 2013.

Following publication, 21 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations and these were proposed as the Final Recommendations for North Dorset District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of two three-member wards, 10 two-member wards, and seven single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the Final Recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for North Dorset District Council as presented.

12. Update on the Review Process

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Business Re-engineering project being carried out by external consultants. He had concerns about progress, and the ability of the exercise to achieve its intended aims and objectives. He indicated that he would be meeting the consultants to discuss these matters and would then decide appropriate action.

Agreed

The Chief Executive would report back to the Commission at its next meeting.

13. Chair's Report

The Chair confirmed that Sir Tony Redmond's reappointment to the Commission was expected shortly.

14. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive briefed the Commission on the recent Speaker's Committee Budget Sub-Committee meeting. The session had not given rise to any major points for reconsideration of the plan. He would iron out some inconsistencies, and add an explanation of the heavier case mix, and submit it by the end of February for final Speaker's Committee approval.

Agreed

A paper on the issues in relation to location and support services would be prepared for discussion at a workshop on the day of the April Commission meeting.

15. Performance Management: 3rd Quarter Outturns for Non-Financial Indicators

Policy & Research Officer Michelle von.Ahn, confirmed that the Commission had been meeting its targets in all four key performance indicators.

The Commission noted the content of the report.

16. Report on Audit Committee Meeting

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the Audit Committee meeting the previous day.

Key topics covered were:

- A discussion on the first draft of the Annual Report.
- A new risk policy, and newly formatted risk register, which would strengthen existing procedures
- Key Performance Indicators for 2014-15.
- A progress report on internal audit 2013-14.
- Internal audit plan for 2014-15.
- A VfM report from the NAO on fixed costs.
- The first draft of the Governance Statement.
- Audit Committee members would be receiving meeting papers electronically for the Audit Committee meeting in May as a pilot project.

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported a risk for immediate attention by the Commission. The risk related to resilience, in sustaining continuity at senior management level during the transition to new senior managers, coinciding with the maternity leave of another key manager.

Agreed

The Chief Executive to produce a paper addressing the heightened risk and setting out what steps might mitigate it.

17. New and Emerging Risks

The discussion of the previous item had crystallised the following emerging risks:

- Resilience/continuity
- Arrangements for maternity leave cover

18. Future Business – LGBCE (13)192

The content of the Future Business paper was noted.

AOB

The Business & Committee Services Manager asked Commissioners to submit any expense and fees claims by 7 March 2014 in order to facilitate year end accounts.

Close of Business 11:48am