

## **LGBCE (17)11 Meeting**

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 21st November 2017 1.00pm, in the Belgravia Suite, 29th Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

### **Commissioners Present**

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)  
Sir Tony Redmond (Deputy Chair)  
Alison Lowton  
Peter Maddison QPM

### **LGBCE Officers Present:**

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance & Resources
Marcus Bowell	Director of Strategy & Communications
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jo Porter	Review Manager
Mishka Mayers	Review Officer (item 2)
Alison Evison	Review Officer (item 4)
Mishka Mayers	Review Officer (item 6)
Laura Taylor	Review Officer (item 7)
David Owen	Review Officer (item 8)
Paul Kingsley	Review Officer (item 9)
Angela Hendry	Office Manager & HR Lead (minutes)

### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Steve Robinson and Andrew Scallan CBE

### **Declarations of interest**

There were none.

## **Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

The minutes were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:  
Under item 8 it should read: It was noted that the Commission needed to be mindful to achieve an appropriate balance between electronic and hard copy when targeting groups.

Under item 13: it should read H&S was only limited assurance because if there is one red recommendation, it automatically makes the whole area red. Actions for the red recommendations have either been completed or are in progress.

## **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

## **Actions from the previous Commission meeting**

There was a brief discussion about single-member and three-member patterns of wards. It was noted that, whilst an update to the technical guidance was being prepared, the Commission needed to be mindful that proposals for warding patterns could be regarded as contributed towards the effective and convenient local government criterion.

The CEO updated that OMT are considering the issue of digital mapping and cover papers. Lead Commissioners should be being briefed on the areas that are brought out in reports and maps in particular. The Commission will review how consistently the framework for Commissioner involvement in reviews is being implemented at a future meeting.

### **1. Operational Report - LGBCE (17)128**

The CEO presented the Operational Report for November and the Commission noted its content.

The Commission considered how they would deal with the creation of new authorities and agreed a potential way forward that will be developed further with CLG.

The Director Strategy and Communications updated the Commission on the prayer that was raised in Parliament in relation to East Devon.

The CEO updated that initial meetings are underway for the 2018-2019 programme.

The two new Commissioners have now started their induction and will be attending briefings on reviews and tours.

The CEO reported on staffing changes and welcomed Lucy Porter, the new review assistant.

### **2. Copeland Council Size – LGBCE (17)129**

It had been agreed to review Copeland Borough Council at the request of the local authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with 12 of wards having a variance of more than 20. One ward, St Bees, has a variance of more than 27 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 51 members.

Some concerns had been raised about the initial submissions and the review team had requested additional information from the Council.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size decrease by 18 from 51 to 33 members.

The Commission considered both the submissions in detail and felt that some issues had still not been fully explored, including the viability of alternative council sizes and the consequences of incomplete broadband coverage. However, on balance, they felt that the submission by the mayor was more persuasive.

**Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 33 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

**3. Warwick Council Size – LGBCE (17)130**

It had been agreed to review Warwick Council at the request of the local authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 27.2 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with the highest variance being 18.5 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 46 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size decreasing by 2 from 46 to 44 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 44 members.

**Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 44 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

**4. Basingstoke & Deane Council Size – LGBCE (17)131**

It had been agreed to review Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 34.5 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 3.4% of wards being greater than 20 per cent. One ward, Rooksdown, had a variance of over 43 per cent.

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 that the council size decrease by 6 from 60 to 54 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 54 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 54 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

## **5. Runnymede Council Size – LGBCE (17)132**

It had been agreed to review Runnymede Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 14 per cent of wards having variances of greater than 20 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 42 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size remain at 42 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 42 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 42 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

## **6. North Devon Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (17)133**

The review of North Devon District Council had commenced on 18 July 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 37 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward, Instow having a variance of over 20 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 July 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 41.

In preparing the Draft Recommendations, the team had taken into consideration both the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. In doing so, they had noted that a council size of 42 would provide for a better pattern of boundaries across the local authority. Accordingly, the Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 6 three-, 8 two-, and 8 single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

As a result of this further consideration and, on the basis of the evidence, the Commission agreed to move away from its original opinion on council size and, instead, agreed a council size of 42 as this provided for a better pattern across the local authority

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for North Devon District Council as presented.

**7. Rutland Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (17)134**

The review of Rutland County Council had commenced on 18 July 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 13 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with seven per cent of wards being over 20 per cent. One ward, Oakham North West, has a variance of 53 per cent

At its meeting on 18 July 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 26 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. In doing so, they had noted that a council size of 27 would allow for a better pattern of boundaries across the local authority. Accordingly, the Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 2 three-, 8 two-, and 5 single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

As a result of this further consideration and, on the basis of the evidence, the Commission agreed to move away from its original opinion on council size and, instead, agreed a council size of 27 as this provided for a better pattern across the local authority

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Rutland County Council as presented

**8. Bath & North East Somerset Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (17)135**

The review of Bath & North East Somerset Council had commenced on 18 July 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 24.3 per cent of wards had

variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, Peasedown, had a variance of 22.5 per cent and another ward, Bathwick had a variance of 22.4 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 July 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 59 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 1 three-, 21 two-, and 14 single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

#### **Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset Council as presented.

### **9. Hertsmere Final Recommendations – LGBCE (17)136**

The review of Hertsmere Borough Council had commenced on 20 December 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33.3 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 December 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 39 and had subsequently, on 16 May 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 10 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 7 three- and 9 two-member wards.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it was considered that there was sufficient evidence to undertake a period of further limited consultation focusing on the proposals for the Potters Bar area before the Commission published its Final Recommendations.

Three submissions were received in relation to the further consultation on proposals for the Potters Bar area. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

#### **Agreed**

Final Recommendations for Hertsmere Borough Council as presented.

## 10. Chair's Report

The Chair reported on a meeting of the inter-Commission meeting that had been hosted by the Welsh Boundary Commission in Cardiff.

### 11. Chief Executive's Report

There was nothing to add to the operational report

### 12. Director of Finance and Resources Report

The DFR updated that the NAO value-for-money study is still going through their approval levels.

### 13. Audit & Risk

The Commission noted the minutes.

### 14. Business Plan – LGBCE (17)138

The Director of Strategy and Communications updated on the business plan and quarterly update and highlighted the key points from the report.

It was noted that new technical guidance is being turned into simple English and this will come to Commission for endorsement (afternote – for the January meeting).

### 13. Review of Policies: Correspondence Handling Policy and Complaints Process/Guidance – LGBCE (17)129

The Commission noted the proposed amendments in relation to the policy were agreed. Internal guidance for staff on how to handle complaints has been drafted.

#### **Agreed**

The paper as presented.

### 14. Relocation Update

Sir Tony Redmond reported on the relocation steering group meeting and the three options set out in the relocation paper.

It was noted that the option of Windsor House had presented an unanticipated early opportunity which meant that it had not been possible to complete the intended full appraisal of all of the options. Nevertheless, since Windsor House had presented a pragmatic solution, it had been tested against the agreed criteria identified at the beginning of the process. On this basis the steering group had recommended that the possibility should be explored further.

At the same time, they agreed that, should Windsor House not prove suitable, then a more detailed analysis of other options would be pursued.

The Commission gave authority to the CEO and the DFR to move forward with the option of Windsor House subject to a final approval of the business case.

15. Future Business – LGBCE (17)140

The Commission noted the future business paper.

14. AOB

It was agreed to hold an away day in March. It was noted that if Commissioners wish to have a facilitator the this would need to be organised soon.

**Close of Business 3:30pm**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cath. Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.