

## LGBCE (18)1st Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018 at 1.15pm, in Belgravia Suite, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

### Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)

Sir Tony Redmond (Deputy Chair)

Alison Lowton

Peter Maddison QPM – joined by phone

Andrew Scallan

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE

Lynn Ingram

Marcus Bowell

Alison Evison

Richard Buck

Jo Porter

Mishka Mayers

Paul Kingsley

David Owen

Emily Starkie

Angela Hendry

Chief Executive

Director of Finance & Resources

Director of Strategy & Communications

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Review Officer (item 6)

Review Officer (item 7)

Review Officer (item 8)

Review Officer (item 9)

Office Manager & HR Lead (minutes)

## Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Steve Robinson.

## Declarations of interest

Colin Mellors declared an interest in item 7 (Redcar & Cleveland Draft Recommendations). He left the room and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Richard Buck declared an interest in item 5 (Crawley Council Size). He left the room and took no part in the discussions of that item.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017

Minor amendments were made to:

- Item one on page 3.- now reads 'The Director of Strategy and Communications had offered to meet Sir Hugo'.

There was short discussion about the recording of declarations of interest at the beginning of that agenda item. For the future, minutes would record that the individual declared an interest in that item and left the room at that point.

### Matters Arising

Basingstoke and Deane outcome – to be raised in the operational report

#### 1. Operational Report - LGBCE (17)01

The Chief Executive presented the Operational Report for January 2018 and the Commission noted its content.

The Chief Executive updated that we will be looking again at the timetable for Carlisle to determine when electoral arrangements would be implemented in light of seeking further information about council size. The Commission agreed that it was highly preferable to remain with 2019 and the time-table will be considered at the February meeting.

The report considered why it had been necessary to modify schedules in a number of cases.

Mid Suffolk, Babergh and Windsor & Maidenhead have all had electorate forecasting problems.

Windsor & Maidenhead - Richard Buck updated on the discrepancy with the figures received from the Council. Meeting is scheduled to go through the issues.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk - Johanna Porter updated on discrepancies with the figures received from the Council. Meeting has taken place with the Council and we have received a revised forecast which the team are currently considering.

Basingstoke & Deane – Alison Evison updated that the request for further information on council size will cause delays to the time-table. The investigation into the reason for the council size submission not being considered concluded that there was an oversight in saving and responding to the email but that the process for acknowledging and recording submissions is sound and that no further action is required.

The Chief Executive updated on the five-year programme. The Commission agreed the proposals as set out in the Operational Report and asked that the counties are brought forward for consideration again.

It was noted that Rochdale will not be requesting an electoral review.

The Chief Executive reported on the meeting with HM Treasury.

The Chief Executive reported that our IT systems are being tested on Friday afternoon and, therefore, there will be very few people in the office.

## 2. Reigate & Banstead Council Size – LGBCE(18)02

It had been agreed to review Reigate & Banstead Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 26 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward being over 30 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 51 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 51 to 45 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 45 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

## 3. Dover Council Size – LGBCE(18)03

It had been agreed to review Dover District Council at the request of the local authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 15 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 4.8 per cent of wards being over 20 per cent. One ward, Town & Pier had a variance of 22 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 45 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 13 from 45 to 32 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 32 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 32 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

#### 4. Norwich Council Size – LGBCE(18)04

It had been agreed to review Norwich City Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 31 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, University, had a variance of -31 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 39 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 39 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 39 members.

##### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 39 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

#### 5. Crawley Council Size – LGBCE(18)05

*Richard Buck left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item.*

It had been agreed to review Crawley Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, Three Bridges had a variance of 33 per cent. Two wards, Pound Hill North and West Green both had variances of -14 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 37 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 1 from 37 to 36 members.

##### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 36 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

#### 6. Dartford Draft Recommendations – LGBCE(18)06

The review of Dartford Borough Council had commenced on 16 January 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 41 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, Bean & Darenth had a variance of 17 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 January 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 42 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 seven three-, eight two-, and five 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 Dartford Borough Council as presented.

## 7. Redcar & Cleveland Draft Recommendations – LGBCE(18)07

*The Chair left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item. This item was chaired by the Deputy Chair, Sir Tony Redmond.*

The review of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council had commenced on 19 September 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 September 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 12 three-, 11 two-, and 1 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 Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council as presented.

## 8. Torbay Final Recommendations – LGBCE(18)08

The review of Torbay Council had commenced on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 27 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Shiphay-With-The-Willows having a variance of 31 per cent.

At its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 36 and had subsequently, on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 30 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Commission for consideration.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 5 three-, 10 two-, and 1 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 which included amendments in the following areas:

- Wellswood area
- Barton, Watcombe and St Mary Church areas
- Shiphay, Cockington & Chelston areas

### **Agreed**

Final Recommendations for Torbay Council as presented

## **9. East Hampshire Final Recommendations – LGBCE(18)09**

The review of East Hampshire District Council had commenced on 16 May 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 39 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with three wards being over 20 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 May 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 43 and had subsequently, on 19 September 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 30 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Commission for consideration.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 2 three-, 8 two-, and 21 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 to a period of further limited consultation focusing on the areas of Alton and Homdean and recommending a variation to the warding pattern to be consulted on as part of the further draft recommendations: In Horndean and Rowlands Castle, the Commission agreed that further consultation be undertaken on the basis of a three-member Horndean Kings, Blendworth, & Rowlands Castle ward.

### **Agreed**

A period of further limited consultation focusing on the areas of Alton and Horndean and Rowlands Castle.

## 10. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the recruitment process for new commissioners is still ongoing.

## 11. Chief Executive's Report

There was nothing to report.

## 12. Electoral Review Process for Newly Established Councils – LGBCE(18)10

The Commission noted the report and agreed the process outlined in the paper. A question was raised about the Commission's ability to exercise its traditional "+/- !" flexibility when drafting schemes in order to achieve the best warding pattern. This would be clarified with MHCLG.

## 13. Director of Finance and Resources Report – LGBCE(18)11 Quarter 3 Performance Indicators – Finance and non-Financial for 2017/18

There was discussion about the publication of full papers and it was agreed that this item would come back to a future meeting.

The Commission noted the Quarter 3 Key Performance Indicators and Financial Projections. The Director of finances and Resources updated that the supplementary estimate which has been vetted by the Treasury was going to the Speaker the following day and included capital funds for Sharepoint, the Website and Windsor House setup. It was noted that the budget is quite tight and will continue to be monitored closely.

The Commission asked for a short synthesis on the KPI report to flag up any issues that they should be aware of. It was noted that the KPI report is discussed at OMT on a monthly basis

#### 14. Future Business – LGBCE (18)12

The Commission noted the Future Business Plan.

#### 15. AOB

It was agreed that the Chief Executive should consider ways of achieving early warning when there might be issues about council size submissions or councils that might fail to submit robust warding patterns. He would report back at a future meeting about actions that could be taken to minimise such difficulties.

**Close of Business 3:45pm**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Melly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.