

## LGBCE (18)4th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 24 April 2018, at 1:15pm, in Belgravia Suite 29<sup>th</sup> Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

### Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)  
Susan Johnson OBE  
Peter Maddison QPM  
Andrew Scallan CBE  
Steve Robinson

### 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
Jonathan Ashby	Review Officer (item 4)
Mishka Mayers	Review Officer (item 5)
David Owen	Review Officer (item 6)
Laura Taylor	Review Officer (item 7)
Dean Faccini	Business Support Officer (minutes)

### Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Lynn Ingram who was unable to attend the meeting in person but would be participating for items 11 to 13 via conference call.

### Declarations of interest

The Chief Executive declared an interest in item 3. Wiltshire, and took no part in the discussion of that item.

### Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 20 March 2018

Minor amendments were made to item 6. Nottingham Final Recommendations.

## Matters Arising

The Chair noted that Alison Lowton's term of office had ended on 31 March 2018. The Commission expressed its appreciation for the significant contribution that she had made to the work of LGBCE, including her role as Chair of Audit and Risk Committee. It was hoped to find a suitable occasion for a formal farewell in the near future.

## Actions from the previous Commission meeting

The Chair reviewed the Commission's action points.

### 1. Operational Report - LGBCE (18)39

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

Highlights of the report included:

- Two new requests for reviews had been received from Charnwood Borough Council and New Forest District Council.
- The Commission agreed to delay consideration of the draft recommendations for Cornwall District Council. The council had also asked for a longer consultation period, which the Commission agreed to. The consultation period would now close on 17 September 2018.
- There had been briefing meetings, organised by MHCLG, regarding the new authorities that would potentially be established in 2019.

Following the discussion of the Operational Report, two new actions were identified and added to the Commission Actions Log:

- A 'lessons learned' paper on the series of meetings held by the Chair and Lead Commissioner concerning the role of the Commission in the establishment of new authorities.
- A discussion on dealing with inadequate council size submissions (to be considered at the Commissioner strategy session).

### 2. Isle of Wight Council Size – LGBCE (18)40

It had been agreed to review the Isle of Wight council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 3 per cent of wards having variances of

The current size of the Council is 40 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 40 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 40 members.

**Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 40 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

### 3. Wiltshire Council Size – LGBCE (18)41

*Jolyon Jackson left the meeting and took no part in the discussion of this item.*

It had been agreed to review Wiltshire Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 27 per cent of divisions had variances of more than 10 per cent, with 3 per cent of divisions having a variance of more than 20 per cent. One ward, Durrington & Larkhall, had a variance of 32 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 98 members.

During the preliminary period of the review, the Commission received two submissions; one from Wiltshire Council who proposed an increase of one to 99 members, and the Liberal Democrat Group who proposed a reduction of twelve from 98 to 86 members.

However, given that the two respondents had drawn different conclusions from the similar evidence that had been presented, LGBCE Officers felt unable to recommend a council size. It was recommended to the Commission that further evidence from both respondents would be sought before recommending a council size.

**Agreed**

The Commission agreed that further evidence would be sought from both the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group.

### 4. Runnymede Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (18)42

The review of Runnymede Borough Council had commenced on 21 November 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with Englefield Green East ward having a variance of 45 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 November 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 14 three-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 Runnymede Borough Council as presented.

## 5. North Devon Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)43

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 Instow ward having a variance of 20 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 July 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 41 and had subsequently, on 21 November 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations but based on a revised council size of 42 members since this would provide for a better pattern of boundaries across the local authority.

Following publication, 63 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 five three-, seven two-, and 13 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 Devon District Council as presented.

## **6. Bath & NE Somerset Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)44**

The review of Bath & North East Somerset had commenced on 18 July 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had a variance greater than 10%, with Bathwick ward having a variance of 47 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 July 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 59 and had subsequently, on 21 November 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 510 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 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 that a period of further limited consultation take place focusing on the proposed modifications to the city of Bath area before publishing its Final Recommendations.

Subject to the further limited consultation, the Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 26 two-, and seven single-member wards.

### **Agreed**

The Final Recommendations for Bath & North East Somerset subject to a period of further limited consultation focusing on the Bath City area.

## **7. South Somerset Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)45**

The review of South Somerset District Council had commenced on 15 August 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with Brympton ward having a variance of 20 per cent.

At its meeting on 15 August 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 60 and had subsequently, on 19 December 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 130 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 seven three-, 11 two-, and 17 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 Somerset District Council as presented.

## **8. Parish Warding Arrangements – LGBCE (18)46**

The Commission noted the Parish Warding Arrangements paper and confirmed the approach as outlined in the report.

## **9. Chair's Report**

The Chair provided the Commission with an update on two recent meetings:

- Rishi Sunak MP, Minister for Local Government
- The Speaker's Committee

## **10. Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive had nothing further to add.

## **11. Director of Finance and Resources Report**

The Director of Finance and Resources introduced the Financial and Non-Financial Outturn for 2017/18.

Highlights of the report included:

- An update on the Commission's end-of-year performance against all six of its Key Performance Indicators (Electoral Imbalance, Requested Reviews, Customer Satisfaction, Orders Laid Before Anticipated Election, Average Unit Cost of Reviews, Percentage Expenditure Variance from Total Revenue Budget).
- An update on the Provisional Revenue Outturn for 2017/18 with explanations of variations to budget.

- An update on the Provisional Capital Outturn 2017/18 with explanations of variations to budget.
- The draft Annual Report & Accounts will be presented to the Audit & Risk Committee on 22 May. As agreed with the National Audit Office (NAO) the final draft of the Annual Report & Accounts will be presented for approval to the Commission and to the Audit & Risk Committee on 19 June 2018.
- The Final Accounts NAO is currently underway and will last for three weeks.

The Commission noted the report.

## 12. Audit & Risk Committee minutes – LGBCE (18)47

The Commission noted the minutes of the February Audit & Risk Committee meeting.

## 13. Protocols for appointments to Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Committee Members – LGBCE (18)48

The Commission endorsed the protocols for appointments to Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee and Committee Members subject to the following amendment:

- The process of leaving the Audit & Risk Committee requires permission from the Commission once notice to leave has been received (para 1.5 from the Audit & Risk Committee Terms of Reference).

It was agreed that Peter Maddison would serve as interim Chair for the next two Audit & Risk Committee meetings, pending the appointment of a new Chair, and that Susan Johnson would be appointed as a member of the Committee.

## 14. Future Business – LGBCE (18)49

The Future Business document was noted by the Commission.

**AOB**

There were no other items.

**Close of Business 16:46**

*Colin Walsh*  
21/5/18

