

LGBCE (18)05 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 22nd May 2018 at 1:00pm, in Hilton Double Tree, 30 John Islip Street, London SW1P 4DD

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
Susan Johnson OBE
Peter Maddison QPM
Andrew Scallan CBE
Lizzie Peers (Independent ARC Member)

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
Emily Starkie	Review Officer (item 4)
Dan Carlsson-Hyslop	Review Officer (item 5)
David Owen	Review Officer (item 6)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (item 7)
Angela Hendry	Office Manager & HR Lead (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Steve Robinson.

Declarations of interest

Peter Maddison declared an interest in item 2 (Cambridge Council Size), and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Susan Johnson and Richard Buck both declared an interest in item 7 (Crawley Draft Recommendations), and took no part in the discussions on that item.

Colin Mellors declared an interest in item 10 (Redcar & Cleveland Final Recommendations), and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 24th April 2018

The minutes were agreed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

It was noted that a further report on Wiltshire will come to Commission once additional supporting information had been received from the Council.

Actions from the previous Commission meeting

The following actions were reported on:

Board effectiveness to be discussed at the strategy day.

Distinguishing between the 'Commission' as a corporate entity and Commissioners acting as 'Board' of LGBCE – The Chief Executive said that we are currently looking through our guidance with a view to discussing at the strategy day.

There was a brief discussion about how actions arising from meetings are logged and shown as and when completed. Agreed to adopt the same format for Commission action points as those presented to ARC.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (18)51

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

It had been necessary to delay Norwich draft recommendations due to the Council providing inaccurate electorate figures and an incorrect copy of the electoral register. The team now had the correct information and was preparing a scheme. Accordingly, the draft recommendations will be considered at the June meeting.

There was an error in the Leeds Order in which the Commission made some decisions that were not then reflected in the mapping. Whilst this only affected a handful of voters, there was a difference between the textual description within the report and the mapping that accompanied the order. Legal advice confirmed that the Order mapping, rather than the text of the report, should legally be used as the basis for the wards for the election. The Commission and the Council had liaised about the issue in advance of the election and the electoral arrangements had been properly implemented. An amendment Order will be laid to correct this for the Council's next election. The Director of Strategy and Communications will lead an investigation to understand why the error occurred, and put forward any recommendations and report to the June Commission.

The Chief Executive updated on the establishment of new authorities.

It was noted that the council size ratios by authority type had not yet been added to the cover papers but would be incorporated for the next meeting.

2. Cambridge Council Size – LGBCE(18)52

Peter Maddison left the room and took no part in the discussion on this item.

It had been agreed to review Cambridge City Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, Trumpington had a variance of 32 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.

3. Hartlepool Council Size – LGBCE(18)53

It had been agreed to review Hartlepool Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 45 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 33 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 increase by 3 from 33 to 36 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 36 members.

Agreed

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

4. Cornwall Draft Recommendations – LGBCE(18)54

The review of Cornwall Council had commenced on 18 April 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 30 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10

per cent with 7 per cent being over 20 per cent. Redruth North had a variance of greater than 33 per cent with Liskeard North being over 58 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 April 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 87 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 87 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 Cornwall Council as presented.

5. Oxford Draft Recommendations – LGBCE(18)55

The review of Oxford City Council had commenced on 19 December 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 67 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

Two wards had a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 December 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 48 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 24 two-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 Oxford City Council as presented.

6. Reigate & Banstead Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(18)56

The review of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council had commenced on 23 January 2018. 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.

At its meeting on 23 January 2018, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 45 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 15 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 Reigate & Banstead Borough Council as presented.

7. Crawley Draft Recommendations – LGBCE(18)57

Susan Johnson and Richard Buck left the room and took no part in the discussion on this item.

The review of Crawley Borough Council had commenced on 23 January 2018. 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 32 per cent.

At its meeting on 23 January 2018, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 36 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-, and 3 two-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 Crawley Borough Council as presented.

8. Dover Draft Recommendations – LGBCE(18)58

The review of Dover District Council had commenced on 23 January 2018. According to the latest available electoral figures, 14 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with 5 per cent having a variance of greater than 20 per cent.

At its meeting on 23 January 2018, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 32 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-, 12 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.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Dover District Council as presented.

9. Dartford Final Recommendations – LGBCE(18)59

The review of Dartford Borough Council had commenced on 19 September 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 41 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, Bean and Darenth had a variance of 17 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 September 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 42 and had subsequently, on 23 January 2018, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 62 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 7 three-, 8 two-, and 5 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 with amendments in the following areas:

- Swanscombe area
- Town area
- Wilmington, Sutton-at-Hone & Hawley area

- Joyden's Wood area

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Dartford Borough Council as modified.

10. Redcar & Cleveland Final Recommendations – LGBCE(18)60

Colin Mellors left room and took no part in the discussion on this item. This item was chaired by Susan Johnson.

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 had subsequently, on 23 January 2018, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 49 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 12 three-, 11 two-, and 1 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 with amendments in the following areas:

- Teesville area
- Saltburn and St Germain's area
- Mickledales, West Dyke area
- Zetland area.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council as modified.

11. Chair's Report

It was noted that the Commission would re-instate the policy workshops to the schedule of meetings. Technical guidance to be discussed at a policy workshop.

The Chair outlined the agenda for the strategy day that had been circulated to Commissioners. The Chief Executive would now draw up a programme for the event and circulate for comment as well as identifying background material and information. There was some discussion about the potential for some sessions being facilitated.

12. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive updated the meeting on the relocation project - planning to close the office around midday on 22nd June to move out of Millbank Tower and move into Windsor House on 23rd June. Email communication about the move will be forwarded to external partners.

The Chief Executive reported that the Information & Data Officer, Alex Tudge is moving to a new job.

The Commission noted the volume of current activity, including: relocation, Sharepoint, the NAO audit, rewriting the guidance, etc. The Commission asked the Chief Executive to pass on their thanks to the staff for their work and commitment.

13. Director of Finance and Resources Report

The Director of Finance & Resources reported that the ARC had discussed the draft Annual Report and Accounts at its meeting that morning.

The Commission were informed that the NAO Audit is still ongoing and around 80% complete. Work planning and the time of year mean that it was not easy for the NAO to easily change their programme. The Commission was assured that no issues have been identified.

The Director of Finance and Resources said that normally, at its June meeting, the ARC would recommend the annual report for approval to the Commission. However, this may not be possible this year as a final NAO management letter might not have been received by this time. *(Note from Secretary - We have subsequently had confirmation that the NAO think it is likely that they will be able to produce a draft management letter in June.)* If this is the case, the draft letter and latest annual report will be discussed in June at both ARC and the Commission. The Audit Committee (out of committee) will subsequently recommend that the Commission approves the accounts (having been appraised in detail of any further changes that have been made between the June meeting and receipt of the final NAO letter.). The Commission can then approve the Annual Report and Accounts (again, out of Committee) and authorise the CEO to sign them.

After this, the Chief Auditor NAO will sign our Annual Report and we will be able to lay the Annual Report in Parliament before reces.

The Commission indicated their willingness to adopt this process provided there are no substantive issues raised by the NAO.

14. Audit & Risk Committee – Chair's Report

The Chair of ARC reported on the outcomes from their meeting that morning. Plans for June 'deep dives' in risk include Health & Safety, the employment side of equality & diversity and a presentation on Information Security at the Commission.

The latest internal audit expressed a confidence about how the Commission is handling the relocation project.

ARC discussed the draft Annual Report and Accounts.

15. Future Business – LGBCE (18)61

The Commission noted the Future Business document.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business 17:00

Bob Mills
19/6/18

