

LGBCE (18)7th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 24th July 1:30pm at LGBCE, 1st Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
Susan Johnson OBE
Andrew Scallan CBE
Steve Robinson
Amanda Nobbs OBE

LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance & Resources
Marcus Bowell	Director of Strategy & Communications
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jo Porter	Review Manager
Paul Kingsley	Review Officer (item 3)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (items 4 & 7)
Dan Carlsson-Hyslop	Review Officer (item 5)
Mishka Mayers	Review Officer (item 6)
Laura Taylor	Review Officer (item 8)
David Owen	Review Officer (item 9)
Dan Carlsson-Hyslop	Review Officer (item 10)
Angela Hendry	Office Manager & HR Lead (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Peter Maddison and Alison Evison.

Declarations of interest

The Chief Executive declared an interest in item 4, Carlisle City Council, and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 19th June 2018

Amendments were made to item 3, Salford Council size to reflect that Andrew Scallan left the room and took no part in the discussion. The amended minutes were agreed as a correct record and signed by The Chair.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Actions from the previous Commission meeting

The following actions were reported on:

- Council size to be discussed on day 2 of Strategy Event
- Review of effectiveness questionnaire – Commissioners have received in preparation for the Strategy Event.
- Clarification of 'Commission' and 'Board' will be raised at the Strategy Event.
- Availability of Commission papers will be discussed at a policy session.
- Review Officer Desk Instructions to be taken forward as part of 'upping the game' project.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (18)79

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

The following orders are currently laying in Parliament:

- East Hampshire
- Kings's Lynn & West Norfolk
- Nottingham
- Richmondshire
- Scarborough

The Leeds amendment Order will be laid when Parliament returns from summer recess. Consultation is underway for the establishment of the new authorities and will close on 3 August 2018.

The team is considering how potential reviews of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and any other new authorities could be included in the review programme.

Further London meetings are planned for September and October.

Richard Buck has undertaken an analysis about the impact on the programme and the laying of Orders in Parliament of election date scenarios. RB to circulate to Commissioners.

It was agreed to include FOIs and Complaints in the Operational report.

It was noted that there had been an issue with the formulas in the electoral data spreadsheet which had resulted in small data errors in some of the cover papers for this meeting. Attention would be drawn to the correct data as part of the discussion of each of the affected reviews and a mechanism to ensure that formulas and data were correct would be implemented.

2. Harrow Council Size - LGBCE (18)80

It had been agreed to review Harrow Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review Programme of the London Boroughs. According to the latest available electoral figures, 5 per cent of wards had a variance greater than 10 per cent, with 1 ward being over 20 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 63 members.

The Commission received two submissions on Council size. One, from the Labour Group, proposed retaining the current council size of 63 members. The Conservative Group proposed that the number of councillors decrease by eight to 55 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 eight from 63 to 55 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, was minded to support a council size of 55 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 55 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

3. Basingstoke & Deane Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (18)81

The review of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council had commenced on 21 November 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 3 per cent of wards having variances greater than 20 per cent. One ward, Rooksdown, had a variance of over 43 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 February 2018, 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 18 three-member wards.

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 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council as presented.

4. Carlisle Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (18)82

The Chief Executive left the room and took no part in the discussion on this item.

The review of Carlisle City Council had commenced on 19 December 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 41 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with 9 per cent having variances of greater than 20 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 February 2018, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 39 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 13 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 Carlisle City Council as presented.

5. Warwick Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)83

The review of Warwick District Council had commenced on 21 November 2017 following a request from the authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 27 per cent of wards had variances of greater than 10.

At its meeting on 21 November 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 44 and had subsequently, on 20 March 2018, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 43 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 11 three-, 5 two-, and 1 single-member wards in total. It was proposed that the Commission agree amendments to the Draft Recommendations in the following areas:

- Cubbington & Leek Wootton, Leamington Milverton and Leamington Lillington;
- Warwick Aylesford and Warwick Saltisford;
- Three ward name changes.

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 Warwick District Council as presented.

6. Copeland Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)84

The review of Copeland Borough Council had commenced on 21 November 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances of greater than 10 per cent with 12 wards having a variance of more than 20%. One ward, St Bees, had a variance of 27 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 November 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 33 and had subsequently, on 20 March 2018, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 28 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 6 three-, 4 two-, and 7 single-member wards in total. It was proposed that the Commission agree amendments to the Draft Recommendations in the following areas:

- Cleator Moor ward
- Gosforth and Seascale area
- Arlecdon & Ennerdale ward
- Three ward name changes

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 Copeland Borough Council as presented.

7. Mid Suffolk Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)85

The review of Mid Suffolk District Council had commenced on 18 April 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 37 per cent of wards had variances of greater than 10 per cent with 3 per cent of wards having variances of over 30 per cent. One ward, Stowmarket North, has a variance of 32 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 April 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 34 and had subsequently, on 19 September 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 25 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria. In the formulation of its Final Recommendations the team identified a number of anomalies in the electoral figures. It was decided not to bring the Final Recommendations to the Commission Meeting on 20 February 2018 but, instead, to do so once a revised set of electoral figures had been agreed with the Council and following the issue of a set of New Draft Recommendations. The latter had been published on 6 March 2018, again inviting further submissions.

In total, 15 submissions had been received commenting on the New Draft Recommendations. Taking all of the submissions into account, it had been judged that there was sufficient evidence to change the Draft Recommendations for Eye and Hoxne & Worlingworth wards. Other than this area, it was proposed that the Commission confirm its New Draft Recommendations for Mid Suffolk District Council as Final.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 8 two-, and 18 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 Mid Suffolk District Council as presented.

8. Babergh Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)86

The review of Babergh District Council had commenced on 18 April 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 11 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 April 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 31. As a result of 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 32 as this provided for a pattern of wards that represented a better balance of our statutory criteria.

Following publication, 52 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria. In the formulation of its Final Recommendations the team identified a number of anomalies in the electoral figures. It was decided not to bring the Final Recommendations to the Commission Meeting on 20 February 2018 but, instead, to do so once a revised set of electoral figures had been agreed with the Council and following the issue of a set of New Draft Recommendations. The latter had been published on 6 March 2018, again inviting further submissions.

In total, 66 submissions had been received commenting on the New Draft Recommendations. 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 New 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 1 three-, 6 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 New Draft Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented with amendments in the following areas:

- Shotley peninsula area
- Hadleigh area
- Sudbury area.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Babergh District Council as modified.

9. Bath & North East Somerset Final Recommendations – LGBCE (18)87

The review of Bath & North East Somerset Council had commenced on 18 July 2017. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with 8 per cent of wards having variances of over 20 per cent. One ward, Bathwick, had 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. At its meeting on 24 April 2018, the Commission agreed its Final Recommendations for most of the authority, but agreed to a period of further limited consultation in the Bath city area before publishing its Final Recommendations.

In total, 169 submissions were received in response to the further limited consultation. Taking all of the submissions into account, it had been judged that there was sufficient evidence to agree the revised ward boundaries for Bath city subject to minor amendments in the following areas:

- Kingsmead;
- Bathwick;
- Widcombe & Lyncombe.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 26 two-, and 7 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 further limited consultation proposals.

It agreed the Final Recommendations for the Bath city area as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Bath and North East Somerset as presented.

10. South Cambridgeshire Related Alteration – LGBCE (18)88

The Commission considered the content of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would have no adverse effect on electoral equality. There was evidence of support from electors affected by the alteration.

Agreed

The Commission agreed to the making of an Order implementing the related

alteration.

Secretary's Note

In addition, to the individual review recommendations, the Commission also requested that a log be kept of all wards with variances where variances over 10%, outlining the reasons for these particular decisions.

11. Chair's Report

The Chair noted that papers would be circulated for the Strategy Event. Commissioners were asked to ensure they responded to the questionnaire.

The Chair reported back from the LGA conference which had been very useful.

It was noted that MHCLG had launched a programme encouraging the use of digital approached to facilitate efficiencies. The team was asked to consider if this might be relevant to supporting the mapping initiative that was being discussed with one local authority currently being reviewed.

12. Chief Executive's Report

There was nothing further to add.

13. Director of Finance and Resources Report – LGBCE (18)89

The Commission formally endorsed the signing of the Annual Report and Accounts by the Chief Executive and noted that they were now agreed and laid in Parliament.

The Director of Finance and Resources reported on the quarter one financial report and projections. This was usually a joint report with the Commissions performance which would feature the new KPIs this month. However, due to the staff vacancy of the Information & Data Officer, the production of these figures had been delayed. They will, therefore, come to the next Commission meeting and, thereafter, on a quarterly basis.

The Commission noted a projected potential underspend of £50k this year. There has been a savings on staff due to a non-return from maternity leave and this post has now been deleted as the review workload is adequately covered by the existing team meaning ongoing savings for the Commission. There were also some increases and decreases relating to timing of budget setting before some expenditure decisions were made on Windsor House and the move leading to an overall one-off increase of £5k.

The Director of Finance and Resources updated that we expected to use the capital budget of £50k for committed expenditure on Windsor House and it is likely we may need to increase this slightly by way of a supplementary estimate if capital

expenditure exceeds £50k. This will be known in good time to enact a capital revenue swap in February 2019. It was noted that, since the report had been circulated, we have received a final quote for the refurbishment works at Windsor House Floor One; however, we are still awaiting invoices for the common areas.

14. Draft ARC June Minutes – LGBCE (18)90

The Commission noted the Audit & Risk Committee minutes from the June meeting.

The Commission recommended amendments as follows:

- Page 4 – amend the wording to reflect that the Commission has a policy and procedure for dealing with a ransom wear attack.
- Page 4 – should read *outturn position*, not *opposition*.
- The meeting noted the importance of Commissioners and staff being mindful of social media activity.

15. Future Business – LGBCE (18)91

The Chief Executive reported that the Future Business Plan has been updated to reflect the change in meeting arrangements for the Audit & Risk Committee and Policy sessions.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business 16:45

 21/8/18