

## BCFE (08) 5th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 7 April 2008 at 10.30am at the Trevelyan House, 30 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2HW

Present:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Robin Gray  
Joan Jones CBE  
Jane Earl  
Ron Johnston  
Professor Colin Mellors  
Dr Peter Knight

Also present:

Archie Gall	Director
Tim Kershaw	Review Manager
Tim Atkinson	Senior Adviser
Tim Bowden	Review Officer
Arion Lawrence	Review Officer
Kalim Anwer	Review Officer
Claire Sherer	Regional Liaison Officer – South of England
Ross Clayton	Business Assistant (minutes)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Jane Earl and Professor Ron Johnston to their first formal meeting of the Committee as Deputy Electoral Commissioners. The Chairman also welcomed Ross Clayton to his first meeting of the Committee.

## 2. Minutes of the last meeting: 20 March 2008 - BCFE (08) 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting were approved, subject to a minor modification.

## 3. Matters arising

- 3.1 The Committee discussed the Section 151 (Finance) Officers' meetings that had recently taken place in Devon, Norfolk and Suffolk. It was noted that all the meetings had gone smoothly and that no major issues had been raised.
- 3.2 The Committee noted that the Electoral Commission would be discussing a paper on the MOJ Review of Boundaries Legislation at its meeting later in the week. Copies of the Commission paper could be accessed from Commission Secretary's office.

## 4. Isle of Wight: Final Recommendations BCFE (08) 03

- 4.1 The Review Officer (AL) briefed the Committee on the background to the review, the Committee's draft recommendations, the response to them and the Review Team's conclusions.
- 4.2 The Committee noted that the major area of contention related to its draft recommendation for a two-member Brading, St Helens and Bembridge Electoral Division. The Committee noted the response to Stage Three consultation and that the two-member division had attracted a mixed response. Robin Gray referred to his site visit to the Island and commented on the communication linkages between the three parish areas concerned.
- 4.3 The Committee noted that comparisons had been drawn between the Bembridge area and the Committee's final recommendations for Barrow Island ward in Barrow-in-Furness. However, it concluded that there were few similarities between the two areas and there was little justification in community identity terms for the significant electoral imbalance that would result for a single-member Bembridge division.
- 4.4 Following discussion, the Committee agreed the Review Team's conclusions on the final recommendations

## 5. Electoral reviews update – oral report

- 5.1 The Review Manager (TK) and Director updated the Committee on the progress of the Wiltshire, Shropshire, Cornwall and West Sussex electoral reviews.

- 5.2 The Committee noted with concern that in Cornwall and Wiltshire some significant increases in council size were likely to be proposed. The Director said that if there were any need to seek further evidence in support of the council sizes proposed, there was a significant threat to the review timetable being met. This would result in the Electoral Commission missing the proposed May 2009 implementation date.
- 5.3 The Chairman asked that copies of all the electoral review proposals be circulated to the relevant Committee members on receipt. It was agreed that the relevant Committee members should have meetings with the political groups in Cornwall and Wiltshire as soon as practicable.

## 6. Structural reviews update – oral report

- 6.1 The Review Officer (TB) updated the Committee on the progress of the Devon structural review and concepts from Devon and Exeter Council. He also updated the Committee on recent meetings with the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Authority for Devon and Cornwall.
- 6.2 The Review Officer (KA) updated the Committee on the progress of the Suffolk structural review.
- 6.3 The Senior Adviser (TA) updated the Committee on the Norfolk structural review and recent meeting with stakeholders. Some feedback on their initial concepts had been given to a number of local authorities the previous week, which they had found helpful

## 7. Proposed process for assessing unitary authority concepts on 15-16 April BCFE (08) 04

- 7.1 The Senior Advisor (TA) outlined the proposed process for assessing the concepts received and identifying any information gaps.
- 7.2 The Director said he would consider the timescale for the return of any further information sought by the Committee.

## 8. AOB

- 8.1 It was agreed to hold a meeting on 15 May, following a Committee dinner.

## 9. Next Meeting

- 9.1 The next meeting of the Committee will be on 30 April.2008, starting at 10.30 am.

**The Boundary Committee for England  
April 2008**