

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

LGBCE (14)6th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 17 June 2014, at 9:30am, in Rooms A & B, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Commissioners Present

Max Caller CBE (Chair)

Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)

Dr Peter Knight CBE DL

Alison Lowton

Sir Tony Redmond

Professor Paul Wiles CB

Jolyon Jackson

Chief Executive Designate

Elizabeth Butler (items 15 & 16)

Independent Adviser to the Audit Committee

Duncan Russell (items 15 & 16)

National Audit Office (NAO)

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill

Chief Executive

Archie Gail

Director of Reviews

Lynn Ingram

Director of Finance

Marcus Bowell

Communications Manager

Tim Bowden

Business Development Manager

Richard Buck

Review Manager

William Morrison

Review Officer

Lucy Ward

Review Officer

Alex Hinds

Review Officer

David Owen

Review Officer

Paul Kingsley

Review Adviser

Dean Faccini

Business Assistant

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Dr Colin Sinclair and Sarah Vallotton.

Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest for the Suffolk Coastal item and left the meeting during its discussion. The Deputy Chair chaired the item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 20 May 2014

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (14)64

The Director of Reviews presented the Operational Report for June.

The Queen's Speech had announced plans to introduce a Bill that will provide for the direct election of members to national parks authorities. The Commission had previously participated in a consultation on this and had commented on the issues that would arise from any move towards warding. They would be kept updated on developments.

The Director Reviews updated the Commission on amendments that have been tabled to the Deregulation Bill and other legislative matters. These included: the potential for appointing an independent member (as opposed to adviser) to the Audit Committee, the frequency of Corporate Plans presented to the Speaker's Committee each Parliament, and the extent of National Audit Office work on issues relating to value for money.

The Operation Report included a timeline on the Baker Tilly improvement work. Reports on this progress will be issued to the Commission on a regular basis.

2. Peterborough Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (14)65

The review of Peterborough City Council had commenced in October 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward being over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 10 December 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 60 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 20 three-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received. It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Peterborough City Council as presented.

3. Woking Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (14)66

The review of Woking Borough Council had commenced in October 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 10 December 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 30 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-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received. It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented subject to the following modification:

- That the boundary between the proposed Sheerwater and Pyrford ward follow the railway line in its entirety provided this did not have a material adverse impact on electoral variance in this area. The Commission requested confirmation of electorate figures and variances by correspondence.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Woking Borough Council as presented subject to the above modification if confirmed by correspondence.

4. North Somerset Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)67

The review of North Somerset had commenced in January 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 13 of 36 wards (36%) had an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for the district. In addition, Gordano ward had a variance of 32% from the average and Portishead East ward had a variance of 68% from the average for the district.

At its meeting on 12 March 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 51. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on a revised council size number of 50 since this figure provided for a better scheme, at its meeting in August 2013. At its meeting in February 2014, the Commission had decided to undertake a period of further limited consultation in the rural area of the district, given new evidence that had been put forward during consultation.

Following this period of further limited consultation, 284 submissions had been received. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, both in response to the original consultation and to the further consultation in respect to the specified area, it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in this part of North Somerset.

However, the Commission agreed to three minor amendments to the warding patterns for Portishead and Nailsea in order to correct a minor error identified in the Draft Recommendations. The Commission also agreed to amend the name of a parish ward in Weston-super-Mare to avoid confusion with the district ward name. Kewstoke parish ward becomes Worlebury parish ward. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for North Somerset

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 15 two-member wards and 20 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 and tabled.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for North Somerset as presented and tabled.

5. Breckland Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)68

The review of Breckland District Council had commenced in March 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, two wards had variances of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 12 March 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 50. However, it had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on a revised council size number of 49 since this figure provided for a better scheme, at its meeting in November 2013.

Following publication, 26 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of a minor amendment to the boundary between Forest and Weyland wards which would see Wretham parish move into the Wayland ward. The following ward name changes were also made:

- Burgh & Haverscroft ward will change to Attleborough Burgh & Haverscroft ward
- Harling ward will change to Harling & Heathlands ward
- Kenninghall ward will change to Guiltcross ward
- Queens & Besthorpe ward will change to Attleborough Queens & Besthorpe ward
- Thetford Cathedral ward will change to Thetford Priory ward
- Wayland ward will change to All Saints & Wayland ward
- Whitewater ward will change to Lincoln ward

These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Breckland District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of four three-member wards, 14 two-member wards and nine 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.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Breckland District Council as presented.

6. Corby Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)69

The review of Corby Borough Council had commenced in March 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 40 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10% from the average for the borough.

At its meeting on 11 June 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 29. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in November 2013.

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

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented subject to the following modification:

- That the boundary between the proposed Rural West and Rowlett wards be amended in order that properties to the north of Rockingham Road be located in Rowlett ward. The Commission agreed that the revised boundary follow the existing electoral division boundary in this area.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of six three-member wards, five two-member wards, and one single-member ward 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 subject to the above amendment.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Corby Borough Council as presented with the modification to the Rural West-Rowlett as agreed.

7. Braintree Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)70

The review of Braintree District Council had commenced in March 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 23 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10% from the average for the district.

At its meeting on 11 June 2103, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 50. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on a revised council size number of 49, at its meeting in November 2013.

Following publication, 60 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of minor amendments to the ward boundaries between the proposed Braintree Central & Beckers Green and Braintree Blackwater wards. The following name changes were also made:

- Braintree Blackwater will change to Bocking Blackwater
- Kelvedon will change to Kelvedon & Feering
- Witham Maltings will change to Witham South

These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Braintree District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of three three-member wards, 17 two-member wards, and six 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

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Braintree District Council as presented.

8. West Dorset Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)71

The review of West Dorset District Council had commenced in May 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 13 August 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 42. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in January 2014.

Following publication, 51 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of minor amendments to the boundaries for Dorchester North, Dorchester South and Dorchester West wards and the inclusion of Chetnole and Stockwood parishes the two-member Yetminster & Cam Vale ward and Leigh Parish in the proposed two-member Frome Valley ward. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for West Dorset District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of four three-member wards, 10 two-member wards, and 10 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.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for West Dorset District Council as presented.

9. Erewash Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)72

The review of Erewash Borough Council had commenced in August 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards currently exceeded the 10 per cent variance threshold.

At its meeting on 13 August 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 47. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in January 2014.

Following publication, 69 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of minor amendment to the ward boundary in Sandiacre. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Erewash Borough Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of nine three-member wards, and 10 two-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 Erewash Borough Council as presented.

10.

Suffolk Coastal Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)73

Following the Chair's declaration of interest, he withdrew from the meeting and this item was chaired by the Deputy Chair.

The review of Suffolk Coastal District Council had commenced in April 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, two of the council's 34 wards had variances of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 9 April 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 43. However, it had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on a modified council size of 42, at its meeting in January 2014, since this figure provided for a better scheme.

Following publication, 79 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of three areas: a minor amendment that saw Bredfield parish included in a single-member Grundisburgh ward; that the proposed three-member Rushmere ward be divided into a single-member and two-member ward; and that Letheringham parish be included in the Hacheston ward. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council.

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 subject to the following amendment:

(1) That the proposed two-member and single-member wards in the Rushmere St Andrew area be named Tower ward and Fynn Valley ward respectively;

(2) That the proposed wards of Rushmere St Andrew parish be named Rushmere St Andrew Village and Rushmere St Andrew Tower.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of one three-member ward, 14 two-member wards, and 11 single-member wards in total.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Suffolk Coastal District Council as presented subject to the ward name changes identified above.

11. Ashfield Further Consultation - LGBCE (14)74

The review of Ashfield District Council had commenced in April 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 40 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 9 April 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 35. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in January 2014.

Following publication, 209 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to propose moving away from the draft recommendations in respect of Hucknall, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield as additional, persuasive, evidence had been received in these areas. It was therefore recommended by the team that a period of further consultation focusing on the proposals for Hucknall,

Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield be carried out before the Commission published its Final Recommendations.

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 rural areas of Hucknall, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield.

Agreed

A period of further limited consultation focusing on the areas of Hucknall, Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield.

12. Review of the Year - LGBCE (14)75

The Policy and Research Officer introduced the 'Report on the Year 2013/14'. This presented the key delivery elements of LGBCE's review activity last year.

The Commission noted the report and fed back its comments and amendments.

Agreed

- To draft a covering letter that will be sent to key partners following minor amendments to the report.
- To evaluate the accuracy of five-year forecasts from previous reviews.
- To consider ways of enhancing learning from stakeholder feedback.

13. Chair's Report

The Chair would be attending a meeting with Gary Streeter MP. He would report back to the Commission at a later date.

The Chair informed the Commission of the appointment of Jolyon Jackson as Chief Executive Designate.

14. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive outlined the work being done on the Back Office Review and Relocation projects.

The Chief Executive also noted progress towards governance changes through the Deregulation Bill.

15. Audit Committee Annual Report to the Commission - LGBCE(14)76

Sir Tony Redmond presented the Audit Committee Annual Report. Key messages were:

- Review of the Risk Register had added three new risks: a reduction in demand for services, impact of the General Election 2015, and staffing resilience.
- The Committee had scrutinised and commented on the NAO Value for Money Review of the Commission's back office service arrangements.
- Continued commitment to improving performance management.
- A brief overview why LGBCE had determined that joining the Internal Audit Joint Procurement Project was inappropriate.
- Further review of unit costs. The Commission was now getting much more useful information that would be helpful to the back office project.

Sir Tony's views were endorsed by Elizabeth Butler and Professor Colin Mellors.

The Chair thanked the Committee for all its hard work during the year.

16. Annual Report and Accounts 2013-2014 – Final - LGBCE (14)77

The Finance Director presented the final draft of the Annual Report and Accounts for approval.

Duncan Russell (National Audit Office - NAO) introduced the Audit Completion Report. The NAO had concluded the audit with a satisfactory result. The NAO was content for the accounts to be signed by the Accounting Officer and expected that the Comptroller and Auditor and General would certify them without qualification.

Agreed

- The Commission noted the National Audit Office's Audit Completion Report.
- The Commission was content with the Annual Report and Accounts for 2013-14, which the Accounting Officer would sign.

17. New and Emerging Risks

The Commission had nothing to report.

18. Future Business – LGBCE (13)192

The Director of Reviews informed the Commission that Cotswold had been dropped from the Review programme because of the need for a Related Alterations Order to re-align county division boundaries to new parish boundaries.

AOB

Officers agreed to brief Alison Lowton about the process for equalities screening.

Close of Business 13:45

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a long horizontal line.

CHAIR

15/1/14