

LGBCE (16)11th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 15th November 2016, at 12:30pm, in 29th Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors (Chair)
Sir Tony Redmond (Deputy Chair)
Peter Knight CBE
Alison Lowton
Peter Maddison QPM

LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance
Marcus Bowell	Director of Strategy & Communications
Lucy Ward	Review Manager
Dan Carlsson-Hyslop	Review Officer (item 6)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (item 7)
Paul Kingsley	Review Officer (item 8)
Alex Hinds	Review Officer (item 9)
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Richard Buck, Review Manager.

The Chair formally welcomed Lizzie Peers who had recently been appointed to the role as Independent Member to the Audit & Risk Committee. She was attending the meeting as an observer.

The Chair congratulated Jo Porter, Review Manager, on the birth of her daughter. The Commission expressed their best wishes to Jo and her family.

Declarations of interest

Although not participating in any of the discussions, Lizzie Peers formally declared an interest in item. 8 Chichester Final Recommendations.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 18th October 2016

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

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (16)121

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

A formal request had been received from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The Chair and Chief Executive would be meeting with council leaders next week and the review would take up one of the TBC slots in the Review Programme.

The Chief Executive asked the Commission if they were content with the review of Surrey Heath Borough Council being delayed by one month. The council had experienced issues with its forecasting data and this would have implications when it came to the team drawing up ward boundaries. The Commission agreed to the delay.

The Chief Executive advised the Commission on a number of forthcoming meetings in November and December. This included a meeting with the Department for Communities and Local Governance (DCLG) and the annual meeting of the UK Commissions.

The Commission formally agreed the review allocations.

2. Bolsover Council Size – LGBCE (16)122

It had been agreed to review Bolsover District Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 25 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 20 per cent of wards having a variance of over 20 per cent. One ward, Shirebrook East, had a variance of 29 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 37 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 37 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 37 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 37 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

3. North East Derbyshire Council Size – LGBCE (16)123

It had been agreed to review North East Derbyshire District Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, four per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward, Reinshaw, having a variance of 35 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 53 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 53 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 53 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 53 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

4. Ribble Valley Council Size – LGBCE (16)124

It had been agreed to review Ribble Valley Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 21 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with four per cent of wards having variances of 20 per cent. One ward, Whalley, had a variance of 30 per cent.

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.

5. Blackburn with Darwen Council Size – LGBCE (16)125

It had been agreed to review Blackburn with Darwin Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 30 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward, Audley, having a variance of 20 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 64 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 13 from 64 to 51 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 51 members.

Agreed

- The Commission agreed that a council size of 51 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.
- That the Commission adds an assessment of its approach to Council Size to the policy workshop scheduled for March 2017.

6. North Norfolk Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (16)126

The review of North Norfolk District Council had commenced on 21 June 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 47 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with Happisburgh ward having a variance of 19 per cent more electors than average, and Sheringham North ward having a variance of 19 per cent fewer.

At its meeting on 21 June 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 40 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 mixed pattern of seven two- and 26 single-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 Norfolk District Council as presented

7. Manchester City Council Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (16)127

The review of Manchester City Council had commenced on 19 July 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 16 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Cheetham, having a variance of 35 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 July 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 96 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 uniform pattern of 32 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 Manchester City Council presented.

8. Chichester District Council Final Recommendations – LGBCE (16)128

The review of Chichester District Council had commenced in 19 January 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 14 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 July 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 36 and had subsequently, 19 July 2016, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 52 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, 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 mixed pattern of two three-, 11 two-member, and 8 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 Chichester District Council as presented.

9. Harrogate Borough Council Final Recommendations – LGBCE (16)129

The review of Harrogate Borough Council had commenced on 19 January 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 31 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward, Claro ward, having a variance of 18 per cent more electors than average.

At its meeting on 19 January 2016 the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 40 and had subsequently, 21 June 2016, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 14 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, 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 uniform pattern of 40 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 Harrogate Borough Council as presented.

10. St. Edmundsbury Related Alterations - LGBCE (16)130

The Commission considered the content of the St Edmundsbury Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the proposals were supported locally and by the Council, and the changes proposed would not worsen the current levels of electoral inequality.

Agreed

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

11. Cherwell Related Alterations - LGBCE (16)86

The Commission considered the content of the Cherwell Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as an amendment between the parish boundary of Banbury and Bodicote was needed to make them coterminous. This was as a result of inaccurate mapping being used to initially draw the boundary line between these two parishes when Cherwell District Council originally carried out a Community Governance Review (GCR).

Agreed

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

12. Chair's Report

The Chair confirmed that the recruitment exercise for the Commissioner vacancies was now underway. Interviews have been scheduled for early December.

There had been a useful meeting of the Chair, the Lead Commissioner, the Review Manager and the Director of Strategy and Communications with the Chair and a member of the independent advisory review group that had recently undertaken some work on behalf Cornwall Council on future governance.

Following last month's discussion about council size, a further meeting has been scheduled with Rotherham District Council.

13. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive confirmed preparations were underway for the Speaker's Committee meeting in March 2017.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the amendment to the Hertfordshire electoral order had been made. The order is in the process of being laid in Parliament.

14. Finance Director's Report

Nothing to report.

15. Audit and Risk Committee - Chair's Report

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee gave a brief update on its meeting that had taken place earlier on in the day.

Highlights included:

- Good progress had been made on both the yearly plan, and the Corporate Risk Register.
- A selection of HR related policies were reviewed.
- A report was given on a recent external audit of health and safety within the LGBCE. Initial feedback had been positive.
- The Committee discussed which business activities required further scrutinising through audit. Three themes that emerged from this were: compliance of policies, budget monitoring and value for money of the LGCBE website.
- The Committee agreed the induction process for new members of ARC.
- It was agreed that the Internal Audit Plan should replace the equality profiler with a risk appetite workshop. The aim was to hold this workshop at the next Commission policy workshop in February.
- An update on the Internal Audit tendering process was given.

Agreed

The Commission would move the policy workshop to March to allow for the Audit and Risk Committee meeting and Commission meeting to take place on the same day.

16. Future Business – LGBCE (16)132

No comments on future business.

17. Updated Business Plan – LGBCE (16)133

The Commission noted the content of the Business Plan.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business 14:05


20 December 2016