

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

LGBCE (13) 8th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 13 August 2013, at 09:30am, 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
Sir Tony Redmond
Professor Paul Wiles CB
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance
Marcus Howell	Communications and Public Affairs Manager

Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jessica Metheringham	Review Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
Paul Kingsley	Review Adviser

David Owen (from item 15)	Policy and Research Officer
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It was noted that this would be Jessica Metheringham's last attendance at a Commission meeting before leaving the organisation. On the Commission's behalf, the Chair thanked her for her work and wished her success in her future role.

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence, but Dr Sinclair had sent his apologies for late attendance.

Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest in the Suffolk Coastal review (included in the Operational Report). Sir Tony Redmond declared an interest in the South Bucks review. They did not take any part in any discussions relating to these areas.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 9th July 2013

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Wellingborough Modification to Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13)112

At its meeting on 9 July 2013, the Commission had agreed to modify the boundary between the wards of Irchester and Great Doddington & Wilby. The modification to the Draft Recommendations had been mapped and circulated to Commissioners on 10 July 2013. All members had been content to confirm the change via correspondence. The Commission formally confirmed its proposed draft recommendations accordingly.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (13)113

The content of the Operational Report was noted.

2. West Devon Council Size - LGBCE (13)114

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review West Devon's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, 36% of wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold. One ward, Hatherleigh, had a variance of 31%.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority leaders and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 31 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size remaining at 31 members.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed that a council size of 31 be used as the basis for the council size consultation in West Devon.

3. Lichfield Council Size - LGBCE (13)115

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Lichfield's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, 35% of wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority leaders and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 56 members.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed that a council size of 56 be used as the basis for the council size consultation in Lichfield.

4. Broxtowe Council Size - LGBCE (13)116

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Broxtowe Borough Council's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, one ward (Eastwood North & Greasley (Beauvale)) had 36% fewer electors than the borough average.

The Commission had held meetings with officers, group leaders, the Council and parish representatives both to explain the process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 44.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed that a council size of 44 be used as the basis for the council size consultation in Broxtowe.

5. Doncaster Council Size - LGBCE (13)117

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Doncaster's electoral arrangements. Based on the 2012 electorate figures, 10% of its wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold. The review had been requested by the previous Mayor.

The Commission had held meetings with the Mayor, local authority group leaders and Intervention Commissioners, and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 63 members.

The Commission had received a number of submissions. In the light of the information received, notwithstanding the proposals made, LGBCE officers judged that available evidence pointed to a council size of between 54 and 48. The team recommended that the Commission consult on the proposal to reduce the council size and seek views on the approach taken by the Council and the Intervention Commissioners. The Commission noted that the evidence received during consultation may point to a council size that lies between these two numbers.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed that a council size in the range of between 54 and 48 be used as the basis for the council size consultation in Doncaster.

6. South Bucks Council Size - LGBCE (13)118

Sir Tony Redmond had declared an interest and took no part in the discussion of this area.

This further electoral review was being conducted as a result of a request made by the authority. Based on 2012 electorate figures four of the wards (21%) had a variance greater than 10% with the biggest outlier being Burnham Beeches ward, which had 20% fewer electors per councillor than the district average.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority group leaders, full council and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 40 members.

Having considered the evidence received during the preliminary period, the team proposed that the Commission be minded to consult on a council size of 28 members.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed that a council size of 28 be used as the basis for the council size consultation in South Buckinghamshire.

7. West Dorset Council Size Post Consultation -LGBCE (13)119

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review West Dorset's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, 36% of its wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority group leaders, full council and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 48 members.

Having considered the evidence received during the consultation, the team recommended that the Commission be minded to adopt a council size of 43 for West Dorset, and that the review proceed to consultation on warding arrangements.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed a council size of 43 for West Dorset.

8. Leicester Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)120

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Leicester City Council's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2011 electorate figures, 36% of the Council's 22 wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold. Castle and Spinney Hill wards currently had 29% more electors than the city average.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority group leaders, full council and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 54 members.

Having considered the evidence received, the team recommended that the Commission confirm a council size of 54 members for Leicester.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed a council size of 54 for Leicester.

9. Cotswold Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)121

This further electoral review was being conducted following a request from Cotswold District Council. The request was for a reduction in council size and a single

member ward review. Based on December 2012 electorate figures, 11% of wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority group leaders, full council and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 44 members.

The team considered that the strongest evidence was for a council size of between 32 and 36 members. The Council had provided persuasive evidence and had expressed support for a council size of 35.

Having considered the evidence received, the team recommended that the Commission confirm a council size of 35 for Cotswold.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed a council size of 35 for Cotswold.

10. Erewash Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)122

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Erewash Borough Council's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, 36% of wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold.

The Commission had held meetings with local authority group leaders, full council and officers both to explain the review process and to seek information about electorate forecasts and the basis of the proposed council size. The current size of the Council is 51 members.

At its May 2013 meeting, the Commission had considered the evidence received on council size and concluded that the evidence had been finely balanced between reductions to council sizes of 43 and 47. The Commission had therefore agreed to undertake consultation on council sizes of both 43 and 47.

Consultation responses showed that this fine balance still existed and, whilst the team were prepared to recommend the smaller figure, it was noted that a majority of the responses received supported the higher figure. On balance, the Commission felt that the totality of the evidence received during consultation pointed more to a council size of 47.

Agreed

After considering the evidence received, the Commission agreed a council size of 47 for Erewash.

11. North West Leicestershire Consideration of Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (13)123

The paper presented to the Commission invited it to decide how to proceed with the North West Leicestershire review following a parish warding issue identified in Hugglescote & Donington le Heath parish which had been identified during the formulation of draft recommendations.

While it was open to the Council to request related alterations to the county division boundaries which would have resolved the issue, it was noted that the Council had declined to do so. The Commission noted that while it was not ideal to leave this parish warding anomaly, the legislation does permit the anomalous boundary and would not require any unviable parish warding to be created.

The Commission noted that the issue could be addressed by the scheduled review of Leicestershire County Council and agreed that the publication of the draft recommendations should continue according to the existing work programme.

In considering the proposed boundaries of North West Leicestershire, the Commission noted that the scheme had been developed in Coalville by the team in light of the lack of local proposals that would have provided acceptable levels of electoral equality.

Agreed

The Commission agreed the team's recommendations including agreement of the draft recommendations as drafted.

12. North Somerset Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13) 124

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review the electoral arrangements of the Council. Based on the December 2011 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.

Preliminary discussion with the authority had begun in May 2012, and meetings had been held with officers, group leaders, full Council and parish representatives.

At its meeting on 12 March 2013 the Commission decided that, on the basis of evidence received, North Somerset should have a council size of 51 members. Submissions on warding patterns based on this size had been invited subsequently.

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 single-member wards and 15 two-member wards.

The Commission agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented with a modification to the name of one ward. This would become Cleveden Moor rather than Cleveden Yeo Moor to avoid confusion with other ward names in nearby areas.

Agreed

The draft recommendations as amended.

13. Kensington & Chelsea Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13)125

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Kensington & Chelsea's electoral arrangements. Based on the December 2010 electorate figures, 44% of wards in the council currently had variances of greater than 10%. The Notting Barns ward had a variance of 17%.

At its meeting on 11 September 2012, the Commission decided that, on the basis of evidence received, the Council should have a council size of 51 members, and invited submissions on warding patterns on that basis. However, in formulating a warding pattern for Kensington & Chelsea as part of the draft recommendations, the Commission considered that a council size of 50 would provide a better allocation of members throughout the borough. The draft recommendations had therefore been based on a council size of 50.

Following publication, 98 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 considered that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations in respect of Brompton, Hans Town and Courtfield wards and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Commission.

The team also suggested some ward name changes including St Charles being changed to St Helens; and Hans Town changing to Brompton & Hans Town.

The team recommended that the Commission agree the proposed final recommendations for Kensington & Chelsea.

Agreed

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.

14. 2014-2015 Review Programme - LGBCE (13)126

At its meeting in July 2013, the Commission had agreed to review 20 areas which all met the intervention criteria in 2014/2015. A draft work programme for these areas was presented, including the allocation of Lead Commissioners to reviews.

In addition, the Commission had committed to start seven requested reviews in 2014/2015.

Elmbridge in Surrey had subsequently formally requested a review, and the Commission was invited to add a review of Elmbridge to the programme.

Some flexibility remained within the work programme so that any other authorities coming forward with requests might be accommodated.

The Commission was asked to agree the draft work programme.

Agreed

The Commission agreed the work programme and the inclusion of Elmbridge.

15. London Assembly Constituencies – LGBCE (13)127

A report on the electorate figures for the London Assembly Constituencies, and electorate change between 1998 and 2012 was presented for information, together with a report which set out the legislative constraints on any proposed review. Any review of GLA constituencies would be unlike other reviews undertaken by the Commission

Agreed

The Commission agreed to commission a paper modelling whether improvements to electoral variances could be made if a full review of London Assembly Constituencies were undertaken. Once the outcome of this had been considered, the Commission could decide whether to commence a review of the Constituencies .

16. LGBCE Functions – LGBCE (13)128

A paper was presented for information that set out the functions of the Commission, along with a list of legislative changes that would, if passed, provide the Commission with more efficient and effective ways of working.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that the Chair should send the report, suitably reformatted, to the LGA for information.

17. Post 2011 Election Follow Up Survey – LGBCE (13)129

The content of the report was noted.

18. Chair's Report

The Chair reported on a recent meeting with Keith Vaz MP.

19. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive updated the Commission on the recent industrial action.

The Chief Executive had had a meeting with the Local Government Association to discuss its thoughts on local government structure post 2015.

20. Re-appointment of Audit Committee Independent External Adviser – LGBCE (13)130

The Chair moved that Elizabeth Butler should be re-appointed as the Independent External Adviser to the Audit Committee.

Agreed

The re-appointment was so agreed.

21. New and Emerging Risks – LGBCE (13)131

The Business and Committee Services Manager explained that there would in future be a standing item on the Commission's agenda on new and emerging risks. This was to encourage Commissioners to share information from their other activities that might be relevant to the Commission.

A brief paper setting out any red risks, and their mitigation, would be presented to the Commission regularly.

22. Update on CIPFA Study on Costing & Programme Management – LGBCE (13)132

The Director of Finance invited the Commission to note the update on the CIPFA study. She said that it was intended that Programme Management Reports would be available from the Quarter 4 of this financial year and it was planned that they

would be presented to the Commission quarterly thereafter. The format of the reports would be presented to the Commission prior to that time for consideration.

23. Performance Management – 1st Quarter Outturns for non-financial indicators – LGBCE (13)133

The content of the report was noted.

24. Future Business – LGBCE (13)134

The content of the Future Business paper was noted.

AOB

There was no other business

Close of Business 13:15