

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

LGBCE (13) 9th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 10 September 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

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
William Morrison	Review Officer
Nicholas Dunkeyson	Review Officer
Mark Pascoe	Review Officer
Lucy Ward	Review Officer
Simon Keal	Review Officer

Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Professor Paul Wiles CB, Dr Colin Sinclair CBE and Marcus Bowell, Communications Manager.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 13th August 2013

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

No matters arising.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (13)135

The content of the Operational Report was noted.

2. Peterborough Council Size - LGBCE (13)136

It had been agreed to review Peterborough City Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in December 2012. 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.

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 57 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 changing to 60 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 60 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 60 be used as the basis for consultation.

3. Woking Council Size - LGBCE (13)137

It had been agreed to review Woking Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in February 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

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 36 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was proposed by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size changing to 30 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 30 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 30 be used as the basis for consultation.

4. Darlington Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)138

It had been agreed to review Darlington Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 17 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward being over 40 per cent.

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 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 the council size changing to 50 members.

At its meeting in June 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. Given the change proposed, the Commission had decided to consult on the issue of council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 50 members. The consultation ended on August 2013

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 50 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 50 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

5. Canterbury Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)139

It had been agreed to review Canterbury City Council at the request of the authority. The review had commenced in March 2013.

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 50 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 changing to 38 members.

At its meeting in June 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. Given the change proposed, the Commission had decided to consult on the issue of council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 38 members. The consultation ended on August 2013.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 38 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 38 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

6. Wyre Forest Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)140

It had been agreed to review Wyre Forest District Council at the request of the authority. The review commenced in March 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, it does not meet the criteria with 24% of wards having variances of greater than 10%.

The Commission has 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 42 members.

At its meeting in June 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 33 members. The consultation ended on August 2013.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 33 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 33 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

7. Newark & Sherwood Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (13)141

The review of Newark & Sherwood had commenced on July 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on February 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 38 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared on the basis of such a Council size. However, the team felt it necessary to move away from the minded council size of 38 and instead adopt the District Council's proposal of 39 as this was felt to provide a better allocation of members across the district and would not adversely impact on the governance arrangements for the council.

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 seven three-member wards, five two-member wards, and eight single-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 Newark & Sherwood as presented.

8. South Kesteven Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (13)142

The review of South Kesteven had commenced on August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 38 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on June 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 55 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared on the basis of such a Council size. However, following consultation on a proposed council size of 55, the team has put together an alternative warding pattern that would see a council size of 56. This increase of one councillor provides for a better allocation of members across the town and rural areas and also provides for a warding pattern that achieves a better balance between the statutory criteria.

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 four three-member wards, 18 two-member wards, and eight single-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 South Kesteven as presented.

9. South Ribble Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (13)143

The review of South Ribble Borough Council had commenced on September 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on February 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 50 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 four three-member wards, and 19 two-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 and was keen to receive local evidence on warding names.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for South Ribble Borough Council as presented.

10. North Dorset Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (13)144

The review of North Dorset District Council had commenced in June 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward being over 30 per cent.

At its meeting in March 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 33 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 two three-member wards, 10 two-member wards, and seven single-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 North Dorset District Council as presented.

11. Three Rivers Final Recommendations - LGBCE (13)145

The review of Three Rivers District Council had commenced in January 2012. The review was being conducted following a request from the authority. According to the latest electoral figures, 25 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting in July 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 39 and had subsequently agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 312 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 the Abbots Langley area as well as a small amendment to the boundary between the proposed Moor Park & Eastbury and Rickmansworth Town wards. The team also proposed changing the ward name of Croxleyhall Wood to Dickinsons. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Three Rivers District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 13 three-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 Three Rivers District Council as presented.

12. Uttlesford Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13) 146

The review of Uttlesford District Council commenced in January 2012. 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 in March 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 39 and had subsequently agreed the Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 41 submissions were received 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 an amendment to the Stansted North and Broad Oak & the Hallingburys wards and some changes to ward names: The Commission agreed to rename four wards: Stansted South & Birchanger; Littlebury, Chesterford & Wendon Lofts; Flich Green & Little Dunmow and Great Dunmow South & Barnston. These were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Uttlesford District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of three three-member wards, 11 two-member wards, and eight 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 Uttlesford District Council as presented.

13. East Dorset Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13)147

The review of East Dorset District Council had commenced in June 2012. The review was being conducted following a request from the authority. According to the latest electoral figures, eight per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting in September 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 29 and had subsequently agreed the Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 24 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 for the proposed wards in the Verwood and Crane areas, and the renaming of Heath & Moors ward as West Moors & Holt. These changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations for East Dorset District Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of four three-member wards, five two-member wards, and seven 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 East Dorset District Council as presented.

14. Lancaster Final Recommendations Further Limited Consultation - LGBCE (13)148

The review of Lancaster City Council had commenced in April 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, one ward has a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting in May 2013, the Commission was minded to adopt the draft recommendations for Lancaster City Council as final but felt there was sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations in respect of the areas for Morecombe and Heysham, and Carnforth. The Commission therefore proposed that further limited consultation should be held in those areas. During this further limited consultation, the Commission received a total of eight submissions concerning its revised proposals. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it had been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations for the Morecombe and Heysham, and Camforth areas of Lancaster and adopt the revised proposals as part of the Final Recommendations.

The Final Recommendations would provide a pattern of 12 three-member wards, nine two-member wards, and six 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 Lancaster City Council as presented.

15. Council Size Consultations – LGBCE (13)149

This paper would be deferred to November's meeting.

16. Chair's Report

The Chair reported on the helpful meetings he and the Director of Reviews had attended with County Council Leaders on the next round of reviews.

The Chair informed the Commission that he was due to meet with Gary Streeter MP. He would brief the Commission on the outcome of the meeting at a later date.

The Chair circulated a draft note to Commissioners only on the future top structure of the Commission which will be substantively discussed in November and in the meantime the Commission agreed that the Chair will work with the Chief Executive to establish a timeline and more detail for discussion at the same time.

17. Chief Executive's Report

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

The Chief Executive reported on the recent Speaker's Committee session on proposed changes to legislation relating to governance.

The Chief Executive presented an office action note detailing the agreed actions following the recent Strategic Planning Event.

Agreed

- The Strategic Planning Actions as set out and amended
- A half-hour demonstration of the Commission's video conference system be arranged immediately in advance of the Commission meeting on 11 November (Commissioners were requested to bring any portable IT equipment they might wish to use for video conferencing).
- That dates for the Commission's policy discussion and the Commissioner & Staff event in April 2014 be agreed and arranged by Business Manager as soon as possible.

18. New and Emerging Risks

The Chief Executive updated the Commission on its current recruitment exercise with regards to the vacant Review Officer posts, the Research & Policy Officer post, and the Business Support Officer post.

The Commission also noted the variable capacity of local authorities to engage fully with the review process.

Agreed

- An updated staff contact list to be circulated to the Commission upon completion of the recruitment exercise.

19. Future Business – LGBCE (13)150

The content of the Future Business paper was noted.

AOB

None.

Close of Business 12:55