

## BCFE (09) 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Minutes of meeting held at 10.30 am on 20 October 2009, at  
Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2HW

Present:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Joan Jones CBE  
Professor Colin Mellors  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Jane Earl

In attendance:

Archie Gall	Director
Louise Footner	Senior Lawyer
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Sam Hartley	Review Manager
Alison Wildig	Review Manager
Arion Lawrence	Review Officer (Item 2)
Megan Bayford	Review Assistant

## **1. Declarations of interest**

Noted: that there were no declarations of interest.

## **2. Minutes of previous meeting**

Resolved: the following minutes of previous meeting were agreed subject to a minor amendment:

- the minutes of BCFE (09) 15<sup>th</sup>

## **3. Central Bedfordshire council size – BCFE (09) 61**

Noted:

1. that the meeting with Central Bedfordshire members and officers on 8 October had been productive and that the Council had acknowledged the Committee's view that the evidence in its original submission pointed to a lower figure than the 66-member council originally proposed
2. that the Council's preference was for 60-members rather than 59 for reasons of effective community engagement.
3. that the evidence still pointed to a council of 59 members based on the authority's most recent submission.

Resolved:

1. that the Committee agreed that they are minded to adopt a council size of 59 for Central Bedfordshire Council
2. that the Committee would write to Central Bedfordshire Council thanking them for the opportunity to meet and for the additional material provided

## **4. LGBCE draft Scheme of Transfer – BCFE (09) 62**

Noted:

1. that there was still no written provision for the LGCBE to remain in Trevelyan House under license to occupy until such time as suitable accommodation was available.
2. that the Speaker's Committee may query the proposed set-up costs of the LGBCE when comparing them to the current costs of the

Boundary Committee being supported by the Commission in Trevelyan House.

3. that the Commission's existing lease on Trevelyan House expires in 2011.
4. that the transfer of legal liabilities broadly fitted into three categories: 1) those reviews which have been completed and the LGBCE cannot affect the outcome; 2) those reviews on which legal proceedings are begun while the Boundary Committee is part of the Commission but which will continue beyond 1 April 2010; 3) those reviews which the LGBCE can affect the outcome but action is not brought until after 1 April 2010.

Resolved:

1. that, assuming Royal Assent is not significantly delayed, the Committee do not wish the LGBCE's date of establishment to be extended beyond 1 April 2010.
  2. that the Chair write to the Chair of the Electoral Commission in advance of the Commission Board meeting on 4 November in order to begin a transparent process of identifying possible scenarios for the location of the LGBCE
  3. that contingency arrangements for the location of the LGBCE be agreed before the Scheme of Transfer and Memorandum of Understanding are agreed by the Committee.
  4. that subject to finance, the Committee's first preference is for the LGBCE to be located other than in Trevelyan House but, if this is not practical by 1 April 2010, there should be some agreement to stay in Trevelyan House under license on appropriate terms until such time the LGBCE is able to move, or alternative arrangements are made. The document stating this needed to be concurrent with the Scheme of Transfer.
  5. that the Committee will identify a position on the transfer of legal liabilities in respect of electoral reviews via a schedule.
  6. following Royal Assent and before vesting day, the Committee will need to approve new guidance for publication dealing with the changes to the process following the new legislation.
- 5. Update on activities supporting the establishment of the LGBCE – BCFE (09) 63**

Noted: the Committee noted the report and requested to know when the advertisement for the Interim Chief Executive went live, as the period for responding seemed exceptionally short.

## **6. Operational report – BCFE (09) 64**

Noted: the updates outlined in the paper. In addition, there were oral updates given of an external meeting with CLG.

## **7. Any other business**

Noted: that the Chair gave an update on external meetings with the LGA and at the Conservative Party Conference.

Resolved:

1. that in the event that the Secretary of State were to withdraw his request for advice following the Suffolk Court of Appeal judgment, the Committee should publish a report on its findings in relation to the structural reviews of Devon, Norfolk and Suffolk
2. that Professor Ron Johnston and Irene Lucas (CLG) be invited to the Committee's informal dinner prior to its January 2010 meeting
3. that the Chair of the Electoral Commission be invited to the January 2010 meeting of the Boundary Committee.

**October 2009**