

LGBCE (10) 2nd Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 18 May 2010, in Room A in
Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Present:

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

Also present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
David Hewitt	Director of Finance
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Sam Hartley	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business and Committee Services Manager
Eleanor Gregory	Minutes

1. Minutes from the LGBCE's meeting on 15 April 2010

Noted:

1. Maps relating to reviews should be noted in the minutes when tabled.
2. The Chair clarified that, in respect of the overview report, the review chart referred to in the minutes was to compare and contrast the councillor:elector ratios of different types of local authorities.

Agreed:

1. The minutes were agreed subject to minor changes.
2. The amended minutes to be circulated to the Chair within a week of the meeting and then circulated to all Commissioners once cleared by him.
3. Draft minutes to be circulated to the Chair within a week of the meeting and then circulated to all Commissioners once cleared by him.
4. Future minutes to record agreed actions to develop a note of actions outstanding.

2. Declarations of Interest

1. Jane Earl noted two long-term declarations of interest that would need to be recorded in the register of interests; Director of Cifas and Interim Chief Executive of Rich Mix.

Governance

3. Chair's report

1. The Chair and Chief Executive had met with Gary Streeter MP to brief him on the review programme.

4. Commissioners' Fees, Travel and Expenses – LGBCE (10)14

Noted:

1. The Chief Executive presented the Commissioners' fees, travel and expenses paper. The paper was intended to set out standard practice for fees and claims.
2. The Business and Committee Services Manager will be administering the Commissioners claims on the Agresso system. She will be providing new electronic forms in due course.
3. That Commissioners' should provide all the necessary documentation to the Business and Committee Services Manager, including, where appropriate, car insurance for business use.
4. The Commission discussed the wording and prospective changes to the paper.

Agreed:

1. To keep using Electoral Commission headed fee claim forms until the new forms are available.
2. The Commission will only reimburse standard fare costs, but if an individual chooses to travel 1st class, they can pay the difference.
3. To re-issue the paper, with the revised version of the minutes of the last meeting.
4. The paper as amended.

5. Budget Report – LGBCE (10) 15

Noted:

1. The Chief Executive and Director of Finance presented the Budget report. The report focused on business planning and effective resource management.
2. The report sought to integrate the financial aspects of the business with the review programme.
3. The figures in table three of the report were updated by the Director of Finance based on latest numbers available and further work.
4. An assessment of the process would be helpful at the start of the next budgetary session in the autumn.
5. That the post-implementation reviews and policy development had not been taken into account in the report.
6. The need for clear documentation of the use of people resources in relation to reviews.

Agreed:

1. To flexibility in ordering the management of resources
2. That the paper constitute a working document subject to changes and recirculation

Break: 11:55

Resumed: 12:00

Reviews

6. Declarations of Interest

1. Joan Jones declared an interest in item 7 due to her previous involvement with the Stoke-on-Trent Governance Commission. She took no part in the discussion on this review.
2. Joan Jones declared an interest with respect to Gloucestershire County Council (considered under item 8: Further Review Programme), as a resident of the county.
3. Jane Earl declared an interest in Slough Borough Council (considered under item 8: Further Review Programme).

7. Operational Report - LGBCE (10) 04

Noted:

1. The Director of Reviews presented the paper
2. The Review Manager gave an update on the Stoke-on-Trent consultation. There had been useful feedback but there may be some misunderstandings about the LGBCE's role. There were concerns about patterns of single and multi-member wards.
3. The feedback had been variable dependent on location and there are lessons to be learnt which will be applicable to other reviews.
4. Colin Mellors requested a headline note on the consultation events before the next meeting.
5. The Chair requested that at a future meeting the Commission reflect on Stoke-on-Trent and the methods of consultation used as part of the review, separate from the actual recommendations.
6. The Director of Reviews gave an update on the involvement of the Speaker in the laying of Orders Committee and on the East Devon and Suffolk litigation.
7. The Review manager noted that one of the maps in the recently published Bedford report contained an incorrect boundary between the proposed Castle and Newnham wards. The Commission was assured that this could be rectified immediately without incurring costs.

Agreed:

1. The paper was noted.
2. To have a headline note on the ongoing Stoke-on-Trent consultations before the next meeting.
3. To have a fuller report on the Stoke round-table consultation for a future meeting of the Commission.

8. Further Review Program – LGBCE (10) 17

Noted:

1. The Review Manager presented the review programme for the next tranche of reviews.
2. Following the lessons learnt from the recent structural reviews, the team recommendation was not to conduct any reviews of the unitary authorities of Norwich and Exeter at this stage.
3. The team recommended that reviews begin in a number of areas which meet the FER criteria; namely West Lindsey, Swindon, Daventry, Slough, Hartlepool, Broxborne, Purbeck and Rushmoor, Rugby and Swale.
4. The team also recommended commencement in the in the current year of the single-member ward review of Gloucestershire County Council.

5. An outline programme of boundary reviews based on those councils that have requested a review of their external boundaries was being developed.
6. a revised timetable was tabled which included the ongoing Bedford review.

Agreed:

1. Based on the lessons learnt during recent reviews to give future consideration to the length and scope of consultations
2. To accept the team's recommendations for FER reviews and to agree, in principle the review timetable
3. To take no action on possible consequential electoral reviews in Norfolk, Suffolk, Devon, Exeter and Norwich
4. For the Chair to propose for Commissioners agreement lead Commissioners for future reviews.
5. To write to those local authorities meeting the FER criteria and earmarked for review.

9. AOB

1. None

12:10: Meeting closed