

## LGBCE (12) 4th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 17 April 2012, at 11:15 am, 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  
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
David Hewitt	Director of Finance
Richard Buck	Implementation & Programme Manager
Timothy Bowden	Review Manager
Jessica Metherringham-Owlett	Review Manager
Danny Edwards	Review Manager
Marcus Howell	Communications Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
Simon Keal	Review Officer
Paul Kingsley	Review Advisor
Alex Skerten	Review Officer
Alex Hinds	Review Assistant
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant (minutes)

The Chair welcomed Alex Hinds, the new Review Assistant, to his first Commission meeting and congratulated Richard Buck, Daniel Edwards and Jessica Metherringham-Owlett on their recent promotions.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 13 March 2012

The minutes of the Commission meeting on 13 March 2012 were agreed as an accurate record.

## Matters Arising

No matters arising.

## Declarations of interest:

Dr Colin Sinclair declared an interest in Cumbria and would withdraw from discussion of that item.

### 1. Report on the Year 2011/2012 – LGBCE (12)42

The Commission noted the content of the presented report which summarised the Commission's activity and progress throughout 2011/12.

The Chair enquired about publicising the report to stakeholders. The Director of Reviews confirmed that, as in previous years, the report would be made available through the LGBCE website. The Chair suggested that hard copies should also be sent to key stakeholders such as members of the Speaker's Committee, the Local Government Association and the Local Government Elections Centre at Southampton University.

#### **Agreed**

Hard copies of the Report on the Year 2011/2012 to be sent out to key stakeholders identified by the Commission.

### 2. Operational Report – LGBCE (12)43

The Director of Reviews presented the Operational Report for March 2012.

Statutory orders for Gloucestershire and Staffordshire had been made.

### 3. Overview Report – LGBCE (12)44

The content of the report was noted by the Commission.

### 4. Lancaster Council Size & Review Type – LGBCE (12)45

It had been agreed to review Lancaster Council at the request of the authority. The review had commenced on August 2011. According to the latest electoral figures, one ward had a variance of 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 60 members.

At this stage, LGBCE officers felt unable to recommend a council size given the insufficient evidence received.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. In the absence of sufficient evidence, the Commission was unable to determine a council size.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that insufficient evidence had been received to support a council size of either 60 or 40 members. Having considered the evidence received at the preliminary stage and in discussions with group leaders, the Commission agreed to go out to public consultation on three different council sizes of 40, 50 and 60, with a set of focussed questions.

## **5. Cumbria County Council Final Recommendations – LGBCE (12)46**

The review of Cumbria County Council had commenced on 12 October 2010. According to the latest electoral figures, 30 percent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent with Dalston & Cummerside being over 30 per cent

At its meeting on 13 September 2011, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 84 and had subsequently, at its meeting on 11 October 2011, agreed draft recommendations.

Following publication of the draft recommendations, 31 submissions had been received. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

It was noted that the published draft recommendations report contained numerical errors for some divisions in the South Lakeland area, specifically for Kendal town. The Commission satisfied itself that these errors were relatively minor in scale. Furthermore, although one submission proposed an alternative division pattern for the town based on these figures, the Commission was content that there were other overarching reasons for not adopting these alternative proposals. The Commission noted that an errata notice had been placed on its website. However, it agreed that Kendal Town Council should be sent a copy of the errata notice with an explanation.

Taking all of the submissions into account, the team judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations and these were proposed as the final recommendations for Cumbria County Council subject to minor amendments, including name changes to several divisions to better reflect local community identity.

The Commission considered the proposed 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 Cumbria County Council as presented.

## **6. Purbeck District Council Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (12)47**

The review of Purbeck District Council had commenced in May 2011. According to the latest electoral figures, 43 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent

At its meeting on 9 August 2011, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 27.

On 21 February 2012, the Council resolved to change its electoral cycle to whole council elections and for this to be implemented at elections in 2015. As a result, the Council submitted an alternative warding pattern based on a council size of 25. In light of further evidence received from the Council, the team had based the draft recommendations on a council size of 25 members.

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 4 three-member wards, 4 two-member wards and 5 single-member wards.

The Commission considered the draft 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 Purbeck District Council as presented.

## **7. Mansfield Ward Name Change Consent Case – LGBCE (12)48**

The Mansfield (Electoral Changes) Order was made in 2011, and the ward name is protected for a period of five years. The Commission noted that the ward name “Ransom Wood” had originally been proposed by the Council as part of its electoral review, had been the subject of wide consultation by the Commission as part of the review and that the Council’s own public

consultation had not drawn any widespread local support for the requested change; indeed several comments were sceptical of it.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed to decline the request from Mansfield District Council for a ward name change (Ransom Wood to Strawberry Hill).

## **8. Northumberland/Gateshead PABR Recommendations – LGBCE (12)49**

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.

### **Agreed**

1. The final recommendations for the Northumberland/Gateshead PABR as presented.
2. The final recommendations report be sent to the Secretary of State with an accompanying letter from the Chair.
3. Copies of the final recommendations report to be sent to those consulted over the draft recommendations.

## **9. East Hertfordshire/Stevenage PABR Recommendations – LGBCE (12)50**

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.

### **Agreed**

1. The final recommendations for the East Hertfordshire/Stevenage PABR as presented.
2. The final recommendations report be sent to the Secretary of State with an accompanying letter from the Chair.
3. Copies of the final recommendations report be sent to those consulted over the draft recommendations.

## **10. Chair's Report**

The Chair had nothing to report other than items that had occurred elsewhere on the agenda.

## 11. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive updated the Commission on an Institute for Governance event he recently attended entitled 'What can Elected Mayors do for our Cities?'

## 12. Governance Statement – LGBCE (12)51

The Finance Director presented the draft Governance Statement. The Commission noted its content.

## 13. Future Business – LGBCE (12)52

The Commission noted the content of Future Business.

The Director of Reviews informed the Commission that the Local Government Association conference would be taking place at the end of June. In the Chair's absence, Professor Colin Mellors would be attending the event but if any other Commissioner would also like to attend, they should let the Communications and Public Affairs Manager know.

**13:30 Meeting Closed**