



Colin Mellors
21/6/16

LGBCE (16)5th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 17 May 2016 at 12:15pm, Ness Meeting Room, Double Tree Hilton, 30 John Islip Street, London, SW1P 4DD.

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors (Chair)
Sir Tony Redmond (Deputy Chair)
Alison Lowton
Peter Maddison
Professor Paul Wiles CB

LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Finance Director
Marcus Bowell	Strategy and Communications Director
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jo Porter	Review Manager
Lucy Ward	Review Manager
Emily Starkie	Review Officer (item 2)
William Morrison	Review Officer (item 3)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (item 5)
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE meeting on 19 April 2016

The minutes were agreed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (15)46

The Chief Executive presented the Operational Report for May 2016 and the Commission noted its content.

Three new authorities that had requested reviews were in the process of being allocated to the review programme. They were:

- Cheshire West and Chester
- Forest of Dean
- South Gloucestershire

A new format had been devised for the way reports on electoral reviews are presented to the Commission. The new format would see a commitment to the use of plain English and would also add pictorial elements to the report. Officers would trial the new format at the next Commission meeting in June.

An update was given on the Chief Executive's recent liaison meeting with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Chief Executive invited the Chair to update the Commission on two recent meetings relating to the electoral review of Birmingham. The Chair and the Chief Executive had met with council group leaders at Birmingham City Council and in a separate meeting, met with members of Parliament representing their Birmingham constituencies.

2. Harrogate Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (16)47

The review of Harrogate Borough Council had commenced on 19 January 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 31 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with Claro ward being over 18 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 January 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 40 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 40 single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Harrogate Borough Council as presented.

3. Huntingdonshire Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (16)48

The review of Huntingdonshire District Council had commenced on 15 December 2015. According to the latest available electoral figures, 28 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with St Neots & Priory Park ward being over 35 per cent.

At its meeting on 15 December 2015, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 52 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 eight three-member wards, 10 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 advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Huntingdonshire District Council.

4. Newcastle upon Tyne Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (16)49

The review of Newcastle City Council had commenced on 19 January 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with Westgate ward having a variance of 27 per cent, and Castle and Benwell & Scotswood wards having variances of 17 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 January 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 78 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared on the basis of such a council size.

The Commission noted the significant initial variances that would result under the proposals although it was indicated that these would be resolved within the five-year projection (2021) through a significant uplift in electors brought about by a combination of new developments and a more robust registration process. The Commission was assured that the team had themselves queried the robustness of the figures and had asked the council to review its electoral forecast for 2021. As a consequence, there had been a reduction of 894 electors from the original forecast.

During a recent tour, the team had taken the opportunity to visit new and proposed development sites and this, combined with the new approach to registration, led them to be as confident as they could be in the forecast figures. With this assurance the Commission accepted the figures as a reasonable basis for drawing up new boundaries.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team took into consideration both the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 26 three-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Newcastle City Council as presented.

5. Redbridge Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (16)50

The review of Redbridge London Borough Council had commenced on 17 November 2016. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with Newbury ward having a variance of over 27 per cent.

At its meeting on 17 November 2015, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 63 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 21 three-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Redbridge Borough Council as presented.

6. Chair's Report

The Commission agreed that Alison Lowton would replace Sir Tony Redmond as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee following Sir Tony's appointment to the role of Deputy Chair of the Commission. Alison's role as Chair would commence after the Audit & Risk Committee meeting in June.

The Chair noted that the Commission was still awaiting confirmation for the reappointment of a former commissioner.

The Chair noted the success of the previous day's strategic planning session. Informed by the discussions that had taken place, the Commission will revisit the corporate plan and business plan within the next quarter.

7. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive had nothing further to add.

8. Chair of Audit & Risk Committee

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee gave a brief update on its most recent meeting which had taken place on 17 May 2016.

Highlights included:

- The creation of an annual plan that would be used to review the performance of the Audit & Risk Committee at the year-end.
- The first draft of the Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report was reviewed. It was noted that this version of the report would be more focused and succinct.
- The Committee also reviewed the first draft of the Annual Report & Accounts 2015/16 which had undergone a number of technical amendments.
- An update on the Risk Register was given. The Committee had asked the team to give particular focus on actions relating to equalities and staff resilience.
- The Committee discussed the first draft of the Scheme of Delegation.
- A representative from RSM presented the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2015-16. It was noted that the Commission had received a number of good ratings within the report.
- The Business Support Officer briefed the committee on two additions to the Internal Audit Recommendations Log.

An update was then given by the Finance Director on plans to find a replacement for the External Independent Adviser who would be leaving her post after the Audit & Risk Committee meeting in June.

10. Finance update

The Finance Director confirmed that the final draft of the Annual Report and Accounts would be formally presented to be agreed at the Commission meeting in June.

11. Future Business – LGBCE (15)33

The Commission noted its content.

14. Scheme of delegation – LGBCE (15)33

The Chief Executive informed the Commission that he would be meeting with Alison Lowton to discuss a new draft Scheme of Delegation. The paper would look at the hierarchy of decision making at the Commission and would clearly define the roles and powers reserved to the Chair, the Commissioners, in the activities and statutory functions of the Commission, and those delegated to the Chief Executive.

When ready, the paper would go to the Audit & Risk Committee and then to the Commission for consideration.

15. PABR – LGBCE (15)

A paper proposing a new approach to the way the Commission carries out its duties in Principal area boundary reviews (PABRs) was presented by the Chief Executive. The proposals would result in a change to existing policies by removing unnecessary aspects from the current PABR process and reflecting changes in the local government landscape.

The Commission considered the paper and accepted the recommendations put forward, with minor adjustments and subject to a discussion with the Department for Communities and Local Government and with the Local Government Association.

AOB

The Review Manager asked the Commission if they had experienced any technical difficulties with the online mapping resource, Story Maps. The Commission had no issues to report. It was agreed that any Commissioner who would like to continue receiving hard copies of maps would do so on request.

It was noted by the Chair that this was the last meeting for Tim Bowden, Review Manager, who would be leaving the Commission at the end of May. The Commission expressed their appreciation for the work Tim had given over eight years of service and expressed their best wishes to him in his future role.

Close of Business 14:42