

## BCFE (09) 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 27 April 2009, in the Boothroyd Room in Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2HW

Present:

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

Also present:

Archie Gall	Director
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Alison Wildig	Review Manager
James Ansell	Review Officer
Jessica Metherringham	Review Officer
Megan Bayford	Review Assistant

## **1. Cheshire West & Chester council size – BCFE (09) 19**

- 1.1 The Review Officer presented a report on the proposed council size for Cheshire West & Chester.
- 1.2 In discussion, the Committee felt that the number of councillors requested by the authority (75, an increase from the present 72) was not an unreasonable number, and was well-evidenced. While noting that several other submissions proposed alternative council sizes, the Committee considered these were not supported by substantive evidence in terms of political management structure, member workload or a councillor's representational role. The Committee concluded that there was no evidence in support of a council size that was radically different from that proposed by the council.
- 1.3 The Committee noted that a number of submissions suggested a strong preference for single member wards. Officers agreed to clarify the ward size requirements under the Act in the context of electoral cycles and ensure the authority was provided with this information prior to the start of Stage One consultation
- 1.4 The Committee noted the measure of cross-party agreement over the council's proposal and that the numbers were not inconsistent with the council's proposed management structure. The Committee also considered that it been helpful to see how particular council sizes might serve to provide electoral equality across the authority.. However, this should not detract from the primary justification needed to support the proposed council size.
- 1.5 The Committee agreed that, for the purposes of inviting proposals on warding patterns, it was minded to adopt a council size of 75 for Cheshire West & Chester .

## **2. Cheshire East council size – BCFE (09) 20**

- 2.1 The Review Officer presented a report on the proposed council size for Cheshire East.
- 2.2 The Committee noted that there had been alternative proposals to the Cheshire East's proposed council size of 82 (an increase from the present 81), including from the Liberal Democrats, which had proposed 90 members. On the whole, the Committee felt that while the council's proposals had the most supporting evidence, they were less robust than the submission from Cheshire West & Chester.
- 2.3 The Committee considered that further clarification should be sought from the authority. In particular, further evidence relating to members' roles on quasi judicial committees and details of the local area partnerships. The Committee agreed that it also needed evidence from the authority that it had considered alternative council sizes, such as the

90 member proposal. Subject to this further information being satisfactory, the Committee agreed to delegate to the Chair and the two lead Committee members the decision to confirm that the Committee was minded to accept a council size of 82 for Cheshire East.

- 2.4 The Review Officer reported that the authority had signalled they were looking at a mixed pattern of single and multi-member wards. As with Cheshire West & Chester, officers agreed to provide the authority with clarification on electoral cycles and ward size requirements prior to the start of Stage One consultations.

### **3. Operational report (update) – BCFE (09) 21**

- 3.1 Joan Jones gave an update on the structural review meetings in Devon the previous week.
- 3.2 The Review Manager gave an oral report on the parish meetings in Norfolk and Suffolk the previous week.
- 3.3 The Chair reported on a meeting with the Legal Team.
- 3.4 There was discussion the boundaries of Ipswich & Norwich in a two unitary authority pattern. The Committee agreed that, without prejudice to its future consideration of consultation representation, it should review all structural review boundary issues at its meeting on 26 May.
- 3.5 The Review Manager provided an update on the progress of electoral reviews in Durham and Northumberland.

### **4. Any other business**

- 4.1 There was no business not already on the agenda.

### **April 2009**