

The
**Local Government
Boundary Commission**
for England

LGBCE (14)7th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 15 July 2014, at 09:30am, 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
Alison Lowton
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE

LGBCE Officers Present:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Alan Cogbill | Chief Executive |
| Jolyon Jackson | Chief Executive Designate |
| Archie Gall | Director of Reviews |
| Lynn Ingram | Director of Finance |
| Marcus Bowell | Communications Manager |
| Tim Bowden | Business Development Manager |
| Richard Buck | Review Manager |
| Sarah Vallotton | Business & Committee Services Manager |
| Mark Pascoe | Review Officer (items 4 & 5) |
| Lucy Ward | Review Officer (item 6) |
| David Owen | Review Officer (item 7) |
| Johanna Porter | Review Officer |
| Emily Starkie | Review Officer |
| Dean Faccini | Business Assistant (minutes) |

The Chair welcomed Joanna Porter and Emily Starkie to their first meeting of the Commission.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Professor Paul Wiles.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 17 June 2014

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 (14)79

The Director of Reviews presented the Operational Report for July.

The Commission's attention was drawn to updates to the Baker Tilly project plan. Progress would be reported in each Operational Report in future.

It was confirmed that orders listed in paragraphs 24 and 25 of the report had been signed by the Chair.

The Commission noted the content of the report.

2. Rochford Council Size - LGBCE (14)80

It had been agreed to review Rochford District Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest electoral figures, 32 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 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 39 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was proposed by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to recommend the council size remaining at 39 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to recommend a council size of 39 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 39 be used as the basis for consultation on warding patterns.

3. Gloucester Council Size – LGBCE (14)81

It had been agreed to review Gloucester City Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest electoral figures, one ward (Quedgeley) has an electoral variance of 48%.

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 36 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was proposed by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to recommend the council size increasing by 3 to 39 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to recommend a council size of 39 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 39 be used as the basis for consultation on warding patterns.

4. Bristol Council Size - LGBCE (14)82

It had been agreed to review Bristol City Council due to electoral imbalance and as the Council had requested the Commission undertake a review. According to the latest electoral figures, 29 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward (Cabot) being at 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 70 members.

Following dispatch of Commission papers the Lead Commissioner and officers met members of the City Council to discuss the council size proposed. A note of this meeting and additional information had been circulated to Commissioners in advance of the Commission meeting. Having considered all of the evidence received it was proposed by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to recommend the council size remain at 70 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to recommend a council size of 70 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 70 be used as the basis for consultation on warding patterns.

5. Darlington Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)83

The review of Darlington Council had commenced in June 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 17 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward (Faverdale) being over 30 per cent.

At its meeting in September 2013, following consultation, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 50. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in February 2014.

Following publication of the draft recommendations, 15 submissions had been received. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in respect of a minor amendment to the boundary between the proposed Faverdale and Pierremont wards.

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. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

They provide for a pattern of 10 three-member wards and 10 two-member wards in total.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Darlington Council as presented.

6. Canterbury Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)84

The review of Canterbury City Council had commenced in June 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, three of the Council's 24 wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting in September 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 38. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on a revised council size number of 39 at its meeting in February 2014.

Following publication of the draft recommendations, 45 submissions had been received. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in respect of two areas: the inclusion of the whole of the Parish of Thanington Without in the Wincheap ward, and the division of the proposed two-member Barham Bridge & Littlebourne ward into the two single-member wards of Little Stour & Adisham and Nailbourne.

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. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

They provide for a pattern of four three-member wards, 10 two-member wards, and seven single-member wards in total.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Canterbury City Council as presented.

7. Leicester Final Recommendations - LGBCE (14)85

The review of Leicester City Council had commenced in May 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36% of the Council's 22 wards currently exceeded the 10% variance threshold. Castle & Spinney Hill ward currently has 29% more electors than the city average.

At its meeting in August 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 54. It had agreed its Draft Recommendations, based on this number, at its meeting in February 2014.

Following publication of the draft recommendations, 160 submissions had been received. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in respect of amendments to the warding pattern in the south of Leicester. However, the Commission agreed minor amendments to the boundary between Knighton and Stoneygate wards and between Beaumont Leys and Fosse wards.

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. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented subject to a minor amendment in the wording of the report, to be agreed by the Chair and Deputy Chair by correspondence.

They provide for a pattern of 12 three-member wards, and nine two-member wards in total.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Leicester City Council as presented subject to the amendment outlined above.

8. Quarterly Review Programme Update - LGBCE (14)86

The Review Manager presented the quarterly update on the Review Programme. The Commission agreed to the proposed changes outlined in paragraph 3 of the report. Reviews affected by the proposed changes included Lichfield, Ashfield, Cotswold and Rugby.

It was confirmed that Sir Tony Redmond would be the lead Commissioner for the review of Elmbridge. Reviews had also been reallocated to take account of both the review team restructure and the two new Review Officers who had started work with the Commission in June.

The Director of Reviews confirmed that a full report on the 2015-2016 review programme would be considered by the Commission at its meeting in August.

9. Chair's Report

The Chair placed on record his thanks to Marcus Bowell, Communications Manager, and to Alex Hinds, Mark Cooper and Lucy Ward, Review Officers, for all their work and involvement at the recent LGA conference.

The Commission also congratulated the Communications Manager and the others involved in winning a Digital Innovation award for the LGBCE website.

The Commission also noted the circulated correspondence

10. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive had informed the Speaker's Committee Clerks that LGBCE would wish to meet the Committee after the Recess to seek approval on decisions relating to the relocation of LGBCE's offices and new arrangements for back office services.

The Speaker's Committee would be meeting in early September, and it might be possible for this item to be discussed at that meeting. If this were not possible a meeting could not be held before the end of October. The Relocation and Back Office Steering Group would meet on the afternoon of the August Commission meeting to approve the business case so that it could be taken to the earlier date if necessary. All Commissioners would have the opportunity to see the business case before finalisation and submission to the Speaker's Committee.

The Chief Executive had reminded the Clerks of the implications of the Chair's term ending in December 2015 and the challenge that this might pose for a new Speaker's Committee putting in place a process to appoint a successor through open competition by that date.

The Deregulation Bill had had its second reading in the House of Lords, and was on track to lift the requirement on LGBCE to produce a draft five-year plan and undergo a National Audit Office Value for Money study each year. The Bill also provides for the appointment of independent member(s) to the Audit Committee.

The next plan would need approval for 2016-17 onwards. LGBCE's financial estimates would still require approval every year. For 2015-16, it seemed unlikely that the Speaker's Committee would require close examination if the Commission had delivered previously agreed plans, unless there were, by then, new Treasury requirements.

11. Key Risks and New & Emerging Risks - LGBCE (14)87

In accordance with the Commission's Risk Policy, the Business & Committee Services Manager highlighted two risks that had been identified as 'Red' from the risk register. The risks were:

- Speaker's Committee support for Corporate Plan & Budget.
- Failure to have a resilient work force.

Agreed

That the Commission should be presented with an updated risk register each time the Risk Management Working Group identifies a risk moving into the 'Red' category. Also, the Chief Executive and Chief Executive Designate should brief the Commission in the next few months on what measures were available, and being taken, to sustain a skilled and sufficient workforce.

12. Audit Committee Appointments - LGBCE (14)88

The Commission re-appointed Sir Tony Redmond as Chair of the Audit Committee and Professor Colin Mellors as a member. It also appointed Alison Lowton as the new member to succeed Dr Colin Sinclair when he stands down as a Commissioner in November.

13. Audit Committee Terms of Reference - LGBCE (14)89

The Commission approved minor amendments to the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference.

14. Report of Audit Committee Meeting

Sir Tony Redmond gave an oral report of the previous day's Audit Committee meeting.

- The Audit Committee had looked at the internal audit progress report, specifically the audit on IT and the strategic impact on the Commission's relocation and back office projects.
- The Audit Committee had signed off the Corporate Government Framework.
- The Audit Committee had reviewed the Commission's fees and travel policy and the revised Finance Manual.

Sir Tony Redmond placed on record his thanks to the Finance Director for her work streamlining the Finance Manual.

He thanked Dr Colin Sinclair for his contribution to the Audit Committee, and the Commission endorsed this.

15. Quarter 1 Finance Report - LGBCE (14)90

The Finance Director presented the Quarter 1 Finance Report.

- There was a projected underspend of £163k for 2014-15.
- This might provide for:
 - development of the Commission's IT strategy (in particular licensing and staff training in geocoding)
 - costs arising from the Commission's relocation and back office support projects
 - staff training (in particular the need for staff to reach required standards in report writing)
 - development of the LGBCE portal.
- The Commission's medium-term financial plan for the next three years, if achieved, would allow the Commission to meet steadily reducing budgets.

22. Future Business – LGBCE (13)192

The Commission noted the content of Future Business.

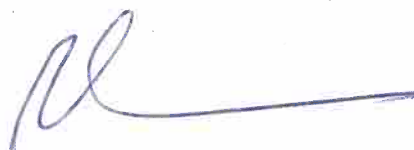
Agreed

- That Future Business should include dates for the laying of orders.
- That the review of Knowsley should be added to Future Business.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business 10:50



CHAM
19/8/14