

LGBCE (16)6th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 21 June 2016 at 11:30am, Meeting Room, 29th Floor Millbank Tower.

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	Director of Finance
Marcus Bowell	Strategy and Communications Director
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jo Porter	Review Manager
Alex Palacky	Office Manager (minutes)

Dr Peter Knight CBE DL In attendance

Apologies for Absence

Lucy Ward, Review Manager.

Declarations of interest

Richard Buck (Review Manager) declared an interest in item 6 (Southwark Final Recommendations).

Minutes of LGBCE meeting on 17 May 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 (16)54

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

Minor amendments to the programme were:

- Allerdale: Commissioner Paul Wiles has already met with the group leaders
- Preston: The meeting took place last week
- South Gloucestershire and Forest of Dean meetings scheduled for next week

Following discussion, the following additional allocation of Lead Commissioners were agreed

- Blackburn with Darwen – Peter Maddison
- South Gloucestershire – Alison Lowton
- Forest of Dean – Peter Knight (tbc)
- Cheshire West & Chester – Peter Maddison

The proposal for the formal request to conduct a review of the Isles of Scilly was considered and discussed. The Commission agreed to undertake the review. A visit to the Isles will be organised. It was agreed to check any legislation which is specific to the Scilly Isles prior to the visit.

In addition, the Commission has also formally received a request for a review from Scarborough Borough Council.

Tewkesbury had requested a short delay in order to better understand the electoral forecast implications of a large-scale housing project for which planning is being finalised. Following discussion, the Commission agreed that a delay until December 2016 was acceptable.

The Chief Executive updated the Commission on his meeting with Paul Rowsell and indicated that a meeting between the Chair and DCLG to discuss the implications of mergers for LGBCE would be timely.

Looking forward to the 2017-2018 review programme, the Commission noted that a number of local authorities met the intervention criteria. These would be contacted to ascertain if natural electoral changes would address the variances. The team would report to the Commission in August 2016 with the formal proposal for those to be included in the 2017–2018 programme. The team agreed to recheck the data for Shropshire and the Isle of Wight before contacting them.

2. Ashford Council Size - LGBCE (16)55

It had been agreed to review Ashford Borough due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 43 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 43 members.

The Commission received one submission on council size from Ashford Borough Council which presented the case for increasing the council size to 47.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size increase by 4 from 43 to 47 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 47 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 47 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

3. South Norfolk Council Size - LGBCE (16)56

It had been agreed to review South Norfolk due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 22 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 1 ward being over 30 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 46 members.

The Commission received one submission from the council presenting the case for retaining the current council size.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size remain at 46 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 46 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 46 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

4. North Norfolk Council Size - LGBCE (16)57

It had been agreed to review North Norfolk due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 47 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 48 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size decrease by eight from 48 to 40 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 40 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 40 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

5. Taunton Deane Council Size - LGBCE (16)58

It had been agreed to review Taunton Deane Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 42 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 56 members.

The Commission received two submissions, one from the Taunton Deane Borough Council proposing 43 members, and one from the Churchstanton Parish Council proposing 42 members. There was good evidence from the Borough Council about how a reduction of this size would work practically.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size decrease by 13 from 56 to 43 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 43 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 43 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

6. Southwark Final Recommendations – LGBC (16)59

The review of Southwark London Borough had commenced on 18 August 2015. According to the latest available electoral figures, 43 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 August 2015, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 63 and had subsequently, 19 January 2016, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 80 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Commission for consideration.

Three-quarters of the submissions received opposed the Half Moon and Dulwich Village wards. Others were more localised comments.

Half Moon and Dulwich Village were two single member wards in the draft recommendations. Submissions received recommended joining the wards to create a two-member ward which better represented the area and secures better electoral equality. Other amendments were made in respect of ward name changes that were made to support local names used within the area.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 17 three- and six two-member wards in total.

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.

Agreed
Final Recommendations for Southwark London Borough as presented.

The Commission noted the new format of the report which was being piloted with this review and approved of its greater clarity and accessibility. They expressed their thanks to Lucy Ward (Review Manager) and others involved in putting together the new style which would be gradually introduced for all reviews.

7. Chair's Report

The Chair updated Commissioners on:

- Appointments

Agreement of the Speakers Committee to begin the new recruitment exercise has been approved.

Progress on Peter Knight's reappointment

- Meetings

The large number of Council meetings/briefings coming up over the coming months which would have workload implications for Commissioners and the team.

8. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive has appointed a new Review Officer. Dan Carlsson-Hyslop has previous local government experience and will be joining us on August 1 2016.

9. Chair of Audit & Risk Committee – Record of signing of minutes of Audit & Risk Committee Meeting of 17 May 2016 – LGBCE (16)60

These were agreed and signed.

10. 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 20 June 2016.

Highlights included:

- NAO provided their audit report on accounts. There are minor adjustments to be made.
- Discussed the level of involvement of the NAO requiring a significant staff commitment to complete the accounts. There was a proportionality issue given the size of the Commission.
- The audit should be considerably less involved in 2016/2017. There are no plans for a VFM audit over the next 12 months.
- Scheme of Delegation: the improved version, assisted by Commissioner Alison Lowton's input, was acknowledged by the committee but further work will need to be undertaken in respect of the roles of the Chair, the CEX and Commissioners.
- The Progress report on the Audit & Risk Committee Plan required more depth than simply a summary of activity

- Update on Equalities & Diversity. Committee felt a time line for the action plan was required and further progress should not wait until the next Committee meeting. The Equalities & Diversity Working Group is to keep the Committee informed with a timeline and clear target, and deadlines for actions.
- Plan on employment was signed off
- Risk Register and Report was well received. The Committee are to keep an oversight on how it's developing
- Risk register was good at identifying mitigation, however the Committee would like it to be more action oriented rather than process driven.
- The Internal Audit Recommendations log was noted
- Recruitment of Independent Member is underway (Elizabeth Butler's term ends in August 2016).
- Transparency of minutes should be reviewed in terms of how they are recorded and put on the website.

11. Annual Report of Audit & Risk Committee – LGBCE (16)61

The report was noted by all members of the Commission.

Highlighted points were:

- The roles of member of the A&R Committee were clarified in relation to risk.
- Innovation of the workshop for the audit plan in 2016/2017. This was held in January 2016.
- Internal Audit Recommendations were well implemented with 87% complete and 10% ongoing.
- Preliminary work on the draft Annual Report and Accounts including suggestions for improvements to the structure which were actioned.
- Received a positive response on the VFM report from the NAO on Back Office and Relocation Project.
- Agreed that virtual presence at a meeting counts as presence in terms of quoracy.

Tony Redmond was thanked for the work he has done during his time as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Elizabeth Butler was thanked for her hard work during her time as independent member of the Audit & Risk Committee.

Alison Lowton was welcomed as the new Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee.

12. Finance Director's Report – LGBCE (16)62 Annual Report & Accounts

The Annual Report and Accounts was considered by the Audit and Risk Committee on June 20 2016 prior to presenting it to the Commission for signing by the Chief Executive.

The laying date for the Annual Report and Accounts will be 4 July 2016.

In April an underspend of £74k was presented. This has been reduced to £72k during the audit process.

There were still some minor presentational amendments to be undertaken but these do not affect the financials.

Draft comments on the management letter on the NAO.

Lynn Ingram (Director of Finance) and Karen Cleverly (Business Support Officer) were thanked for their work they completed on the annual accounts while undergoing Audit.

Agreed

Annual Report and Accounts approved by the Commission with minor amendments as noted.

13. Future Business – LGBCE (16)63

No comments on future business

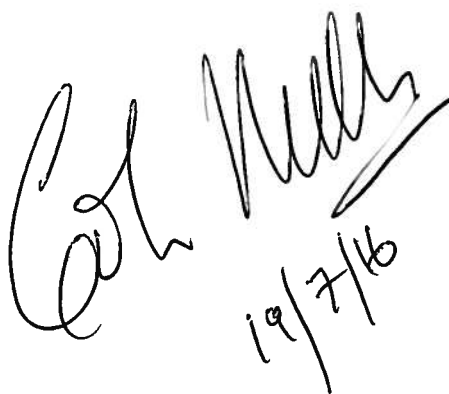
AOB

Outcomes of the Strategy Day held on May 16 2016 are being incorporated into the 2016/2017 Business Plan which will be presented at the July Commission Meeting.

Revised Scheme of Delegation will also be presented at the July Commission Meeting.

Close of Business

13:10

Handwritten signature and date. The signature is written in cursive and appears to be 'Col Mills'. Below the signature, the date '19/7/16' is written in a similar cursive style.