

LGBCE (14)4th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 8 April 2014, at 9:30am, 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
Professor Paul Wiles CB
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance
Marcus Bowell	Communications Manager
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
Mark Cooper	Review Officer
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Sir Tony Redmond and Alison Lowton.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 18 March 2014

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Baker Tilly - Process Review Final Report - LGBCE (14)45

Baker Tilly presented a number of recommendations from their final report to the Commission on the Business Process Re-engineering Project. The report was intended to be the beginning of a process whereby the Commission might consider whether it wished to implement the recommendations fully, partially or in an amended form.

The Commission acknowledged the recommendations made and requested that officers produce a formal report for the next Commission meeting setting out the implications of the recommendations in terms of: validation of savings achievable, resources needed to complete, their deliverability, implementation programmes, etc.

2. Operational Report - LGBCE (14)46

The Director of Reviews presented the Operational Report for April. The content of the report was noted.

3. Broxtowe Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)47

The review of Broxtowe Borough Council had commenced in February 2013. According to the latest electoral figures one ward (Eastwood North & Greasley Beauvale) had 36% fewer electors than the borough average.

At its meeting in December 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 44 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 six three-member wards, 12 two-member wards, and two single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the 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 Broxtowe Borough Council as presented.

4. Lichfield Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)47

The review of Lichfield District Council had commenced in October 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting in November 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 47 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, nine two-member wards, and five single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the 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 Lichfield District Council as presented.

5. Warwickshire Council Size – LGBCE (14)49

It had been agreed to review Warwickshire County Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in April 2014. According to the latest electoral figures, 52 per cent of divisions 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 62 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size changing to 57 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 57 members. In doing so, however, it was noted that the Council's proposed council size did not provide the best allocation of members across the county on a district-by-district basis. Accordingly, the Commission agreed that the Council be informed of this concern about allocation in order to alert them to the possibility of change to the council size if scheming proved difficult.

Agreed

- The Commission agreed that a council size of 57 be used as the basis for consultation on division patterns.
- The Commission agreed that it would consider its approach to the allocation of councillors across districts during county council reviews, and how this should be communicated, in a future policy paper.

6. Hertfordshire Council Size – LGBCE (14)50

It had been agreed to review Hertfordshire County Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in October 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 34 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent with one division (Hatfield North) being 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 77 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size remaining at 77 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 77 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 77 be used as the basis for consultation.

7. North Hertfordshire Related Alteration – LGBCE (14)51

The Commission considered the content of the North Hertfordshire Related Alterations paper. It was minded not to agree to the related alteration as North Hertfordshire already met the Commission's intervention criteria and the requested alteration would increase the level of electoral imbalance.

Agreed

That the Commission did not agree to the making of an Order implementing the related alteration.

8. Chair's Report

The Chair updated the Commission on the recent Speaker's Committee meeting that he and the Chief Executive had attended. In the event, they had not been called on

to give evidence and the Committee had approved the 2014/15 corporate plan and estimate without further scrutiny.

The Chair and the Chief Executive would be meeting Brandon Lewis MP. The Chair informed the Commission of the items he wished to raise at the meeting. Commissioners noted the Chair's suggested topics.

9. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive invited the Review and Programme Manager to provide a brief update on the Review Programme timetable for 2014-15 and proposals for populating the remaining programme slots. Manchester, Preston, Redcar and Cleveland were likely to be included in the programme. Authorities that had previously requested reviews would be approached to see if they were interested in the review being brought forward.

The Chief Executive noted the appointment of the new Commissioner, Alison Lowton, who had come in for an initial meeting with the Chair and himself on 1 April. Alison had not been available for the April meeting, and would attend her first Commission meeting in May.

10. New and Emerging Risks

The Commission had nothing to report.

11. Risk Update

The Corporate & Committee Services Manager advised the Commission that the next scheduled Risk Manager's Group meeting would take place before Easter. This meeting would identify whether any new risks had emerged, review existing risks and risk scores, and check assurances. A report outlining the outcome of this review would be presented to the Audit Committee in May, and an oral report would be provided to the May Commission meeting.

12. Finance and Performance Report – End of Year - LGBCE (14)52

The Finance Director presented the End of Year Finance and Performance Report for 2013-14. Highlights taken from the report included:

- An overall underspend of 177k. This figure was in line with the Commission's expectations throughout the year.
- A Supplementary Estimate had been submitted to raise the Commission's capital to £95k. This had enabled the development of the new LGBCE website and portal, allowed the enhancement of the use of social media, and purchased a replacement Designjet plotter printer.

- The Commissioner budget was underspent, largely due to delays in the appointment of the new Commissioner, who had been expected to start work with the Commission earlier in the year.
- Following comments from Commissioners on the importance of staff development, there had been a real focus on staff training which accounted for the small overspend in the training budget.
- The Draft Annual Report would be presented to the Audit Committee meeting on 19 May, and to the Commission at its meeting the following day. The final version of the Annual Report would be presented for authorisation to the Commission at its meeting in June.

13. Future Business – LGBCE (14)53

The content of the Future Business paper was noted. Items to be added to the paper included:

- An officers' report on the Baker Tilly Business Process Re-Engineering recommendations.
- The new Chief Executive interviews.

The Commission was reminded that a policy workshop was scheduled on 19 May. It was agreed that this would be an appropriate time to discuss the final report from Baker Tilly and the Draft Annual Report and Accounts.

14. Relocation and Back Office Project - LGBCE (14)54

The Chair reminded the Commission that a steering group had been formed to steer the project to relocate the Commission and reframe its supporting services. Other Commissioners were welcome to feed in views. It would be prudent to take into account the recommendations in Baker Tilly's final report before making any formal decisions.

AOB

The Commission expressed an interest in receiving meeting papers in electronic format, although maps would continue to be circulated in printed format. The Corporate and Committee Services Team would put in place the necessary technology in order to facilitate this and liaise with Commissioners individually in order to implement.

Close of Business 12:15



Chair

20 May 2014