

## LGBCE (15)9th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, at 10.15am, in Altitude 360, 29<sup>th</sup> Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

### Commissioners Present

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Alison Lowton  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Finance Director
Marcus Bowell	Communications Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Alison Evison	Review and Programme Manager
Lucy Ward	Review Officer (item 5)
Emily Starkie	Review Officer (item 6)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (item 7)
Karen Cleverly	Business Support Officer (minutes)

## Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Sir Tony Redmond. Sir Tony had sent comments on some of the agenda items which were made known to the Commission as appropriate.

## Declarations of interest

The Chair declared an interest in item 7, Kent, and took no part in the discussions of that item. Alison Lowton declared an interest in Rotherham and Peter Knight declared an interest in Birmingham, both of which were referred to in the Operational Report. The Finance Director declared an interest item 4, Devon, and took no part in the discussions of that item.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 18 August 2015

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)87

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

Schedules would need to be confirmed for a number of areas that had requested a review.

An enquiry had been received from the Isles of Scilly and a decision was needed on whether to carry out a review. The Review and Programme Manager explained that the Isles had not fallen within the Commission's (or its predecessor body's) area of responsibility until 2009. Consequently, a review had not been carried out since 1982. It was confirmed that the area met the Commission's criteria for intervention and Commissioners agreed that a review should be carried out.

Commissioners noted the timetable for the laying of Orders for Warrington, Watford and Welwyn Hatfield and the implications for the review schedules. Officers believed that these were deliverable and advised that the Orders were likely to be made early in 2016 and within statutory timescales.

The Commission requested that the names of the appropriate Review Managers and Review Officers were added to the Operational Report in future.

A list of priorities arising from the recent strategic planning event had been circulated and it was agreed that this would be developed into a detailed work programme showing links between the different activities.

Finally, the Chief Executive reported that further meetings had been arranged with Professor Colin Copus regarding the work on council size, and with Southampton University regarding mapping and community identity.

#### **Agreed**

- To carry out a review of the Isles of Scilly.
- That the names of Review Managers and Review Officers would be added to the Operational Report.
- That the priorities arising from the strategic planning event would be developed into a detailed work programme.

## 2. East Sussex Council Size - LGBCE (15)88

It had been agreed to carry out an electoral review of East Sussex County Council as a coordinated process in conjunction with each of the five districts within the county.

According to the latest available electoral figures, East Sussex County met the Commission's intervention criteria, and would have been subject to an electoral review before the next election in 2017. In addition, two of the districts - Wealden and Hastings - also met the criteria. Electorate growth trends for Lewes indicated that it would meet the review criteria within a few years. The figures are outlined in the following table:

Local Authority	Type of Review	Imbalance	Governance	Previous Review
East Sussex County Council	Intervention	34%	Leader and Cabinet model	2004
Eastbourne Borough Council	Request	11%	Leader and Cabinet model	2001
Hastings Borough Council	Intervention	38%	Strong leader	2001
Lewes District Council	Request	29%	Leader and Cabinet model	2001
Rother District Council	Request	20%	Strong leader	2001
Wealden District Council	Intervention	26% (outlier 30%)	Leader and Cabinet model	2001

The current size of each of the Councils is:

East Sussex County	49 members
Eastbourne Borough Council	27 members.
Hastings Borough Council	32 members.
Lewes District Council	41 members.
Rother District Council	38 members.
Wealden District Council	55 members.

Having considered the evidence provided by each of the Councils being reviewed, the team recommended the following council sizes:

Local Authority	Current Council Size	Recommended Council Size	Change	Within Nearest Neighbour Range?
East Sussex County Council	49	50	Increase of 1	Yes
Eastbourne Borough Council	27	27	No change	Yes
Hastings Borough Council	32	32	No change	Yes
Lewes District Council	41	41	No change	Yes
Rother District Council	38	38	No change	Yes
Wealden District Council	55	45	Reduction of 10	Yes

The team also recommended that the Commission invites the local authorities in the area to submit proposals for a pattern of electoral divisions and wards.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support the recommended council sizes.

**Agreed**

That the following council sizes would be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations:

East Sussex County	50 members
Eastbourne Borough Council	27 members.
Hastings Borough Council	32 members.
Lewes District Council	41 members.
Rother District Council	38 members.
Wealden District Council	45 members.

That the local authorities in the area would be invited to submit proposals for a pattern of electoral divisions and wards.

It was also agreed that it would be helpful to capture lessons from the review process as it progressed so that they could be combined into a summary report that might inform similar approaches in the future.

### **3. Leicestershire Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (15)89**

The Commission agreed to defer consideration of the review of Leicestershire County Council until October 2015 when the lead Commissioner, Sir Tony Redmond, would be present.

### **4. Devon Final Recommendations – LGBCE (15)90**

The review of Devon County Council had commenced on 21 October 2014. According to the latest available electoral figures, 39 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 October 2014, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 60 and had subsequently, on 17 March 2015, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 199 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.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of two two-member, and 56 single-member divisions in total. They invited the Commission to consider the need for further limited consultation in East Devon and North Devon and a number of division name changes.

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.

Taking all of the submissions into account, the Commission agreed that there was sufficient evidence to undertake a period of further limited consultation focusing on the proposals for the North Devon area before the Commission published its Final Recommendations. In the case of East Devon, the Commission did not consider that there was sufficient persuasive evidence to undertake a period of further consultation.

In all other areas the Commission agreed the Final Recommendations as presented although they decided a name change from Budleigh Salterton Coastal to Exmouth & Budleigh Salterton in East Devon.

## **Agreed**

The Final Recommendations as presented, subject to a period of further limited consultation focusing on the area of North Devon.

The change of name of Budleigh Salterton Coastal to Exmouth & Budleigh Salterton.

### **5. Dorset Final Recommendations – LGBCE (15)91**

The review of Dorset County Council had commenced on 16 September 2014. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 September 2014, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 46 and had subsequently, on 17 February 2015, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 68 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.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of six two-member, and 34 single-member divisions in total. They invited consideration of the need for further limited consultation in Purbeck following the receipt of submissions which proposed alternative division arrangements, which were considered to provide better boundaries than the Commission's draft proposals while ensuring electoral equality.

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.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it was considered that there was sufficient evidence to modify the pattern of divisions in Purbeck District and include these forward as the Commission's Final Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations in all other areas as presented.

## **Agreed**

The Final Recommendations as presented, including the modifications in the Purbeck area.

## **6. Exeter Final Recommendations – LGBCE (15)92**

The review of Exeter City Council had commenced on 27 January 2015. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. Three wards had variances greater than 20 per cent with one ward, Topsham, projected to have a variance of 50% by 2020.

At its meeting on 27 January 2015, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 39 and had subsequently, on 19 May 2015, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 56 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.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 13 three-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 Exeter City Council as presented.

## **7. Kent Final Recommendations – LGBCE (15)93**

*The Deputy Chair chaired this item given that the Chair had declared a conflict of interest*

The review of Kent County Council had commenced on 18 November 2014. According to the latest available electoral figures, 31 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 November 2014 the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 81 and had subsequently, on 21 April 2015, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 157 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.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of nine two-member, and 63 single-member divisions in total and a period of further consultation in the Sevenoaks area.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it was considered that there was sufficient evidence to undertake a period of further limited consultation focusing on the proposals for the Sevenoaks area before the Commission published its Final Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations in all other areas as presented.

**Agreed**

A period of further limited consultation focusing on the area of Sevenoaks.

The Final Recommendations as presented in other areas.

## 8. Middlesbrough Consent – LGBCE (15)94

This consent case had been referred to the Commission following a request by Middlesbrough Borough Council to rename Kader ward as Kader & Brookfield Ward. Officers did not consider that persuasive evidence in support of the request had been provided and recommended that the Commission did not give consent for the change.

**Agreed**

The Commission decided not to grant consent for the proposed ward name change.

## 9. Chair's Report

The Chair advised that he would try to obtain an update on the confirmation of the appointment of the two new Commissioners later that week. He had nothing further to report.



## 10. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive advised that there would be a farewell dinner for Dr Peter Knight, who was stepping down from the Commission on the evening before the December Commission meeting.

Alison Lowton advised that she would be unable to attend and offered her apologies.

## 11. Finance Director's Report

The Finance Director advised that the financial report for the second quarter of 2015/16 would be brought to the October Commission meeting.

The process for agreeing the Commission's budget was not clear because the Speaker's Committee was not yet confirmed. The Commission requested that a costed forward options report was prepared for its October or November meeting.

## 12. Relocation & Back Office Services Project Update

The Finance Director gave an oral update on the relocation and back office services project.

The final relocation and back office steering group meeting would be held in October with any further issues arising from the project being considered by the Commission.

Following discussions with the Chair, LGBCE's IT provider had been asked to implement a mobile device management solution which would fulfil all Commissioners' IT needs. However, it had not been possible to find a cost effective solution that could synchronise several separate email accounts and calendars as well as giving calendar access to LGBCE staff.

After discussion, Commissioners agreed that their prime requirements were for their LGBCE email account to automatically forward to another nominated email account. They were content to maintain their own calendars and did not wish LGBCE staff to have access. However, it was stressed that more advance notice of appointments was required and that there should be a routine and consistent approach to identifying and notifying forward review meeting schedules.

It was acknowledged that the Chair may need a more tailored solution.

### **Agreed**

The email forwarding arrangements for Commissioners would be expedited and the Chief Executive would ensure that forward diary schedules are made in a timely manner. A separate IT solution for the Chair would be explored.

13. Future Business – LGBCE (15)95

The future business of the Commission was noted.

**AOB**

It was agreed that the proposed meeting with the Local Government Association would be arranged as soon as possible. The Chair, Deputy Chair and the Chief Executive would attend.

**Close of Business 12:20**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' followed by a long horizontal stroke.