

## LGBCE (17)6th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 20 June 2017, 29<sup>th</sup> Floor, Millbank Tower,  
Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

### Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)  
Sir Tony Redmond (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL  
Alison Lowton  
Peter Maddison

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance & Resources
Marcus Bowell	Director of Strategy & Communications
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jo Porter	Review Manager
Lucy Dunkeyson	Review Manager
David Owen	Review Officer (item 3)
Laura Taylor	Review Officer (item 4)
Dan Carlsson-Hyslop	Review Officer (item 5)
Emily Starkie	Review Officer (item 6)
Alex Hinds	Review Officer (item 7)
Dean Faccini	Business Support Officer (minutes)

## Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

## Declarations of interest

Alison Lowton declared an interest in item 3. Rotherham Draft Recommendations, and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Jo Porter declared an interest in item 6. Croydon Final Recommendations, and took no part in the discussion of that item.

## Point of order

The Commission congratulated the Chair who was awarded an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 16 May 2017

The minutes were agreed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

## Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

## Action from the previous Commission meeting

There were two outstanding actions.

An update was given on the Equalities Impact Analysis (EIA) for the review process, in particular, screening of the draft and final recommendations. The Audit and Risk Committee would receive a final report at its meeting in October.

The Commission would receive a progress report on the work being done against the key performance indicators (KPIs) at its meeting in November.

### 1. Operational Report - LGBCE (16)63

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

An update was given on the Torbay electoral review. The council is currently in the process of reviewing its operations and the services it provides. The electoral review will continue as planned and the Chief Executive will inform the Commission should anything substantive emerge from the council that could impact the review.

West Oxfordshire District Council are carrying out some preliminary work before deciding whether to make a formal request for a review.

The Commission has received three Freedom of Information requests in relation to the Manchester City review. The requests focus on the number of late submissions received and the opportunities that had been afforded for consultation.

An MP had expressed a concern about the final recommendations for South Norfolk.

A catch up meeting between the Chief Executive and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had been scheduled for next week.

The Chair and Chief Executive had attended a useful meeting with the two West Suffolk District Councils who were at the early stages of putting together a proposal for a potential merger. The council aims to submit a proposal to DCLG in the early autumn.

The Chair and the Chief Executive had scheduled meetings with council representatives at Dover District Council and Rugby Borough Council. It was agreed that Alison Lowton would be appointed Lead Commissioner for the electoral review of Dover and Sir Tony Redmond would be appointed Lead Commissioner for the electoral review of Rugby.

## 2. Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Council Size - LGBCE (17)64

It had been agreed to review Borough of King's Lynn & West Norfolk due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, one ward, Brancaster, had a variance of 31 per cent.

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 that the council size decrease by 8 from 62 to 54 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 54 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 54 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

## 3. Rotherham Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (17)65

The review of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council had commenced on 21 February 2017 following the decision to change the Council's electoral cycle. According to the latest available electoral figures, two wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 February 2017, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 59 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 9 three-, and 16 two-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council presented.

#### 4. Tewkesbury Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (17)66

The review of Tewkesbury Borough Council had commenced on 20 December 2016. According to the December 2015 electorate figures, 32 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 December 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 38 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 three three-, 12 two- and five single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Tewkesbury Borough Council as presented.

#### 5. Tendring Final Recommendations - LGBCE (17)67

The review of Tendring District Council had commenced on 18 October 2016 following a request from the Council. According to the latest available electoral figures, 11 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Brightlingsea, having a variance of 17 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 October 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 48 and had subsequently, on 21 February 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 22 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, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, 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 three-, 12 two-, and 18 single-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 Tendring District Council as presented.

## 6. Croydon Final Recommendations - LGBCE (17)68

The review of Croydon Borough Council had commenced on 20 September 2016 following a request from the Council. According to the latest available electoral figures, 21 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 September 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 70 and had subsequently, on 21 February 2017, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 457 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, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, 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 Commission noted that the Chief Executive of the Council had raised some concerns and the Commission took the view that it was important that the report on the final recommendations also addressed the specific concerns raised in this correspondence.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 15 three-, 12 two-, and one single-member ward 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 Croydon Borough Council as presented.

## 7. Harborough Final Recommendations - LGBCE (17)69

The review of Harborough District Council had commenced on 18 October 2016 following a request from the Council. According to the latest available electoral figures, 44 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. Broughton Astley-Primethorpe ward has 29 per cent fewer electors per councillor than the average

At its meeting on 18 October 2016, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 34 and had subsequently, on 21 February, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 16 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, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, 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 three, three-, nine two-, and seven single-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 Harborough District Council as presented.

## 8. Outline Five Year Plan - LGBCE (17)70

At its meeting in May 2017, the Commission agreed to the Future Work Programme, a programme of review work that covers a three-year period from 2018/19 to 2020/21. The Outline Five-year Plan confirms the programme for the three year period and sets out the programme for the final two years.

The five-year programme will undertake the following types of electoral reviews:

- Intervention reviews
- Request reviews
- London Boroughs
- Metropolitan Boroughs

The five-year plan would enable the Commission to:

- Achieve its strategic objectives of keeping the map of local government in good repair, combining requests, reviews that meet the intervention criteria and reviews in areas where a review has not taken place in the last 12 years.
- Articulate to the Speaker's Committee that the Commission has a full programme for electoral reviews over the next five years
- Demonstrate to the Treasury that the Commission has a full five-year review programme

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed to the Five-year Work Programme for 2018/19-2022/23

## **9. Chair's Report**

The Chair advised the Commission that it was hoped a date for the meeting with senior DCLG officials would be confirmed shortly.

An update was given on the Commissioner recruitment process. The Chair had been advised that, following the purdah period, the Secretary of State has now received a request to formally approve the appointment of new Commissioners.

The Chair suggested that it would be helpful to clarify responsibilities for policy approval and refresh and it was agreed to add this item to the July meeting agenda.

## **10. Chief Executive's Report**

The Chief Executive updated the Commission on the new structure of the Speaker's Committee following the recent general election.

The Chief Executive and the Finance and Resources Director will be scheduling a 'keep in touch' meeting with the Treasury.

## **11. Finance and Resources Director's Report Approval of Annual Report & Accounts - LGBCE (17)71**

### **Finance update**

The Finance and Resources Director (FRD) advised the Commission that attempts to recover a missing delivery of staff and Commissioner P60s had not been successful. As a result, the FRD would report the missing P60s to the Information Commissioner. All reasonable steps to recover the P60s had been made by LGBCE Officers but, as the previous payroll provider did not use a trackable method of delivery, locating the missing delivery proved difficult.

The Commission had since moved to new payroll provider which commenced at the beginning of April 2017. Under the new provider, all pay slips would be emailed to staff.

## **Final accounts**

The Commission was asked to agree the Annual Report and Accounts.

The National Audit Office (NAO) had concluded its audit of the accounts and issued an Audit Completion Report which included the Audit Certificate and the Letter of Representation.

Three issues were raised by the NAO in the Audit Completion report. They were:

- The incorrect treatment of employer deduction payments for £26k for March's payroll (they were treated as an outstanding item on the bank reconciliation rather than a non-trade creditor).
- The treatment of the 6 month free period for the Millbank Tower lease since 2014/15 – leading to a £6k unadjusted error.
- The Commission has a number of assets that are fully depreciated and in reviewing their useful economic life the NAO felt that there was an overstatement of depreciation of £27k. No adjustment was required.

The Audit and Risk Committee had considered the accounts on two occasions, once at the draft stage and then again earlier this morning in its final draft. The Committee had recommended to the Commission that it approved the Annual Report and Accounts and agreed to a signing date of 20 June 2017.

The Commission agreed to the Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/17. The Chief Executive, in his role as Accounting Officer, would sign the Accounts and Letter of Representation. This would ensure that the Commission achieved its target of laying the Annual Report before July.

## **12. Audit & Risk Committee Chair's Report**

The Audit and Risk Committee Chair provided an update on the Audit and Risk Committee (A&RC) meeting held earlier that morning.

In its meeting, the Committee had:

- considered and agreed to the Annual Report and Accounts for 2016/17
- looked at the action plan from its Review of Effectiveness
- reviewed the Commission's revised Freedom of Information policy
- reviewed the Audit Recommendations Log
- received a progress report on equalities and diversity
- discussed performance management and the Commission's KPIs
- discussed the Commission's budget build-up and what could be done to improve this process for the next financial year.



### 13. Audit & Risk Committee minutes (May) - LGBCE (17)72

The Commission noted the minutes from the May Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

### 14. Annual Report of Audit & Risk Committee - LGBCE (17)73

The Audit and Risk Committee Chair provided a summary of the Committee's achievements over the past 12 months.

The summary included:

- The Chair was pleased to announce that it had been a successful year for the Committee which had undergone a number of changes to its personnel with appointments made to the position of Chair, the position of the Independent Member and the selection of new internal auditors.
- A number of processes initiated by the Committee were successfully carried out. These included:
  - a review of the Committee's effectiveness,
  - regularly assessing achievements against its plan,
  - reporting formally to the Commission on its activities,
  - implementing an Induction Process for new committee members; and
  - reviewing its Terms of Reference.
- Risk Management was something the Committee had looked closely at as both the A&RC plan and Internal Audit Plan were based around the risk register. The Committee had also commissioned the Risk Appetite workshop and would look closely at the work being done to refrain the risks on the current risk register
- The Committee had championed equalities work across the Commission and would continue to do so.
- The Committee had reviewed nine policies.
- All planned activities in relation to the internal audit had been completed. 86% of audit recommendations were implemented during the year.

The Chair gave assurance to the Commission that the Audit and Risk Committee had been efficient in performing its duties and carrying out its responsibilities.

#### **Agreed**

The Chair and the Audit & Risk Committee were thanked by the Commission for all their hard work over the past 12 months.

15. Future Business - LGBCE (17)74

The Future Business document was noted.

AOB

There were no other items.

**Close of Business 15:35**

*Cook Nelly*