

## LGBCE (12) 11th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 13 November 2012, 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  
Professor Paul Wiles CB  
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE  
Sir Tony Redmond

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Richard Buck	Review & Programme Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Jessica Metherringham	Review Manager
Danny Edwards	Review Manager
Marcus Howell	Communications Manager
Simon Keal	Review Officer
Mark Pascoe	Review Officer
Daniel Knag	Review Officer
Lucy Ward	Review Officer
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant (minutes)

### Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

### Declarations of interest:

No declarations of interest were received.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 10 October 2012

The minutes of the 10 October Commission meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

### Matters Arising

The Chair informed the Commission that he had met Damien Collins, MP for Folkestone and Hythe, to discuss the Shepway review.

#### 1. Operational Report - LGBCE (12)147

The Director of Reviews informed the Commission that the Hackney final recommendations would be presented at the next Commission meeting. Subject to the Commission's views, there was likely to be a need for some further limited consultation on ward patterns in specific parts of the borough. This would mean that the final recommendations would not be published until the next financial year.

A Prayer has been laid against the electoral change order for Cumbria. The 40-day laying period ends week ending Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

#### 2. Response to DCLG Consultation on Parishes and Alternative Approaches to Reviewing Tiers – LGBCE (12)148

The Commission discussed the lines of a response to the DCLG consultation on parishes, and alternative approaches to reviewing tiers. Commissioners noted that there would be possible benefits to councils, and their electors, and to the LGBCE itself in its playing a greater part in parish work, so long as any new work was adequately resourced. It would also facilitate resolution of problems which can arise in district reviews where the underlying foundation of parishes is missing or poorly aligned with what is needed at ward level. The key point would be the scale and practicalities of any new arrangements, alongside holding to LGBCE's already planned and agreed programme.

#### **Agreed**

That the Director of Reviews prepares a draft response to the consultation for Commissioners to consider at the next meeting. The response would be finalised at the Commission's January 2013 meeting.

### 3. East Lindsey Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (12)149

It had been agreed to review East Lindsey Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 31 percent 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 60 members.

At its meeting in August 2012 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. The Commission decided to consult on a change in council size to 55 members. The consultation ended on 15 October 2012.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 55 members.

#### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 55 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

### 4. Middlesbrough Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (12)150

It had been agreed to review Middlesbrough Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in December 2011. According to the latest electoral figures, 30 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent and Middlehaven ward had a variance of -35%.

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 48 members.

At its meeting in June 2012 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. The Commission decided to consult on a change in council size to 46 members. The consultation ended on 6 August 2012.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 46 members.

#### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 46 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

## 5. Vale of White Horse Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (12)151

The Commission formally agreed the modifications to the draft recommendations in correspondence.

### **Agreed**

That the modified draft recommendations be confirmed.

That the Director of Reviews considers options for ensuring the accuracy of the electoral data received from local authorities.

## 6. King's Lynn & West Norfolk Related Alterations - LGBCE (12)152

The Commission considered the content of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Related Alterations paper.

### **Agreed**

An order be drafted to implement the related alternations for King's Lynn & West Norfolk as proposed in the report.

## 7. Chair's Report (oral)

The Chair reported on his meeting with Brandon Lewis, the DCLG Minister responsible for local government matters, which had been constructive. Both parties had agreed that it would be useful to keep in touch through officials and to meet again in the New Year. He would be meeting the Permanent Secretary of the Department shortly. He would not be available for the December meeting, because he had been called upon to serve as part of a Commonwealth observation mission in respect of the forthcoming elections in Ghana.

## 8. Chief Executive's Report (oral)

The Chief Executive informed the Commission that the National Audit Office had identified the current vacancy of the Finance Director as a risk area in its latest report to the Audit Committee. The Chief Executive acknowledged that

the loss of a capable and experienced member of the team was indeed a risk, but assured the Commission that measures were in place to safeguard the essentials of LGBCE's financial control, along with appropriate reporting functions, pending the appointment of a successor.

The NAO Value for Money study also indicated the importance of staff costing and the recording of staff time. Much progress had been made in this area and further enhancements were intended. It was important that the data were properly contextualised in its formal presentation and, along with other colleagues, he would be liaising with NAO on this aspect.

The Chief Executive noted that the Commission is currently working through a heavy patch in the enhanced review work programme, whilst efforts are also being made to improve and streamline how we do our current business in future. The workload was challenging and any potential proposals about future new business – such as arising from the discussion of the DCLG paper on parishes – add a further dimension. It is therefore important the Commission recognises the risks and is ready to re-prioritise where necessary.

## 9. Audit Committee Report (oral)

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on business at the Audit Committee meeting the previous day.

## 10. Future Business - LGBCE (12)146

The Commission noted the schedule.

**11:20am Meeting Closed**