

LGBCE (13) 5th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 21 May 2013, 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

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Marcus Howell	Communications Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jessica Metheringham	Review Manager
Simon Keal	Review Officer
Richard Otterway	Review Officer
Arion Lawrence	Review Officer
Daniel Knag	Review Officer
William Morrison	Review Officer
Alex Hinds	Review Officer
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were given to Lynn Ingram, Finance Director and Sarah Vallotton, Business & Committee Services Manager. The Chair wished Sarah a speedy recovery.

Before the meeting commenced, the Chair welcomed back Alison Evison, Review & Programme Manager, from maternity leave.

Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were given.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 12 April 2013

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

It was agreed that the agreed actions for item 9 and item 16 from the Commission minutes for April should be progressed as matters of priority.

The Chief Executive confirmed that steps were being taken to ensure that the Commission had access to information on these matters before the August Commission meeting.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (13)67

The Director of Reviews updated the Commission on the prospective reviews of Bristol and Liverpool, and on the Doncaster review.

2. West Dorset Council Size - LGBCE (13)68

It had been agreed to review West Dorset District Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in February 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent 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 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 the council size changing to 43 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it agreed to consult on a council size of 43 members.

Agreed

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

3. Leicester Council Size - LGBCE (13)69

It had been agreed to review Leicester City Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in November 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent 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 54 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 54 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were 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 consultation.

4. Cotswold Council Size - LGBCE (13)70

It had been agreed to review Cotswold at the request of the authority. The authority had also requested a single-member ward review. The review had commenced in November 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 11 per cent 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 44 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 35 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 35 members.

Agreed

- The Commission agreed that a council size of 35 be used as the basis for consultation. The Commission also agreed to the request for a single-member ward review.
- That the Review Teams consider preparing a set of guidelines when responding to single member ward requests from local authorities. These guidelines will form part of the Technical Guidance.

5. Erewash Council Size - LGBCE (13)71

It had been agreed to review Erewash Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent 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 51 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that, on balance, there was sufficient evidence to support the council size changing to 43 members although it was noted that an alternative number, 47, had also been suggested .

The Commission considered all the available evidence. In doing so, they noted that, whilst both parties had indicated that there should be a reduction, there were different views (both supported by evidence) about the new council size.

The Commission noted the balance of arguments and, on the basis of the evidence submitted, agreed to a structured consultation on both council sizes put forward, i.e. 43 and 47 members

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 43 and 47 be used as the basis for structured consultation

6. Newark & Sherwood District Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)72

It had been agreed to review Newark & Sherwood District Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in July 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent 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 46 members.

At its meeting in February 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. Given the change proposed, the Commission had decided to consult on the issue of council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 38 members. The consultation ended on April 2013.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 38 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 38 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

7. South Kesteven Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)73

It had been agreed to review South Kesteven District Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in August 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 38 per cent 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 58 members.

At its meeting in February 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. Given the change proposed, the Commission had decided to consult on the issue of council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 55 members. The consultation ended on April 2013.

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.

8. South Ribble Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)74

It had been agreed to review South Ribble Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in September 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 per cent 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 55 members.

At its meeting in February 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. Given the change proposed, the Commission had decided to consult on the issue of council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 50 members. The consultation ended on May 2013.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted they were minded to support a council size of 50 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 50 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

9. Stratford-on-Avon Council Size Post Consultation - LGBCE (13)75

It had been agreed to review Stratford-on-Avon District Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in October 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 29 per cent 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 53 members.

At its meeting in October 2012 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. Given the change proposed, the Commission had decided to consult on the issue of council size. The Commission sought views on a change in council size to 36 members. The consultation ended on April 2013.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 36 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 36 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

10. Wyre Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13)76

The review of Wyre Borough Council had commenced on October 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 31 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward being 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 15 January 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 50 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, 14 two-member, and four single-member wards.

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 with modifications to the boundary between Jubilee and Rossall wards to better reflect local communities.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Wyre Council as modified.

11. Telford & Wrekin Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13)77

The review of Telford & Wrekin had commenced on June 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 39 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on January 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 54 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 thirteen two-member wards, and ten single-member wards.

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 with the modification that the name of Madeley & Cuckoo Oak was changed to Madeley.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin as modified.

12. Shepway Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13)78

The review of Shepway District Council had commenced on April 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward being over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on October 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 30 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 five three-member, seven two-member, and one single-member wards.

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

The Commission considered the draft recommendations for parish electoral arrangements. Folkestone Town Council proposed an increase in the number of town councillors from 18 to 25. The Commission agreed that for the purpose of the draft recommendations, Folkestone Town Council should return to 18 town councillors.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Shepway District Council as modified with regards to parish electoral arrangements.

13. Selby Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13)79

The review of Selby Council had commenced on April 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, three wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on January 2013, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 31 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 four three-member, 13 two-member, and three single-member wards.

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 Selby Council as presented.

14. Milton Keynes Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13)80

The review of Milton Keynes Council had commenced in January 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 39 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward being over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on March 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a council size of 51 and had subsequently agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 128 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations and these were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Milton Keynes Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 19 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 Milton Keynes Council as presented.

15. Lancaster Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13)81

The review of Lancaster City Council had commenced in April 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, one ward has a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting in July 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a council size of 60 and had subsequently agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 43 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These 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 respect of the Heysham and Carnforth areas. For the remainder of Lancaster it had not been judged that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations except in respect of minor amendments to the proposed Kellet and Upper Lune Valley wards and one ward name change in the Lancaster City area, changing the proposed name of Duke's ward to Castle.

The Final Recommendations would provide a pattern of 12 three-member wards, nine two-member wards, and six 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 noted that the proposed changes were substantial in the Heysham and Carnforth areas. The team therefore proposed the Commission undertake a period of further limited consultation in these areas only.

Agreed

That further limited consultation should be held in the Heysham and Carnforth areas. That draft recommendations should be adopted as final in the remaining areas of Lancaster subject to a minor change to the boundary between the proposed Kellet and Upper Lune Valley wards and one ward name change. The results of the limited consultation would be discussed at the Commission meeting in September.

16. Bromsgrove Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13)82

The review of Bromsgrove District Council had commenced on February 2012. The authority had requested the Commission undertake a single-member ward review. According to the latest electoral figures, three of the wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on March 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 31 and had subsequently agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 144 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria. At its meeting in February 2012, the Commission agreed significant changes in the western part of Bromsgrove and decided to undertake further limited consultation on these areas given that they moved away significantly from the Draft Recommendations.

The Commission received 96 further submissions in response to the further limited consultation.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of one two-member ward and 29 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 and further limited consultation. It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Bromsgrove as presented.

17. Chair's Report (oral)

The Chair updated the Commission on his understanding about progress the request for an additional member and the renewal of the Deputy Chair for a further term.

18. Chief Executive's Report (oral)

The Chief Executive confirmed that final sign off of the Corporate Plan had been given by the Speaker's Committee.

He noted that, as indicated to Commissioners at the last meeting, following a ballot of members, the PCS had commenced a period of discontinuous action short of a strike, in pursuance of their pay dispute. The Chief Executive confirmed that industrial action is currently taking place.

19. Audit Committee (oral)

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the Audit Committee meeting that had taken place the previous day.

Key topics covered were:

- The Committee had reviewed its skills and knowledge, performance, and terms of reference, identifying areas for further work.
- The relationship between internal audit and external audit.
- The draft Annual Report which would be coming to the Commission, in particular how policies and procedure are applied and the impacts on performance.
- The Committee had reviewed the Corporate Risk Register and found it in good order. Two new risks had been identified: budget underspend and volatility in demand for reviews.
- The draft Annual Report and Accounts were commended for their clear presentation.
- There should be further and quicker progress on performance management improvements, as reported to the Committee.

- The Committee had received a presentation on possible joint procurement of internal audit services across a group of non-Governmental public bodies.

Agreed

- That Commissioners feed in any contextual or editorial comments on the LGBCE's draft Annual Report to the Communications Manager before the Commission meeting in June, which would formally consider it for approval.

20. Future Business – LGBCE (13)83

The Commission noted the content of the Future Business document.

AOB

No further business was raised.

Meeting closed at 2pm