

BCFE (10) 1st Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 13 January 2010, in the
Boothroyd Room in Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street,
London, SW1P 2HW

Present:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Joan Jones CBE
Professor Colin Mellors
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Jane Earl

Also present:

Archie Gall	Director
Alan Cogbill	Interim CEO LGBCE
Alison Wildig	Review Manager
Sam Hartley	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Arion Lawrence	Review Officer
Gareth Nicholson	Press and Public Affairs Officer
Eleanor Gregory	Review Assistant
Christopher Eames	Minutes

1. Declarations of interest

1. Noted: as previously declared, that the Chair owned a holiday cottage in Suffolk.
2. Noted: Jane Earl declared herself to no longer be employed by the Commission of Employment and Skills.

2. Opening remarks

Noted:

1. The Chair welcomed members of the Committee and staff to the first meeting of the year.
2. The Committee welcomed Eleanor Gregory, maternity cover for Megan Bayford.

3. Minutes from Committee meeting on 7 December 2009

Noted:

1. the minutes were agreed subject to minor amendments to ensure accuracy and precision.

4. Matters arising

Noted:

1. that the minutes from the meeting with the Speakers' Committee on the 25 November will not be released for a year, however an official letter confirming the endorsement of the LGBCE's corporate plan and budget estimate was expected by next week.

5. Northumberland final recommendations post-consultation – BCFE

Noted:

1. The Review Officer presented a report on the Northumberland electoral review final recommendations.
2. In addition to the proposed modifications from the draft recommendations, the Committee discussed the representation from Thirston Parish Council. While the Committee agreed the representation had merit in supporting the parish council be included in the proposed Shilbottle division, it did not

consider this to be sufficient to warrant the knock-on effect such a change would have as a result to adjoining divisions.

Resolved:

3. The Committee agreed the paper with the exception of the parish electoral arrangements for Prudhoe Town Council. The Committee agreed the final recommendations should propose 12 parish councillors, as set out in the District of Tynedale (Electoral Changes) Order 1998, rather than 17 as stated in the paper. It was noted that the paper was drafted and had been dispatched before this discrepancy had come to light.
4. Professor Mellors thanked the Review Officer for the quality of the mapping and presentation.

6. LGBCE Report

Noted:

1. The LGBCE's Interim Chief Executive informed the Committee of the progress of the establishment of the LGBCE. There has been an intensive period of checking the services of the preferred provider and its contractor to ensure that they were viable and affordable. It has now reached the stage where an agreement may be close.
2. that the adverts for a number of posts were due to go out this week. It was hoped to fill these posts by the first of April to help with the establishment of the LGBCE.
3. that the Chair had written to the Minister for Local Government about the LGBCE's Order-making process, the continuing lack of clarity, and seeking assurance that the Department was taking the matter forward. There was a need for a process to be in place from about March if Orders were not to be delayed.
4. that the adverts for the Deputy Chair and the new Commissioners would be published shortly.
5. the Chair thanked the team for working to the tight schedule and meeting timetable expectations.

7. Structural Review:

Noted:

1. the Committee's advice had been published on 7 December 2009 with good press coverage

2. The Secretary of State is receiving representations until 19 January 2010. If, and when, the Secretary of State does decide on any changes it is up to Parliament to implement them.
3. A discussion was held over CLG's letter to affected authorities potential implementation, and the implications for the LGBCE in light of the need to consider whether electoral reviews of new authorities should be conducted. The Committee would consider this further if, and when, any decisions had been taken.

8. Judicial Reviews:

Noted:

1. The Suffolk councils had requested leave to apply to the Supreme Court to appeal the Court of Appeal's judgment.
2. Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC has taken the lead in the Norfolk councils' application for judicial review. Court proceedings had been issued on Christmas Eve with a request of expedition. There had been no decision on timescales and the documents are being prepared.
3. No legal action has been taken by East Devon District Council.
4. Depending on the outcome and timing of the cases, any costs might be against the LGBCE

9. Operational Report

Noted:

1. The Director informed the Committee of the progress of the electoral reviews for Mansfield, County Durham, Stoke, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire, West Somerset, Sedgemoor, South Derbyshire and Northampton.
2. An addendum to the paper was introduced, outlining timetable changes to the review programme.

Resolved:

1. that all appointments and meetings that are agreed at Committee meetings should be confirmed in writing afterwards.
2. that the Boundary Committee would brainstorm the background and process of boundary reviews following its meeting on 3 February 2010.
3. that the draft recommendations for Stoke and the other reviews on the same timetable should be published before the date by which the notice of election must be posted.

4. the Committee agreed to defer the publication of draft recommendations for West Somerset, Sedgemoor, South Derbyshire and Northampton until after the general election and to reduce the consultation phase from 10 weeks to 8 weeks.
5. the Committee agreed on the need to focus on the deliverables for the reviews and not to get behind due to timelines and staffing.