

## LGBCE (14)3rd Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 18 March 2014, at 10:15am, 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  
Sir Tony Redmond  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Marcus Bowell	Communications Manager
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Lucy Ward	Review Officer
Alex Hinds	Review Officer
Nicholas Dunkeyson	Review Officer
Paul Kingsley	Review Adviser
David Owen	Review Officer
Mark Pascoe	Review Officer
Karen Cleverly	Business Support Officer (minutes)

### Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Dr Colin Sinclair CBE, Lynn Ingram, Finance Director and Sarah Vallotton, Business and Committee Services Manager.

### Declarations of interest

Sir Tony Redmond declared an interest in South Buckinghamshire and did not take part in the discussion relating to the review of that area.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 18 February 2014

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

### Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

#### 1. Operational Report - LGBCE (14)29

The Director of Reviews presented the Operational Report for March. The content of the report was noted.

#### 2. Quarterly Review Programme Review – LGBCE (14)30

The Commission considered the recommendations from the Quarterly Review Programme and the potential to delay reviews of those seven district councils with whole council elections which are currently programmed in the 2014/15 work programme. The Commission recognised that it would be important to start the planned number of reviews in 2014-15.

#### **Agreed**

- To delay the reviews of Test Valley and North East Derbyshire.
- To consider, through a variety of approaches, which other authorities might be brought into the programme
- To adopt a two-year perspective on the matter in order to smooth the profile of work.
- To agree changes to the programme occasioned by the review by correspondence, to avoid delay.

#### 3. Cherwell Council Size Post Consultation – LGBCE (14)31

It had been agreed to review Cherwell District Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in December 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with the variance in Banbury Grimsbury & Castle being over 25 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 50 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 48 members.

At its meeting in December 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. The Commission agreed to consult on a change in council size to 48 members. The consultation ended on 17 February 2014.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 48 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 48 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

## **4. Lincoln Council Size Post Consultation – LGBCE (14)32**

It had been agreed to review City of Lincoln Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in December 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards have variances greater than 10 per cent with Carholme ward being over 30 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 33 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 33 members.

At its meeting in December 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size. The Commission decided to consult on a council size of 33 which was the Council's proposed number. The consultation ended on 17 February 2014.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 33 members.

### **Agreed**

The Commission agreed that a council size of 33 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

## 5. Doncaster Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)33

The review of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council had commenced in August 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 10 per cent of wards have variances greater than 10 per cent. The review had been requested by the previous Mayor.

It should be noted that the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government laid the Borough Of Doncaster (Scheme Of Elections) Order 2013 in Parliament on 27 November 2013. This order has passed Parliamentary scrutiny and comes into force on 1 June 2014. It provides for a change in the electoral cycle of the Council from elections by thirds to whole council elections.

At its meeting on 12 November 2013, the Commission had been 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 three single-member wards, six two-member wards and 13 three-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 following modification:

- The parishes of Hickleton and Marr to be included in Adwick-le-Street & Carcroft ward to improve electoral equality.
- Also, comments would be specifically invited on the most appropriate warding arrangements in respect of Austerfield..

### **Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council as modified.

## 6. West Devon Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)34

The review of West Devon Borough Council had commenced in August 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Hatherleigh, varying by more than 30%.

At its meeting on 13 August 2013, the Commission had been 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 three single-member, 11 two-member and two three-member wards in total.

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 West Devon Borough Council as presented.

## **7. South Buckinghamshire Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)35**

The review of South Buckinghamshire District Council had commenced in August 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 21 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 12 November 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 28 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 two single-member wards, four two-member wards and six three-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 South Bucks District Council as presented.

## **8. High Peak Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)36**

The review of High Peak Borough Council had commenced in July 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 30 per cent of wards have variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 9 July 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 43 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 15 single-member wards, 11 two-member wards and two three-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 High Peak Borough Council as presented.

## **9. Wyre Forest Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)37**

The review of Wyre Forest District Council had commenced in June 2013. The Council had requested the Commission undertake a review.

At its meeting on 11 June 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 33 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 11 three-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 Wyre Forest District Council as presented.

## **10. Poole Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)38**

The review of Poole Borough Council had commenced in July 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 9 July 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 42 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 two-member and ten three-member wards in total.

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 Poole Borough Council as presented.

**11. Stafford Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (14)39**

The review of Stafford Borough Council had commenced in July 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 27 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 9 July 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 40 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 seven single-member, 15 two-member and one three-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 a slight modification to the areas of Coton and Doxey & Castletown in order to produce a clearer boundary.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Stafford Borough Council as modified.

**12. Bolsover Related Alteration – LGBCE (14)40**

The team recommended that the Commission agree to make an electoral change order implementing alterations to district wards as requested by the Council. This would restore co-terminosity between parish and district ward boundaries in Bolsover.

**Agreed**

The Commission agreed to make the necessary electoral change order.

### 13. Chair's Report

The Chair reported that the Law Commission was undertaking a review of electoral law and that he had been invited to participate in a session on 29 April 2014.

A meeting with Liam Fox MP had taken place to discuss the Commission's revised draft proposals for North Somerset.

The timetable for the recruitment of the new Chief Executive was noted by Commissioners.

### 14. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive confirmed that the appointment of the new Commissioner, Alison Lowton, and the re-appointment of Sir Tony Redmond had now been approved by the Queen.

### 15. NAO Value for Money Study – Final Report – LGBCE (14)42

The Commission noted the report. It was agreed that the recommendations were very useful and would enable the organisation to progress to the next stage.

### 16. Matters Arising from Briefing with Baker Tilly

The Commission agreed that Baker Tilly had provided a thoughtful presentation as part of the Business Process Re-engineering Project.

The findings relating to finance now needed to be reviewed and confirmed by the Finance Director.

### 17. New and Emerging Risks

The Commission identified the following risks:

- The need to ensure that the Commission maintains its proposed review workload in view of the discussion under item 2 - LGBCE (14)30.
- The need to consider the potential impact on future review schedules should a significant number of councils move towards all-out elections.

It was also agreed that key corporate risks should be reported to the Commission at least once a quarter.

18. Minutes of the Audit Committee Meeting on 17 February 2014 – LGBCE (14)43

The minutes were noted.

19. Future Business – LGBCE (14)44

The content of the Future Business paper was noted.

AOB

There were no other items. **Close of Business 12:40 pm.**