

LGBCE (15)5th Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 May 2015, at 09:30am, in the View Studio 6.2 6th Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP

Commissioners Present

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Alison Lowton
Sir Tony Redmond
Professor Paul Wiles CB

LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE	Chief Executive
Lynn Ingram	Finance Director
Tim Bowden	Business Development Manager (items 2 & 4)
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Alison Evison	Review and Programme Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
Emily Starkie	Review Officer (item 3)
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were given for Marcus Bowell, Communications and Public Affairs Manager.

Declarations of interest

The Chief Executive declared an interest in item 4 (Nottinghamshire) and took no part in the discussion of that item.

The Finance Director declared an interest in item 2 (Hampshire) and item 4 (Nottinghamshire) and took no part in the discussions of those items.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 21st March 2015

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

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (15)45

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

The Chief Executive advised the Commission of those reviews included in the current review programme that had had a change of political control as a result of the elections on 7 May 2015.

The Commission was given an update on recent changes at the Government Legal Department, which it was hoped would be confirmed by the end of the month. In the meantime existing arrangements would be continued.

The Chief Executive gave a brief report on recent developments at the Boundary Commission for England.

2. Hampshire Council Size- LGBCE (15)46

It had been agreed to review Hampshire County Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 44 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 78 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 remain at 78 members.

The Commission considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 78 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 78 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

3. Exeter Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (15)47

The review of Exeter City Council had commenced in January 2015. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with Topsham ward being over 50 per cent.

At its meeting in January 2015, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 39 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 13 three-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 with amendments in the following areas:

- Minor ward name changes.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Exeter City Council as presented.

4. Nottinghamshire Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (15)48

The review of Nottinghamshire County Council had commenced on 21 October 2014. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 October 2014, the Commission had been minded to agree a council size of 67. However, in preparing the Draft Recommendations, the team felt that a council size of 66 members provided a better allocation of councillors between the districts in the county.

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 one three-member division, nine two-member divisions and 45 single-member divisions 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 with amendments in the following areas:

- Rather than a three-member division in the Hucknall area the Commission proposed the area be covered by three single-member divisions
- Changes to the names of four divisions in Mansfield.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Nottinghamshire County Council as amended.

5. Chair's Report

The Chair highlighted areas that might feature in the Queen's Speech, including the possibility of a Bill in relation to city regions and elected mayors and other associated measures. It was agreed that the Strategic Planning event would present an opportunity to reflect on implications of such developments for the work of local government and the agenda of the Commission.

It was also agreed to raise the possibility for an informal discussion with DCLG officials about likely future agendas.

The Chair would write to the Speaker to congratulate him on his re-appointment and, also, to restate the opportunities afforded by this year's inter-Commission meeting.

6. Chief Executive's Report

Following discussion about Commissioners' availability, it was agreed that the Strategic Planning event would take place on 25 and 26 August, the location to be notified.

7. Finance Director's Report

The Finance Director presented the latest draft of the Annual Report and Accounts which would be formally presented to be agreed at the June meeting.

The Annual Report and Accounts had initially been discussed at February's Audit Committee, and the first draft had been submitted to the National Audit Office on 24th April. The final Accounts audit had commenced on 5th May and was ongoing.

The audit had indicated the need for a small number of minor amendments which had now been made. The revised report had been tabled at the May Audit Committee.

The final Accounts would be produced once the audit had been completed and would be submitted to the Audit Committee meeting which, this year, would be taking place in June rather than July in order to fit in better with the NAO's deadlines. These would be presented to the Commission's June meeting (with any further modifications following discussion at Audit Committee tabled at that meeting). The Annual Report and Accounts would be laid in Parliament in July.

The outturn presented to the previous Commission meeting had predicted an underspend of £10k. This underspend had reduced and was now projected to be £8k. Being so close to allocation, the National Audit Office had carried out additional testing but this was not regarded as an issue and the Commission congratulated the team on the satisfactory outcome.

The Finance Director provided an update on the Relocation and Back Office Services Project. LGBCE successfully moved to its new offices at Millbank Tower on 25th April. There had been some IT issues resulting from the handover from Liberata and these would be discussed at the steering group meeting later in the day.

The Commission congratulated all those involved in the arrangements for the transfer to Millbank Tower.

LGBCE staff would attend a workshop hosted by the IT provider, Wavex, to discuss Commissioner IT requirements and solutions.

8. Triennial Review - LGBCE (15)49

The Chief Executive presented the report of the Triennial Review of the Boundary Commissions.

Its main recommendation of relevance to the Commission was that LGBCE should continue to talk with the Boundary Commission for England on opportunities for sharing expertise, support arrangements and back office services. Such talks would become more relevant as relocation in 2018 drew near. It had been accepted that the different statutory position and governance arrangements of the two organisations precluded anything beyond such measures.

The need to review and codify the induction processes and appraisal processes for Commissioners was discussed and agreed.

9. Risk Update and New & Emerging Risks

The Business and Committee Services Manager presented the Risk Update for May.

The Risk Register Working Group had met in March and April - the first meeting focussing on the Assurance Framework and the second on control. Assurance owners had attended and answered questions on how the controls in place had been implemented and their effectiveness. The Corporate Risk Register, the Assurance Framework and the Relocation & Back Office Project Register had been revised to reflect the outcome of these meetings.

At its meeting in May, the Audit Committee had reviewed the risk registers. Two further points had been raised which would be addressed in the next iteration.

The Chair of the Audit Committee suggested that, rather than having the Risk Update as a standing items at each Commission meeting, it would be beneficial for an item on risk to appear only at the meeting after an Audit Committee, when he could report the Audit Commission's discussion. The Committee would be renamed The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

The Commission noted the contents of the risk update and agreed to the proposals outlined by the Audit Committee Chair. It also agreed the name of the Audit Committee should be changed to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Terms of Reference of both the Audit & Risk Committee and the Remuneration Committee would be reviewed. The Audit Committee would have the opportunity to review its Terms of Reference at its meeting in June. A review of the Remuneration Committee's Terms of Reference would also be carried out, and presented to the June Commission meeting for consideration.

10. Future Business – LGBCE (15)49

Noted.

AOB

The Chair of the Audit Committee requested that his verbal report of Audit Committee meetings to the Commission on the day after each Audit Committee be reinstated as a standing agenda item. This was agreed.

Close of Business 12:40

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'A' followed by a long horizontal line that tapers to a point on the right.

16/6/15

Chair