

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England

LGBCE (13) 12th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 10 December 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
Sir Tony Redmond
Professor Paul Wiles CB
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
Lynn Ingram	Director of Finance
Marcus Bowell	Communications Manager
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Tim Bowden	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
Paul Kingsley	Review Adviser
David Owen	Review Officer
Alex Hinds	Review Officer
Dean Faccini	Business Assistant
Karen Cleverly	Business Support Officer

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

Professor Colin Mellors declared an interest in York and took no part in the discussion of that item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 12th November 2013

The minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (13)183

The Order for the changing electoral cycle arrangements in Doncaster had been laid in Parliament on 27 November. The order would sit in Parliament for 21 days from that date. Once the Order had been made, the Commission would write to all interested parties clarifying its position on single and multi-member wards.

At its November meeting, the Commission had agreed Final Recommendations for the Electoral Review of York. Following a query from the York Liberal Democrats, it had been confirmed that the polling district mapping provided by York Council, and used to prepare Final Recommendations for York, was incorrect. The Director of Reviews indicated that the error was significant, with implications for the integrity of the recently published final recommendations. Accordingly, he would be writing to the Chief Executive of City of York Council to confirm the error in the mapping provided by the Council relating to the university area and seeking assurance that there were no further inconsistencies. It was agreed that that the Commission would receive a formal report on the matter at its January 2014 meeting and that no Order should be laid until the situation had been resolved. .

The Director of Reviews had been approached by Lichfield Council with a request to send a representative from the Commission to its council size working group. The Commission agreed that it would be inappropriate to send a representative.

2. Broxtowe Council Size Post Consultation – LGBCE (13)166

The Commission originally considered the Broxtowe council size post consultation representations in November. However, as a result of an additional representation being identified, the paper with all representations was considered in full at the December meeting.

This further electoral review was being conducted following the Commission's decision to review Broxtowe Borough Council's electoral arrangements. The review had commenced in February 2013. Based on the December 2012 electorate figures, one ward (Eastwood North & Greasley Beauvale) had 36% fewer electors than the borough average.

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.

At its meeting in August 2013 the Commission considered all the evidence it had received on council size and had agreed to seek views on a council size of 44 members. The consultation ended on 14 October 2013.

The Commission considered all the available evidence. On the basis of the evidence submitted it was minded to support a council size of 44 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 44 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of draft recommendations.

3. Telford & Wrekin Final Recommendations – LGBCE (13)173

At its meeting on 12 November 2013, the Commission considered Final Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin.

When making draft recommendations, the Commission proposed a number of parish wards, including an Admaston & Shawburch parish ward of Wrockwardine parish.

No objection was made to the parish ward names during consultation on the draft recommendations. However, when considering Final Recommendations, the Commission agreed a district ward in this area which comprises only the area of the parish ward should be called Admaston & Bratton district ward.

The team therefore recommended that, in the interests of clarity and to reflect communities in that area, the name Admaston & Bratton should also be given to the parish ward which covers the area of the proposed district ward of that name.

Agreed

The Final Recommendations as presented.

4. Ashfield Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (13)184

The review of Ashfield District Council had commenced in October 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 40 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 9 April 2013, the Commission had been minded to agree a Council size of 35 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 one three-member, five two-member, and 22 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

The Draft Recommendations for Ashfield District Council as presented.

5. Cherwell Council Size – LGBCE (13)185

It had been agreed to review Cherwell District Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in June 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent 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.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 48 be used as the basis for consultation.

6. Lincoln Council Size – LGBCE (13)186

It had been agreed to review City of Lincoln Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in June 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 36 per cent of wards had 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.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 33 be used as the basis for consultation.

7. Woking Council Size Post Consultation – LGBCE (13)187

It had been agreed to review Woking Borough Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in February 2013. According to the latest electoral figures, 35 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 36 members.

At its meeting in September 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 30 members.

In the light of the information and evidence received, and on detailed consideration of it, LGBCE officers judged that the evidence pointed to a council size of 30 as being the appropriate size.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 30 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of Draft Recommendations.

8. Peterborough Council Size Post Consultation – LGBCE (13)188

It had been agreed to review Peterborough City Council due to electoral imbalance. The review had commenced in December 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one 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 57 members.

At its meeting in 10 September 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 60 members.

In the light of the information and evidence received, and on detailed consideration of it, LGBCE officers judged that the evidence pointed to a council size of 60 as being the appropriate size.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 60 be used as the basis to proceed to consultation on warding arrangements and preparation of Draft Recommendations.

9. Horsham Related Alterations – LGBCE (13)189

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

Agreed

The Commission agreed to make the necessary electoral change order.

10. Key Performance Indicators – 2nd Quarter Outturn – LGBCE (13)190

The Commission noted the content of the report.

11. GLA Constituencies – LGBCE (13)172

A thorough report setting out options for reviewing the Greater London Authority constituencies had been produced.

There were a number of current and future legislative issues and some practical considerations that would make carrying out such a review problematic at this time; within the current constraints, there were no options available which would materially improve overall electoral balance. The report recommended that the Commission agree not to promote any changes to GLA constituencies and the present time, and that the Chair write to the Minister and the GLA stating the Commission's decision, and to draw the Minister's attention to the need for possible legislative changes,

which could not reasonably be introduced in time for the next scheduled GLA elections..

Agreed

The Commission agreed not to promote any changes to GLA constituencies at the present time. It was also agreed that the Chair would write to the Minister and the GLA in the terms set out in the report's recommendations.

12. Chair's Report

The Chair updated the Commission on the recent UK Boundary Commission Conference that he and the Chief Executive had attended.

The Chair had in the past met representatives of the Municipal Demarcation Board for South Africa which was interested in developing relations between the Boundary Commissions of all Commonwealth-based nations. They had now made similar approaches to the other UK Commissions. All were conscious of the resource implications. The Chair had agreed to write to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on behalf of these Commissions jointly to explore if there were ways of meeting the South African Board's request.

The Chair gave a précis of a report on the Local Government Democracy of Wales Act.

The Chair mentioned the triennial review of the four UK-based Parliamentary Boundary Commissions and how the LGBCE might establish closer working relationships with the English Parliamentary Boundary Commission. This could allow for the secondment of staff to work at both Commissions and for the potential development of a shared back office for secretariat and IT support. The LGBCE and BCE would discuss further propositions which the triennial review was likely to explore.

The Chair tabled a note that included a slide taken from a presentation he had received at a recent Public Chairs Forum. The presentation gave ideas that could help develop LGBCE's values and behaviours. It also highlighted the importance of ensuring 'intellectual capital' is not lost to the organisation.

At the Chair's request, the Chief Executive tabled the latest draft of the Five Year Corporate Plan. The Chair asked for any comments to be sent to the Chief Executive.

The Chair confirmed that Brandon Lewis MP has been appointed as a member of the Speaker's Committee.

13. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive updated the Commission on this year's National Audit Office Value for Money (VfM) study. The amount of external audit required each year was still to be determined but the Speaker's Committee had approved that the VfM study this year would focus on the contract for LGBCE's support services through the Local Government Association.

An update was given on the procurement of a contract to provide internal audit provision.

The Chief Executive would be interviewing shortlisted consultancies who had tendered for the work to support the process review being undertaken by the Commission.

The Chief Executive advised the Commission of the difficulties in scheduling the Staff/Commissioner workshop for April 2014. It was agreed that the workshop would be postponed.

14. New and Emerging Risks

The Commission identified the following risks:

- Looking ahead post-April 2015, when the current agreement with LGA in relation to accommodation and related provision would end, in securing suitable accommodation and sustainable back office services.
- Policy in relation to the management of documentation.

16. Future Business – LGBCE (13)192

The Director of Reviews informed the Commission that the agenda for the Commission meeting in April 2014 looked light. The Commission agreed to review the business at the end of January 2014 before making a decision on whether the meeting should go ahead.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business 11:30