

1. Minutes

- 1.1 The Committee revised Item 3.5 to read:
“The Committee described how it might treat proposals which required the transfer of reserves from one authority to another due to the increased likelihood of risk.”
- 1.2 With these amendments, the minutes were agreed.

2. Matters arising

- 2.1 The Electoral Commission had now responded to the Secretary of State regarding the Cornwall electoral review consultation on the date of the local elections. Copies of the correspondence were distributed.

3. Structural reviews

- 3.1 The Committee considered the choices facing it in light of the East Devon judgment. The Committee noted that there had not yet been a substantive response to the Chair’s letter dated 23 January 2009 to John Healey. The Committee would like to alert affected local authorities to the potential delay as soon as possible and felt that it was important not to delay it too long. They authorised the Chair to write to be sent on 5/6 February* setting out the current position but accepted that it might need to be modified if CLG responded and left the final form in the hands of the Chair.
- 3.2 The Committee felt that it was essential to determine if it was possible to work to a programme which substantially completed any further consultation before the election purdah period and agreed to meet on 18 February at 10:30am to review the decision needed to carry the work forward.

*Post-meeting note: the need for a letter was overtaken by events

4. Quality assurance report on analysis of financial information

- 4.1 Dr Eric Fisher’s report on his QA review of the Committee’s independent financial consultants (IFC) financial review reports was tabled.
- 4.2 The Committee noted the conclusions that the QA process stated that the IFC conclusions were robust and soundly based and can be relied upon. The Committee agreed that its report and the final IFC report be published on the website as soon as convenient.

5. Boundary Committee work programme 2009-2011

- 5.1 The Committee agreed the recommendations in Paragraph 21 of the report and authorised the Chair to allocate Deputy Commissioners to reviews once the specific authority reviews had been determined.

6. Northumberland electoral review: council size

- 6.1 The Director reported on the correspondence received from the County Council noting that they now accepted that a council size of 67 would not adversely affect neighbourhood empowerment. The Committee agreed to base the next stage in the review on a council size of 67 members.
- 6.2 The Committee noted the Council's views on the date of the next council election and that in any event it would not be possible to complete the process in time for a 2010 election. The date of an election was presently a matter for the Electoral Commission.

7. Local Democracy, Economic Development and Constriction Bill

- 7.1 The Committee considered the current position with respect to the Bill and the amendments currently tabled. It noted the intention to recruit a project manager to prepare for separation. The Committee considered that the major topic to be considered at its annual away event would be preparing for implementing the LDEDC Bill and felt specific consideration would need to be given to the role of the new separate Committee in corporate governance, performance review and information needs. The Committee discussed its ability to influence legislation and whether the LGA should be involved.

8. City Governance

- 8.1 The Committee gave initial consideration to the paper prepared by Professor Mellors and decided in the absence of Professor Johnston to defer decision on its central points until the next meeting.

9. Corporate Governance Review

- 9.1 The Committee were updated on the programme of the Electoral Commission's corporate governance review.

10. AOB

- 10.1 There was no further business not on the agenda.

February 2009