

LGBCE (10) 7th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 6 October 2010, at 9.30am in Room B, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Present:

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

Also present:

Alan Cogbill	Chief Executive
Archie Gall	Director of Reviews
David Hewitt	Director of Finance
Joan D'Souza	Review Manager
Sam Hartley	Review Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Marcus Howell	Communications & Public Affairs Manager
Sarah Vallotton	Business & Committee Services Manager
David Owen	Policy and Research Officer
Kathleen Peacock	Business Support Officer (Minutes)

1. Minutes from the LGBCE's meeting on 14 September 2010 and Matters Arising

The minutes from the 14 September 2010 were agreed as an accurate record, subject to minor amendments.

The Commission discussed Matters Arising from the 14 September Minutes.

Noted:

- 1.1 That the process for formally agreeing minutes would in future be that the Chair and Deputy Chair will be asked to approve the draft minutes, which will then be circulated to Commissioners for any further comments before finalisation and formal agreement at the next Commission meeting. Once the agreed minutes have been signed off by the Chair (or Deputy Chair) the minutes will be published on the Commission's website.
- 1.2 The Chair and Professor Colin Mellors had recently met West Lindsey representatives and had received assurances that further evidence would be provided to the Commission by 18 October 2010.
- 1.3 That a suggested alternative date for the proposed additional meeting in February 2011 would be forwarded to Commissioners for agreement.

2. Declarations of Interest

Dr Peter Knight declared an interest in Staffordshire. Joan Jones declared an interest in Gloucestershire. Jane Earl declared an interest in Slough and Oxfordshire

3. Chair's Report

Noted:

- 3.1. That Lord Harris had recently agreed to speak, when necessary, on behalf of the LGBCE in the House of Lords and a meeting with Lord Harris had been planned.
- 3.2. No further information had been received from the Secretary of State regarding the re-appointment of Jane Earl or Dr Peter Knight to the Commission. In response to this the Chair had recently written to the Secretary of State, requesting the re-appointment of Dr Peter Knight and Jane Earl for further terms of 5 years each.
- 3.3. Over the last 6 months a number of meetings with MPs had taken place. These had proved successful in ensuring MPs had been kept well informed of the work of the Commission. The LGBCE's work has been seen in a positive light by the MPs.

Agreed:

- 3.4. That the Communications and Public Affairs Manager would circulate a list of which MPs the Commission had met with the next set of Commission papers.

4. Chief Executive's Report

Noted:

- 4.1. That the Chief Executive, the Director of Reviews, the Director of Finance and the Communications and Public Affairs Manager would appear before the Speaker's Sub-Committee on Monday 11 October 2010. The Chair and Chief Executive would appear before the full Speaker's Committee on Wednesday 13 October 2010.

- 4.2. That the Communications and Public Affairs Manager would lay the first four LGBCE Orders in Parliament on Monday 11 October. The Orders would relate to Cornwall, Northumberland, Cheshire East, and Cheshire West & Chester. The production of these Orders in just 6 months was an excellent achievement for the LGBCE and the Commissioners thanked all those involved for their efforts.
- 4.3. Responses to questions from the Scrutiny Unit on the Commission's budget submission to the Speaker's Committee had been submitted. These responses had been circulated to Commissioners for information.
- 4.4. The difficulty of predicting the number of PABRs that would be undertaken during the next 5 years was noted.

Agreed:

- 4.6. The Chief Executive would brief Commissioners on the outcome of the Meeting with the Sub-Committee on Monday 11 October 2010 before the meeting with the Speaker's Committee on Wednesday 13.

5. Risk Register – LGBCE (10)58

Noted:

- 5.1. The Director of Finance presented the updated Risk Register. The risks identified had been allocated to Management Team members and would be reviewed regularly at Senior Management Team Meetings.

Agreed:

- 5.2. That the format of the Register would be changed to highlight which Risks were new, which had changed and which had been closed.
- 5.3. That any missing risk scores would be included.

6. Proposed Temporary Amendments of Commission Standing Orders – LGBCE (10)59

Noted:

- 6.1. The interim Deputy Chair's current term of appointment was due to end on 31 October 2010. The Commission's current Standing Orders set a quorum of 4 of the existing 5 Members. From 1 November, there was a risk that, if any Commissioners were absent for any reason, or unable to participate owing to a conflict of interest, the Commission would not be quorate and could not undertake business.
- 6.2. Requests had been made to the Secretary of State for confirmation of reappointments. A response was still outstanding.
- 6.3. A number of temporary changes to the Commission's Standing Orders were therefore necessary, to ensure the Commission could continue its business.

Agreed:

- 6.4. That from 1 November 2010, the Commission's Quorum would be temporarily reduced to 2 participating Commissioners; and the number to require a special meeting should also be reduced to 2. These changes would cease once the number of Commissioners (including the Chair) was no fewer than five, and the standing orders would revert to their earlier provision.
- 6.5. That, in the absence of the Chair or Deputy Chair, the Chief Executive would have powers to deal with urgent or non-contentious business, consulting with such Commissioners as may be available, and reporting such exercise of powers to the next available meeting of the Commission.
- 6.6. That this arrangement would be reviewed as part of the Commission's review in 2011 of the Governance Framework.
- 6.7. These amendments of standing orders, which required a two thirds majority of those present and voting, were carried unanimously.

7. FER of Sedgemoor District Council

Noted:

- 7.1. At its meeting on 19 August 2010, the Commission had agreed to the final recommendations for Sedgemoor District Council, subject to the provision of 2015 electorate forecasts. The updated forecasts had been provided.
- 7.2. The effect of the 2015 forecasts was that four wards would vary by more than 10% from the average, rather than the expected three under the 2013 figures. No ward would vary by more than 14% from the average by 2015.

Agreed:

- 7.3. That the Commission confirm its final recommendations as agreed at its August meeting.

Break: 10:25

Resumed: 10:35

8. Council Size Working Group Report– LGBCE (10)60

Noted:

- 8.1. The content of the report was noted and discussed. The full discussion would be reflected as appropriate, in the final consultation document.

9. Electoral Review Process Working Group Report – LGBCE (10)61

Noted:

- 9.1. The content of the report was noted and discussed. The full discussion would be reflected as appropriate, in the final consultation document.

10. PABR Working Group Report – LGBCE (10)62

Noted;

10.1. The content of the report was noted and discussed. The full discussion would be reflected as appropriate, in the final consultation document.

11. Decisions on the Consultative Process – LGBCE (10)63

Noted:

11.1. That policy and procedures for the determination of council size, electoral reviews, and principal area boundary reviews would be the subject of consultation. There should be direct consultation with local government organisations including councils' representative bodies, and with Communities & Local Government. The Commission's website will also facilitate consultation with any other interested organisations and individuals.

Agreed.

11.2. That the preparation of documentation to aid consultation on policy and procedures for the determination of council size, electoral reviews, and principal area boundary reviews should reflect the Commission's discussions.

11.3. That consultation on these matters should be undertaken and completed by 31 December 2010. The determination of council size and electoral reviews shall form the subject of one set of consultation documents and principal area boundary reviews shall be the subject of another set of documents.

11.4. That the Commission should aim to consider first drafts of its new guidance at the meeting in early February 2011.

11.5. That the Commission should aim for formal publication of new guidance in April 2011.

11.6. That in the conduct of consultation, regard should be had to the needs of visually impaired consultees.

13.45 Meeting Closed