

LGBCE (12) 12th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 11 December 2012, at 09:30am, in Rooms A & B,
Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)

Dr Peter Knight CBE DL

Professor Paul Wiles CB

Dr Colin Sinclair CBE

Sir Tony Redmond

LGBCE Officers Present:

Alan Cogbill

Archie Gall

Richard Buck

Tim Bowden

Jessica Metherringham

Danny Edwards

Marcus Bowell

Sarah Vallotton

Alex Skerten

Simon Keal

Paul Kingsley

Mark Pascoe

Lucy Ward

Daniel Knag

Dean Faccini

Chief Executive

Director of Reviews

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Communications Manager

Business & Committee Services Manager

Review Officer

Review Officer

Review Adviser

Review Officer

Review Officer

Review Officer

Business Assistant (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Max Caller, Chair of the Commission. The Deputy Chair chaired the meeting in Max's absence.

Declarations of interest:

No declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 10 October 2012

The minutes of the 13 November Commission meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

A response to the DCLG consultation on parishes would be considered at the January Commission meeting.

1. Operational Report - LGBCE (12)154

The Director of Reviews reported recent media interest in the Tower Hamlets review. Some proposed ward names had been received controversially.

The Cumbria draft order had been debated in the House of Lords on 3 December 2012. Lord Toby Harris of Haringey had spoken strongly on behalf of the Commission, against a group of critics. Questions of detail had been raised during the debate, and a letter setting out the Commission's response to those questions was being prepared for Lord Harris' signature.

The Chair would be ready to sign the order in week beginning Monday 17th December 2012.

Commissioners were keen that lessons be learned from the issues that had arisen during the Cumbria, and similar, reviews.

Agreed

A suitable discussion should be arranged.

2. Overview Report – LGBCE (12)155

The Commission noted the Report and thanked Eleanor Gregory for compiling it.

3. Milton Keynes Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (12)156

The review had begun in January 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 39 percent of wards had variances greater than 10%, with one ward being over 30 per cent

At its meeting in July 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 57 and the Draft Recommendations had been prepared on this basis.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team had taken into consideration the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 19 three-member wards.

It was noted that the scheme as set out in the report produced a slightly unusual, though acceptable, ward. The team reported that an alternative warding pattern was available if required. The Commission asked that the alternative be mentioned in the published report.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Milton Keynes as presented.

4. Lancaster City Council Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (12)157

The review had begun in April 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, one ward had a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 10 July 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 60 and the Draft Recommendations had been prepared on this basis.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team had taken into consideration the submissions it had received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 11 three-member wards, 11 two-member wards, and five single-member wards in total.

The Commission considered the recommendations in detail informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Lancaster City Council as presented.

5. LB Hackney Final Recommendations - LGBCE (12)158

The review had begun in February 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 37 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 14 February 2012, the Commission was minded to agree a Council size of 57. The Commission subsequently agreed Draft Recommendations for Hackney at its meeting in June 2012.

Following publication, 45 submissions had been received on the Draft Recommendations. These had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all submissions into account, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the draft recommendations in respect of south west Hackney, central Hackney, and north east Hackney. The proposed changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Commission.

The proposed changes were significant, and the Commission felt that they warranted further limited consultation on warding in the three areas specified.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for the London Borough of Hackney subject to further limited consultation on three areas.

6. NW Leicestershire Council Size - LGBCE (12)159

It had been agreed to undertake a Single Member Ward Review of North West Leicestershire at the request of the authority. The review had begun in December 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 5 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward having a variance of 28 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 38 members.

Following receipt of information about governance structures and representative arrangements, LGBCE officers recommended that there was sufficient evidence to support a council size of 38 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 38 be used as the basis for consultation.

7. North Dorset Council Size - LGBCE (12)160

The review had been triggered by electoral imbalance. The review had begun in December 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 29 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one 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 representative arrangements, LGBCE officers recommended that there was sufficient evidence to support a council size of 33 members.

Agreed

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

8. South Hams Council Size - LGBCE (12)161

This review had been triggered by electoral imbalance. The review had begun in December 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 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 40 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representative arrangements, LGBCE officers recommended that there was sufficient evidence to support a council size of 30 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 30 be used as the basis for consultation.

9. North Somerset Council Size - LGBCE (12)162

This review had been triggered by electoral imbalance. The review had begun in May 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 33 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with two 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 61 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representative arrangements, LGBCE officers recommended that there was some rationale to support either 46 or 51 members. LGBCE officers recommended that consultation on both these possibilities.

In the specific circumstances, the Commission agreed to consult on the basis of the two suggested council sizes of 51 and 46. The Commission also recommended a further meeting between the political leaders on the council and the Lead Commissioner.

Agreed

To consult on a council size of 46, and a council size of 51; concurrently, the Lead Commissioner to meet council political leaders.

10. Wellingborough Council Size - LGBCE (12)163

This review had been triggered by electoral imbalance. The review had begun in December 2012. According to the latest electoral figures, 44 percent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with two wards having a variance of 22 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.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representative arrangements, LGBCE officers recommended that there was sufficient evidence to support the council size remaining at 36 members.

Agreed

The Commission agreed that a council size of 36 be used as the basis for consultation.

11. Chair's Report – LGBCE (12)164

In the Chair's absence, the Deputy Chair presented a report outlining the meetings that the Chair had attended over the last few weeks.

12. Chief Executive's Report (oral)

The Improvement Steering Group would be meeting that afternoon. Working Groups had been tasked to at look at potential improvements in the way the organisation operated to increase efficiency. The Steering Group would consider the scope and initial findings of the working groups.

13. Audit Committee Minutes – LGBCE (12)165

The Commission noted the minutes.

14. Future Business - LGBCE (12)166

The Commission noted the schedule.

Agreed

- To schedule a discussion on Declaration of Interests Policy on the day of the January 2013 Commission meeting.
- To prepare a short risk assessment protocol for decisions whether to launch further consultation before moving to final recommendations
- To prepare a protocol on ward naming
- As agreed at the council size meeting on 27 November, to hold a practice workshop, with Review Managers, after the Commission meeting in January, to examine what evidence in recent submissions had critically supported the decisions.
- To test if Commissioners could be available to start the January meeting at 9.30am, owing to the amount of business

AOB

The Business and Committee Services Manager updated the Commission on proposals to introduce video conferencing capabilities.

12:00 Meeting Closed