

LGBCE (22-23)13 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 17 January 2023, at 10:00am. All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams.

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)

Susan Johnson OBE

Amanda Nobbs OBE

Andrew Scallan CBE

Steve Robinson

LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE

Lynn Ingram

Glynn McDonald

Alison Evison

Richard Buck

Richard Otterway

Ben Meredeen

Paul Kingsley

Rebecca Pritchard

Johnny Ashby

Ram Avtaar

Dean Faccini

Angela Hendry

Chief Executive

Director of Corporate Services

Communications & Public Affairs Manager

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Review Officer (item 3)

Review Officer (item 4)

Review Officer (item 5)

Review Officer (item 6)

GIS & Data Officer (item 8)

Governance & Compliance Lead (items 11 & 12)

Office Manager/HR Lead (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 13 December 2022

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

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Actions from the previous Commission Board meeting

The following actions were reported on:

1. Reflections on Driving at Work Report - going to the February ARC meeting.
2. Council size equalities impact assessment –discussion at last EDI group and further discussion will take place at next EDI meeting in January with discussion paper coming to a subsequent Board.
3. Away-day for Commission Board/Leadership Team meeting – The Board agreed to an off-site meeting on 29th & 30th June 2023.
4. Staff Survey LT and Commissioners meeting to address the issues raised – date to be agreed.
5. Agreed to an in-person Board meeting in May and October, which will include all-staff/Commissioner policy sessions.

1. Chair's Report

The Chair updated the Board on the meeting with Cat Smith MP (the new spokesperson for Commission business on Speaker's Committee) which also involved the Communications & Public Affairs Manager.

The Chair informed the Board that we have been approached by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission in relation to the potential for closer working arrangements. An exploratory meeting was being arranged and all Commissioners would be updated as and when appropriate.

2. Operational Report - LGBCE(22/23)131

The Chief Executive presented the Operational Report for January 2023, and the Commission Board noted its content.

- The Chief Executive Officer reported on the communication from the PCS union in relation to a mandate to strike on 1st February 2023.
- Related alterations & consents - we will be responsive to any we receive and will circulate out of committee.
- North Northamptonshire – the Board agreed to delay the Draft Recommendations by one month and consider them in May 2023.
- Mole Valley Order: It was noted that the UK Parliament website indicated that the draft order has completed its 40-day laying period in both houses and that

the Instrument can be signed into law, The Board was content for the Chief Executive to sign and make the order.

- The Chair endorsed the proposed new lead commissioner allocations.

3. Nuneaton & Bedworth Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)132

The review of Nuneaton & Bedworth Council had commenced on 23 August 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 23 August 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 38 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 19 two-member wards in total.

The Board 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.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Nuneaton & Bedworth Council as presented.

4. Wokingham Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)133

The review of Wokingham Council had commenced on 23 August 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 23 August 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 54 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 18 three-member wards in total.

The Board 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.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for Wokingham Council as presented.

5. North Tyneside Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)134

The review of North Tyneside Council had commenced on 23 August 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. This was a periodic electoral review.

At its meeting on 23 August 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 60 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 20 three-member wards in total.

The Board 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.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for North Tyneside Council as presented.

6. Fareham Final Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)135

The review of Fareham Council had commenced on 18 January 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, one ward had a variance greater than 10 per cent. This was a periodic electoral review.

At its meeting on 18 January 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 32 and had subsequently, on 23 August 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 111 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it had been judged that there was insufficient evidence to change the Draft Recommendations, and therefore, they were proposed as the Final Recommendations for Fareham Council.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 16 two-member wards in total.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Final Recommendations for Fareham Council as presented.

Agreed

The Board agreed to the laying of a draft Order before Parliament giving effect to its final recommendations for Fareham Council.

7. Bracknell Forest Related Alteration - LGBCE(22/23)136

The Board considered the content of the Bracknell Forest Council Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would make for better electoral equality. The changes involve uniting a housing estate which was previously split by a parish boundary, and making other minor changes to ensure that parish boundaries reflect the situation in reality.

Agreed

The Board agreed to the making of an Order implementing the related alteration.

8. Qtr 3 KPI & Finance Analysis - LGBCE(22/23)136

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Qtr 3 KPI report to the Commission Board.

- KPI 2A website sessions - further work will be done to look at the pattern during the past year. We will also look at Facebook recording in more detail. It was noted that the volume of reviews would impact on this KPI. A verbal report will be provided at the March meeting.
- Social media reach - similar to the website sessions and this will be investigated further.
- Training plans – this KPI will be available at the end of this financial year.
- Number of delayed final recommendations – the Board requested that unforeseeable reasons for delays should be listed as external events (such as unplanned elections, pandemics etc).

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Qtr 3 Financial projections to the Commission Board.

- The NAO have started their interim audit this week.
- Projecting an underspend of £37K.
- There was a discussion about the dilapidation estimate of £48K and the Commission Board were content that we will not need to apply for a supplementary estimate.

9. Final Draft Corporate Plan – LGBCE(22/23)138

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Final Draft Corporate Plan.

- The Board noted the amendments made since the previous version.
- The Board discussed the presentation of the graphs of local authorities and electors with acceptable electoral equality and agreed to go with the graphs with the original scale. It was agreed to reword footnote 8.
- The Board endorsed the Final Draft Corporate Plan subject to the amendments as agreed. Final version to come back to the February Board meeting.

10. Strategic Finance Overview – LGBCE(22/23)139

The Chief Executive Officer introduced the finance paper which considers the budget, costs and financial assumptions over the next three years.

- The Commission Board noted the report and the different ways in which the report breaks down the budget.
- The Commission Board discussed having a contingency and it was recommended that any contingency should be a percentage rather than a given figure. Discussion on a contingency fund to come back to the Commission Board following guidance from the Treasury.

11. Business Plan Qtr 3 - LGBCE(22/23)140

The Commission Board noted the Business Plan and each of the project leads presented their project update to the meeting.

- Assurance Framework - now complete and will continue to be managed through the Leadership Team and ARC.
- LGBCE Induction Process – we have begun to look at the Commissioner Induction pack. We will review staff induction process in the next quarter and use SharePoint to support the induction process. ARC induction pack had worked well for the Independent.
- Corporate Training Plan – work is ongoing to bring together the mandatory training and all other training and development offered to staff.
- GIS refresh – recent release of new product from ESRI which we will explore. Still on track to roll our StatMap to all staff by April.
- Improving external involvement – we will repopulate this project with new items once the new website has been launched.
- Replacement review programme – We worked with Transparency in December and taking what we learnt there and are building our own app.
- Future working project – taking forward the work we discussed at the last policy session. The Board asked to have a Commissioner involved in this project.
- Governance review – This is a new project and will capture actions that will come from the meeting with Tony Redmond in February. The Board requested that a Commissioner be involved in this project.

12. Risk Register - LGBCE(22/23)141

The Governance and Compliance Lead introduced the report. Details regarding the Risk Management Group's January meeting were provided.

- 1A: Order Blocked in Parliament
- 1B: Judicial Review

Both risks fall within the risk category of reputational review and were reviewed together. Before the review both risks had a current risk score of Possible / Major / 6 and a trend status of stable. The controls and assurances were discussed, and it was agreed that the current arrangements for both risks were sufficient for keeping the current risk score as it is.

The RMG did not identify any immediate concerns in relation to risks but an action was recorded to update the Commission Board on the Mole Valley Complaint.

The Commission Board asked for a summary paper to be produced on the parliamentary process of laying an order including what can happen during the process.

13. Training & Development Update - LGBCE(22/23)142

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Training & Development update to the Commission Board. The report covers the development of a skills matrix for each role as part of the people strategy project, the embedding of training requirements in the annual appraisal form and the roll out of mandatory and other training to staff. Training reports will become part of the management information reports.

It was noted that continuous development after the first two years of employment will be part of the Learning & Development policy, as part of a staff offering.

14. Website Replacement Update - LGBCE(22/23)143

The Communications & Public Affairs manager gave an update on the progress of the development of the new website and a walk through of layout and design.

- It was noted that the updating of the website will be done within existing resources.
- It was noted that navigation of the website for users was a key priority.
- It was noted that the project is making good progress. From week commencing 13 February, we will be able to start uploading review material and other content from week commencing 28 February with a go live date of 22 March.
- It was noted that we have a couple of amber risks in relation to the development of the new website project which we anticipate will change to green as the new supplier makes progress with development work.
- Board to receive another presentation when the project is complete.

15. Future Business

- The Commission Board noted the link to the Future Business plan.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business