

## LGBCE (22-23)15 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 21 February 2023, at 11:15am in the LGBCE Boardroom, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL

### 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

Tom Rutherford

Yemi Fagun

Johnny Ashby

Paul Kingsley

Angela Hendry

Chief Executive

Director of Corporate Services

Communications & Public Affairs Manager  
(via Teams)

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Review Officer (item 4)

Review Officer (item 5)

Review Officer (item 6)

Review Officer (item 7)

Office Manager/HR Lead (minutes)

## Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

The Chair welcomed the Independent Member of ARC, David Horne, to his first Commission Board meeting.

## Declarations of interest

Amanda Nobbs declared an interest in item 3 (Surrey) Council Size and took no part in the discussions on that item.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 17 January 2023

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 - This action is complete.
2. Council size equalities impact assessment – this was discussed by Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group and a report will come to the March Board.
3. Staff Survey LT and Commissioners' meeting to address the issues raised – date to be agreed for March.
4. Future Working Project and Governance Review Project to include a Commissioner – in progress.
5. Summary paper to be produced on the parliamentary process for order laying – March Board meeting.
6. Session for Board on the website when it is launched – this will be arranged for after the launch date of 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023.
7. Clarity on objectives for a Corporate Plan – discussion to take place at June awayday. Link with the ARC action on the annual report.
8. KPI 2A Website sessions – oral feedback to the March Board on analysis of website sessions.

### 1. Chair's Report

The Chair updated the Board on the recruitment of a new Commissioner.

The Chair gave an update on the meeting with the MP for Workington regarding the boundaries of the new Cumberland Council.

The Chair gave an updated following the meeting with the Boundary Commission for England.

### 2. Operational Report - LGBCE(22/23)151

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

The Commission Board formally agreed the Related Alterations and consents circulated 'out of Committee'.

The Board noted the potential PABR between Hertsmere and Watford.

The Chief Executive updated on the complaint in relation to the electoral review of Mole Valley.

### 3. Surrey Council Size - LGBCE(22/23)152

*Amanda Nobbs left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this agenda item.*

It had been agreed to review Surrey County Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review programme. According to the latest available electoral figures, 16 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 81 members.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support that the council size remain at 81 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 81 members. The Board also agreed to the request for a single-member review.

#### **Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 81 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

#### **Agreed**

That the review proceed as a single-member division review.

*Amanda Nobbs returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item.*

### 4. Rossendale Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)153

The review of Rossendale Council had commenced on 20 September 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, none of the wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 September 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 30 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 10 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.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Rossendale Council as presented.

## 5. West Northamptonshire Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)154

The review of West Northamptonshire had commenced on 23 August 2022 following the establishment of the council as a new authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 19 per cent of wards, which are based on the previous county divisions, 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 77. The Draft Recommendations were therefore considered on the basis of such a council size.

However, in light of the evidence received, the Commission agreed to move away from its original minded to decision on council size and, instead, agreed a council size of 76 as this provided for a better pattern of wards that reflect the statutory criteria.

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 13 three-, 15 two-, and 7 single-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 West Northamptonshire as presented.

## 6. Buckinghamshire Final Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)155

In 2019, the Secretary of State for the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government laid a Structural Changes Order in Parliament which established the new unitary authority of Buckinghamshire Council. The new council is comprised of the former Buckinghamshire County Council, South Bucks District Council, Chiltern District Council, Wycombe District Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council. Interim electoral arrangements had been provided for in the Order for the purposes of elections to the authority held in May 2021.

At its meeting on 20 July 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 98 and had subsequently, on 19 July 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations. Following publication, 558 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, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 10 three-, 28 two-, and 11 single-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.

Taking all of the submissions into account, it was considered that there was sufficient evidence to undertake a further period of consultation focusing on the proposals for the Gerrards Cross & Denham, Farnham & Stoke Poges, Chalfont St Peter and Iver areas before the Board published its Final Recommendations. The Board also noted that the revised proposals for these wards would necessitate a change to its original decision on council size. This would change from 98 councillors to 97 councillors.

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 to a further period of consultation focusing on the proposed wards of Gerrards Cross & Denham, Farnham & Stoke Poges, Chalfont St Peter and Iver.

### **Agreed**

A period of further limited consultation focusing on the proposed wards of Gerrards Cross & Denham, Farnham & Stoke Poges, Chalfont St Peter and Iver.

## **7. Basildon Final Recommendations - LGBCE(22/23)156**

The review of Basildon Council had commenced on 25 April 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 13 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 25 April 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 42 and had subsequently, on 20 September 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 30 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, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 14 three-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 Basildon Council as presented.

### **Agreed**

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

## **8. Final Draft Corporate Plan – LGBCE (22/23)157**

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

- The Board endorsed the Final Draft Corporate Plan subject to a final check and amendments as agreed.
  - The Board agreed to ask for 4% inflationary increase on all costs
  - The Board agreed to ask for a 4% Risk and Resilience Budget

Agreed

The Board agreed that the Corporate Plan update would be sent to the Speakers Committee for the 15<sup>th</sup> March meeting.

## **9. Future Business**

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

## **AOB**

There were no other items.

## **Close of Business**