

LGBCE (21-22)20th Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Monday 14 February 2022, at 1:30pm. All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams.

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)

Susan Johnson OBE

Peter Maddison QPM

Amanda Nobbs OBE

Andrew Scallan CBE

Steve Robinson

LGBCE Officers Present:

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| Jolyon Jackson CBE | Chief Executive |
| Lynn Ingram | Director of Corporate Services |
| Glynn McDonald | Communications & Public Affairs Manager  |
| Richard Buck | Review Manager |
| Richard Otterway | Review Manager |
| Jonathan Ashby | Review Officer (item 5) |
| Mark CooperRebecca PritchardAngela Hendry | Review Officer (item 6)Review Officer (item 7)HR Lead (minutes) |
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Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Alison Evison who was on leave, and Peter Maddison who joined the meeting a little late but in time for all the review discussions.

Declarations of interest

Steve Robinson declared an interest in item 4 Redditch Council Size and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Minutes of LGBCE’s meeting on 18 and 20 January 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:

* Review Evaluation Reporting – review costing exercise and database of reviews costings will come to the March Board meeting.
* Emergency Contact process – is being piloted amongst staff. Commissioners will be contacted about the new process once the pilot has concluded. Not fully complete.
* Redaction Policy – to be circulated after the meeting.
* Legend (colours) to be added to Management Information is now complete.
* GLA – permutation potential based on 16 constituencies will come to April meeting together with proposal for contacting relevant officials. At GLA and DHLUC
* Universities and Electoral Reviews – to be discussed at June away day.

1. Chair’s Report

The Chair reported on the recent meeting between the UK’s Parliamentary and local government boundary commissions. This annual event, which again took place in virtual format, is a useful opportunity to share ideas and experiences between the various commissions.

2. Operational Report – LGBCE (21-22)172

The Chief Executive presented the Operational Report for February 2022, and the Commission noted its content.

* The Board noted the Communication Team’s work planner now shows Lead Commissioner allocation and the key stages for review assistants.
* There will be further work on the Council Size Guidance and template to provide clarity to councils and to help them put forward good council size submission(s) and ensure that the terminology is consistent. This would be revised for the March meeting in order to incorporate Commissioner comments
* Richard Otterway gave an update on correspondence in relation to Epsom & Ewell.

# 3. North Hertfordshire Council Size – LGBCE (21-22)173

It had been agreed to review North Hertfordshire Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review Programme. According to the latest available electoral figures, 37 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 49 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 increase by one from 49 to 50 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 50 members.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 50 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

# 4. Redditch Council Size – LGBCE (21-22)174

*Steve Robinson left the meeting and took no part in the discussion of this agenda item.*

It had been agreed to review Redditch Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review. According to the latest available electoral figures, 8 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 29 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 decrease by two from 29 to 27 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 27 members.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 27 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

*Steve Robinson returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item.*

# 5. East Hertfordshire Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (21-22)175

The review of East Hertfordshire Council had commenced on 21 September 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 27 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 September 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 50 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 6 three-, 12 two-, and 8 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 East Hertfordshire Council as presented.

# 6. Epsom & Ewell Final Recommendations – LGBCE (21-22)176

The review of Epsom & Ewell Council had commenced on 20 April 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 23 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 April 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 35 and had subsequently, on 21 September 2021, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 44 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 7 three-, and 7 two-member wards.

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**

1. Final Recommendations for Epsom & Ewell as presented.
2. The Board agreed to the laying of a draft Order before Parliament giving effect to its final recommendations for Epsom & Ewell Council.

# 7. Tonbridge & Malling Final Recommendations – LGBCE (21-22)177

The review of Tonbridge & Malling Council had commenced on 20 April 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, seventeen per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 April 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 43 and had subsequently, on 21 September 2021, agreed to increase this number by one to 44, to provide a pattern of wards that more effectively balanced the Commission’s statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations were agreed on this basis.

Following publication, 83 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 7 three-, 11 two-, and 1 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.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

1. Final Recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Council as presented.
2. The Board agreed to the laying of a draft Order before Parliament giving effect to its final recommendations for Tonbridge & Malling Council.

AOB

No other business was raised.

**Close of Business**