

LGBCE (22-23) 06 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 19 July 2022, at 09:30am, 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:

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 3 & 6)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (item 4)
Yemi Fagun	Review Officer (item 5)
Tom Rutherford	Review Officer (item 7)
Paul Kingsley	Review Officer (item 8)
Rafa Chowdhury	Finance Lead (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Alison Evison.

Declarations of interest

Steve Robinson declared an interest in item 4, Redditch Draft Recommendations and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 21 June 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:

- Health & Safety revised policy coming to November ARC.
- Universities and Electoral Reviews coming to October meeting once the GIS, Data & Information Officer has settled into his role.
- Council Size changes - the council size guidance will be updated once Ed Hammond has completed the final version of the report

1. Chair's Report

The Chair provided an update on the recruitment of a replacement Commissioner. The Chair also reported on the LGA Conference which had provided a useful opportunity for meeting key local government stakeholders.

2. Operational Report – LGBCE (22-23) 041

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

- Related Alterations and Consents – Consented to parish electoral arrangement changes in North Devon and Breckland.
- South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse - A verbal update was provided to the Commission Board.
- FOI – There was one outstanding freedom of information request, which has been responded to.
- Recruiting – Matt Gillespie, Review Assistant will be leaving the Commission at the end of the month. The team is currently recruiting for another review assistant. The process of appointing a new independent member of ARC is also underway.
- The Commission Board agreed the following Lead Commissioner allocations:
 - Susan Johnson - Sefton

3. Buckinghamshire Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 042

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 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 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-, 27 two-, and 14 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 Buckinghamshire Council as presented.

4. Redditch Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 043

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

The review of Redditch Council had commenced on 15 February 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 8 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 15 February 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 27 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 9 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 Redditch Council as presented

Steve Robinson returned to the meeting.

5. Tunbridge Wells Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 044

The review of Tunbridge Wells Council had commenced on 13 December 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 13 December 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 39 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 13 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 Tunbridge Wells as presented.

6. East Hertfordshire Final Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 045

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 had subsequently, on 15 February 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 42 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 6 three-, 12 two-, and 8 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

Final Recommendations for East Hertfordshire Council as presented.

Agreed

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

7. Telford & Wrekin Final Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 046

The review of Telford & Wrekin Council had commenced on 18 May 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 17 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 May 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 54 and had subsequently, on 16 November 2021, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 303 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 5 three-, 12 two-, and 15 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

Final Recommendations for Telford & Wrekin Council as presented

Agreed

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

8. Chesterfield Final Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 047

The review of Chesterfield Council had commenced on 20 April 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 21 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 40 and had subsequently, on 18 October 2021, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 24 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 8 three- and 8 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 Chesterfield Council as presented.

Agreed

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

9. Qtr 1 Finance & KPIs - LGBCE (22-23) 048

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report.

- KPIs & Management Information – Members suggested that 'on track - no action required' might be better described as 'no additional action recommended'.
- Website Sessions – The Communications and Public Affairs Manager clarified the website session statistics related to the location of the visitor/respondent and not the review concerned. Members asked if it would be possible instead to show data by review in order to identify which reviews are getting more interest than others.
- Social Media statistics – Members asked if the increase in Facebook reach and the decline in Twitter reach were connected since there was an almost perfect correlation. The Communications and Public Affairs Manager explained that most activity is generated by work around draft recommendations and more work was needed to put these figures into context.
- Direct Review Time – Members suggested that hours logged for annual leave and sickness could be stripped out of the calculations for MI 3H since this

would provide a better reflection of the proportion of time Review Officers spend on direct review activity as opposed to other activities.

- Finance – The Commission Board noted the projected underspend of £32K. It was noted that it would be important to closely monitor Commissioner’s fees and travel expenses as more Commissioner activity was anticipated in the coming months. The DCS explained that the rent and rates budget had decreased significantly since last year given that, under IFRS 16, rental payments for accommodation will now be treated as depreciation and this change was adjusted accordingly in the Commission’s budget.

Agreed

- 1) The Commission Board noted the report

10. Draft ARC June Minutes - LGBCE (22-23) 049

Noted the minutes of the June meeting

11. Business Plan Qtr 1 - LGBCE (22-23) 050

The lead officer for each item on the business plan provided an update on their respective projects for the financial year.

- Rewards and Recognition – This project is now complete. For transparency purposes, at the end of the financial year, names of those who have been rewarded will be shared with the ARC Chair,
- Replacement review programme – Transparency will provide training to three members of staff in the development of Project Power Apps, the aim being to undertake the development of this project in house.
- Improving external engagement – There has been some delay to this project. The analysis on customer satisfaction is scheduled to be presented to the Commission Board in September.
- Induction Process - This project will look at the induction process for staff and Commissioners and how this can work both online and in person.
- Corporate training plan – The project will look at a number of corporate training areas that we would like to have training on an annual basis, and this will also be tied into the induction process for new members of staff.
- New LGBCE Website – Five organisations have expressed interest and will provide proposals in the coming weeks.

12. Risk Register - LGBCE (22-23) 051

The DCS introduced the report. Details regarding the Risk Management Group’s July meeting were provided. This was the first Risk Management meeting using both the risk register and the (new) assurance framework.

- Risk 3C – Commission/Audit & Risk Committee becomes inquorate: This was last reviewed in December 2021. There was no change to its current risk score or trend status. The following actions were identified:
 - To document the Commission’s process in which Commissioners are recruited/reappointed.
 - Carry out a review of the assurances in place on the Risk Register in relation to the Commissioner recruitment/reappointment process
 - Review the Commissioner Job specification document
 - Review the recruitment channels used to advertise the role
- Risk 4B – Budget being reduced to an unsustainable level: This was last reviewed in November 2021. There was no change to its current risk score or trend status.
- Risk Assurance Framework – Members commented that it would be useful to have a Commission-wide session on how the assurance framework is going to be incorporated into the risk management process and wider governance.

Agreed

The Commission Board noted the report.

13. Future Communications Team Resource - LGBCE (22-23) 052

The team proposed to retain two Review Assistants and appoint a Communications Officer, who will also be trained to provide RA level resource from time to time.

There were no further comments.

Agreed

- 1) The Commission employ a communications officer on a one-year contract from as soon after 1 September 2022
- 2) Retain two permanent Review Assistant positions from 1 October 2022

14. AOB

DCS to send out a link to Future Business.

Members would like the link to Future Business to be added to the agenda.

Close of Business