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LGBCE (22-23) 07 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 23 August 2022, at 09:30am. 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:

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| Jolyon Jackson CBE | Chief Executive |
| Alison Evison | Review & Programme Manager |
| Glynn McDonald | Communications & Public Affairs Manager |
| Richard Buck | Review Manager |
| Richard Otterway | Review Manager |
| Johnny Ashby | Review Officer (item 8) |
| Tom Rutherford  Mark Cooper  Rebecca Pritchard  Angela Hendry | Review Officer (item 9)  Review Officer (item 10)  Review Officer (item 11)  Office Manager/HR Lead (minutes) |
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Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Peter Maddison and Lynn Ingram.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of LGBCE’s meeting on 19 July 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:

* Driving at Work Policy – will be considered again in light of the recent incident during the Harlow tour.
* Chair to write to Lizzie Peers, Independent Member of ARC, expressing the Commission’s gratitude for her contributions, as she approaches the end of her term of office.

1. Chair’s Report

The Chair provided an update on the recruitment of a Commissioner.

The Chair referred to an incident during the Harlow tour when heavy tree branches had fallen on the car containing a Commissioner and an Officer. It was extremely fortunate that neither occupant had been injured physically although the car itself had been badly damaged.

It would be important to consider any lessons from the event - both policy and practice – in respect of how tours are undertaken, the means of transportation, how risks are assessed and mitigated, and how any incidents and related consequences are handled. In doing so, the Commission will be mindful of its duty of care towards staff and commissioners (and third parties where appropriate).

The Chief Executive agreed to take this matter forward expeditiously and would ensure that any follow-up from the recent incident reflected this approach.

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 have been received for East Riding of Yorkshire and Broxtowe and Chelmsford.
* The Commission Board agreed to delay the Sheffield/Barnsley PABR until September 2022 when it was hoped that full information had been received.
* The Commission Board agreed to the request from Buckinghamshire Council to extend consultation to allow time for it to take its formal response through its governance structure and to a full council meeting at the end of November.
* The Commission Board noted the communication from Rossendale in relation to council size and the consideration being given changing their electoral cycle. The Board agreed their Council Size would now be considered at the main Board meeting in September.
* The Communications and Public Affairs Manager gave an update on the tendering process for website provider.
* The Communications and Public Affairs Manager reported on the appointment to the post of Review Assistant.
* It was noted that as a result of recent staff changes, we no longer have two EDI Champions on the staff team.
* Wigan Stage 3 complaint, a response is being drafted.
* The Communications and Public Affairs Manager updated that the closing date for the Communications Officer vacancy is 24 August and interviews are scheduled for 5 September.
* The Chair confirmed Amanda Nobbs as Lead Commissioner for Oxfordshire and Calderdale.

3. Wokingham Council Size - LGBCE (22-23) 054

It had been agreed to review Wokingham Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review and intervention. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 54 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 54 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 54 members.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 54 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

4. Nuneaton & Bedworth Council Size - LGBCE (22-23) 055

It had been agreed to review Nuneaton & Bedworth Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review and as an intervention review given the levels of electoral inequality. According to the latest available electoral figures, 35 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 34 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 four from 34 to 38 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 38 members.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 38 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

1. West Northamptonshire Council Size - LGBCE (22-23) 056

It had been agreed to review West Northamptonshire following the establishment of the new authority prior to its next election in 2025. 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 93 members. The Board noted this had been set as an interim arrangement and was derived from the number of previous county divisions in the area covered, with three members being allocated per previous division.

Following receipt of information about future governance and representational arrangements, it was recommended by LGBCE officers that there was sufficient evidence to support a council size of 77 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 77 members.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 77 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

6. North Northamptonshire Council Size - LGBCE (22-23) 057

It had been agreed to review North Northamptonshire following the establishment of the authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 15 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 78 members. The Board noted this had been set as an interim arrangement and was derived from the number of previous county divisions in the area covered, with three members being allocated per previous division.

At this stage, LGBCE officers considered that there was insufficient information to identify a council size given the limited evidence received. The officer team recommended that a request be made to the Council for further evidence, including the option for those proposing alternatives to the official council submission to offer evidence in support of their initial views.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed to request further evidence from the Council, including from those who had identified alternatives to the official council submission during its preparation and consideration by the Council.

7. North Tyneside Council Size - LGBCE (22-23) 058

It had been agreed to review North Tyneside Council as part of a Periodic Electoral Review. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 60 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 60 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 60 members.

**Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 60 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

8. Fareham Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22-23) 043

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.

At its meeting on 18 January 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 32 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 16 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 Fareham Council as presented.

9. Mole Valley Final Recommendations – LGBCE (2-23)60

The review of Mole Valley Council had commenced on 21 September 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 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 39 and had subsequently, on 15 March, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 113 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 13 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 Mole Valley Council as presented.

**Agreed**

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

10. Fenland Final Recommendations – LGBCE (22-23)061

The review of Fenland Council had commenced on 18 October 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 21 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 October 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 42 and had subsequently, on 15 March, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 181 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. These included the addition of a further member since this allowed for a warding pattern that better reflected the statutory criteria, i.e. 43 members.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 9 three-, 7 two-, and 2 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 Fenland Council as presented.

**Agreed**

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

11. Liverpool Final Recommendations – LGBCE (22-23)062

The review of Liverpool Council had commenced on 23 September 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 30 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 23 September 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 85 and had subsequently, on 15 March 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 220 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 3 three-, 15 two-, and 46 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 Liverpool Council as presented.

**Agreed**

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

12. Appointment of Independent Member to ARC

The Chair of Audit & Risk updated on the recruitment process for a new Independent Member to Audit & Risk Committee to succeed Lizzie Peers at the completion of her term next month.

The Board agreed to the appointment of the recommended candidate, Dr David Horne to the position of Independent Member to ARC. He would serve for the period 23 August 2022 - 22 August 2025.

The new Independent Member to ARC would be invited to the November Policy Session.

13. AOB

It was noted that there will be two Board meetings in September.

**Close of Business**