

LGBCE (22-23)09 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 20 September 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:

Jolyon Jackson CBE

Lynn Ingram

Glynn McDonald

Alison Evison

Richard Buck

Richard Otterway

Jonathan Ashby

Ben Meredeen

Mark Cooper

Paul Kingsley

Paul Nizinskyj

Dean Faccini

Rafa Chowdhury

Chief Executive

Director of Corporate Services

Communications & Public Affairs Manager

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Review Officer (item 5)

Review Officer (item 6)

Review Officer (item 7)

Review Officer (item 8)

Review Officer (item 10)

Compliance Lead (item 17)

Finance Lead (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Peter Maddison.

Declarations of interest

Alison Evison declared an interest in item 9 Epping Forest and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 23 August 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 and safety – Revised policy going to November ARC
- Universities and Electoral Reviews – October/November. (afternote – November)
- Driving at work – More discussions required. To be taken to the Commission board in October
- HR policies – Marked as an ARC Action. Report on HR Policy Review Project to be presented to the Commission Board in October. Camile Nickson (HR Consultant) will also be present to discuss background details.

1. Chair's Report

- The Chair updated the Board on the recent ministerial changes.
- The Chair provided an update on the recruitment of a replacement Commissioner.
- Board members were reminded of the face-to-face policy session which is to be held on 19th October.

2. Operational Report – LGBCE (22/23) 067

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

- Related alterations and consents – Two were later on the agenda and further cases are being allocated to Review Officers.
- Cannock Chase – The Commission Board agreed to consider Cannock Chase draft recommendations at its November 2022 meeting instead of October.
- Mole Valley – Following a recent complaint from a local councillor that her submission had not been fully considered, the Commission Board were invited to re-consider in full the Final Recommendations for Mole Valley. They did so in the context of all submissions received during the consultation period. The Board agreed the Final Recommendations for Mole Valley as presented.
- Parliament - Parliament is in recess until at least 20 September. The six orders that were to be laid in early September will now be laid in October and November.
- FOI & Complaints – There are two FOI requests. A Wigan Stage 3 complaint has been responded to.
- Recruitment and Staffing - Harry Latham has started his role as a Review Assistant. In addition, a Review Assistant has been recruited for one month to support the communications team during the busy launch period.

- The Commission Board agreed the following Lead Commissioner allocations:
 - Coventry – Andrew Scallan
 - Gateshead – Susan Johnson

3. Review Programme – Intervention Authorities - LGBCE (22/23) 068

The report identified 32 authorities that meet the intervention criteria using the December 2021 electoral registers. The team recommended including 12 of these authorities in its 2023/24 programme based on criteria outlined in the paper.

The Commission Board agreed in principle for the following 12 authorities that meet the Commission’s intervention criteria to be included in the 2023/24 electoral review programme:

1. Cheshire East
2. Swindon
3. Middlesbrough
4. Vale of White Horse
5. Tower Hamlets
6. Colchester
7. Canterbury
8. Newcastle upon Tyne
9. Breckland
10. Milton Keynes
11. Bromsgrove
12. North West Leicestershire

In considering the paper and its recommendations, the Board discussed the amount of time between periodic electoral reviews. The Board agreed that local authorities should be considered for inclusion in the review programme 12 years after the implementation of their last electoral review.

4. Rossendale Council Size – LGBCE (22/23) 069

It had been agreed to review Rossendale Council as part of the Periodic Electoral Review Programme. According to the latest available electoral figures, none of the wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 36 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 6 from 36 to 30 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 30 members.

Agreed

The Board agreed that a council size of 30 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

5. Brentwood Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22/23) 070

The review of Brentwood 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 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 Brentwood Council as presented.

6. Castle Point Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22/23) 071

The review of Castle Point Council had commenced on 25 April 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 14 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 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 Castle Point Council as presented.

7. Harlow Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22/23) 072

The review of Harlow Council had commenced on 25 April 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 46 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 33 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 11 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 Harlow Council as presented.

8. Basildon Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22/23) 073

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 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 14 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 Basildon Council as presented.

9. Epping Forest Draft Recommendations - LGBCE (22/23) 074

Alison Evison left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this agenda item

The review of Epping Forest Council had commenced on 25 April 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 16 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 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 Epping Forest Council as presented.

Alison Evison returned to the meeting.

10. Derby Final Recommendations - LGBCE (22/23) 075

The review of Derby Council had commenced on 19 October 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 18 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 October 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 51 and had subsequently, on 17 May 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 179 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 15 three- and 3 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

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

11. Brighton & Hove Final Recommendations – LGBCE (22/23) 076

The review of Brighton & Hove Council had commenced on 17 August 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 14 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 17 August 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 54 and had subsequently, on 18 January 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

At its meeting on 21 June 2022, the Board agreed to a period of Further limited consultation.

Following publication, 723 submissions had been received commenting on the Further 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 Further 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-, 15 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 and Further Draft Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

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

12. East Riding of Yorkshire related alteration – LGBCE (22/23) 077

The Board considered the content of the East Riding of Yorkshire Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would make parish and district ward boundaries coterminous in the area..

Agreed

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

13. Chelmsford related alteration – LGBCE (22/23) 078

The Board considered the content of the Chelmsford Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alterations as the changes proposed would make parish and district ward boundaries coterminous in the area.

Agreed

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

14. Report on 2021-22 Customer Satisfaction Data – LGBCE (22/23) 079

The Communications and Public Affairs Manager introduced the first Customer Insight report, using the set of surveys that were introduced in April 2021. The aim of this work was to provide the Commission with an insight to allow us to make an objective assessment of how the Commission are perceived by customers as well as to identify areas for service improvement.

The largest source of insight was the general survey. The suite of surveys also includes a series of smaller bespoke surveys which are aimed at specific audiences and activities - CEO, Council briefing, officers' workshop, community & parish council briefings, council communications contact. All surveys include two common questions – one about people's overall satisfaction in dealing with the Commission and the other about the professionalism of staff. The combined number of responses was 703. While response rates have broadly been satisfactory, some of the smaller surveys have poor levels of response rates. Measures are being put in place to address this issue. Overall, the survey responses indicate satisfaction levels are high.

Members made the following comments:

- It would be helpful if we could keep count of how many councillors attend the Full Council briefings and explore ways of eliciting their views at the time, or shortly after, the briefings.
- During Full Council briefings, it is not uncommon for feedback to be provided verbally. Is there a way Commissioners, Review Managers and Review Officers can capture these comments and feedback, whilst being objective.
- Measures also need to be put in place to increase response rates for certain surveys.

Agreed

- 1) The Commission Board noted the report.
- 2) The Commission Board noted the actions in the summary table
- 3) To publish the findings on the Commission's website
- 4) To circulate the findings to key parliamentary contacts
- 5) The 22-23 report to be presented to the Board in June 2023

15. Website Management and Governance – LGBCE (22/23) 080

The Communications and Public Affairs Manager introduced the report. Versantus have been appointed to produce a new website for the Commission and delivery of a fully-operational site is scheduled to go live within this financial year. The start and end dates of the project are subject to confirmation with the supplier. Updates of the project will be provided to the Board and Leadership team until completion of the project.

Board members commented there was no reference in the report to user groups and user testing in order to ensure that end-user experience is incorporated into the website design. The Communications Manager clarified that this aspect will be addressed and put in place and arranged via the supplier.

Agreed

The Commission Board noted the report.

16. Reflections on Driving at Work – LGBCE (22/23) 081

To be discussed in a future meeting.

17. Risk Register – LGBCE (22/23) 082

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

- 1C Failure to gain support from Speaker's committee – This was last reviewed in December 2021. There was no change to its current risk score or trend status.
- 3D Information Security/Management – This was last reviewed in February 2022. There was no change to the current risk score or trend status. The following actions were identified:
 - Refresher training for both Information Security and GDPR
 - Cyber Essentials certification
 - Review of the Commission's IT strategy.
- 5A Fatality, injury or serious damage – Following the Harlow incident, board members commented that this may need some reframing and questioned how the Commission conducts post-incident analysis and review, if there is a significant health and safety incident. Members also commented that it is important to ensure the health and safety policies considers both visitors and Commissioners.

Agreed

The Commission Board noted the report.

AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business