

## LGBCE (24-25) 10th meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 at 10:00am  
All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams

### Commissioners present:

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)  
Amanda Nobbs OBE  
Steve Robinson  
Wallace Sampson OBE  
Andrew Scallan CBE  
Liz Treacy

### LGBCE officers present:

Ailsa Irvine	Chief Executive
Kathryn Trower	Interim Director of Corporate Services
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Hayley Meachin	Communications and Engagement Manager
Tom Rutherford	Review Officer and Review Process Lead
Yemi Fagun	Review Officer (for item 4)
Paul Kingsley	Review Officer (for item 5)
Paul Nizinskyj	Review Officer (for item 7)
Dean Faccini	Governance & Compliance Lead (for items 9 & 10)
Angela Hendry	HR Lead (minutes)

### Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Jonathan Ashby.

### Declarations of interest

Amanda Nobbs declared an interest in item 4, Dacorum Draft Recommendations, and took no part in the discussion of that item.

### Minutes of the LGBCE's meeting on 15 October 2024

The minutes were agreed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

## Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

## Actions from previous Commission Board meetings

The following actions were reported on:

- EDI statement – as outlined in the operational report, the ‘Lines To Take’ will be shared with Commissioners in December. Further, ongoing work relating to EDI and reviews has been incorporated into team work plans.
- BCE – nothing further to update since last month

### 1. Chair’s report

The Chair gave positive feedback on attendance at the LGA conference, noting that it was useful to engage and network with local authorities and other key organisations.

The Chair updated on the Board effectiveness process. An external facilitator will attend a Board meeting as a silent observer, followed by a survey and a feedback session on the day before the February in-person Board meeting.

The Chair and Chief Executive have been invited to attend a session with the Speaker’s Committee in December.

The Chair noted the imminent English Devolution White Paper, which may have an impact on our work.

### 2. Operational report – LGBCE (24/25)075

The Chief Executive presented the operational report for November and the Board noted its content.

- Review programme – the Chief Executive highlighted the minor adjustments to the programme noted in the report, and added that the final recommendations for the 2025-26 programme will come to the Board at the December meeting.
- Orders - The Board noted the latest timetable.
- Recruitment to the Director of Corporate Services (DCS) vacancy - The successful candidate has now formally accepted the offer and we are awaiting confirmation of their start date.
- The Chair confirmed the Lead Commissioner appointments for Chelmsford and Burnley.

### 3. Cumberland Council Size – LGBCE (24/25)076

It had been agreed to review Cumberland Council following the recent establishment of the authority. According to the latest available electoral figures, 22 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. One ward, Dalston & Burgh, had a variance of 33 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 46 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 9, from 46 to 55 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, on the basis of this evidence, was minded to support a council size of 55 members.

### **Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 55 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

## **4. Dacorum Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (24/25)077**

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

The review of Dacorum Council had commenced on 25 April 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 24 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 25 April 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 51. However, the Draft Recommendations being considered had been based on a council size of 52, in order to provide a better balance of the statutory criteria.

In preparing the draft scheme, the team had taken into consideration both the submissions received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 5 three-, 16 two-, and 5 single-member wards.

The Board considered the recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received, and was minded to agree them.

### **Agreed**

The Board agreed the Draft Recommendations for Dacorum Council as presented.

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

## **5. Breckland Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (24/25)078**

The review of Breckland Council had commenced on 13 February 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent. Forest ward had a variance of -45%.

At its meeting on 13 February 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 51 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 received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 2 three-, 13 two-, and 19 single-member wards.

The Board considered the recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received, and was minded to agree them.

### **Agreed**

The Board agreed the Draft Recommendations for Breckland Council as presented.

## **6. Milton Keynes Draft Recommendations – LGBCE (24/25)079**

The review of Milton Keynes Council had commenced on 12 March 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 37 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 12 March 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 60 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 received and the statutory criteria. The Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 20 three-member wards.

The Board considered the recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the advice of officers and the submissions received, and was minded to agree them.

### **Agreed**

The Board agreed the Draft Recommendations for Milton Keynes Council as presented.

## **7. Thurrock Final Recommendations – LGBCE (24/25)080**

The review of Thurrock Council had commenced on 16 January 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 45 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 January 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 49 and had subsequently, on 18 June 2024, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 101 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all 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 Board agreed to rename the ward Standord-le-Hope North & The Homesteads to The Homesteads & Stanford-le-Hope North.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 9 three- and 11 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, and was minded to agree them.

### **Agreed**

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

## **8. Maidstone Related Alterations – LGBCE (24-25)081**

The Board considered the content of the Maidstone Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alterations as the changes proposed will aid effective and convenient local government.

### **Agreed**

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

## **9. Risk – LGBCE (24-25)082**

The Governance and Compliance Lead joined the meeting and presented the risk report for November. The Board noted its content.

The Risk Management Group (RMG) had completed a deep dive on two risks at its November meeting:

- Risk 1B: Judicial review – RMG considered the likelihood of a successful judicial review being initiated against the Commission, and also agreed some actions. The group agreed to revise the risk score to Unlikely/Major/4.
- Risk 3A: Changes in demand outside current resources – RMG noted the upcoming English Devolution White Paper and an action was identified to review the impact on the risk register once the report was available. No change was made to this risk score. It was noted that our engagement with MHCLG should be added as a mitigation to this risk on the risk register.

## **10. Corporate planning – LGBCE (24-25)083**

The Chief Executive presented the corporate planning update and outlined the key elements for the Board. The themes to be contained in the plan follow on from discussions

held at the Board and Leadership Team workshops in September 2024.

The Board discussed the aims and objectives, key activities, financial planning and the design of the corporate plan document, and made some recommendations for additions and amendments.

A draft of the plan will now be developed and shared with Commissioners in draft. A final version of the plan, along with the main supply estimate for 2025/26, will come to the Board for approval in January 2025.

## 11. Dignity at work policy – LGBCE (24-25)084

The Chief Executive presented the dignity at work policy which had been updated further to previous consideration by the Board in September, to simplify the content and avoid duplication with other policies.

The Board considered the policy and recommended a paragraph be included to address what a breach of the policy will mean. The revised policy will be brought to the December Board meeting.

## 12. Any other business

There was no other business.