

## LGBCE (25-26) 6th meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 2025 at 10:00am  
All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams

### Commissioners present:

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

### LGBCE officers present:

Ailsa Irvine	Chief Executive
Rachel Barker	Director of Reviews, Strategy & Engagement
Bipon Bhakri	Director of Corporate Services
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Jonathan Ashby	Senior Review Officer
Brendan Connell-French	Senior Review Officer
Nicole Holt	Review Officer (item 4)
Rafa Chowdhury	Finance Lead (minutes)

## Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Hayley Meachin and Tom Rutherford.

## Declarations of interest

Colin Mellors and Wallace Sampson declared an interest in item 5, North Yorkshire Final Recommendations, and took no part in the discussion on this item.

Colin Mellors and Wallace Sampson noted their respective engagement in work across Yorkshire, as recorded on the register of interests.

## Minutes of the LGBCE's meetings on 15 and 17 July 2025

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:

- Strategic discussion on review programming for September away day – on track; work is underway to develop the session which will be included on the agenda for the September Board/Leadership Team away day.
- MHCLG and use of terminology in relation to wards/divisions – work is ongoing to understand any legal barriers to achieving this. Officers will now check our understanding of the position with MHCLG officials, to inform our approach to raising the issue more formally with MHCLG.

### 1. Chair's report

The Chair reported that four key areas will be considered during the September Board and Leadership Team away day – review programming, strategic communications, digital strategy and how we work.

The Chair thanked Alison Evison for arranging the recent session with Calderdale Council officers on electoral reviews from a local authority perspective.

The Chair reported on the recent webinars which had been facilitated by MHCLG focussing on councillor numbers for those areas in the Devolution Priority Programme.

### 2. Operational report - LGBCE(25/26) 028

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

- It was noted that the Chief Executive had granted St Helens the consent to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order changing protected electoral arrangements.
- The Commission Board agreed to include Dorset Council in the 2025/26 programme, for implementation in 2029.
- The Commission Board agreed to Doncaster Council's request to delay their review by a year.

- The Commission Board agreed to Sheffield City Council's request for a three month extension to the deadline for their submission of council size proposals. The council size decision will be moved back from December 2025 to March 2026.
- The Chair confirmed the allocation of lead Commissioners as follows:
  - Dorset - Amanda Nobbs
  - York - Wallace Sampson
  - North Somerset - Steve Robinson
  - Doncaster - Amanda Nobbs
  - Darlington - Amanda Nobbs

### 3. Sandwell Final Recommendations – LGBCE(25/26)029

The review of Sandwell Council had commenced on 21 May 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 13 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 May 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 72 and had subsequently, on 21 January 2025, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 85 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 Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 24 three-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 Sandwell Council as presented.

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

### 4. East Riding of Yorkshire Final Recommendations – LGBCE(25/26)030

The review of East Riding of Yorkshire Council had commenced on 25 April 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 23 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 67 and had subsequently, on 21 January 2025, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 82 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 Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 11 three- and 17 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 East Riding of Yorkshire Council as presented.

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

## **5. North Yorkshire Further Draft & Final Recommendations – LGBCE(25/26)031**

*Colin Mellors and Wallace Sampson left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item. Andrew Scallan chaired this item in the absence of the Chair.*

The review of North Yorkshire Council had commenced on 18 September 2024.

At its meeting on 18 September 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 89 and had subsequently, on 18 March 2025, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 195 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 and Further Draft Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations and Further Draft Recommendations proposed a pattern of 2 two- and 85 single-member divisions.

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 agreed them in principle.

The Board also considered the Further Draft Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations, It agreed to a period of further limited consultation on the Further Draft Recommendations, focusing on the central and western areas of North Yorkshire.

### **Agreed**

The Board agreed a period of further limited consultation on the Further Draft Recommendations, focusing on the central and western areas of North Yorkshire. The Board agreed in principle the Final Recommendations for the remaining areas of North Yorkshire.

*Colin Mellors and Wallace Sampson returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item.*

## **6. ARC minutes – LGBCE(25/26)032/033**

The Commission Board noted the minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee's February 2025 and May 2025 meetings.

## **7. ARC Chair's report / Review of effectiveness of ARC – LGBCE(25/26)034**

The Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee highlighted key items from the meeting that took place on 28 July 2025.

- The new internal auditors, MIAA, provided a summary of the internal audit plan for 2025/26.
- The Independent Member provided an overview of the findings from the effectiveness of ARC review. The Committee discussed the priorities and areas for action that had been highlighted in the report.
- It was agreed to convene a private meeting with the External and Internal Auditors prior to the November ARC meeting.

- It was agreed that an in-person ARC meeting will be held at least once annually.
- It was agreed that the Commission Chair be invited to an ARC meeting annually
- It was noted that Liz Treacy has been appointed as the new Chair of ARC and will take up that role in September

The Commission Board noted the update and the ARC effectiveness report.

## 8. Review of policies

- Risk – LGBCE(25/26)035

The Governance and Compliance Lead presented the updated policy and outlined the key changes that have been made.

The Board welcomed the updated policy and the revised risk management framework it established. The risk impact matrix was considered, and a minor amendment agreed to reflect that small amounts of budgetary loss do not necessarily mean that the impact will be negligible for the Commission.

### **Agreed**

The Commission Board approved the updated policy, subject to the above amendment.

- Whistleblowing – LGBCE(25/26)036

The Finance Lead presented the updated policy and outlined the key changes that have been made.

Board members made the following comments in discussion of the policy:

- The presentation and tone of this and other Commission policies could be enhanced, to ensure a consistent approach and to improve their accessibility. It was agreed that this could be considered as part of wider work on the policy schedule, which flows from the recent ARC effectiveness review.
- The policy should clearly specify the appropriate course of action if the concern relates to the Chair of ARC.
- The policy should address more specifically whether the outcome of the investigation will be communicated to the whistleblower.

### **Agreed**

The Commission Board approved the updated policy, subject to the above amendments.

## 9. Stakeholder survey and feedback – LGBCE(25/26)037

The Director of Reviews, Strategy and Engagement introduced the report and updated on the work that has been undertaken to promote the stakeholder survey in Q1.

Board members made the following comments in discussion of the report:

- The current survey should continue to run for this year, enabling us to build a baseline of results. However, future amendments to the survey could consider whether more could be done to distinguish between views on the outcome and views on the process.
- The use of qualitative information was welcomed as supporting us with developing a deeper understanding of both our strengths and the areas where improvement is required.
- There was support for exploring a more sophisticated breakdown of stakeholders, supporting us with establishing different ways to engage and also providing opportunities to consider feedback from different categories of stakeholders, helping to set the context for their responses.

AOB

There was no other business.