

LGBCE (22-23)10 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 18 October 2022, at 09:30am. All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams.

Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
Peter Maddison QPM
Susan Johnson OBE
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
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Paul Kingsley	Review Officer (item 3)
Paul Nizinskyj	Review Officer (item 4)
Yemi Fagun	Review Officer (item 5 & 6)
Mark Cooper	Review Officer (item 7)
Ben Merdeen	Review Officer (item 8)
Dean Faccini	Compliance Lead (items 13 & 14)
Camille Nickson	External HR Consultant (item 16)
Angela Hendry	OM / HR Lead (minutes)

Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Richard Otterway.

Declarations of interest

Susan Johnson declared an in item 3 North Hertfordshire and took no part in the discussion on that item.

Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 12 and 20 September 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 would be presented to ARC in November. Discussion would include the wider issue of cover for staff and Commissioners when carrying out their duties on behalf of the Commission off site.
- Universities and electoral reviews was planned for the November meeting
- Driving at work going to ARC in November. (afternote – now called Health and Safety incident)
- Late responses to consultations will be discussed by the Leadership Team in November
- Changing council size and the effect on distribution/pattern to be discussed by the Leadership Team in November and followed, at a later stage, with a paper to the Board

1. Chair's Report

The Chair updated the Board on updated on the progress for recruiting a replacement Commissioner.

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

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

- The Review Manager indicated that Tunbridge Wells had requested a pause in the electoral review before final recommendations are agreed to allow them to consider their electoral cycle. The Commission Board agreed the recommendation to delay their decision on final recommendations for Tunbridge Wells until the February 2023 meeting, subject to any decisions on the Council's electoral cycle.
- It was noted that the Communications Officer would take up their role in early November.
- The Communication & Public Affairs Manager updated the Commission that the issue with website media resources by regions has been resolved.
- It was noted that spaces have been booked at the LGA Conference for July 2023.

3. North Hertfordshire Draft Recommendations – LGBCE 084

Susan Johnson left the meeting and took no part in the decision on this agenda item.

The review of North Hertfordshire Council had commenced on 14 February 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 37 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 14 February 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 50 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 7 three-, 13 two-, and 4 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.

As a result of this further consideration and, on the basis of the evidence, the Commission agreed to move away from its original opinion on council size and, instead, agreed a council size of 51 as this provides for better electoral equality.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

Agreed

Draft Recommendations for North Hertfordshire Council as presented.

Susan Johnson returned to the meeting.

4. Cheltenham Draft Recommendations – LGBCE 085

The review of Cheltenham Council had commenced on 17 May 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 17 May 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 40 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 20 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 Cheltenham Council as presented.

5. Worcester Draft Recommendations – LGBCE 086

The review of Worcester Council had commenced on 15 March 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 15 March 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 35 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 5-three, and 10 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 Worcester Council as presented.

6. Stevenage Final Recommendations – LGBCE 087

The review of Stevenage Council had commenced on 16 November 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 31 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 November 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 39 and had subsequently, on 17 May 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 99 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 Stevenage Council as presented.

Agreed

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

7. Southampton Final Recommendations – LGBCE 088

The review of Southampton Council had commenced on 16 November 2021. According to the latest available electoral figures, 19 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent with one ward, Bargate being over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 November 2021, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 51 and had subsequently, on 25 April 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 142 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 17 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 Southampton Council as presented.

Agreed

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

8. Havant Final Recommendations – LGBCE 089

The review of Havant Council had commenced on 21 September 2021. This is a periodic electoral review. According to the latest available electoral figures, none 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 36 and had subsequently, on 25 April 2022, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 163 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 12 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 Havant Council as presented.

Agreed

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

9. Cotswold Related Alteration – LGBCE 090

The Board considered the content of the Cotswold Council Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would achieve promote effective and convenient local government.

Agreed

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

10. Broxtowe Related Alteration – LGBCE 091

The Board considered the content of the Broxtowe Council Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would promote effective and convenient local government.

Agreed

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

11. Tewkesbury Related Alteration – LGBCE 092

The Board considered the content of the Tewkesbury Council Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would promote effective and convenient local government.

Agreed

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

12. Qtr 2 Finance & KPIs – LGBCE 093

The Director of Corporate Services introduced the report for Quarter 2.

- The Commission Board welcomed the clear presentation of the data in the report.
- Project Spread – It was noted that the Leadership Team will consider this matter further when reports are run from project spread as the data is impacted by people being on leave when the report is run.
- Facebook and twitter reach - it was noted that a Facebook conversion rate comprises the number of people seeing our posts who take further actions as a result. The Communications and Public Affairs Manager suggested that it would be more beneficial to compare our conversion rate over time as rather than try to identify an industry standard.
- KPI 1A Reviews started – It was noted that 26 reviews are planned for the whole year of which 12 have been achieved so far.
- M1A Five-year forecasting accuracy – It was noted that further work will be done to understand and interpret the breakdown of figures.
- Finance – The Commission Board noted the projected underspend of £27K. The budget includes the proposed pay award for Commissioners and staff, inflationary price increases for our contracts, LGA conference costs, printing including a backlog of providing reports/mapping to the Legal Deposit-British Library. It was noted that the budget will be monitored closely on an on-going basis.

13. Business Plan Qtr 2 – LGBCE 094

- The Business Project leads updated the Commission Board on their respective projects.
- Rewards and Recognition – now complete and will be removed from the Business Plan.
- Assurance Framework – the new assurance framework is up and running, and the project will be complete once the quarterly report goes to ARC in November. It was agreed to make a presentation to the December Board meeting on the approach to the assurance framework.
- GIS refresh – the GIS officer has been working on cleansing data, stress testing the system and beginning to write desk instructions for Review Officers.
- Improving External Involvement – the work on the development of the website along with the actions identified from the customer insight report will feed into this project over the coming months. It was noted automatic replies are sent to submissions made via the website or by email followed by an individual email with a unique reference number. The new website project will look at how we streamline this process. It was noted that the website project should be informed by the work of the EDI group on external involvement and external partners.

- Replacement review programme – training has begun with Transparency on the Microsoft programme which will enable us to develop our own app.
- Future Working phase II – session will be held on 19 October 2022.
- Corporate Training Plan – It was noted that we now have a new training process as part of the appraisal system.
- Induction Process – a working group will be formed to take this project forward. Work to be done to ensure the Commissioner induction is up to date.

14. Risk Register – LGBCE (22/23) 095

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

- 5A Health & Safety – This was last reviewed in March 2022. There was no change to its current risk score or trend status. The RMG reviewed the current effectiveness of risk and assurances, the investigation procedure, and the Health & Safety policy. The Health & Safety policy is scheduled to be reviewed by the Leadership Team in November before going to ARC for endorsement.
- A new action was identified to create a 'Health & Safety forum' through Microsoft Teams to help raise health & safety awareness at the Commission. This action has been implemented.
- The office will become a nut free environment in order to protect those with allergies and guidance notes will be circulated to all staff and Commissioners.

Agreed

The Commission Board noted the report.

15. Website Replacement Update - LGBCE (22/23) 095

The Commission Board noted the Website Update report from the Communications and Public Affairs Manager.

16. People Strategy (HR Policy Review) – LGBCE (22/23) 097

Camille Nickson (external HR Consultant) joined the meeting for this item.

The Director of Corporate Services delivered a presentation to the Commission Board on the work achieved as part of the People Strategy HR policy review.

- All HR policies have been reviewed in terms of current legislation
- All HR policies have been reformatted to clearly show the responsibilities for employees; managers; HR Lead and also for the Commission
- All policies have been checked for consistency and equalities impact
- All policies were considered by the Leadership Team
- A manager's guide has been drafted

- All HR policies will be relaunched as version 1 and uploaded to SharePoint as mandatory reads
- In response to a question on workforce and succession planning, it was noted that this along with a skills audit could be considered as part of People Strategy 2.
- It was noted that as part of the review of HR policies, consideration was given to which policies relate to staff and which relate to staff and Commissioners.
- It was noted that with the relaunch of the HR policies, we are reverting to the process of review on a bi-annual basis as per the policies update list with appropriate updates as and when there are changes in legislation.

16. AOB

There were no other items.

Close of Business