

## LGBCE (23-23) 7 Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on 17 October 2023, at 11:15am, in Meeting Room, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0TL.

### Commissioners Present

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)

Amanda Nobbs OBE

Wallace Sampson OBE

Andrew Scallan CBE

Liz Treacy

### LGBCE Officers Present:

Jolyon Jackson CBE

Kathryn Trower

Hayley Meachin

Alison Evison

Richard Buck

Richard Otterway

Mark Cooper

Yemi Fagun

Paul Kingsley

Tom Rutherford

Dean Faccini

Rafa Chowdhury

Chief Executive

Interim Director of Corporate Services

Communications & Engagement Manager

Review & Programme Manager

Review Manager

Review Manager

Review Officer (item 4 & 8)

Review Officer (item 5)

Review Officer (item 6)

Review Officer (item 7)

Governance & Compliance Lead (item 13 & 14)

Finance Lead (minutes)

## Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Steve Robinson.

## Declarations of interest

Jolyon Jackson and Amanda Nobbs declared an interest in item 9, Wiltshire Related Alterations, and took no part in the discussions of that item.

Colin Mellors and Wallace Sampson declared an interest in item 5, Calderdale Draft Recommendations, and took no part in the discussions of that item.

## Minutes of LGBCE's meeting on 19 September 2023

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:

- Progression on Resilience & Retention - This has been deferred until after the relocation is determined.
- Value for Money – to be discussed in February 2024.
- Fees and Expenses Policy – Due in December 2023.
- Review of Story maps – RO has arranged for one to one's with Commissioners.
- Review website by ARC – with VFM in February.
- Follow up on Communications to be part of the agenda for February 2024 policy session.

#### 1. Chair's Report

The Chair formally welcomed Wallace Sampson to his first Commission Board meeting.

#### 2. Operational Report - LGBCE(23/24)072

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

- Related alterations - There are currently six outstanding related alteration requests. An additional related alteration request from Cornwall is expected in due course.
- Thurrock – The Commission Board agreed to conduct an electoral review of Thurrock Council for implementation at an all-out election in 2025.
- Cotswold – The Commission Board agreed to conduct the review of Cotswold as a request review as well as an intervention review.
- FOIs – There are two outstanding FOI requests.
- Recruitment and staffing– The Commission Board thanked Harry Latham (Review Assistant) for his work at the Commission. The recruitment process has commenced for Harry's replacement.
- The Chair agreed the Lead Commissioner allocations as follows:
  - Wallace Sampson – Plymouth

- Wallace Sampson – North East Lincolnshire
- Wallace Sampson – Nuneaton & Bedworth
- Wallace Sampson – Dudley
- Wallace Sampson – Sefton
- Wallace Sampson – Gateshead
- Andrew Scallan - Thurrock
- Wallace Sampson – Thanet
- Liz Treacy – Wakefield
- Liz Treacy – North Yorkshire
- Amanda Nobbs – Southend
- Andrew Scallan – Cumberland
- Andrew Scallan – Westmorland & Furness

### 3. Barnsley Council Size - LGBCE(23/24)073

It had been agreed to review Barnsley Council due to electoral imbalance. According to the latest available electoral figures, 19 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

The current size of the Council is 63 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 63 members.

The Board considered all the available evidence and, based on this evidence, it was minded to support a council size of 63 members.

#### **Agreed**

The Board agreed that a council size of 63 be used as the basis for the preparation of the Draft Recommendations.

### 4. Coventry Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(23/24)074

The review of Coventry Council had commenced on 16 May 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 33 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 May 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 54 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared based on 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 considering the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Coventry Council as presented.

## 5. Calderdale Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(23/24)075

*The Chair, Colin Mellors, and Wallace Sampson left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item. This item was chaired by the Deputy Chair, Andrew Scallan.*

The review of Calderdale Council had commenced on 16 May 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, no wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 16 May 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 54 and the Draft Recommendations being considered had been prepared based on 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 considering the advice of officers and the submissions received.

It agreed the Draft Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Draft Recommendations for Calderdale Council as presented.

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

## 6. Tandrige Final Recommendations - LGBCE(23/24)076

The review of Tandrige had commenced on 13 December 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 10 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 13 December 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 42 and had subsequently, on 16 May 2023, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 226 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. Particular attention had been paid by officers to individual areas regarding the possibility of achieving three-member warding arrangements whilst not undermining the three statutory criteria. The reasons for departing from a uniform pattern in some areas was detailed in the Final Recommendations.

The Final Recommendations included an amendment to the council size to 43 and proposed a pattern of 10 three-, 5 two-, and 3 single-member wards in total.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and considering the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

### **Agreed**

Final Recommendations for Tandridge as presented.

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

## **7. North Northamptonshire Final Recommendations - LGBCE(23/24)077**

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

At its meeting on 15 November 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 70 and had subsequently, on 16 May 2023, agreed Draft Recommendations. The Draft Recommendations included an amendment to the council size to 68 since this would enable a warding pattern that better met the statutory criteria.

Following publication, 88 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 12 three-, 13 two-, and 6 single-member wards in total.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and considering the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Final Recommendations for North Northamptonshire as presented.

**Agreed**

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

## 8. North Tyneside Final Recommendations - LGBCE(23/24)078

The review of North Tyneside Council had commenced on 23 August 2022. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 23 August 2022, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 60 and had subsequently, on 24 January 2023, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication of the draft recommendations, the Commission agreed to undertake a period of further consultation in several areas of the Borough.

Following publication, 22 submissions had been received commenting on the Further 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 20 three -member wards in total.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and considering the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations.

It agreed the Final Recommendations as presented.

**Agreed**

Final Recommendations for North Tyneside Council as presented.

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

## 9. Wiltshire Related Alteration - LGBCE(23/24)079

*The CEO, Jolyon Jackson and Amanda Nobbs left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item.*

The Board considered the content of the Wiltshire Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration as the changes proposed would maintain a reasonable level of electoral equality, reflect community identities and aid effective and convenient local government.

### **Agreed**

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

*The CEO, Jolyon Jackson and Amanda Nobbs returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item.*

## 10. Stroud Related Alteration - LGBCE (23/24)080

The Board considered the content of the Stroud Related Alterations paper. It was minded to agree to the related alteration. While the proposed changes would result in a high electoral variance in one ward, the variance here was very high, regardless of the related alteration. Furthermore, it was considered that the changes proposed would reflect community identities and aid effective and convenient local government.

### **Agreed**

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

## 11. Qtr. 2 Finance & KPIs - LGBCE(23/24)081

The Interim Director of Corporate Services presented the Quarter 2 Finance and KPI report.

- MI 1B: Number of delayed final recommendations – Length of delay to be investigated further.
- MI 2B: Social Media Reach – To be closely monitored.
- Quality of data – Comms Manager and GIS & Data Officer to investigate, in preparation for February Policy meeting.
- Finance – The Commission Board noted the projected underspend of £38k. It was noted that the budget will be monitored closely on an on-going basis.

## 12. Qtr. 2 Business Plan - LGBCE(23/24)082

The CEO updated the Commission Board on various projects.

- LGBCE Staff Induction process – This is due to be complete by the end of October.
- Corporate training plan – Due to be complete by the end of October.
- Governance review – Policy session on Value for Money to be rescheduled to February. Scheduling of Governance papers for Commission Board, ARC and Leadership Team, to be presented to ARC for approval.
- Esri Sweet builder – 1 to 1 induction with Review Officers is ongoing.
- Improving external involvement – Ongoing.
- Replacement review programme – Training is ongoing with Transparency.
- Relocation – To be discussed at Policy session with Commissioners and Staff. Business case will be submitted to Commission Board in January 2024.

### 13. Risk Register - LGBCE(23/24)083

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

- Changes in demand outside scope of current resources - The risk has now been scored at Unlikely / Major / 3, with the trend status remaining at stable.
- Inadequate engagement from the local authority - No change was made to the current risk score of Possible / Major / 6 and to the trend status of 'Stable.
- Currently, there are two risks that carry a risk profile sufficient to occupy a top risk summary. The group considered adding a third risk, but having considered all risks from the risk register, it was acknowledged that no risk had a sufficiently high enough profile to position it as a top 3 risk.

#### **Agreed**

The Commission Board noted the report.

### 14. Future Business

Next in-person meeting – February.

AOB

There were no other items.

#### **Close of Business**