

LGBCE (24-25) 6th meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024 at 2:00pm
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:

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| Ailsa Irvine | Chief Executive |
| Richard Buck | Review Manager |
| Alison Evison | Review & Programme Manager |
| Hayley Meachin | Communications and Engagement Manager |
| Jonathan Ashby | Review Officer and Mapping Lead |
| Tom Rutherford | Review Officer and Review Process Lead |
| Nicole Holt | Review Officer (for items 2 & 7) |
| Yemi Fagun | Review Officer (for items 3 & 6) |
| Paul Nizinskyj | Review Officer (for items 4 & 5) |
| Paul Kingsley | Review Officer (for item 8) |
| Angela Hendry | HR Lead (minutes) |

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Kathryn Trower.

Declarations of interest

Hayley Meachin declared an interest in item 1, Cheshire East Draft Recommendations, and took no part in the discussion of that item.

The Chair, Colin Mellors, and Wallace Sampson declared an interest in item 7, Kirklees Further Draft & Final Recommendations, and took no part in the discussion of that item.

Liz Treacy declared an interest in item 8, Derbyshire Final Recommendations, and took no part in the discussion of that item.

1. Relocation – LGBCE (24/25)051

The Commission Board considered the paper circulated by the Interim Director of Corporate Services and approved signature of the licence to occupy for Bunhill Row by the Chief Executive and the associated spend.

2. Cheshire East Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)044

Hayley Meachin left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item.

The review of Cheshire East Council had commenced on 16 January 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 31 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 82 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-, 22 two- and 23 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 support them.

Agreed

The Board agreed the Draft Recommendations for Cheshire East as presented.

Hayley Meachin returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

3. Bassetlaw Draft Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)045

The review of Bassetlaw Council had commenced on 13 February 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 28 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one ward having a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 13 February 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 48 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 8 three-, 6 two- and 12 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 support them.

Agreed

The Board agreed the Draft Recommendations for Bassetlaw as presented.

4. Oxfordshire Final Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)046

The review of Oxfordshire Council had commenced on 20 February 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 8 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 2 divisions having a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 20 February 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 69 and had subsequently, on 19 September 2023, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 41 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

At its meeting on 13 February 2024, the Board agreed to a period of further limited consultation focusing on the areas of Cherwell and Vale of White Horse, and agreed in principle the Final Recommendations for remaining areas of the county.

Following publication of the Further Draft Recommendations, 13 submissions had been received 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 Further Draft Recommendations in relation to the names of some of the divisions, and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations for Oxfordshire Council as a whole proposed a pattern of 69 single-member divisions.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft and Further Draft Recommendations, and was minded to agree them.

Agreed

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

5. Sunderland Final Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)047

The review of Sunderland Council had commenced on 18 April 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 18 April 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 75 and had subsequently, on 19 September 2023, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 274 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

At its meeting on 13 February 2024, the Board agreed to the publication of New Draft Recommendations for the whole authority.

Following publication of the New Draft Recommendations, 415 submissions had been received 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 New 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 25 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 New Draft Recommendations, and was minded to agree them.

Agreed

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

6. Canterbury Final Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)048

The review of Canterbury Council had commenced on 19 September 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 67 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 September 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 39. At its meeting on 13 February 2024, as a result of further consideration and on the basis of the evidence, the Commission agreed to move away from its original opinion and instead agreed Draft Recommendations based on a council size of 40 since this allowed for a pattern that better reflected the statutory criteria.

Following publication, 43 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 1 three-, 14 two- and 9 single-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 Canterbury as presented. The Board agreed to the laying of a draft Order before Parliament giving effect to its final recommendations for Canterbury Council.

7. Kirklees Further Draft & Final Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)049

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 Kirklees Council had commenced on 19 September 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 13 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 19 September 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 69 and had subsequently, on 13 February 2024, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 155 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 23 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 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 for the Huddersfield and Dewsbury areas.

Agreed

The Board agreed to a period of further limited consultation focusing on the areas of Huddersfield and Dewsbury. The Board agreed in principle the Final Recommendations for the remaining areas of Kirklees.

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

8. Derbyshire (South Derbyshire) Final Recommendations - LGBCE(24/25)050

Liz Treacy left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item.

The review of Derbyshire Council had commenced on 21 March 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 20 per cent of divisions had variances greater than 10 per cent, with one division (Etwall & Repton) having a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 21 March 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 64 and had subsequently, on 12 December 2023, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 229 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria. At its meeting on 21 May 2024, the Board agreed to an extension to the period of consultation in the South Derbyshire district part of the county.

During the extended consultation period for South Derbyshire, seven submissions were received which had been considered carefully in the context of 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 for South Derbyshire in some aspects, and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations for Derbyshire Council as a whole proposed a pattern of 64 single-member wards.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations, and were minded to agree them.

Agreed

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