

**LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING  
HELD AT 9.30AM ON 7 DECEMBER 2021 IN HASTINGS HOUSE AND VIA  
TEAMS**

This document is available in Welsh

**Present:** Mrs Debra Evans-Williams (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling; Mr David Powell and Mrs Julie May

**LDBCW Officers attending:** Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Miss Carys Vaughan (Team Support Officer).

**Time Started: 09:30**

**Time Finished: 11:45**

**Apologies:** No apologies were made.

**1. Declarations of Interest**

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

**2. Chair's Briefing**

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the earlier meeting with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- An update was given on the appointment of new Commissioners. Shortlisting for the role of Chair and Commissioners has taken place and interviews will commence next week. Two candidates will interview for the role of Chair and six candidates will interview for the role of Commission member.
- The Minister has agreed to extend the current Chair's term until the end of January 2022.
- The correspondence regarding the Llansteffan and St Clears electoral ward in Carmarthenshire was discussed. Lisa James reported that the individual has also written to the WG Sponsor Division.
- A discussion took place on what the Commission can learn from the issue that had been raised. It was **agreed** that the Commission could emphasise more that individuals must respond within the consultation periods for the representation to be considered. Also, it was **agreed** that the Commission would keep a record on file of the Google maps used when it is used as part of the decision-making process. It was

**agreed** that it is important to have a decision-making standard and a clear record of every decision made.

- A discussion on developing a portal was had and the Sponsor Division is in support of the idea. Lisa James agreed that directing the public to the portal and using the portal to post information including Policy and Procedures would be an effective way of engaging with the public.
- A special Committee has been set up to consider legislation on Senedd reform and one of the issues being considered are the boundaries of Senedd constituencies.
- Modifications to the descriptive section of communities are being made to the Powys Order. There will be similar modifications to the Wrexham Order.
- The Caerphilly ERO has reported that the map used for the Caerphilly Final Recommendations Order needs amending. WG Legal Advisors are currently deciding whether a new map will need to be published. The HPP has sent WG new map files.

### **3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 28 September 2021**

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2021 as a correct record of the matters considered.

### **4. Issues Arising**

- 4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 29 November 2021 by the CE.
- 4.2. It was **Resolved** to accept the Report noting any issues for later discussion in the meeting, and updated progress was noted on the following issues:
- **(Issue 1)** The CE and Head of Business will discuss with staff their training needs and develop a Training and Development Plan based on those discussions.
  - **(Issue 2)** All Orders have now been published with minor modifications to a select few.
  - **(Issue 8)** The Head of Business is currently obtaining quotes for JEGS assessors. The CE has informed Lisa James and Commission staff are aware that a restructure is taking place.
  - **(Issue 9)** The CE met with the WG Sponsor Division, and it was agreed that if it is proved that the portal is an effective way of engaging with the public then

the WG will commit to funding the development process. It was **noted** that the Commission already have specifications of the BCW tender for the portal and can make minor changes to this before going to tender. Also, it was **noted** that the Commission can link the portal to the Commission database which will help to streamline the review process.

- **(Issue 10)** The Commission held the first meeting of the ERP 2023 Research Working Group in October and it was attended by WLGA, One Voice Wales and Welsh Government. It was **agreed** that there would be two pieces of research commissioned. The first on the impact of non-standard population issues on an elected members workload and the second on the impact on deprivation issues.
- **(Issue 11)** It was **noted** that the recruitment of the Commission's CE may require further discussion with the Workforce Sub-Committee. The CE **noted** that there will need to be some changes to the Terms and Conditions.

## 5. Reviews Progress Report

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 4 November 2021 by the HPP.
- 5.2. It was **noted** that Orders for all 22 principal council areas have now been published as well as the Community Order for Monmouthshire.
- 5.3. It was **noted** that Ordnance Survey are checking the Orders and the Commission are answering queries accordingly.
- 5.4. It was **agreed** that this item is to be removed from the agenda as of the next meeting.

## 6. ERP 2023

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 17 November 2021 by the HPP.
- 6.2. The draft of the Policy and Practice document for the 2023 Electoral Review Programme was discussed and minor amendments were **agreed**.
- 6.3. It was **agreed** that the Decision-Making Standard document is an important addition to the review process of the Commission.
- 6.4. **Action:** Dave Powell to send notes on the Policy and Practice document to the HPP after the meeting.

## 7. Draft Community Review Guidance

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 30 November 2021 by the HPP.
- 7.2. It was **noted** that following the advice of the Commissions Legal Advisor, the Commission has updated the previous draft Community Review Guidance to make clear that there are two separate types of community review.
- 7.3. The draft Community Review Guidance was **agreed** subject to minor amendments.
- 7.4. It was **noted** that a Community Review has started in Coity, Bridgend.

## 8. Budget Report 2021- 22

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 7 December 2021 by the FM and the current budget position for 2021- 22 was **noted**.
- 8.2. The following changes to the Budget Categories were **noted**. Directly Employed Staff Costs were reduced by £3,000 from £146,000 to £143,000 and the Media Requirements budget was increased by £3,000 from £0 to £3,000. The current budget position for 2021- 22 was noted.
- 8.3. It was **reported** that the Commission would be underspent at the end of the financial year although the exact amount was not currently known as expenditure in the final quarter for costs of the portal, ERP Research and staff having new Surface Pros would need to be confirmed and factored in. Further expenditure for the training and induction of the newly appointed members would also be required. It was expected that the Commission will have a clearer picture of the final budget position in January 2022. It was **agreed** that the Commission would consider how much Grant-in-Aid to surrender back to Welsh Government at their January meeting.
- 8.4. It was **agreed** that multiple training sessions would take place between the current Commissioners and new Commissioners in February/ March. Also, it was **agreed** that a training session would take place between the Commissions Legal Advisor and the new Commissioners. It was **noted** that the training sessions will be dependent on WG appointing the new Commissioners by February.

- 8.5. It was **agreed** that the Commission will ask its Legal Advisor to read through the draft ERP Policy and Practice document. The Commission will ask for an estimate price so it can allocate funds from this financial year to cover the cost.
- 8.6. It was **agreed** to have a meeting between the WLGA and the new Commissioners. The CE will arrange this.
- 8.7. It was **noted** that the lease for the Commissions current accommodation ends in December 2022. It was **noted** that external consultancy advice on finding suitable accommodation could be used and funds from this financial year's budget could be allocated to cover the cost.
- 8.8. **Action:** The CE to find out from the WG if the Commission need a business case for changing accommodation.
- 8.9. **Action:** The CE to arrange a meeting between the WLGA and new Commissioners.
- 8.10. **Action:** The CE to arrange training session between the current and new Commissioners.
- 8.11. **Action:** The CE to ask the Commissions Legal Advisor for an estimate price for reading the draft ERP Policy and Practice document.

## 9. Risk Management - Risk Register

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 17 November 2021 by the FM.
- 9.2. It was **noted** that no changes were made to the Risk Register at the last meeting.
- 9.3. It was **agreed** to reduce the overall risk score to 6 for CR3 as the risks are currently being managed.
- 9.4. It was **agreed** that Commissioners being unable to meet face to face should be added as a consequence to CR4, and mitigation should be added to reflect that shorter but additional online meetings could be used to train new Commissioners. It was **agreed** the Commission will monitor the effect of the new variant of Covid before deciding to increase the risk level for CR4.
- 9.5. It was **agreed** that the Commission not approving the year end budget position before the new Commissioners are appointed should be added as

an Emerging Risk to CR5. Also, a new consequence should be added that the Commission may not be quorate should the new appointments be delayed. New mitigating actions should be added to CR5 to reflect the risks associated with the new Commissioners appointment. This includes the Commission not having a hand over between the current and new Commissioners and not having the decision made regarding the surrender of funds back to WG approved before the new Commissioners take over.

9.6. **Action:** The FM to update the Risk Register with the agreed changes.

## 10. Board Effectiveness Review

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated November 2021 by the FM.
- 10.2. It was **noted** that in the June 2021 meeting the Commission **agreed** to review the Board Effectiveness Action Plan every six months. It was **noted** that multiple action points have been implemented since the June 2021 meeting.
- 10.3. The Commission considered that the board had been managed effectively and the current stable position could be passed on to the newly appointed members next year.
- 10.4. It was **agreed** that the item regarding regular meetings to be held directly with the Minister should be changed from May to January 2022 and should state quarterly instead of regular.
- 10.5. It was **agreed** that the next board effectiveness review would be delayed until April 2023 to allow time for the new members to gain experience of the board before completing the Board Effectiveness exercise. It was **agreed** that the new members will be able to change the board effectiveness assessment process should they wish to do so.

## 11. Current Business Continuity Arrangements (Verbal Update)

- 11.1. It was **reported** that most staff will be working from home during the period leading up to Christmas. There will be a TSO in the office on Wednesday 22 December. The CE will continue to monitor restrictions and advice from WG and will follow Public Health guidance. It was **noted** that further restrictions may impact BCW work.

11.2. Julie May will bring in her equipment on Wednesday 22 December and will liaise with a TSO on a time for handover.

11.3. **Action:** TSO and Julie May to liaise on a time for return of equipment.

## **12. Calendar of Events**

12.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

12.2. It was **agreed** that the next meeting will be held on 26 January 2022 at 12:30pm. The meeting will be short and will follow the Inter Commission meeting which finishes at 12pm. It was **agreed** that Ceri Stradling will present at the Inter Commission meeting.

12.3. It was **agreed** that the February Commission meeting will be held on 22 February 2022 but is subject to change.

12.4. It was **noted** the next ARAC meeting will take place on 28 February 2022. It was **agreed** that, if possible, the new Chair of the Commission should attend the ARAC meeting.

## **13. Any Other Relevant Business**

13.1. The Commission thanked Julie May formally for her outstanding efforts as a commissioner and her significant contribution since her appointment. Julie May added her thanks to the Secretariat and fellow Commissioners, praising their efforts and sent best wishes to the new Commissioners.

**Date of Next Meeting: 26 January 2022**