

**LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING
HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2018 AT HASTINGS HOUSE**
This document is available in Welsh

Present: Mr Owen Watkin (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling; Mr David Powell; Mrs Julie May and Mr Theodore Joloza.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mr Steve Halsall (Chief Executive); Mr Matt Redmond (Deputy Chief Executive); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr David Burley (Business Support Manager); Mrs Cher Cooke (Review Officer); Mr Farhan Khan (Review Officer); Mr Ross Evans (Review Officer), and Mr Huw Blacker (Review Officer).

Apologies: Mrs Cath Thomas (Review Assistant); Mrs Caroline Redmond; Mr Tom Jenkins (Review Officer) and Mr Matthew Farrell (Review Officers)

Time Started: 9:30
Time Finished: 13:00

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 appointment of a new Minister and their deputy. The Chair considered that the changes would have little impact on the work of the Commission, at least until the end of the 2022 Review Programme.
- 2.2. The Chair and Chief Executive have been invited to an event on 31 January 2019, with the new Welsh Government Public Bodies Unit to discuss new Term of Government remit arrangements for WGSBs and would update the Commission on any issues arising.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 20 November 2018

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2018 with the agreed changes as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the Report of the Chief Executive dated 3rd December 2018 and to the issues raised below;

- **(Issue 3)** Accommodation – the landlord had signed the lease of Hastings House to the Commission for period of five years.
- **(Issue 4)** HR Policies - The extent of this work had been reviewed and was been found to be much more extensive than was first considered. Policies would be grouped for consideration by future meetings.
- It was **agreed** to change the target date for completion from December 2018 to March 2019.

The Chair highlighted the requirement to take into consideration of the Welsh Language Assessment Compliance Notice. It was **agreed** that the Chief Executive would report back on this at the next meeting.

Welsh Government announced that they will be reviewing their own HR policies, which the Commission will look at following WG's review.

- **(Issue 6)** Annual Report – The 2017-18 Annual Report was published on 28 October 2018.
- **(Issue 7)** JEGS review – The outcome of the review is expected by January 2019.
- **It was Resolved to note the Report.**

5. Print Tender Exercise

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the Report of the Business Support Manager (Commercial, In Confidence) dated 10th December on the Print Tender exercise. The successful Tender received was from the previous contract holder and was for less than was being charged previously. That, together with the fact that the Commission was happy with the service provided by the respondent company, meant that the contract had been awarded by the Tender Board to Zenith Print Media for a 5-year period.
- 5.2. It was Resolved to note the Report and to confirm the acceptance of the tender.

6. Powys Electoral Review Draft Final Proposals Report.

- 6.1. The Commission considered the Report dated 7th December by the Review Officer on the Draft Final proposals for Powys.
- 6.2. Comments provided by the Lead Commissioners were incorporated into the report.
- 6.3. It was Resolved to agree the draft Final Report, subject to amendments.

7. Review Progress Report

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report of the Deputy Chief Executive dated 11th December 2018.

It was reported that there had been no changes to the progress of Reviews since the previous meeting and the following matters were reported,

7.2. Caerphilly and Cardiff Reviews had been initiated. Commissioners have been informed.

7.3. The Commission had provided Welsh Government with an advance copy of the Monmouth report, so that WG could begin work on the Order.

8. Analysis of the Extension of Electoral Franchise

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the Deputy Chief Executive dated 11th December 2018 upon the analysis made in response to the Minister's revised Remit Letter, and informed the Commission that reviewers in the Office for National Statistics had confirmed that the analysis contained in the Report was correct, and had utilised the relevant available statistics to support its conclusions.

8.2. It was Resolved to accept the Report and analysis, subject to minor amendments, and to submit it to the Minister for Housing and Local Government in compliance with the Remit Letter.

9. Corporate Plan

9.1. Consideration was given to the report by the Chief Executive dated 18 December 2018.

9.2. An internal audit recommendation required that Commission to include a Mission Statement in their Corporate Plan. Options were discussed for the format of the Mission Statement.

9.3. It was Resolved to adopt the following wording as the Mission Statement for the Commission:

“Our role is to review the electoral arrangements in local authorities in Wales, in order to ensure effective and convenient local government.”

10. Financial Dealings and Conflicts of Interest Policy

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the report by the Finance Manager dated 18 December 2018 regarding a revised version of the Commission's Financial Dealings and Conflicts of Interest policy.
- 10.2. The Commission discussed and agreed appropriate changes to the policy.
- 10.3. The contents of the report were noted by the Commission and it was Resolved to adopt the Report as its policy.

11. Lead Commissioner Role

- 11.1. Consideration was given to the Report of the 26 November 2018 by the Chief Executive upon the functions of Lead Commissioners.
- 11.2. Amendments were proposed to the document outlining the specific duties of the Lead Commissioner. It was Resolved to accept the Report subject to minor amendments.

12. Risk Management – Risk Register

- 12.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the Finance Manager dated 11 December 2018, giving the latest version of the Corporate Risk Register and the following changes were agreed:
 - Risk CR6 the mitigating action regarding signing and adopting the new lease be amended to show it had been completed; and
 - Risk CR7 regarding meeting the deadline for the remit letter requirement to provide the Minister with an analysis of extension of the electoral franchise be deleted as the deadline had been met.
- 12.2. The Commission, at the request of the Audit and Risk Committee, discussed mitigation of the potential risk of Brexit and considered that the process of liaison with Welsh Government over the impact of Brexit through the WGSB Heads of Resources meetings, as stated in risk CR1, met the requirements of the Committee.

13. Budget Report

- 13.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 10 December 2018 by the Finance Manager. The Commission agreed the proposed transfer of funds between budget categories.
- 13.2. The estimated underspend for the year was noted and it was **Agreed** that the Commission would surrender £20,000 of their 2018-19 Grant in Aid back to Welsh Government.
- 13.3. The Commission considered and **Agreed** the budget profile for 2019-20. It was noted that sponsor division had been made aware of the estimated 2019-20 budget requirement.

14. Report of ARAC Meeting held on 21 November 2018

- 14.1. Consideration was given to the report by the Finance Manager dated 27 November 2018. The Commission noted the outcome of the ARAC meeting including the decisions made and the minutes of the meeting.
- 14.2. Proposals and recommendations were discussed and Noted by the Commission.

15. LDBCW Board Evaluation – Analysis of Responses

- 15.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 28 November 2018, being a summary of responses to the Board Evaluation Questionnaire.
- 15.2. It was considered that a potential mid-year evaluation could be implemented to better monitor progress and that the Chief Executive should be included as an independent opinion on whether the questionnaire responses accurately reflect the Commission's performance.
- 15.3. It was **Agreed** that these issues would be discussed with the Chief Executive in early 2019.

16. ICT Transformation Project Progress Report

- 16.1. Consideration was given to the report by the Business Manager dated 10 December 2018.
It was Reported that;
Website – Development work was ongoing with it was hoped that beta testing would commence in January 2019. There were issues regarding gaining access to the BCW domain from the Welsh Government; and Telephony – Reception phone lines had been setup with testing due to start in January 2019.

16.2. The Commission Noted the content of the report.

17. Calendar of Events

17.1. The Commission added the Public Bodies Unit meeting in Newport (Qualifications Wales Office) on January 31 to the Calendar.

18. Any Other Relevant Business

1. Staffing.
2. Consideration was given to the issue of staff resources regarding achieving the Review programme, the amount of work involved and timescale restraints. It was reported that action for recruiting staff was planned, however no additional recruitment has taken place to date. In order to increase staff resources to meet the anticipated workload, and to fill a currently vacant post, the Commission had agreed provisionally to a) authorise the appointment of an additional secondee Review Officer and b) to invite internal applications from the Permanent Review Officers to the temporary post of Review Manager. It was confirmed that the additional costs could be met from the budget for 2018/19.

It was Resolved to confirm the creation of a temporary post of Review Manager and to authorise the Chief Executive to invite applications to the posts, as reported.

Date of Next Meeting: 29 January 2019, beginning at 08:30