

**LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING
HELD AT 9.30AM ON 27 JULY 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); Mr Rhydian Fitter (Communications and Engagement Manager); Mrs Catherine Thomas (Business Support Officer); Miss Carys Vaughan (Team Support Officer).

Time Started: 09:30

Time Finished: 10:30

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):

- Ministers have made 9 decisions to date, with minor changes to Welsh language names.
- It was **noted** that the Commission have not had sight of the decision report for Ceredigion. The CE will raise this with Lisa James at the next monthly meeting.
- The Minister is interested in completing a Collective Review for Lessons Learned from the review process. This will be developed further in the year.
- The Commission was informed that there could be potential delays in some Orders and with decisions stretching into October. There are on-going internal discussions within Welsh Government on how to manage this and officials will be meeting with the Minister in mid-August.
- Recruitment of new Commissioners was also discussed as well as the timescales for appointments.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 29 June 2021

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to some minor amendments.

4. Issues Arising

- 4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 20 July 2021 by the CE.
- 4.2. It was **Resolved** to accept the Report as a whole noting any issues for later discussion in the meeting, and updated progress was noted on the following issues:

- **(Issue 1) Change Programme**

The first Insight Training session successfully took place on 12 July. All staff members participated in the session and have received their personal profiles. The second session is scheduled for 28 July and will focus on team dynamics and staff sharing elements of their personal profiles.

One Voice Wales will be delivering a masterclass session on 24 September. All staff members and Commissioners have been sent an invite to the online session.

The CE and Head of Business have been in initial meetings with Acuity in relation to the restructure programme.

- **(Issue 2) Framework Agreement**

There has been no progress on the Framework Agreement. Lisa James has informed the Commission that the Public Bodies Unit have sent out information around Five-year Remit letters. The Commission have informed Lisa James that it has not received anything from the Public Bodies Unit and have asked her to look into this.

It was **noted** that it is important to have the Framework Agreement set up with WG before the Commission sets up a discussion on the MOU between the Commission, BCW, WG and Cabinet Office.

Action: The CE to contact WG directly about progressing the Framework Agreement.

- **(Issue 3) Electoral Review- Orders Update**

Ministers have decided on and published the recommendations for RCT, VoG, NPT, Swansea, Bridgend, Carmarthenshire, Powys and Wrexham. Ceredigion

has previously been decided on but has not been made public. CE will ask Lisa James if Ceredigion's CE has been informed on the decision.

Action: The CE to contact WG about Ceredigion.

- **(Issue 4) FOI Requests**

The Commission has responded to the FOI request from Councillor Watts in relation to the Monmouthshire Electoral Review. The Commission received one FOI request between the 23 June 2021 and 20 July 2021. The FOI request is from a Town Councillor in Carmarthenshire and is in relation to a ward the Commission have recommended. Cher Cooke is currently dealing with this.

It was **noted** that as the Minister makes decisions the Commission will receive more FOI requests.

5. Reviews Progress Report

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 20 July 2021 by the HPP.
- 5.2. It was **noted** that the timetable has been updated to reflect the 6 decisions that have been made by WG. It was **highlighted** that the decisions that were made recently will be included in papers for the next meeting.
- 5.3. It was **noted** that the timetable will be beneficial when in discussions with the WG for the next Electoral Review. The CE and HPP will use the timetable when meeting with Lisa James and Elaina Chamberlain to discuss Lessons Learnt.

6. Budget Report 2021- 22

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated July 2021 by the FM and the current budget position for 2021- 22 was **noted**.
- 6.2. It was **noted** that the Commission had an underspend of £35,310 for the first quarter of the financial year. The biggest underspend was £10,013 in Staff Costs. This is partly due to one staff member leaving early and the Commission over-estimating the staff budget.
- 6.3. It was **noted** that there was an underspend of £3,244 for LDBCW Members Fees. This is due to there being no meeting in May and outstanding claims for June. Also, there was an underspend of £5,108 for BCW Members' Fee. This is due to there being no meeting in May and outstanding claims for June. There was also an underspend of £2,490 for BCW Members' expenses due to all meetings taking place online.

- 6.4. It was also **noted** that there was an underspend of £5,658 for Staff Training. However, there will be an invoice for Insights Training of approx. £3,500 which will reduce the underspend significantly.
- 6.5. It was **noted** that the Commission may have to employ additional staff when the BCW Initial Proposals are published in September. Some of the underspend would also be taken up by additional research for the review work. The Commission will monitor business needs and decide closer to the time.

7. Risk Management - Risk Register

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 July 2021 by the FM.
- 7.2. It was **noted** that all changes agreed at the previous meeting had been implemented.
- 7.3. It was **agreed** that CR2 should be removed from the Risk Radar as this risk had been removed from the register.
- 7.4. It was **agreed** that a mitigation action should be added to CR3 to reflect that the Commission have arrangements in place to respond to FOI requests on the completed electoral review recommendations.
- 7.5. It was **agreed** that the residual likelihood risk score for CR4 should be reduced from 4 to 2 giving an overall residual risk rating of 6.
- 7.6. **Action:** The FM is to update the Risk Register with the agreed amendments.

8. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2020-21

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 July 2021 by the FM and its contents **noted**.
- 8.2. It was **noted** that the Annual Pay Policy Statement is for staff members only. The number and remuneration of Commissioners is included in the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 8.3. **Action:** The FM to find out which organisation issued the template for the Annual Pay Policy Report and check if there is a more up to date version available.

9. Current Business Continuity Arrangements (Verbal Update)

- 9.1. As restrictions ease in August, the Commission will be taking a flexible approach to staff working in the office while adhering to Public Health guidance. The CE has asked Managers to discuss preferred office hours with staff members and staff have been made aware that they will need to be in the office more from September when the BCW Initial Proposals are published. Staff will continue to work from home on Fridays unless there is a business need for staff to be in the office.

10. Calendar of Events

- 10.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.
- 10.2. It was **noted** that the Masterclass Session with OVW on 24 September should be added to the Calendar.
- 10.3. It was **agreed** that from September LDBCW Meeting will take place on the last Tuesday of the month. The Calendar of Events is to be updated accordingly.
- 10.4. **Action:** TSO to update the Calendar of events with the agreed changes.

11. Any Other Relevant Business

- 11.1. It was **noted** the Commission will need to recruit a new Commissioner to replace Theo Joloza. This has also been raised with Lisa James and a further discussion on recruitment will take place after the meeting.

12. Date of Next Meeting: 28 September 2021