

**LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES
MEETING**

HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2020 AT HASTINGS HOUSE

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

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); David Burley (Business Manager); Mr Tom Jenkins (Review Manager); Mr Nathan Sweetman (Business Support Officer).

Time Started: 09:40

Time Finished: 12:50

Apologies: Mr Matt Redmond (Deputy Chief Executive), Mrs Catherine Thomas (Business Support Officer)

1. Declarations of Interest

None. Not applicable.

2. Chair's Briefing

- 2.1. The Deputy Chair reported on the latest meeting with the Welsh Government. The Minister has given the go ahead for the Monmouthshire order with a potential time frame of August / September, this year. Other completed reports are likely to have a similar timescale. We will be notified when the Minister has decided to approve an Order to allow us to have updated discussions with local authorities.
- 2.2. **Action** - Legal advice to be sought regarding Monmouthshire. The Chief Executive to liaise with Elaina at Welsh Government regarding legal advice. Sources for independent legal advice include Acuity, Hugh James and Eversheds.
- 2.3. It was noted that Welsh language names should be determined by the orders, in the first instance, and the Welsh Language Commissioner. The reasons for selecting relevant names are to be included in the reports and in the meeting minutes.
- 2.4. It was discussed that the next round of Electoral Reviews will be started earlier and will finish earlier than originally planned. **Action** - Draft regulations and submit request once it becomes law. September 2023 is the current start date. **Action** - Secondary legislation to be requested.

- 2.5. It was **noted** that the BCW start date is likely to be brought forward to Autumn 2020 or begin in January 2021. The Boundary Commission for England are favouring January 2021 as a start date.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 17 December 2019

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting as a correct record of the matters considered subject to some minor amendments.

4. Issues Arising

- 4.1. Consideration was given to the dated 22 January 2020 by the Chief Executive.
- 4.2. It was noted that the staff survey will be undertaken within the next month. The results will then be considered by the Workforce sub-committee.
- 4.3. The usefulness of the recent Away Days for the team was emphasised. **Action** – the Chief Executive to provide a summary of the challenges that were identified, during the Away Days and the actions that can be taken.
- 4.4. **Action** - The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive to summarise the technical elements of a Review Programme and to submit the summary to the Electoral Reform Society who are gathering evidence in advance of legislative changes.
- 4.5. **Action** - ICT 'lessons learnt' paper to be provided at the next Commission Meeting.

5. Reviews Progress Report

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 21 January 2020 by the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 5.2. It was **noted** that since the last Commission meeting, four electoral reviews, at draft stage, have entered into consultation periods. These are as follows: Cardiff, Caerphilly, Newport and Wrexham.
- 5.3. The Vale of Glamorgan draft proposals report is due to be published and distributed in February.
- 5.4. The Swansea final proposals report is due to be published and distributed in March.

- 5.5. A summary of variances from planned outcomes for each individual authority was requested to be included in the Reviews Progress Report going to Welsh Government
- 5.6. It was noted that the Flintshire Electoral Review Final Options and Isle of Anglesey Electoral Review Draft Options are to be included on the next meeting agenda.

6. Risk Management – Risk Register

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 10 January 2020 by the Finance Manager. It was noted that the changes agreed at the last meeting had been implemented.
- 6.2. It was **agreed** that Risk CR1 regarding insufficient future funding should be given a reduced residual risk rating of 4 and that the risk should be transferred to the Operational Risk Register.
- 6.3. It was **agreed** that Risk CR2 regarding insufficient capacity to deliver the review programme should be given a reduced residual risk rating of 4 but that the risk should be retained on the Corporate Risk Register.
- 6.4. It was **agreed** that an additional mitigating action be added to Risk CR3 in respect of the situation with the Monmouthshire community review order.
- 6.5. It was **agreed** to amend the mitigating action to Risk CR3 in respect of the complaint from Bridgend to show that the complaint had now been dealt with and closed.
- 6.6. It was **agreed** to delete the mitigating action to Risk CR4 regarding carrying out electoral reviews based on existing arrangements as this had now been superseded by the various mitigating actions regarding the Monmouthshire community review order.
- 6.7. It was **agreed** that an additional mitigating action be added to Risk CR4 regarding obtaining legal advice on whether the Commission can commence the Monmouthshire electoral review without having received an order from Welsh Government for the Monmouthshire community review.
- 6.8. It was **agreed** that CR5 is to be removed from risk register.

- 6.9. It was **agreed** that an additional mitigating action be added to Risk CR6 regarding obtaining a commitment from Welsh Government to produce an order for the Monmouthshire community review.
- 6.10. The Commission considered their current risk appetite in line with a recent internal audit recommendation. It was **agreed** that the Commission's low risk appetite would be retained and that risks with low residual risk ratings could be considered for removal from the Corporate Risk Register.
- 6.11. The Commission considered the recent internal audit recommendation that their performance management framework be aligned with their corporate objectives. It was **agreed** that the requirements of this recommendation were sufficiently covered by the Commission's Board Assurance Framework.

7. Budget Report

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 14 January 2020 by the Finance Manager. The current budget position was **noted**.
- 7.2. The proposed transfer of funds between budget categories to cover the cost of the new plotter, together with other minor estimated overspends, were noted and **approved**.
- 7.3. In respect of the estimated year-end underspend the Business Manager gave an update on the current position regarding the procurement of new databases. It was hoped that this procurement exercise could be finalised before the year end.

8. Board Self-Evaluation

- 8.1. It was noted that The Commissioners completed their self-evaluation in November 2019 and the Commission staff completed their self-evaluation in December 2019.
- 8.2. In respect of the Commission assessing its performance at regular intervals it was **agreed** to draft a Work Plan covering Commission business and including review of HR policies and review of Corporate Plan twice a year. **Action** – Work Plan to be drafted covering the Commission's meeting agenda items.

- 8.3. In respect of performance being integrated with financial reporting it was noted that reviews could be costed but it would largely consist of apportioned costs.
- 8.4. It was **agreed** that the Commission would produce an action plan following each self-assessment exercise. It was **agreed** the action plan would be reviewed twice a year. **Action** – Action Plan to be drafted to cover outcome of recent board evaluation exercises.
- 8.5. It was **agreed** that a different member of staff would attend Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings based on a rota which would be drafted at the next team meeting.
- 8.6. It was **agreed** that in future the staff's assessment of the Commission board would be obtained through the staff survey. It was **agreed** that the next staff survey would be re-designed to include a draft set of questions regarding board evaluation.
- 8.7. It was **agreed** that the commission would decide which board evaluation questions to include in the staff survey at their August 2020 meeting. **Action** – Staff Survey to be updated following decision on new questions to be included.

9. HR Policies

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 16 December 2019 by the Business Support Manager.
- 9.2. Civil Service Management Code has been updated.
- 9.3. GDPR information has been added to the terms and conditions.
- 9.4. **Action** - clarification to be sought from Welsh Government / Sponsorship Division regarding working for the Commission and direct political engagement.
- 9.5. **Action** - Commission staff to be involved in discussion concerning the potential of job roles being categorised as politically 'sensitive'. Outcome to be discussed at next Commission meeting.

10. Calendar of Events

10.1. Flintshire Electoral Review Final Options and Isle of Anglesey Electoral Review Draft Options to be presented at the next meeting.

10.2. Julie May stated that she will not be able to attend the Commission meeting in September.

11. Any Other Relevant Business

11.1. It was **agreed** to remove the 'Post Book' section from the representation checklist, as this duplicates the database.

11.2. It was **agreed** that only the Lead Commissioner, for each review, requires hard copies of the representations. However, the other Commissioners can request hard copies of representations, if and when, required.

11.3. Julie May stated that she will not be able to attend the next ARAC meeting in February.

12. Date of Next Meeting: revised to 3 March 2020