

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

**HELD ON 30 JUNE 2020 VIA SKYPE**

*This document is available in Welsh*

**Present:** Dr Debra Williams (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling (Deputy Chair); Mr David Powell; Mrs Julie May; Mr Theodore Joloza.

**LDBCW Officers attending:** Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Josh Lovell (Review Officer); Mrs Cath Thomas (Business Support Officer).

**Time Started:** 09:30

**Time Finished:** 11:35

**Apologies:** None

**1. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**2. Chair's Briefing**

- 2.1. The Chair reported that there had been good discussions with the Welsh Government (WG), and at Ministerial level, regarding the Orders but normal WG work is not expected to pick up until the end of the year due to the current priorities of COVID-19 and the economy. Ceredigion is with the Minister for a decision while Gwynedd and Torfaen are with the legal section before going to the Minister.
- 2.2. The Local Government Elections Bill will move to the second stage in the Autumn and is likely to receive Royal Assent in January. Two proposals in the Bill have been paused – the Electoral Registration database and votes for prisoners.

**3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 9 June 2020**

- 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 report dated 23 June 2020 by the CE and progress was noted on the issues below.

- 4.2. **(Issue 1) The Change Programme.** The CE reported that the included Change programme had been updated with the key actions from the People Survey, as agreed, and the FM will be leading the new People Committee.
- 4.3. **(Issue 2) Post-Review Questionnaire.** There are some questionnaires to be completed by mid-July but a document with links has been prepared for circulation.
- 4.4. **(Issue 3) Framework Agreement.** Ongoing. The Sponsor Division is still waiting for the Public Bodies Unit to draft a template for the new agreement. **Action** –the CE is to task the Head of Business with drafting a customised agreement which will be put before WG at the next Liaison meeting.
- 4.5. **(Issue 4) Evidence Request – Senedd Electoral Reform.** The CE reported that the Commission has been asked to give evidence but not all questions could be answered. **Actions** – the CE is to draft a response for the August meeting which refers to staff policy. The CE is also to send the questionnaire to BCW Members and use BCW costing.
- 4.6. **(Issue 5) Consultation – Senedd Cymru (Disqualification) Order 2020.** **Action** - the CE will draft a response for the August meeting.
- 4.7. **(Issue 6) Contact with Councils (Suspended Consultation Period).** The CE reported that this had been completed and the Commission is on track with the suspended consultations. The Councils affected are Cardiff, Caerphilly, Wrexham and Vale of Glamorgan.

## 5. Monmouthshire Pre-review Consultation

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 23 June 2020 by the RO and its contents **noted**.
- 5.2. It was **noted** that the response by Monmouthshire County Council was a response from the cross-party working group and that Councillors had been informed that they could respond to the Commission individually should they wish to do so.
- 5.3. It was **noted** that One Voice Wales had requested that the Commission to carry out a fresh community review, but this request can only be put forward to the Commission by the Principal Council or by direction from the Minister. In addition, there is no capacity within the current timetable to carry out any other review outside of the ERP 2017. It was **agreed** that the CE would

draft a response to One Voice Wales referring to the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013 and email this to Members by 1 July for comment.

- 5.4. It was **agreed** that the Commission should double-check the evidence, regarding ultra vires actions, that the Monmouthshire Community Review report complies with The Local Government Act 1972 and a decision should be made by the close of play on 1 July in order not to delay the Initial stage.
- 5.5. It was **agreed** that the HPP will draft correspondence to the Council regarding the start of the Initial stage. The HPP will also draft correspondence to the respondents to the Pre-review Consultation, explaining why the Commission has accepted the Council's representation; why it is diverging from its Policy and Practice document and emphasising that any issues, relating to the suggested, must be mentioned at the Initial consultation stage and no later. The drafts will be emailed to the Commissioners by 1 July for comment.

## **6. Review Progress Report**

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 23 June 2020 by the HPP and its contents **noted**.
- 6.2. It was **noted** that the Flintshire Final Report and the Anglesey Draft Report were published on 16 June and the Anglesey consultation deadline is 14 September.
- 6.3. It was **noted** that the paused Draft consultations for Cardiff and Caerphilly recommenced on 15 June and the deadlines are 3 and 7 July respectively. The Wrexham Draft consultation recommences on 1 July and closes on 13 July. The Vale of Glamorgan Draft consultation will recommence 1 September and close 20 October.
- 6.4. It was **noted** that the Monmouthshire Initial review is due to commence 7 July and close on 28 September.
- 6.5. The following changes to the timetable were **agreed**:
  - The late July Commission meeting moves to 5 August to enable ROs to meet with Lead Commissioners
  - The August meeting moves to 15 September
  - The September meeting moves to 13 October

## 7. Risk Management – Risk Register

7.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 10 June 2020 by the FM and its contents **noted**.

7.2. It was **noted** that all changes agreed at the previous meeting had been implemented.

7.3. It was **agreed** that additional mitigating actions regarding the Monmouthshire review should be made in CR3. These were:

- Legal advice sought regarding the Monmouthshire review.
- Took advice to consult before start of Monmouthshire review.
- Ensured there were good grounds for commencing Monmouthshire review based on legal advice received.
- Ensured that reasons for proceeding with Monmouthshire review were sufficiently documented to deal with any future challenges.

7.4. It was **agreed** that the likelihood of risk for CR3 could be reduced from a rating of 4 to 3 giving an overall risk rating of 12.

## 8. Budget Report

8.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 30 June 2020 by the FM and its contents **noted**.

8.2. It was noted that the Commission was in a comfortable position at the end of May 2020 with an underspend of £25,000 for the first two months of the financial year, partly due to National Insurance and Maternity Pay refunds. However, the 2.5% staff salary increase actioned in June (and backdated to April) and the Members' temporary fees increase (backdated to January) would take up a significant amount of the underspend.

8.3. It was considered that the current budget should be sufficient to cover any additional expenditure resulting from the Commission's response to the COVID-19 pandemic requirements.

## 9. Draft Annual Accounts

9.1. Consideration was given to the report by the FM dated 23 June 2020.

9.2. The report was **agreed** subject to some minor amendments to be emailed

to the FM before the final version goes before the ARAC meeting on 27 July.

9.3. It was **agreed** that the CE would do a final readthrough of the report.

## **10. Current Business Continuity Arrangements**

10.1. The CE gave a brief verbal update on the current work arrangements.

10.2. It was **noted** that this is the third week since the office was re-opened. The rota is working and the July rota has just been released. There are no more than five staff in the office at any one time and there are parking spaces for staff who need them.

## **11. Calendar of Events**

11.1. The contents of the Calendar were **noted**.

11.2. It was **agreed** to update the Calendar with the dates for the re-arranged Commission meetings.

## **12. Any Other Relevant Business**

12.1. There was a brief discussion regarding catering arrangements for future all day meetings. The CE proposed, and it was **agreed**, that individual lunches would be purchased from local suppliers.

## **13. Date of Next Meeting: 05 August 2020**