

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

MEETING HELD ON 10th MARCH 2015 AT HASTINGS HOUSE.

Present: Mr Owen Watkin (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling; and, Mr David Powell.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mr Steve Halsall (Chief Executive); Mr Matt Redmond (Deputy Chief Executive); Mr David Carr (Finance Manager); Mr Ross Evans (Review Officer) and Mrs Catherine Thomas (Review Assistant).

Apologies: Mrs Rachel Williams (Business Support Manager); Mr Tom Jenkins (Review Officer) and Mr Ralph Handscomb (Review Officer).

Time Started: 9:30 am

Time finished: 2:45 pm

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. **Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Review:** The Review Officer conducting the review had declared an interest as a resident and elector in the Church Village ward of Llantwit Fardre and having lived next door to the councillor for this ward for 20 years. The Commission noted the declaration, and also that the Review Officer was not present at the meeting.

1.2. There were no other declarations of interest made.

2. Chair's Announcements

2.1. The Chief Executive announced that the advertisement for the recruitment of additional new Commissioners had been published by Welsh Government and had also been put on the Commission's website.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 10 February 2015

3.1. It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2015.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 3rd March by the Chief Executive.

4.2. It was **resolved** to accept the report as a whole and updated progress on the following issues were noted:

Issue 1 (IT Strategy) a verbal update was given by the Chief Executive. The

Commission is due to have all computers updated to Windows 7 by Atos. Despite some initial problems having been encountered this issue was currently progressing.

- Issue 7 (Community Order Making Powers)** this topic is to be prioritised and brought up for discussion with Welsh Government later in March.
Action: Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive
- Issue 9 (BCW/LDBCW Memorandum of Understanding)** the Commission **considered** the Memorandum of Understanding and **agreed** the response subject to the inclusion of a provision relating to additional expenditure and its management.
- Issue 10 (Elections Planning Group)** a verbal update was given by the Chief Executive relating to the meeting that took place on the 5th March, regarding new powers for Welsh Government in respect of National Assembly elections and an update from the Electoral Commission in respect of individual electoral registration.
- Issue 15 (Framework Document)** the Commission is awaiting an update from Welsh Government. This issue was raised with Sponsor Division staff during the Secretariat's Welsh Government liaison meeting held on the 24th February. The response was that the updated Framework Document was still pending.
- Issue 16 (Flintshire Community Review)** a verbal update was provided by the Deputy Chief Executive regarding the representations received from the Flint Mountain consultation.
- Issue 17 (Domain Names)** a verbal update from the Chief Executive confirmed that the request for domain names had been made and the Commission currently was awaiting these to be released.
- Issue 22 (Commissioner Appointments)** the Commission **considered** the appointments process and it was noted that the Chair would be involved in the shortlist and interview process.
- Issue 30 (Newsletter)** a verbal update was given by the Chief Executive confirming the Newsletter had been completed and was published via the LDBCW website.

5. White Paper: Power to Local People

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 2nd March 2015 by the Deputy Chief Executive. The report assessed the White Paper published on the 3rd February in aspects where it may affect the Commission and its operations.

- 5.2. The Commission **considered** the basis of the draft consultation response to the White Paper. It was **agreed** that the Deputy Chief Executive would re-draft the response following minor amendments and circulate it to Members by e-mail for further consideration and approval.
Action: Deputy Chief Executive
- 5.3. It was **agreed** to send the final response to Welsh Government prior to the meeting with the First Minister on the 21st April 2015.
- 5.4. The Commission discussed the preparation of evidence for the meeting of the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee on 12th March.

6. Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Review

The Commission noted the Declaration of Interest made by the Review Officer

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 24th February by the Review Officer on the Community Review undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and suggestions made by the Secretariat with regard to the detailed alignment of boundaries and with regard to the boundary between Cwmbach and Aberaman South. The Commission, in coming to decisions, also noted and considered representations made in regard to four proposals.
- 6.2. The Commission considered the proposed changes and the following were **agreed, subject to para. 6.3 below**:
- The change to the boundary between the Communities of Llantrisant and Llantwit Fardre to transfer the western area of Llantwit Fardre into the Community of Llantrisant;
 - The change to the boundary between the Communities of Llantwit Fardre and Llantrisant to fully enclose the Cadwal Court housing estate within the Community of Llantwit Fardre;
 - The change to the boundary between the community wards of Church Village and Llantwit Fardre in the Community of Llantwit Fardre to include 36 properties at Ty Crwyn in the ward of Church Village;
 - The change to the boundary between the community wards of Talbot Green and Llantrisant Town in the Community of Llantrisant to include the area known as Y Graig in the Llantrisant Town ward;
 - The change to the boundary between the Communities of Llantwit Fardre and Llantrisant to include the properties of the Rowan Gardens housing estate and adjacent area into the Community of Llantwit Fardre;
 - The change to the boundary between the community wards of Beddau and Llantrisant Town in the Community of Llantrisant to transfer 2 properties into the Beddau ward;
 - The change to the boundary between the Communities of Llantrisant and Pontypridd to transfer the Pen-y-Coed Cae settlement into the Community of Pontypridd;

- The change to the boundary between the community wards of Church Village and Llantwit Fardre in the Community of Llantwit Fardre to include the whole of the Meadow Farm Housing Estate in the ward of Church Village;
- The change to the boundary between the community wards of Church Village and Llantwit Fardre in the Community of Llantwit Fardre to transfer 2 properties into the ward of Church Village;
- The change to the boundary between the Communities of Cwmbach and Mountain Ash East to transfer 7 properties into the Community of Mountain Ash East;
- The change for the Community of Aberaman to split the community along the current Electoral Wards of Aberaman North and Aberaman South creating two separate communities;
- The change for the Community of Aberdare to split the community along the current Electoral Wards of Aberdare East and Aberdare West creating two separate communities;
- The change for the Community of Mountain Ash to split the community along the current Electoral Wards of Mountain Ash East and Mountain Ash West creating two separate communities
- The change to the boundary between the Communities of Cwmbach and Aberaman to realign the boundary to follow a road and roundabout rather than the river.

6.3. The Commission considered the consequential changes to the community electoral arrangements and these were **agreed**. It was noted that the Commission had made minor changes to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's proposed community council membership for several community wards in the communities of Llantwit Fardre, Llantrisant and Pontypridd. It was **agreed** that these changes should be checked with Rhondda Cynon Taf Council before being adopted.

Action: Review Officer

6.4. It was **resolved** that a draft report would be presented to the April meeting for Members' consideration.

Action: Review Officer

7. Powers of the Public Services Ombudsman

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 23rd February 2015 by the Chief Executive.

7.2. The Commission considered the consultation document and the proposed changes. It was noted that the changes did not directly affect the Commission and that any response should reflect this.

7.3. It was **agreed** that the Chief Executive would draft a response to the consultation.

Action: Chief Executive.

8. Corporate Governance Manual

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 24th February 2015 by the Chief Executive. The report highlighted amendments to the Corporate Governance Manual which included a new section regarding the recently formed Workforce Sub-committee.
- 8.2. The Commission **noted** and **agreed** the report subject to minor amendments.

9. Openness and Accountability

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 26th February 2015 by the Chief Executive. The Report was **noted** by the Commission.

10. Electoral Law

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 20th February 2015 and the draft response produced by the Chief Executive, that concerned the management of appeals against the adequacy of polling stations. The Commission **noted** and **agreed** the response.

11. Wales Audit Office report – Managing Early Departures

- 11.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 19th February 2015 by the Chief Executive. The Commission **noted** the Wales Audit Office's report which would be considered as part of the Staffing Policies.

12. Post Review Questionnaire

- 12.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 3rd March 2015 by the Review Officer.
- 12.2. It was **resolved** that the questionnaire include several amendments, with the inclusion of two additional questions including the stage of the report commented on and elements aimed at user guidance.
- 12.3. The Commission **agreed** the survey format, subject to the agreed changes.
Action: Review Officer

13. Procurement Contracts

- 13.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 3rd March 2015 by the Business Support Manager which outlined the recent tender exercises and resulting successful bids for the Commission's Printing contract and Internal Audit contract.
- 13.2. The Commission **noted** the report and the successful contract bids chosen by the tender boards.
- 13.3 The Commission queried the mechanism for the upward adjustment of the fees contained in the successful contract bid. It was **resolved** to authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to clarify the mechanism for the increase.

14. 2015-16 Remit Letter

- 14.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 2nd March 2015 by the Chief Executive. The Commission noted the content of Remit Letter from the Minister and it was noted that the Chief Executive had sent an acknowledgement letter.
- 14.2 It was **agreed** that the Operational Plan would be drafted to incorporate the requirements of the Remit Letter and be presented at the April meeting.
Action: Chief Executive

15. Risk Management

- 15.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 27th February 2015 by the Finance Manager. The Commission **noted** the report and **approved** the Risk Register and Board Assurance Framework 2014-15 following the changes to risk CR7 requested in the February Commission meeting.

16. Budget Report

- 16.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 27th February 2015 by the Finance Manager. The Commission **noted** the report and the current position with regards to the estimated year end underspend.
- 16.2. The Commission **noted** the surrendering of a further £30,000 back to Welsh Government from the 2014-15 Grant-in-Aid and the impact of this on the budget categories.
- 16.3. It was **noted** that the Chief Executive had written to the sponsor division requesting the carry over of funds for the invoices of Software updates from Atos. The Commission was currently awaiting Welsh Government's response following this request. It was agreed that an urgent response should be sought from the Sponsor Division.
Action: Finance Manager

17. Reviews Progress Report

- 17.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 3rd March 2015 by the Deputy Chief Executive. The Commission **resolved** to note the following:
- 17.2. **Flintshire Community Review:** The deadline date for receipt of representations is the 22 April 2015 and 8 representations had been received to date.
- 17.3. **Cardiff Community Review:** Awaiting final proposals to be submitted to the Commission in April 2015.
- 17.4. **Monmouthshire Community Review:** The council are currently discussing whether to suspend their review at this stage. The Commission expect to receive confirmation shortly.
- 17.5. **Neath Port Talbot Community Review:** The Commission received prospective maps from the council highlighting changes that they are looking to consult upon. The Commission awaits the draft proposals in full, following the consultation period.
- 17.6. **Carmarthenshire Community Review** – Awaiting Draft report to be published following ongoing consultation period due to end on the 3rd April.
- 17.7. **The Vale of Glamorgan Community Review** – The Council have written to The Commission to request a review commence in October 2015. A meeting between the Commission and council officials is to be arranged.

18. Calendar of Events

- 18.1. The Report was **noted**.

19. Any Other Relevant Business

- 19.1. Consideration was given to the recent unsuccessful recruitment campaign for an additional Review Officer.
- 19.2. It was **agreed** that there should be an extension to the exercise for a further month to allow more opportunity for candidates to apply.

20. Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 16th April 2015