LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2016 AT HASTINGS HOUSE.

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. David Carr (Finance Manager); Mrs. Rachel Williams (Business Support Manager); Mr. Daniel Mosley (Review Officer); Mr. Ralph Handscomb (Review Officer); Mrs. Catherine Thomas (Review Assistant)

Time Started: 9:30
Time finished: 12:40

Apologies: Apologies were received on behalf of Mr. Tom Jenkins and Mr. Ross Evans who were unable to attend the meeting.

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. Mrs. Julie May declared a family interest in the Neath Port Talbot Community Review. (See 6.1 below)

2. Chairman's Announcements

2.1. The Chair stated that he would brief the meeting as matters were considered on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 15 December 2015

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 18 January by the Chief Executive on Issues Arising.

4.2. It was **Resolved** to accept the Report as a whole noting the issues for later discussion at this meeting, and updated progress on the following issues was also **noted**:

- (Issue 1) Principal Area Reviews – Desk Instructions had been reviewed and updated, however it was noted that these were a live document and that changes would be made as required. **Matt Redmond**
- (Issue 2) Community Order making powers – instructions have been prepared and have been sent for legal advice. **Matt Redmond**
- (Issue 3) Election Planning Group – next meeting due in March 2016. **Steve Halsall**
- (Issue 4) Electoral Reviews Planning – operational issues to be considered.

February 2016. **Matt Redmond**

- (Issue 5) Travel and Subsistence – an invitation to quote for insurance cover has been placed on Sell2Wales. January 2016. **Rachel Williams**
- (Issue 6) Staff Terms & Conditions – the recommendations of the Workforce Sub-committee are to be reviewed in June 2016. **Steve Halsall**
- (Issue 7) Legal Services – permission to extend the contract with the Government Legal Department has been given by Cabinet Office; the Commission was awaiting a response from the Government Legal Department. **Rachel Williams**
- (Issue 8) Welsh Language Standards – awaiting regulations and then draft compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner. A briefing session is being held by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office on 23 February 2016. **Steve Halsall**
- (Issue 9) Accommodation – investigating new lease with Landlord. **Rachel Williams**
- (Issue 10) Ordnance Survey – Travel and Accommodation for 11 February visit to be arranged. **Tom Jenkins**
- (Issue 13) Memorandum of Understanding – published on website. **Steve Halsall**

5. Outstanding Electoral Reviews: Minister's Statement

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 6 January 2016 by the Chief Executive. The Report provided some background to the Minister's announcement that no Orders are to be implemented for the completed reviews of:

Carmarthenshire,	**Monmouthshire**
Ceredigion	**Pembrokeshire,**
Conwy	**Powys, and**
Denbighshire,	**Torfaen**
Gwynedd,	

5.2. A number of consequential changes had been made as part of the original reviews in these cases but others are still to be addressed as a result of this decision - an anomaly between community and electoral wards in Brecon Town is an example. It was suggested that an approach from Powys County Council to the Welsh Government highlighting this anomaly may provide a solution.

5.3. It was reported that a Freedom of Information request had been made regarding the cost of these reviews but that it was not possible to isolate staff time costs for an individual review and the whole budgets published in the Commission's Annual Reports held the applicable figures for the years in question.

5.4. The Commission **Noted** the report and it was further **Noted** that the Commission had completed its work on these reviews in accordance with the Remit Letter in force at the time. The reviews were of high quality and were conducted with due diligence, clarity, a high regard to communications, and the maintenance of good relation with stakeholders.

6. Neath Port Talbot Community Review

6.1. Mrs Julie May left the room during discussion of this item. Consideration was given to the Report dated 26 January 2016 by the Review Officer and outlined by the Deputy Chief Executive in his absence.

6.2. It was noted that, as there had been some confusion over the number of properties involved in the consultation, the deadline for making representations had been extended as a result of clarification and affected electors had been provided with additional consultation packs. The six representations received from the Brombil area were considered and it was **Agreed** that OPTION A is the preferred choice.

6.3. The draft Report using Option A was considered and it was **Agreed** to be prepared for publication with details of the representations only being shown in the Appendix. **Action: Review Officer.**

7. Commissioner Fees and Expenses

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 January 2016 by the Finance Manager. An amended Policy was presented which had been drafted with the view to establishing consistency of claims across the membership together with an update to rates and other changes. It was **Agreed** that the policy would be amended as proposed and reviewed in 2019 and then every three years. **Action: Finance Manager.**

7.2. The Commission **Noted** the Policy.

8. Public Services Staff Commission

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 18 January 2016 by the Business Support Manager.

8.2. The Commission **Noted** the report and **Agreed** that the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Public Services Staff Commission be invited to attend one of the regular Commission meetings. **Action: Business Support Manager.**

9. Risk Management – Risk register

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 January 2016 by the Finance Manager.

9.2. It was **Noted** that there had been no recent changes to the Risk Register but that risk CR7 ought to be reviewed in the light of the Wales Bill, the Remit Letter, and other changes that may be introduced after the forthcoming NAfW election.

9.3. It was **agreed** that risk CR7 would be recast by senior managers to reflect the current situation regarding the uncertainty about Commission's future work programme and the proposed changes would be reviewed by Members at their next meeting. It was **agreed** that the residual rating for CR7 was to be set back to 25.
Action: CEO/ Deputy CEO/ Finance Manager.

10. Risk Management Policy

10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 January 2016 by the Finance Manager; highlighting amendments to the Risk Management Policy following recommendations put forward by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

10.2. The report was **Noted** and was subject to one change. In Stage 3; the note is to read "*A standard set of review risk have been established*".

10.3. **It was agreed** that subject to the minor change outlined above, the policy will be adopted by the Commission and will be subject to review every three years.

11. Budget Report

11.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 12 January 2016 by the Finance Manager regarding the Commission's budget. The Commission **Noted** the minor amendments to the budget categories and the amended underspend following the surrender of funds to Welsh Government for the year. It was again noted that there were some uncertainties regarding future legal costs for advice received on seaward boundaries and any advice required for drafting community review orders.

11.2. The report was **Noted.**

12. Local Government Wales Bill

12.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 January 2016 by the Deputy Chief Executive. The Paper outlined the Commission's analysis of the relevant clauses of the Local Government (Wales) Bill affecting the Commission which mainly concerned the review of community councils. In addition consideration was given to a draft letter to the Minister outlining the Commission's opinion regarding the Bill.

12.2. The Chief Executive informed the Commission that, following a meeting with Welsh Government officials, it was brought to his attention that the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee of the National Assembly was currently scrutinising the Bill and would welcome any representations the Commission would like to make.

12.3. The draft letter was **Noted**, and subject to a few minor grammatical changes the letter was **Agreed** and would be sent as the Commission's representations to both the Minister, and the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. **Action: Deputy Chief Executive.**

13. Reviews Progress Report

13.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 18 January 2016 by the Deputy Chief Executive on the current Review Progress.

13.2. It was reported that the Cardiff Community Review was currently being printed and would be published in due course. Neath Port Talbot Community Review Final Report had been discussed earlier in the meeting and would undergo the quality assurance process before being translated and published. Carmarthenshire Community Review will be brought to the next Commission meeting; and the Commission was still awaiting the results of the Denbighshire's community review of Prestatyn.

13.3. The Report was **Noted**.

14. WAO Fees Consultation 2016-17.

14.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 6 January 2016 by the Finance Manager, regarding the response from WAO regarding the consultation on the fees.

14.2. The Commission **Noted** the report.

15. Records Management Guidance

15.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 18 January 2016 from the Business Support Manager regarding the Commission's Records Management Policy and Guidance.

15.2. The Commission **Noted** the report and suggested the following amendments;

- The Policy referred to "staff", but should also include a section on Commissioners and their responsibilities.
- To add a clause requiring contractors to abide by the Commission's records management policy.
- To clarify point 16 in the 'Information and Records Management Programme and Guide' with regard to staff and Commissioners leaving the Commission and their responsibilities when leaving employment.

15.3. Subject to the minor amendments above, the Records Management Policy and Guidance was **Accepted**. The Business Support Manager would, as a consequence, organise the Commission's filing according to the File Retention Guidance as part of this policy. The Policy is to be reviewed in 2019 and thence every three years. **Action: Business Support Manager**.

16. Pay Policy Statement 2015-16

16.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 18 January 2016 by the Business Support Manager which set out the Commission's Pay Policy Statement, in response from the Minister's letter in December 2015.

16.2. The Commission **Noted** the Report and **Accepted** the Report for publication. **Action: Business Support Manager.**

17. Calendar of Events

17.1. The calendar was **Noted.**

18. Any Other Business

18.1. There was no other relevant business.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 23 February 2016