

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES
MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 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); Mrs. Rachel Williams (Business Support Manager); Mr. Ross Evans (Review Officer); Mr. Daniel Mosley (Review Officer); Mrs. Catherine Thomas (Review Assistant);

Time Started: 09:30

Time Finished: 12:00

Apologies: Mr. Dave Carr (Finance Manager)

1. Declarations of Interest

- 1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chairman's Announcements

- 2.1. The Chair announced, following the statement made by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Local Government on the 23rd June 2016, Welsh Government's intention for the Commission to complete electoral reviews for all 22 authorities within the next local government term. The Commission **Noted** the receipt of the letter of 23 June 2016 from the Cabinet Secretary to the Chair in respect of his intentions and **Agreed** that an appropriate response be sent.
- 2.2. The Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the implications relating to the Cabinet Secretary's statement with regards to formulating a programme for reviews.
- 2.3. It was **Agreed** that a review timetable be drafted and considered at a future Commission meeting. The timetable will then be submitted to the Cabinet Secretary.
- 2.4. It was **Agreed** by the Commission that a revised Policy and Practice document for electoral reviews be drafted and presented at the next Commission meeting.
- 2.5. It was **Agreed** to seek assistance from Data Unit Wales to prepare a revised Council Size Policy document, to be brought to a future Commission meeting.
- 2.6. It was **Agreed** to obtain the latest electoral statistics from the 22 principal councils.
- 2.7. It was **Agreed** that the Chief Executive contact the WLGA with a view to arranging to meet with Leaders of Principal Councils to inform them of the proposed reviews following the agreement of the timetable and the updating of the Policy and Practice document.

- 2.8. It was **Agreed** that in order to meet the timescale set for the electoral reviews two additional Review Officers would be required. It was **Agreed** that the possibility of recruiting two seconded Review Officers should be investigated, with a view to encouraging applicants who are Welsh-speakers, and that the Sponsor Division be requested to support the recruitment with appropriate resources.
- 2.9. It was **Agreed** that the previously agreed proposal for an online consultation portal be reviewed, with a paper to be presented to the Commission in due course.
- 2.10. In the light of these developments, the Commission **Agreed** to reinstate the 23 August 2016 and 27 September 2016 Commission meeting dates.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 26 April 2016

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2016 as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to one minor amendment.

4. Issues Arising

- 4.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2016 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 2) Electoral Reviews Planning – A paper is to be presented at the next Commission meeting. **Deputy Chief Executive**
 - (Issue 3) Travel and Subsistence – The Business Support Manager advised the Commission that, following extensive investigations, no viable provider of insurances for staff while travelling on Commission business had been found. The Commission **Agreed** that the Business Support Manager to contact the Public Services Staff Commission to establish if they had experience of such a provision. A paper is to be presented at the next Commission meeting. **Business Support Manager**
 - (Issue 4) Staff Terms and Conditions – This is to be discussed at the upcoming Workforce Sub-Committee meeting following the July Commission meeting. **Chief Executive**
 - (Issue 5) Legal Services – Awaiting response from the Government Legal Department. **Business Support Manager**
 - (Issue 7) Accommodation – The Business Support Manager provided an update on the lease arrangements, following discussions with Welsh Government Estates Lawyer. **Business Support Manager**
- 4.3. It was **Agreed** to remove Issue 1 (Meeting of Elections Planning Group) and Issue 7 (Accommodation) from the list of issues arising, as these are now ongoing issues.

5. **Draft Annual Report 2015-16**

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 20 June 2016 by the Finance Manager.
- 5.2. The Commission **noted** the Annual Report and accepted the report subject to the inclusion of a section relating the Commissions IIP award, and the following amendments.
 - Foreword – replace ‘*exiting*’ with ‘*existing*’
 - Inclusion of a short sentence to explain what ‘*Monsters and Trolls*’ Corporate Governance relates to.
 - Section 2.1 – Include the ‘2015-16’ date when referring to Remit Letter (for clarity)
 - Paragraph 3.11 – ensure the IRP is referred to as the ‘*Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales*’.

6. **IT Strategy**

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 06 June 2016 by the Review Officer which informed members of current situation with regards to the Commissions IT Strategy.
- 6.2. The Deputy Chief Executive provided an update on the Commission’s current position and it was **Agreed** that a revised IT Strategy be drafted for the Commission meeting in July.
- 6.3. The Commission **Noted** the report.

7. **Welsh Language Standards Transition Plan**

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the Report and draft Transition Plan dated 20 June 2016 by the Business Support Manager.
- 7.2. It was **Noted** that the Commission is awaiting a reply from the Welsh Language Commissioner, regarding comments made in respect to the consultation on the Welsh Language Standards Compliance Notice, and that, as a result, the Plan may change.
- 7.3. The Commission **Accepted** the Plan and **Agreed** that the work to implement the Standards could begin. The Plan would be reviewed in light of experience gained in operating the new proposals. It was **Agreed** that any proposed revisions to the Plan and progress reports on its implementation be brought to future Commission meetings.

8. **Risk Management – Risk Register**

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2016 by the Finance Manager concerning the Commission’s Risk Management.
- 8.2. The Commission **Noted** the changes made to the Risk Register last month.

- 8.3. Following on from the Cabinet Secretary's announcement last week, the Secretariat will go through the risk register and update accordingly. An updated paper will go to the July Commission and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings.
- 8.4. It was agreed to include a new risk, regarding the IT strategy the Commission will have to utilise in the coming months. The mitigating actions would include the development of an updated IT strategy. It was agreed to contact Welsh Government and other Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies who have gone through similar processes to ascertain their experiences of operating similar systems.

9. Budget Report

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2016 by the Finance Manager.
- 9.2. The Report was **Noted**.
- 9.3. The Report will have to be re-forecasted in light of the Cabinet Secretary's announcement regarding the pending review work the Commission will be undertaking.

10. Reviews Progress Report

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 13 June 2016 by the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 10.2. The Report was **Noted**.

11. Calendar of Events

- 11.1. Following on from the Cabinet Secretary's announcement last week, the Commission saw it fit to reinstate the 23 August and 27 September Commission meetings, which were cancelled last month.
- 11.2. The Deputy Chief Executive offered an update regarding the Parliamentary Review programme of the Boundary Commission for Wales.

12. Any Other Relevant Business

- 12.1. None

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 26 July 2016