LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON 23 AUGUST 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. Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr. Ross Evans (Review Officer); Mr. Daniel Mosley (Review Officer) and Mrs. Catherine Thomas (Review Assistant).

Time Started: 09:30
Time Finished: 11:15

Apologies: Mrs Rachel Williams (Business Support Manager).

1. **Declarations of Interest**

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chairman's Announcements

2.1. The Chair announced that Members will be briefed on workforce matters after the meeting.

2.2. Following last month's invitation to the Chair of the Local Government and Boundary Commission for England, he has accepted our invitation to attend the September meeting. The Secretariat will make arrangements.

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

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2016 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 12 August 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 1, 2, 3) Electoral Reviews – Timetable, Policy and Practice and Council Size Model – The Timetable and associated documents have been submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for his approval. Awaiting response.
- (Issue 4) Electoral Reviews – Electoral Statistics – Electoral statistics have now been received for almost all Councils. **Deputy Chief Executive and Review Officers**
- (Issue 5) Electoral Review Stakeholder Communication – awaiting agreement of the timetable before meetings are arranged. **Chief Executive**
- (Issue 7) Staffing – recruitment of Two Review Officers – The latest

recruitment exercise for two additional Review Officers had produced no applicants. Work will be undertaken to begin another recruitment period. **Business Support Manager**

- (Issue 11) Legal Services – Awaiting response from the Government Legal Department. **Business Support Manager**
- (Issue 12) Welsh Language Standards – The Final Compliance Notice was received by the Commission recently, it will be compared with the Commission's transition plan with any changes being made as appropriate to begin the implementation next year. **Business Support Manager and Chief Executive.**
- (Issue 17) IT Strategy – A paper will be presented to the Commission at a later date, exploring the options available to the Commission in relation to its future IT strategy. **Deputy Chief Executive.**

5. **Annual Report 2015-16**

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 29 July 2016 by the Finance Manager. It was noted that the Annual Report incorporated all previously agreed amendments together with the final audited version of the summary annual accounts.

5.2. The Commission **Agreed** the Annual Report 2015-16 subject to a minor amendment at paragraph 3.9 to change reference to the Commission from plural to singular. It was **Agreed** that the Finance Manager would begin the process of publishing the report for the Commission's website and distribution to the National Assembly and all other interested parties.

6. Lead Commissioner Electoral Review Planning

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 August 2016 by the Deputy Chief Executive.

6.2. The Commission **Noted** the report. It was **Accepted** that the Chair would attend all the Initial Meetings, to provide reassurance to all Councils involved and to engage as fully as possible. It is noted that Julie May and Theodore Joloza will each attend an Initial Meeting in order to observe and further their knowledge of the Lead Commissioner role before undertaking their first reviews of Powys and Conwy.

6.3. It was **Accepted** that the Chair would not act as a Lead Commissioner, in order to remain impartial throughout the reviews. But also to aid in any difficulties throughout the period, such as illness.

6.4. The Commission **Accepted** the following Commissioners to act as Lead Commissioners for the forthcoming reviews –

- **Ceri Stradling** – Ceredigion; Pembrokeshire; Blaenau Gwent; Neath Port Talbot; Newport; Isle of Anglesey.
- **Dave Powell** – Gwynedd; Torfaen; Bridgend; Rhondda Cynon Taf; Caerphilly; Monmouthshire.
- **Julie May** – Powys; Carmarthenshire; Merthyr Tydfil; Wrexham; Vale of Glamorgan; Monmouthshire Community Review.

- **Theodore Joloza** – Conwy; Denbighshire; Swansea; Flintshire; Cardiff.
- The Chair will attend initial meetings with Councils, and will substitute as necessary.

7. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meeting held on 27 July 2016

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 2 August 2016 by the Finance Manager.

7.2. The Commission considered the decisions and actions arising from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 27 July 2016 together with the approved minutes of the meeting. It was noted that the Committee had raised (minute 17.2) "…the possible risk to LDBCW funding following the recent referendum vote to leave the European Union," and had requested the Commission to give consideration to the matter.

7.3. It was **Agreed** that the Secretariat will draft a paper regarding the possible risks to the Commission funding as a result of the outcome of the referendum for a future meeting. **Chief Executive / Finance Manager**

8. Internal Audit Plan – Proposed Additional Internal Audit Work

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 11 August 2016 by the Finance Manager to seek Member's views on the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's proposed changes to the Commission's Internal Audit Plan. It was considered that there would be no benefit in conducting an audit on the Commission's electoral reviews during 2017-18 as not enough review work will have been completed, although there may be merit in increasing the current amount of audit time on electoral reviews for 2018-19 onwards.

8.2. The Commission **Noted** the report and **Agreed** that the existing internal audit schedule for 2017-18 would be retained and that consideration would be given to adding additional audit time to the plan to cover electoral review for 2018-19 onwards. It was agreed that a letter would be drafted for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Chair to send to Deloitte informing them of the Commission's decision. **Finance Manager**

9. Risk Management – Risk Register

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 2 August 2016 by the Finance Manager regarding the Commission's Risk Management.

9.2. The Commission **Agreed** the updated risk register and risk management report subject to the following amendments:

- CR2 – Increase the inherent and residual risk levels following difficulties experienced with recent recruitment exercise and add further mitigating actions covering recruitment and staff structure.
- CR10 – Decrease the residual risk likelihood from a 5 to a 3.
- CR12 – Addition of a mitigating action to highlight the allocation of Lead Commissioners for upcoming Electoral Reviews.
- CR13 – Change risk's deadline date from March 2019, to January 2019.

Finance Manager

10. Budget Report

10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 12 August 2016 by the Finance Manager.

10.2. The Commission **Noted** the current budget position for 2016-17 and that further changes to the budget allocations would be necessary following confirmation of the Commission's future additional budget and recruitment of additional staff.

11. Workforce Sub-Committee Meeting 26 July 2016

11.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 August 2016 by the Deputy Chief Executive

11.2. The Commission **Noted** the report.

12. Reviews Progress Report

12.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 August 2016 by the Deputy Chief Executive.

12.2. The Report was **Noted.**

13. Calendar of Events

13.1. The Calendar of Events was **Noted.**

14. Any Other Relevant Business

14.1. **Welsh Audit Office consultation on Fees.**

- The Chief Executive informed the Commission of the consultation report produced by the WAO.
- Consideration was given to the Report by the WAO and it was **Resolved** for the Chief Executive to send a consultation response.

14.2. **Commissioner Availability**

- The Commission agreed it would be useful, particularly during the period of conducting electoral reviews, to inform the Commission when they are on holiday or otherwise unavailable.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 27 September 2016