LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 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 Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr Ross Evans (Review Officer); Mr Daniel Mosley (Review Officer) and Mrs Catherine Thomas (Review Assistant).

Visitors: Professor Colin Mellors (Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England).

Time Started: 09:30
Time Finished: 12:30

Apologies: Mrs Rachel Williams (Business Support Manager); Mr Matt Redmond (Deputy Chief Executive)

1. **Declarations of Interest**

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair and the Commission recorded their condolences to Rachel Williams and her family for their recent bereavement.

2.2. The Chair gave a briefing to Professor Mellors on the work of the Commission and the upcoming period of reviews that it will be undertaking.

2.3. The Chair stated that the Cabinet Secretary had agreed the programme for the new reviews. Formal consent was awaited for the Council Size Model and the Policy and Practice document but, in view of the current timescales and the need to meet stakeholders, they could be used as working documents, and that arrangements could be made to begin communication with key stakeholders regarding the forthcoming reviews.

2.4. The Chair informed Members that the Cabinet Secretary has agreed to attend a briefing meeting with the Commission on the 1st December at Hasting House.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 23 August 2016

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 August 2016 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 13 September 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 Cabinet Secretary was in receipt of the documents and that the Commission can begin preparatory work for the forthcoming reviews on the basis set out in minute 2.3 above.
- (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 – The Commission can now begin contacting stakeholders to arrange meetings. **Chief Executive**
- (Issue 7) Staffing – recruitment of Two Review Officers – A further recruitment period is underway which closes on 12 October. Work is also being undertaken to explore the possibility of utilising the apprenticeship scheme within Welsh Government to fill the Review Officer roles. **Chief Executive and Business Support Manager**
- (Issue 10) Staff Terms and Conditions – Further discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government. **Chief Executive**
- (Issue 12) Welsh Language Standards – Work is being undertaken to ensure the Commission can comply with all the required standards over the coming months. **Business Support Manager and Chief Executive.**
- (Issue 14) Public Service Staff Commission – Due to the changes in the Commission's work plans there is not an immediate need for a further meeting with the Public Service Staff Commission. **Chief Executive**
- (Issue 17) IT Strategy – A paper will be prepared and presented to the Commission at the next meeting. **Deputy Chief Executive.**

5. Revised Remit Letter

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 September 2016 by the Chief Executive.

5.2. The Commission **Noted** the report and the revised Remit Letter.

5.3. The Commission **Accepted** the response, subject to some minor amendments, and which is to be sent to the Cabinet Secretary on the Chair's behalf.

5.4. The Chief Executive would begin work on the Operation Plan 2016/17 on the basis of the Remit Letter.

6. Risk Management – Risk Register

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 September 2016 by the Finance Manager.

6.2. The Commission **Agreed** the updated risk register and risk management report subject to the following amendments to the Corporate Risk Register:

- CR1 – an additional mitigating action to be included to cover the Welsh Government's intention to keep WGSBs informed of any developments and changes to policy resulting from Brexit, including any impact on funding, through the quarterly WGSB Heads of Resources meetings.

- CR10 – reduce the scoring of the inherent risk to 5 and 3 and the residual risk to 3 and 3.

Finance Manager

7. Budget Report

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 September 2016 by the Finance Manager.

7.2. The Commission **Noted** and **Agreed** the report and the amendments shown following the agreed additional LDBCW funding allocation within the Cabinet Secretary's Remit Letter. It was reported that several budget categories had been changed to reflect the additional funds together with anticipated changes to the staff structure. The Commission noted these budget category changes.

8. Brexit – Implications and Risks

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 16 September 2016 by the Finance Manager. The Commission noted the recent meeting which had taken place between Peter Kennedy, Head of WG HR, and directors of WGSBs to discuss the impact of leaving the EU on the WG and its sponsored bodies. At that meeting it had been agreed that there would be continued liaison with WG through the biannual WGSB Heads of Resources meetings.

8.2. The Commission **Agreed** that the financial uncertainty regarding the decision to leave the EU should be reflected by adding a mitigating action regarding the liaison with WG through WGSB Heads of Resources meetings to corporate risk CR1 (see Risk Management report above).

8.3. Consideration was given to whether there should be an additional operational risk to cover possible changes to employment, environmental and procurement rules and legislation. However, the Commission considered that currently, before any 'Article 50' process has begun, any other risk to the Commission would be hypothetical and uncertain; these should therefore not be reflected within the operational risk register.

9. Reviews Progress

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 September 2016 by the Chief Executive regarding the current progress of reports.

9.2. The Chief Executive highlighted that the Cabinet Secretary has agreed the Commission's proposal reports for community arrangements in Flintshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cardiff and Neath Port Talbot. Welsh Government will proceed to make these orders.

9.3. The Commissioners **Noted** the report and discussed arrangements for initial meetings within the electoral review timetable.

10. Calendar of Events

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

11. Any Other Relevant Business

11.1. No other relevant business.

12. Presentation by Professor Colin Mellors, Chair of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Professor Colin Mellors provided an outline of the LGBCE's current activities and ongoing aims. The Commissions discussed common themes and compared processes involved within their reviews.

The Commission thanked Professor Mellors for the valuable insight into practices within the English Commission, and for welcoming the opportunity to share best practice.

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday 25 October 2016