LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD ON 28 MARCH 2017 AT HASTINGS HOUSE

Present: Mr Owen Watkin (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling; 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); Mr Farhan Khan (Review Officer); Mrs Cher Cooke (Review Officer); Mrs Caroline Redmond (Office Assistant)

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

Apologies: Mr David Powell; Mrs Rachel Williams (Business Support Manager)

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. Reference was made to the Declarations of Interest made in the November meeting in regards to Julie May and the Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Seaward boundary review.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair and the Commission welcomed Ross Evans back into the office following his period of paternity leave and congratulated him on the safe arrival of his daughter.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 21 February 2017

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017 as a correct record of the matters considered subject to a minor amendment.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 15 March 2017 by the Chief Executive on Issues Arising.

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

- **(Issue 1)** Electoral Review Stakeholder Communication – Meeting to be held after the election. June 2017. **Chief Executive**
- **(Issue 2)** Staffing – One application received for the Business Support Officer post. Telephone interview to be arranged. **Business Support Manager**
- **(Issue 3)** Consultation Portal – Tender board to be held 03 April 2017. **Deputy Chief Executive**
- **(Issue 4)** Staff Terms and Conditions – The Commission noted the response from the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary. The Commission **Agreed** to implement the Retention Allowance for selected members of the Secretariat effective 01 January 2017. The Commission noted that sufficient funds were available in the 17/18 budget. **Finance Manager**
- **(Issue 7)** IT Strategy – Qualification Wales are currently finalising their business case with Welsh Government before submitting it to the Commission in April 2017. The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Commission about the meeting with Welsh Government ICT and the subsequent issues with remaining with Welsh Government ICT. **Deputy Chief Executive**
- **(Issue 9)** Inter-Commission Meeting 2017 – Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary has offered to host the meeting at the Senedd. Dates and cost are to be investigated. **Business Support Manager**

5. Reforming Local Government White Paper

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 01 March 2017 by the Chief Executive.

5.2. The Commission **Agreed** the response subject to a minor amendment.

6. Draft Operational Plan

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 16 March 2017 by the Chief Executive

6.2. The Commission **Noted** the draft Operational Plan, and made a number of additions. A further draft will be circulated to the Members by email for agreement before being submitted to Welsh Government.

7. Welsh Language Standards

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 18 March 2017 by the Business Support Manager

7.2. The Commission **Noted** the report and the work completed thus far to comply with all the relevant standards. The Commission is on track to complete all the standards within the July 2017 timeframe.

8. LDBCW Governance Statement 2016-17

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 08 March 2017 by the Finance Manager.

8.2. The Commission **Agreed** the Governance statement subject to a number of amendments, and the inclusion of additional content. A finalised version of the statement would be circulated to Members by email for approval before being included in the draft 2016/17 Annual Accounts and Financial Statements.
Action: Finance Manager

9. Risk Management

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 07 March 2017 by the Finance Manager.

9.2. The Commission **Noted** the updated Register and approved the recommended changes to the Register proposed within the Audit Committee meeting.

9.3. The Commission **Agreed** to the following changes.

- CR2: Residual risk to be decreased to Impact 4, Likelihood 3 = Overall risk 12 (Amber), due to the majority of staffing requirements for the electoral review being in place and the inclusion of an additional mitigating action related to the agreement by Welsh Government to staff retention allowances.
- CR12: Residual risk to be decreased Impact 4, Likelihood 3 = Overall risk 12 (Amber) to reflect recent progress in the initial stages of the review programme together with the reduced risk regarding sufficient staffing.

10. Budget Management

10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 March 2017 by the Finance Manager.

10.2. The Commission noted and agreed the changes to the budget category allocations following the recent surrender of £50K Grant-In-Aid back to

Welsh Government. It was reported that the overall budget would be underspent by approximately £118K at the year end with approximately £96K being in respect of the Cabinet Office BCW budget and approximately £22K being in respect of Welsh Government Grant-In-Aid.

10.3. Welsh Government had recently informed the Commission that they would be changing the way in which they charged for their outward seconded staff and that the salary costs would no longer be deducted from the Commission's Grant-In-Aid at source but would be invoiced for instead. This new arrangement would cover the 2016 – 17 salary costs from October 2016 for the Commission's most recent Welsh Government secondee, which presented a problem as no contingency had been included in the March Grant-In-Aid drawn down request to meet the cost of this unexpected additional expenditure. The Finance Manager was currently discussing the possible solutions to make the necessary funds available with the Sponsor Division.

10.4. The Commission **Agreed** the Budget Report subject to a minor grammatical correction.

11. Review of the Seaward Boundaries of Neath Port Talbot and Swansea

11.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 17 March 2017 by the Review Officers.

11.2. The Commission **Agreed** that Owen Watkin will act as the reviews Lead Commissioner for the purposes of audit checking the proposal reports prior to publication.

11.3. The Commission **Agreed** the following draft proposals.

- The proposed seaward boundary of Neath Port Talbot (NPT) for the construction phase of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon development.
- The proposed seaward boundary of Swansea for the construction phase of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon development.
- The proposed seaward boundary of NPT for the operational phase of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon.
- The proposed seaward boundary of Swansea for the operational phase of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon.

11.4. The Commission **Agreed** to the consequential arrangements proposed as a result of these changes.

11.5. The Commission **Noted** the Draft Proposals Report and highlighted a number of changes to be made, a further copy will be circulated by email and agreed at a later date; in preparation for publication on 9 May 2017.

12. Report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 20 February 2017

12.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 08 March 2017 by the Finance Manager.

12.2. The Commission **Noted** the internal audit's assessment and were satisfied with the results of the ARAC recommendations. The Commission **Noted** that the ARAC Chair's annual report was finalised and will now be published in due course.

13. Reviews Progress Report

13.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 20 March 2017 by the Deputy Chief Executive.

13.2. Meeting to be attended by the Deputy Chief Executive with the Welsh Government and the Welsh Language Commissioner to discuss protocol for deciding new Welsh electoral ward names.

13.3. The Commission **Noted** the report

14. Calendar of Events

14.1. The Commission **Noted** the calendar.

15. Any Other Business

15.1. Members noted the oral report concerning the small underpayment of 2015-16 amount of tax on a Commission Member's fee. The amount requested from HMRC in their letter of 3 March 2017 had now been paid before the deadline to avoid incurring a penalty. The Secretariat was still awaiting a response to their request for additional information from HMRC regarding the circumstances which lead to the underpayment occurring.

Date of Next Meeting: 25 April 2017