Comisiwn Ffiniau a Democratiaeth Leol Cymru

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission For Wales

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales

Minutes

Jan - Sep 2022

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 1p.m ON 26 JANUARY 2022 VIA TEAMS

Present: Mrs Debra Evans-Williams (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling; Mr David Powell.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Miss Carys Vaughan (Team Support Officer).

Time Started: 13:00
Time Finished: 14:20

Apologies: No apologies were made.

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the earlier meeting with Rebecca Evans, Minister for Finance and Local Government (WG):

- The programme of Electoral Reviews was discussed, and the Minister and Chair acknowledged the exceptional team in place and gave thanks to everyone involved.
- The Minister agreed with the Chairs suggestion of the Commission having more autonomy over administrative processes.
- The discussion was focused on communication and education, especially on how to engage with the younger demographic. The Chair highlighted that the Commission currently has one staff member for Communication and Engagement and while acknowledging budget restrictions, proposed funding for another staff member.
- The Minister queried if an additional step in the consultation process was needed for future reviews after receiving correspondence from members of the public who were unaware of the review. The Chair emphasised that an extra step in the consultation process would not alleviate this problem and highlighted there needs to be enough communication and engagement throughout the whole review process. The Chair suggested resources should be used for more

communication including an interactive website with maps and more PR and social media.

- It was **agreed** that the Commission need to reiterate that an extra step in the review process is not needed during future conversations with WG. The Commission would look to hold an additional consultation only in reviews where there are fundamental changes between the draft proposals and the final recommendations. This would be limited to those specific proposal.
- The appointment and membership of the Commission was discussed. The Chair asked for an additional two Commissioners for contingency purposes, highlighting the effect of Covid-19 and the amount of work involved in the review process.
- The Chair requested a commitment of time when a decision is made by WG.
- The Chair and Minister agreed that there were a limited number of contentious reviews.
- The CE reported that correspondence has been received from Bridgend CBC regarding the Community Review in Coity. It was **noted** that the CE will reply to the Bridgend ERO stating that Bridgend Council is the Order making body on this matter as it is a review of electoral arrangements of the Community Council. The Commission is also in agreement with the proposed electoral arrangements for the Community of Coity.

- **Action:** The CE to reply to the Bridgend ERO regarding the Community Review in Coity.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 7 December 2021

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to minor amendments.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 19 January 2022 by the CE.

4.2. The CE gave an update on the special Senedd Committee for reform. The CE and HPP gave a technical briefing to the Committee on 12 January. The Committee has asked for a few options provided in the Expert Panel report, mainly for using Local Authority Boundaries as the groupings. The CE has informed the Committee that it will need to decide on legislation, time scales and Commissioners. It was suggested that LDBCW Commissioners could take on this role, but this will need to be negotiated with the Minister. The CE has met with Lisa James to discuss the reform and will meet with the Senedd Elections/ Boundaries team in WG next week. The CE and HPP will meet with the Senedd Committee tomorrow to discuss the time scales for the review and there will be conversations over the next few weeks regarding the reform. It was **noted** that unless legislative changes are made to the remit of the Commission, there will need to be a Senedd Boundary Commission for Wales set up to carry out the review.

5. ERP 2023

5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 17 January 2022 by the HPP.

5.2. The HPP introduced the draft of the Draft Proposals and Final Recommendations Information Documents. The Information Documents will be published alongside the Draft Proposals and Final Recommendations reports on the website and will contain general information on each stage of the review. It was **agreed** that this will make the reports more user friendly.

5.3. It was **agreed** that a flow chart showing the consultation processes will be included at the back of the Information Documents.

5.4. It was **agreed** that the draft Information Documents are a good starting point and further detail will be added when the Commission decides on the review model.

5.5. It was **noted** that summaries for representations will not be included in the Draft Proposals and Final Recommendation reports for the 2023 Electoral Review. Representations will be published on the LDBCW website. It was **noted** that this will help with the Review Officers workload and will limit representations being open to interpretation.

5.6. It was **noted** that LDBCS build extra factors for deprivation into the review process as it can help create electoral parity in deprived areas.

5.7. **Action:** Dave Powell to send comments on the Information Documents to the HPP.

6. Budget Report 2021- 22

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 26 January 2022 by the FM and the current budget position for 2021- 22 was **noted** and **agreed**.

6.2. Members **noted** and approved the proposed virements between the Budget Categories.

6.3. It was **noted** that the Commission will have an estimated year-end underspend of Grant-in-Aid funding of £82,000, with the Commission surrendering £60,000 of estimated surplus Grant-in-Aid back to Welsh Government. It was **noted** that the exact amount would be clearer following the next Commission meeting as costs for some areas of expenditure have not yet been finalised. These include the following:

- LDBCW Portal- The tender for the Portal is live but the actual cost could be less than estimated.
- LDBCW Website Upgrades- The upgrade to the LDBCW website upgrade is estimated to be completed by the end of March and could cost approx. £25,000.
- New Surface Pros- Staff and Commissioners will receive new Surface Pros by the end of March with an estimated cost of £36,000.
- The Commission is considering developing LDBCW advertising with an estimated cost of £18,000.

6.4. It was **noted** that the LDBCW Portal might not be finalised by the end of March. The Commission is waiting on a decision from WG as to whether the funds to meet this expenditure can be carried over into the next financial year.

6.5. It was **agreed** that the Commission would surrender £60,000 of their 2021-22 Grant-in-Aid allocation back to Welsh Government.

7. Risk Management - Risk Register

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 12 January 2022 by the FM.

7.2. It was **noted** that all changes to the risk register agreed at the previous meeting had been implemented.

7.3. It was **agreed** that a discussion on whether to add Turnover of Key Staff as a Generic Risk would take place in the February meeting. It was **agreed** that the CE and the FM will decide on the wording of the risk prior to the meeting.

7.4. **Action:** The CE and FM to decide on the wording of the potential risk, Turnover of Staff, prior to the February meeting.

8. Report of ARAC Meeting of 29 November 2021

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 12 January 2022 by the FM and the main items discussed and decisions made at the meeting were **noted.**

8.2. It was **noted** that the recent correspondence regarding the Carmarthenshire Review has not progressed further.

9. LDBCW Terms of Reference and Annual Workplan

9.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 26 February 2022 by the FM and its contents was **noted.**

9.2. The Commission made no changes to the LDBCW Terms of Reference and Annual Workplan.

10. Current Business Continuity Arrangements (Verbal Update)

10.1. The CE reported that staff have been working from home during January in line with WG restrictions and Public Health guidance. The office will reopen next week, and staff have been asked for their rota preferences. There will be 4 to 5 staff members attending the office daily and staff will continue to work from home on Fridays. The BCW public hearings will start on 17 February so there will be less people in the office during the six-week period.

10.2. It was **agreed** that the Commission will discuss dates for future meetings with the new Chair and Commissioners.

11. Calendar of Events

11.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

11.2. It was **agreed** to add the ARAC Meeting on 28 February 2022 to the Calendar of Events.

11.3. **Action:** TSO to add ARAC Meeting on 28 February 2022 to the Calendar of Events.

12. Any Other Relevant Business

12.1. The HPP informed the Commission that he has received all of the Post Review Questionnaires and has collated the answers. The HPP will add the item to the agenda for the February meeting and will circulate the spreadsheet with the questionnaire answers to the Commissioners and Secretariat.

12.2. Ceri Stradling reported that he has been contacted by the Chair of LDBCE to discuss a governance issue. He asked if the follow up report to the Mathias report could be sent to him prior to the discussion on 31 January.

12.3. **Action:** The HPP to add the Post Review Questionnaire report as an agenda item for the February meeting and circulate the spreadsheet with the questionnaire answers to the Commissioners and Secretariat.

12.4. **Action:** The FM to find the follow up report to the Mathias report and send to Ceri Stradling.

Date of Next Meeting: 22 February 2022

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 10AM ON 22 FEBRUARY 2022 VIA TEAMS

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Ceri Stradling; Mr David Powell

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Miss Carys Vaughan (Team Support Officer).

Time Started: 10:20
Time Finished: 11:17

Apologies: No apologies were made.

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the earlier meeting with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- Reflections on the review process were discussed and the significant progress the Commission had made on reviews was highlighted. Lisa James advised it is time to look at lessons learnt and how this can feed into the next electoral review. It was **noted** that legislation has been changed to give the Commission powers to pause reviews if needed.
- The fourth successful candidate for Commission Member was unable to take up the appointment. The post will be readvertised.
- Sponsored bodies have been asked to explore the new Handy Assessment Risk Tool. The CE and FM attended a workshop on HART. It was **noted** that public bodies have their own processes which are bespoke to their organisation and the tool is not proportionate to the work involved due to the Commissions size.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 26 January 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered, subject to minor amendments.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 15 February 2022 by the CE.

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

4.3. The CE **reported** that she was due to meet with Welsh Government officials to further discuss Senedd Reform and will provide an update at the next meeting. It was **agreed** that the Commission had the expertise to carry out the review, but it will need further resources to take on the workload and there will need to be an agreement on the timescale.

4.4. **(Issue 5) –** The CE has provided the Commissioners with a verbal update on the JEGS exercise, and a report will be submitted to WG.

5. Post Review Questionnaire Results – ERP 2017

5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 27 January 2022 by the HPP and its contents was noted.

5.2. It was **noted** that the Commission received responses on 6 of the 22 Electoral Reviews. The Commission received 57 responses to its Town and Community council questionnaire, 12 responses to its stakeholder's questionnaire and 20 responses to its elected members and council officer's questionnaire.

5.3. The recommendation for the Commission to improve its communications and engagement was **noted** and it was **agreed** that this would be a main focus for the next review programme.

5.4. It was **noted** that the Commission had appointed a CEM for the BCW Parliamentary Review and the position had been a success, with more engagement and press coverage since the CEM was hired. The Commission **agreed** with the recommendation of the position being made permanent.

5.5. It was **noted** that targeted advertising on social media had led to more engagement during the Initial Proposals Consultation for the BCW Parliamentary Review.

5.6. It was **agreed** that a Communication and Engagement strategy for ERP 2023 should be drafted and presented to the Commission.

5.7. It was **noted** that the CEM has hired a content creation supplier Savage & Gray to work on animations for LDBCW. The animations will cover questions including What is an Electoral Review and What is a community. It was **noted** that the Commission previously used the supplier for animations for BCW.

5.8. The Commission **noted** the recommendation for it to simplify the information it presents. It was **noted** that the Commission had created the Draft Proposals and Final Recommendations Information Documents to make the Draft Proposals and Final Recommendation reports more user friendly. It was **agreed** that the proposals reports should provide more detailed explanations as to why the Commission has not implemented alternatives that have been submitted during the consultation process.

5.9. The Commission **agreed** with the recommendation that it need to increase the amount of feedback it receives on its reviews. It was **agreed** that the Commission should focus on the timing of the feedback and could incorporate questions on the portal to collect feedback throughout the review process.

5.10. **Action:** The CEM to draft a Communication and Engagement Strategy and bring to a future meeting.

6. Budget Report 2021- 22

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and the current budget position for 2021- 22 was **noted** and **agreed**.

6.2. Members **noted** and **approved** the proposed virements between Budget Categories to address estimated overspends in several budgets.

6.3. It was **noted** that at the last meeting the Commission **agreed** to surrender £60,000 of their 2021-22 Grant-in-Aid allocation back to Welsh Government, however this amount has been reduced to £40,000 following further review of estimated expenditure.

6.4. It was **noted** that the Commission will have an estimated year-end underspend of Grant-in-Aid funding of £32,000 and together with the Cabinet Office underspend the Commission will have a total budget underspend of approximately £106,700. It was **noted** that the exact amount has not been finalised due to the Commissions ongoing work with the Portal and the LDBCW website upgrades. It was **noted** that the CEM is waiting on a decision on whether the website upgrades can be completed by the end of the financial year.

7. Risk Management - Risk Register

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 February 2022 by the FM.

7.2. It was **noted** that no changes were made to the Risk Register at the last meeting.

7.3. As agreed in the last meeting, a discussion took place on whether to add Turnover of Key Staff as a Generic Risk to the Risk Register. The FM presented a sample risk, CR6, which is included in the report. It was **agreed** that Turnover of Key Staff is an operational risk and therefore would not be added to the Corporate Risk Register and would be added to the Operational Risk Register instead.

7.4. Members considered that corporate risk CR3 no longer posed a risk to the Commission following the completion of the Electoral Review Programme. It was **agreed** to remove CR3 from the Risk Register.

7.5. Members considered that corporate risk CR5 no longer posed a risk to the Commission following the recent appointment of new Commission members. It was **agreed** to remove CR5 from the Risk Register.

7.6. It was **agreed** that the Commission would decide whether to remove CR4 from the Risk Register in the March meeting.

7.7. **Action:** FM to remove CR3 and CR5 from the Risk Register.

8. Current Business Continuity Arrangements (Verbal Update)

8.1. The CE **reported** that WG had announced the removal of Covid restrictions in Wales in the weeks approaching. The Senior Management Team have suggested to no longer have a staff rota system for the office. Staff will still work from home on Fridays and have been asked to discuss their preferences for office working with their Line Manager.

9. Calendar of Events

9.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

9.2. It was **noted** that the LDBCW March meeting should be changed to 23rd March on the Calendar.

9.3. **Action:** TSO to change the LDBCW March meeting to 23rd March.

10. Any Other Relevant Business

10.1. Ceri Stradling **reported** that he had met with the Chair of LGBCE to discuss the review of governance arrangements. It was **agreed** that Ceri Stradling could share LDBCW practices with LGBCE.

10.2. The Chair, on behalf of the Commission thanked Ceri Stradling and Dave Powell formally for their excellent efforts as Commissioners and for their significant contribution to the Commission. Thanks were also given for the contribution of the outgoing Chair, Debra Evans- Williams. Ceri Stradling and Dave Powell added their thanks to the Secretariat and sent best wishes for the future.

Date of Next Meeting: 23 March 2022

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 10AM ON 23 MARCH 2022 VIA TEAMS

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Michael Imperato; Mr David Powell

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Miss Carys Vaughan (Team Support Officer).

Time Started: 10:15
Time Finished: 11:00

Apologies: Mr Ceri Stradling

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the earlier meeting with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- The draft 2022/23 Remit Letter has been received and once agreed will be finalised.
- Recognition was given for the work the Commission had completed and the professionalism and diligence it had shown in challenging circumstances.
- It was **agreed** the Commission has a firm basis to build on the next 10-year programme. It was highlighted that reflection on lessons learnt, reviewing legislation and the scope and function of the Commission was important.
- The development of Policy and Practice and the Council Size research was mentioned.
- Community and Stakeholder engagement was discussed, and it was **noted** that the CEM is creating a Communications Strategy which will be reviewed at a future Commission meeting.
- A discussion was held on how the Commission could measure its compliance with the Future Generations Act legislation and further work will be undertaken later this year with the new Commissioners.
- Lisa James committed to resolve any issues with the Framework Agreement by autumn. It was **agreed** that this is a good opportunity

to review the document and a discussion would take place at a future meeting.

- The proposals for the budget to be increased subject to other changes i.e., restructure was mentioned. It was **agreed** there should be regular monitoring of the budget.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 22 February 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 16 March 2022 by the CE.

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

4.3. **(Issue 4) –** Recruitment for the fourth Commissioner is on-going. The closing date for applications is 28 March 2022, with an anticipated start date of 1 June 2022.

4.4. **(Issue 5) –** Lisa James has requested a Business Case for the restructure be sent to her by next week. When the Business Case is approved the new vacancies will be advertised. It was **noted** that enquiries are being made on the possibility of a staff member being seconded to WG for 2 years.

4.5. **(Issue 8) –** It was **noted** that the Commission are awaiting comments from the Sponsor Division on the CEX Recruitment Guidance.

4.6. The Commission received a letter from the Public Service Ombudsman regarding the correspondence in relation to a complaint relating to an Electoral Review. The Ombudsman has confirmed that they will not be investigating the complaint.

5. Budget Report 2021- 22

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and the current budget position for 2021- 22 was **noted** and **agreed**.

5.2. It was **noted** that the Commission had a stable underspend throughout the 2021- 22 financial year.

5.3. It was **noted** that the Commission will have a year-end underspend of Grant-in-Aid funding of £117,000. This figure included the £40,000 Grant-in-Aid that was surrendered back to Welsh Government in January.

5.4. It was reported that the Commission had been able to meet half the costs for completing the new review portal and website improvements out of the 2021-22 Grant-in-Aid allocation.

6. Risk Management - Risk Register

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 9 March 2022 by the FM.

6.2. It was **noted** that all the changes agreed at the last meeting had been incorporated into the current version of the Risk Register.

6.3. As agreed in the last meeting, a discussion took place on whether to remove CR4 from the Corporate Risk Register. It was **agreed** to keep CR4 on the Corporate Risk Register until the WG announcement regarding Covid restrictions and measures on 28 March 2022 had been made.

7. Terms of reference Work Plan

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM.

7.2. It was **agreed** that the Commission will review the Terms of Reference Work Plan later in the year when all board members have been appointed.

7.3. **Action:** FM to add Terms of Reference Work Plan to the July meeting agenda.

8. Report of ARAC Meeting held on 28 February 2022

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 9 March 2022 by the FM and the main items discussed and decisions made at the meeting were **noted.**

8.2. It was **noted** that all assets were verified for the fixed assets verification exercise for 2021-22.

8.3. It was **reported** that the Internal Auditors will award the Commission a Substantial Assurance Rating. The Chair welcomed the rating and gave thanks to the Committee for its hard work.

9. Chair of ARAC Annual Report 2021- 22

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 7 March 2022 by the FM and its contents were **noted**.

9.2. It was **noted** that the Chair of ARAC Annual Report 2021- 22 was **finalised** and **agreed** at the last ARAC meeting.

10. Draft Governance Statement 2021- 22

10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 7 March 2022 by the FM and its contents were **noted** and **approved**. No further changes to the Governance Statement were proposed.

10.2. It was **noted** that ARAC had reviewed the Draft Governance Statement 2021- 22 and proposed several changes before approving the document. Also, it was **noted** that the document was approved by Internal and External Auditors who were in attendance at the ARAC meeting held on 28 February.

11. Calendar of Events

11.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

11.2. It was **noted** that Commission meetings will now take place on Wednesdays.

11.3. It was **agreed** that the CE will contact the new Commissioner, Frank Cuthbert, to check availability for future Commission and ARAC meeting dates.

11.4. The CE **reported** that the Commission will be hosting the annual Boundary Commissions meeting this year. The meeting will be held in person with a hybrid option available and is expected to take place in November/ December. The CE will liaise with other Boundary Commission Secretaries to decide on the exact date.

11.5. **Action:** The CE to contact Frank Cuthbert to check availability for future Commission and ARAC meeting dates.

11.6. **Action:** The CE to contact other Boundary Commission secretaries to decide on a date for the annual Inter-Commission meeting.

12. Any Other Relevant Business

12.1. Dave Powell gave thanks to the Secretariat and sent good luck to the new Commissioners. The Chair added her thanks and praised him for his 10 years of dedication, passion, and commitment to the Commission.

12.2. The CE **reported** that she has received confirmation that Welsh Government will undertake the necessary legal steps to enable the Commission to start the next review programme in April 2023.

12.3. The HPP gave apologies for the next meeting and informed the Commission that Policy and Practice will be an agenda item for the next meeting for information purposes only.

Date of Next Meeting: 4 May 2022

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 10AM ON 04 MAY 2022 VIA TEAMS AND AT HASTINGS HOUSE

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Michael Imperato; Mr Frank Cuthbert.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive) via Teams; Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mrs Catherine Thomas (Business Support Officer).

Time Started: 09:57
Time Finished: 11.32

Apologies: Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes).

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the meeting 03 May 2022 with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- The recruitment of a fourth Commissioner is ongoing, and a candidate is to be interviewed 05 May.
- Performance forms have been circulated by the Chair to the other Commissioners who confirmed they are content with them.
- The CE is to meet Peter McDonald (Deputy Director of Senedd Reform Team) later today and Lisa and Peter will be attending the July Commission meeting to discuss Senedd reform.
  Action: CE to formally invite Peter and Lisa to the July meeting.
- Elections were discussed and WG has requested that the Commission provide information on Town and Community Council elections in the same format as it did following the previous elections.
  Action: Spreadsheet to be prepared by the Commission and shared with WG.

2.2. Lessons learned were discussed and it was **noted** that Item 6 on the Agenda related to this. The CE informed the meeting that this was discussed with staff and the previous Commissioners at the away day earlier this year.

2.3. **Action:** CE to circulate the notes from the Away Day.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 23 March 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 26 April 2022 by the CE.

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

4.3. **(Issue 1) –** An updated Framework Agreement has been sent back to Welsh Government for consideration and it is anticipated that a final draft will be ready by August.

4.4. **(Issue 4) –** Following a Sift of three applications, one candidate will be interviewed 05 May for the post of fourth Commissioner. It was **noted** that the term of the Independent ARAC Member will end in July and it was **agreed** that the current Independent Member should be offered an extension of two years.

4.5. **(Issue 6)** – Development work on the new Consultation Portal is progressing well and a test version should be available to trial at a future Commission meeting.

4.6. **(Issue 7)** – A tender exercise for the ERP 2023 Research will be carried out and the work is to be completed within three months.

4.7. **(Issue 8)** – The Commission is awaiting a response from the Sponsor Division regarding the CE Recruitment Guidance.

5. Community Review Guidance

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 25 April 2022 by the HPP.

5.2. It was **noted** that, following legal advice, the draft guidance is very different from the last version published in 2017.

5.3. It was **agreed** to accept the guidance document for publication subject to changes being made to the Easy Read document.

5.4. **Action:** The CE is to make the necessary changes to the Easy Read document before publication.

6. ERP 2023 Policy and Practice

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 25 April 2022 by the HPP.

6.2. It was **noted** that this document is a draft version to be discussed, updated and amended in order to produce a final version for publication at the WLGA Conference in September. The main changes (from past versions) concern the consultation process, Council Size and Welsh Language names.

6.3. The report was considered, the revisions **agreed** and the document will be looked at again at the June Commission meeting.

6.4. **Action**: The HPP to submit the document to the June meeting.

7. Operational Plan 22/ 23

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 26 April 20022 by the CE.

7.2. It was **noted** that the Operational Plan is an outline of the work that the Commission will undertake over the next 12 months and its objectives are based on those in the 2022/23 Remit Letter from the Welsh Government.

7.3. It was **agreed** to submit the Operational Plan to the Welsh Government once approval of the proposed restructure has been received from our Sponsor Division.

8. Welsh Language Annual Report

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 25 April 2022 by the CE.

8.2. It was **noted** that this is the fifth Annual Report produced since the Welsh Language Standards became effective and it provides an overview of the Commission's work relating to the Standards from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. Once agreed, it will be translated and published on the website.

8.3. The report was **agreed** with no amendments.

9. Budget Report 2021-22

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and the end of year position was **noted.**

9.2. It was **noted** that, at the end of 2021-22, the LDBCW had an underspend of £116,758 which was mainly due to the consultation portal and web site upgrade projects not being completed by the year end with only half the costs being paid within year. The Grant in Aid funding remaining unspent at the year end was reclaimed by the Welsh Government. The BCW also had an underspend, of £102,513, which was reclaimed by the Cabinet Office, and this was mainly due to the cost of the Public Hearings being overestimated.

10. Budget 2022-23

10.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and the new budget for 2022-23 was **noted.**

10.2. It was **noted** that £598,000 Grant-In Aid funding had been allocated to the Commission by Welsh Government for 2022-23 and the Commission should be able to work comfortably with this. The agreed BCW budget for 2022-23 is £565,070 plus £34,763 carried over from 2021-22 but £15,000 of this is likely to be surrendered once the final position for 2021-22 is clear.

10.3. The FM assured the Commission that he was content with the budget for this year.

11. Risk Management - Risk Register

11.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 21 April 2022 by the FM.

11.2. As agreed at the last meeting, a discussion took place on whether to remove risk CR4 regarding the impact of COVID restrictions from the Corporate Risk Register. It was **agreed** that risk CR4 should be retained for now and review it again in the summer.

12. Policy Review: Financial Dealings and Conflicts of Interests

12.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 21 April 2022 by the FM.

12.2. The updated policy was **agreed** without amendments.

13. Policy Review: Recovery of Losses to Public Funds

13.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 21 April 2022 by the FM.

13.2. The updated policy was **agreed** without amendments.

Calendar of Events

14.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

14.2. The CE confirmed that Wednesday will be a suitable day for future Commission Meetings and the following new dates were agreed - 19 October, 16 November and 15 December (Thursday - AM only). The ARAC dates will be agreed by the FM with the Commissioners following this meeting.

14.3. The CE highlighted two dates: the Inter-Commission Meeting in Cardiff on 25 November and the Inter-Commission meal the previous evening on the 24 November.

14.4. **Action:** CE to update the calendar with the new meeting dates.

15. Any Other Relevant Business - Office Move

15.1. The CE explained that the current lease at Hastings House ends in December and, due to problems with the current building, a move to another building was preferred. She had been in touch with the Welsh Government Estates team and she outlined the possible options which included moving to the Welsh Government offices at Cathays Park. She stressed the preference of staff to remain in Cardiff as it is central for everyone with good transport links.

15.2. It was **agreed** that the search for a new office should focus on Cardiff and the Commission's independence should be preserved by not considering a move to Cathays Park.

15.3. **Action:** The CE to draft the business case for the office move.

16. Any Other Relevant Business – Induction

16.1. Induction for Commissioners was discussed and it was **agreed** that it will take place once the fourth Commissioner has been appointed.

16.2. **Action:** The CE to arrange a date for the collective induction of new Commissioners, which will include meeting staff. The FM to explain the claims process separately.

Date of Next Meeting: 15 June 2022

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 10.30 AM ON 15 JUNE 2022 AT HASTINGS HOUSE

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Michael Imperato; Mr Frank Cuthbert; Mrs Dianne Bevan.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr David Burley (Head of Business); Miss Carys Vaughan (Team Support Officer).

Time Started: 10:32
Time Finished: 11:30

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the meeting 13 June 2022 with the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- The Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform published its report on 30 May 2022. It was noted the Commission will need to create a project plan for the Senedd Boundary Review which should include timescales, structure, and a reconstituted board to complete the work.
- Sponsor Division has informed the Commission that there are changes being proposed via legislation which will affect the Electoral Review Program. A White Paper will be published in the Autumn. Some of the proposed changes were discussed as part of Lessons Learnt. The Elections Bill will be introduced in Summer 2023 and Royal Assent is expected in the Summer 2024. As a result, the Commission will not publish its Policy and Practice in September and will wait for legislation to be introduced before finalising the document.
- The Commission **agreed** to launch its Community Review Guidance in September 2022 instead of its Policy and Practice. The Commission will be able to set the standard of reports it will receive and the costs for the Community Reviews.
- It was suggested that the Commission could publish its Electoral Review Program in September 2023 reflecting the changes in the proposed legislation. In the meantime, the Commission will carry out

a small number of Community Reviews, which will help contribute to the Electoral Review Program and will provide beneficial experience for new staff. Commissioners will be involved in Community Reviews and there is provision for an additional Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners if needed.

- The Vale of Glamorgan have expressed interest in carrying out a Community Review.
- The Chair has been appointed to the IRP board for 12 months and will keep the Commission informed of any updates.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 04 May 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 04 May 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 04 May 2022 by the CE.

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

4.3. **(Issue 1) –** The Sponsor Division in WG have provided a response to the Framework Agreement. It was **agreed** that Frank Cuthbert is to look at the response and the CE will ask the Sponsor Division to update the document with the proposed changes.

4.4. **(Issue 3) –** The Commission are updating the Community Review Guidance after receiving comments from WG and Town and Community Councils. WG have suggested minor changes including the use of a timeline for undertaking Community Reviews. The Guidance is being shared with One Voice Wales and colleagues in Monmouthshire CC. When finalised the Guidance will be circulated to Commissioners and published.

4.5. **(Issue 9) –**14 out of 31 recommendations from the report published by the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform impact the Commission. The Commission will continue to engage with WG colleagues on the implementation of recommendations, policy matters and the process of reviews. It was **agreed** it is important for the Commission to consider and identify all resources needed to undertake the review. It was suggested that depending on the structure the Commission may consider having a Lead Commissioner during the review process. It was **noted** the review will have four-week consultation periods and there is currently no mention of public hearings.

4.6. **(Issue 10) –** The CE has asked the Head of Business to identify larger office accommodation due to the Commission potentially expanding to complete the additional work associated with the Senedd Boundary Review. A business case will be created and reviewed at a future Commission meeting.

4.7. **Action:** Frank Cuthbert to look at the Sponsor Divisions response to the Framework Agreement.

4.8. **Action:** CE to ask the Sponsor Division to update the Framework Agreement with their proposed changes.

4.9. **Action:** TSO to send spreadsheet on Local Government Town and Community Council election results to Commissioners.

5. Corporate Plan

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 08 June 2022 by the CE and the plan was **noted** and **agreed**.

5.2. It was **noted** that the Corporate Plan currently has no reference to the Senedd Boundary Review. It was **agreed** that once the legislation for the Senedd Boundary Review has been passed the Commission will review the Corporate Plan.

6. ERP 2023 Policy and Practice

6.1. This item was not discussed as WG had informed the Commission of changes to the Electoral Review legislation. The Commission thanked the HPP for the work he had undertaken and **noted** that the document would be discussed and finalised when changes to legislation were known.

7. LDBCW Terms of Reference and Workplan

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2022 by the FM and the LDBCW Terms of Reference and Workplan was **noted** and **agreed**.

7.2. It was **noted** the LDBCW Terms of Reference and Workplan contain current standing items and do not include work expected to be undertaken by the Commission i.e., the Senedd Boundary Review.

8. Budget Report 2022- 23

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2022 by the FM and the budget position to the end of May 2022 was **noted**.

8.2. It was **noted** that to the end of May 2022 the Commissions underspend for the 2022- 23 financial year was £15,674. It was **noted** that this is a reasonable underspend at this point in the financial year.

8.3. It was **noted** that the for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had now issued the Purchase Order for the 2022- 23 BCW budget and that the first quarter's BCW funding had been requested.

9. Risk Management

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2022 by the FM.

9.2. As agreed at the last meeting, a discussion took place on whether to remove risk CR4 regarding the impact of COVID restrictions from the Corporate Risk Register. It was **agreed** that as the risk has reduced significantly CR4 should be removed from the Corporate Risk Register and added to the Operational Risk Register.

9.3. Dianne Bevan requested that documents regarding previous complaints, Lessons Learnt and recommendations that were not approved by WG be shared with her.

9.4. **Action:** The FM to remove CR4 from the Corporate Risk Register and add it to the Operational Risk Register.

9.5. **Action:** The CE to send Dianne Bevan documents on previous complaints, Lessons Learnt and recommendations not approved by WG.

10. Audit Recommendations Update

10.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 27 May 2022 by the FM and its content was **noted**.

10.2. It was **noted** that ARAC receive the Audit Recommendations Progress report at every meeting and the Commission receive the report annually.

10.3. It was **noted** that the two internal audit recommendations not yet implemented were due to be implemented at the end of the June 2022.

10.4. It was noted that the internal audit recommendation that the Commission undertake a series of deep dive reviews of key risks had been rejected as the former ARAC Chair considered that existing level of scrutiny of risks was sufficient. Members considered that this recommendation still had some merit and it was **agreed** that ARAC should be able to undertake deep dive reviews of risks if they consider it is necessary.

11. Annual Accounts 2021- 22 – Impact of Accounting Standards Not Yet Effective

11.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and its content was **noted**.

12. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

12.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM, and it was **noted** that at this stage the report was for information purposes only.

12.2. It was **noted** that the Commission had received the draft Annual Report and Accounts for 2021- 22 yesterday and the FM had queried some items on the report with the accountant. The amended version of the draft Annual Report and Accounts would be put on the agenda for the Commission meeting in July.

12.3. It was **noted** that the audit will start next week**.**

12.4. **Action:** The FM to add Draft Annual Accounts 2021- 22 to the agenda for the July meeting.

13. Policy Review: IT Acceptable Use Policy

13.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2022 by the Head of Business and the IT Acceptable Use Policy documents were **noted** by the Commission.

13.2. It was **noted** that access to personal emails accounts from work devices is restricted due to the heightened security risks associated with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This policy will be reviewed at a later date if the risk environment changes.

13.3. It was **noted** that the Commission are waiting for keyboards for the replacement Surface Pro’s. The new Surface Pro’s will be distributed in a phased roll out which will take place closer to the end of the year. The new machines will have Windows 11 and a training session will be arranged for Commissioners.

14. Calendar of Events

14.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

14.2. It was **agreed** the Commission meeting on 14 July will start at 9.30am and the Commissioner Induction will take place after the meeting.

14.3. It was **noted** that Lisa James and Peter McDonald will attend the Commission meeting on 14 July.

14.4. It was **agreed** the next ARAC meeting will start at 9.30am on 25 July. Members have the option to join the meeting in Hastings House or via Teams.

14.5. **Action:** TSO to add ARAC meeting on 25 July to the Calendar.

15. Any Other Relevant Business

15.1. It was **agreed** Michael Imperato will act as Chair for ARAC and Vice Chair for the Commission.

15.2. It was **agreed** Dianne Bevan and Frank Cuthbert will join ARAC.

15.3. It was **agreed** Frank Cuthbert will act as IT Champion for the Commission.

15.4. It was **agreed** that to enable continuity across the governance of the Commission, Julie James would be offered a 12 month extension on her ARAC appointment.

15.5. **Action:** The CE to contact Julie James and offer her a 12 month extension on her ARAC appointment.

Date of Next Meeting: 14 July 2022

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 9.30 AM ON 14 JULY 2022 AT HASTINGS HOUSE

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Michael Imperato; Mr Frank Cuthbert; Mrs Dianne Bevan.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr David Burley (Head of Business); Miss Carys Vaughan (Review Officer).

External attendees: Ms Lisa James (Welsh Government); Peter McDonald (Welsh Government)

Time Started: 09:30
Time Finished: 11:08

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Peter McDonald and Lisa James from Welsh Government (WG). Commission Members, Secretariat and colleagues Peter McDonald and Lisa James gave introductions to their roles and responsibilities.

1.2. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Commission received a briefing from Peter McDonald which included a summary of the proposed Senedd Electoral Reform, a preview of the year ahead and how the WG officials plan to engage with the Commission in drafting the Bill.

2.2. It was **agreed** there should be consideration of the risks involved in the reform including the use of a feedback loop for any potential challenges and costs.

2.3. It was **noted** that the Boundary Commission for Wales will not consider representations received on the Senedd Electoral Reform during the 2023 Parliamentary Review.

2.4. The Commission received a briefing from Lisa James on the proposals relating to a potential Electoral Administration Bill.

2.5. It was **noted** that it is important to consider how the legislation will affect the Commission and that the Commission will receive more details on the proposed legislation in the coming months.

2.6. The Chair thanked Peter McDonald and Lisa James for their time. Peter McDonald and Lisa James added their thanks to the Commission, especially thanking the CE for her help over the last few months.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 15 June 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 04 May 2022 by the CE.

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

4.3. **(Issue 5) –** Interviews for the Review Officer role have taken place and the Commission will offer one candidate the post. Interviews for the Team Support Role will take place in the coming weeks. The two applicants for the Review Manager post were not suitable and the position will be readvertised. There is an underspend due to Welsh Government covering the cost of a staff member currently on secondment. The underspend will be used to recruit a temporary HEO for 12 to 18 months to support the Head of Business on updating Commission policies, preparing for the office move and transition to the new Commission.

4.4. **(Issue 10) –** Avison Young are preparing a document to present to the Commission with potential options for office accommodation. This will be discussed in detail with the CE and HoB in the coming weeks.

4.5. As mentioned in the last meeting, Vale of Glamorgan have expressed interest in carrying out a Community Review. The Commission has looked into costs and has estimated £13,000 to £14,000 for the Commission to complete the work. There will be additional costs for translation and printing which will be recharged to the council at cost. The CEM has created packages with different costs and levels of advertising for the review. It is estimated the review will take approximately 18 months with an anticipated start date of early next year. The Commission plan to use the review as a pilot for other Community Reviews.

5. Budget Report 2022- 23

5.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and the budget position to the end of June 2022 was **noted** and **approved**.

5.2. Members **noted** and **approved** the transfer of £450 from the Members Fees Budget Category to the Publications Budget Category to address an overspend.

5.3. It was **noted** that to the end of June 2022 the Commissions underspend for the 2022- 23 financial year was £21,647. It was suggested that the underspend could be used in a constructive way for User and Penetration Testing on the Consultation Portal that is currently under development.

6. Risk Management

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 27 June 2022 by the FM.

6.2. The Chair requested that consideration be given to a new potential Corporate Risk associated with the reorganisation of the Commission and associated work to be undertaken. It was **agreed** that this potential risk would be raised and discussed at the ARAC meeting on 25th July.

6.3. **Action:** The FM to discuss potential Corporate risks associated with the reorganisation of the Commission at the ARAC meeting on 25th July.

7. LDBCW Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the FM and the Commission **noted** the unaudited draft accounts.

7.2. The Finance Manager gave a brief summary of the main points of note in the draft accounts including the variances in Operating Expenditure from 2021 to 2022. It was **noted** that the audit had since been completed and the Commission had received good feedback with only minor changes to the draft accounts made by the auditors.

7.3. The final audited Annual Report and Accounts would be considered by the ARAC at their meeting on 25 July 2022 and signed off for the Auditor General for Wales' certificate.

7.4. The Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22 was currently with translators and it was hoped that a Welsh version could be laid with the Senedd by Audit Wales if the translation was received back in time.

8. Pay Policy Statement 2021- 22

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 27 June 2022 by the FM and the Pay Policy Statement 2021-22 was **noted** and **approved**.

8.2. It was **noted** that Annual Pay Policy Statements are published every year by public bodies to promote transparency and accessibility by publishing certain information relating to the remuneration of their most senior staff.

8.3. It was **noted** that the Commission are not required to do a calculation on the gender pay gap as it does not have enough staff to meet the threshold.

9. ICT Update

9.1. Consideration was given to the Report by the Head of Business and the ICT Update was discussed and **agreed**.

10. Calendar of Events

10.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

10.2. It was **noted** that the WLGA has postponed its conference in September 2022 and are currently looking for an alternative date in November 2022. The CE will inform the Commission when a new date is confirmed.

10.3. It was **noted** that the Chair will join the Commission meeting on 15th September via Microsoft Teams.

10.4. It was **noted** that Diane Bevan will join the ARAC meeting on 25th July via Microsoft Teams.

10.5. **Action:** The CE to inform the Commission of new WLGA Conference date once confirmed.

Date of Next Meeting: 15 September 2022

LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 10 AM ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT HASTINGS HOUSE

Present: Mrs Bev Smith (Chair); Mr Michael Imperato; Mr Frank Cuthbert; Mrs Dianne Bevan.

LDBCW Officers attending: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive); Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Miss Carys Vaughan (Review Officer).

Time Started: 10:28
Time Finished: 11:20

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair briefed the Commission on the earlier meeting with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- Electoral Reform Legislation will be introduced in October 2023 and the White Paper will be published on 11 October 2022.
- Lisa James will check if the White Paper can be shared with the Commission before it is published. It was **agreed** that it would be useful for the Commission to see the paper before the meeting with the Minister on 6 October.
- A 3-month consultation period will follow the publication of the White Paper. An online consultation event will be arranged jointly by WG and the Commission to target the Heads of Democratic Services**,** WLGA and One Voice Wales. The White paper will be shared and the implications around the Commissions work will be discussed. It was **noted** that this could help to inform the Commissions consultation response.
- The White Paper will contain reference to the renaming of the LDBCW Audit Committee due to it taking on the work relating to the Senedd Reform. There will be an opportunity to review the function of the Committee and ensure that it has the correct resources.
- The Senedd Reform Bill will be introduced approximately a month before the Electoral Reform Bill in 2023. The Senedd Reform Bill will set out the process for the 2026 and the 2031 reviews. The Bill will

include reference to renaming the LDBCW due to the Commission undertaking the Senedd Reform work.

- The Minister has arranged an event called Diversity and Democracy, which will take place in North and South Wales, in December. The event will focus on two research projects. One based on a survey with Principal and Community Councillors at the end of their last term. The other around the theory of change, which will include barriers to participation, standing for office and a series of workshops. The event will be an opportunity to collectively look at how to remove barriers and how this could affect an increase in participation. The renumeration of Councillors, how to support people with disabilities and if there is potential to widen access to the Elected Office Fund will also be discussed. The Chair will send through any further information to the Commission.
- The Chair will be attending two Ministerial meetings, the first will be an introductory meeting on 20 September and the second will be in relation to the proposed expansion of the Commission's remit. The CE and Chair of the IRP will also be in attendance for the second meeting.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 14 July 2022

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022 as a correct record of the matters considered.

4. Issues Arising

4.1. It was **Resolved** to accept the Report noting any issues for later discussion in the meeting, and updated progress was noted on the following issues:

4.2. **(Issue 2) –** The Commission has agreed to undertake the Community Review of the Vale of Glamorgan (VoG). The review will commence in January 2023. VoG are currently working on its council size policy and once this is confirmed the Commission will publish its Terms of Reference. The Commission are waiting to hear back from Caerphilly and have also been contacted by Cardiff to undertake Community Reviews. As the Commission will potentially be undertaking Senedd Reform work in 2024, the CE will inform Cardiff that a Community Review can only be undertaken if it commences in 2023. Ceredigion Council have been in touch with a query regarding the creation of a community council from a community ward area. The CE will respond and explain that community reviews are used to consider appropriate boundaries for a principal councils' communities.

4.3. **(Issue 6) –** Following discussions at the last meeting and ARAC, the Management Team have drafted a new risk register to reflect the Potential Future Work Programme relating to Senedd Reform and the expanded Commission remit. Five risks have been identified so far and the register will be developed further after the publication of the White Paper.

4.4. **(Issue 7) –** Avison Young has received a shortlist of four potential properties and the Commission are waiting for information on additional costs from the Landlords. The CE will ask the HoB to contact Avison Young for an update and will bring the information to the next Commission meeting.

4.5. **Action:** CE to ask HoB to contact Avison Young for an update on costs for the four potential properties.

4.6. **Action**: CE to inform Cardiff that a Community Review can only be undertaken if it commences in 2023.

4.7. **Action:** The CE to respond to Ceredigion explaining that community reviews are used to consider appropriate boundaries for a principal councils' communities.

5. Budget Monitoring

5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 15 September 2022 by the FM and the budget position to the end of August 2022 was **noted** and **approved**.

5.2. Members **noted** and **approved** the following changes to budget categories to address some estimated overspends.

- Petty Cash increased by £100 from £30 to £130.
- Hospitality increased by £1,200 from £590 to £1,790.
- Directly Employed Staff Costs reduced by £1,200 from £228,249 to £227,049.
- Employers Superannuation reduced by £100 from 51,651 to £51,551.

5.3. It was **noted** that the Commission's current underspend for cash expenditure is £53,960. This is largely due to additional staff being recruited later than intended and the delay in WG agreeing the new staff structure. An underspend in ICT Maintenance/ Lease of £12,692 will mostly be cancelled out by a pending invoice of £10,000 for the BCW reviews portal. The HoPP and HoB are currently looking at improvements which can be made to the LDBCW review portal costing approximately £30,000 which would take up some of the current underspend.

6. Risk Management

6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 15 June 2022 by the FM.

6.2. It was **noted** that there were no changes to the Corporate Risk Register at the last meeting.

6.3. It was **agreed** the Commission will review the Potential Future Work Programme Risk Register after the White Paper has been published.

6.4. **Action:** The Commission to review the Potential Future Work Programme Risk Register after the White Paper has been published.

7. Report on Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting held on 25 July 2022

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 24 August 2022 by the FM and the main items discussed and decisions made at the meeting were **noted.**

7.2. ARAC proposed that the LDBCW should consider whether the LDBCW Chair should be the Whistleblowing Champion instead of the ARAC Chair. The Commission **agreed** that the LDBCW Chair would be more appropriate and the LDBCW Chair **agreed** to take on the role.

7.3. ARAC proposed that a discursive item be discussed at every meeting. The Commission **agreed** that ARAC discussing discursive items that are relevant to the Commissions work programme would be beneficial. It was **agreed** that Michael Imperato and the FM would discuss and decide on discursive items for the ARAC agenda before future meetings. It was suggested that the discursive item for the ARAC meeting in February could be the White Paper.

7.4. It was **noted** that the CE is working on the specification for the independent research programme and will send to Frank Cuthbert once completed.

7.5. The CE thanked the FM for making arrangements for Audit Wales to lay the audited accounts before the Senedd bilingually for the first time.

8. Community Review – Terms of Reference

8.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 31 August 2022 by the HoPP.

8.2. The Commission intended to launch its updated Community Review Guidance on 22 September 2022 in conjunction with the AEA meeting. However due to the mourning period, the Commission will not be publishing the guidance publicly next week. The Commission will still be attending the AEA event and will complete a Q & A session on the guidance for the AEA members. The guidance will be advertised and published on the Commissions website the following week. As part of the guidance, the Commission has suggested that a Terms of Reference is published when undertaking a review. The ToR has been shared with VoG and the Commission has asked for additional informational including council size policy, before the document is published prior to the start of the VoG Community Review in January 2023.

8.3. Work capacity and requirements were discussed, and it was **noted** that the Commission are able to carry out three Community Reviews in 2023. As part of the presentation to the AEA the CEM has stated that the Commission have limited capacity to complete Community Reviews and for interested Principal Councils to get in touch as soon as possible. Once details are confirmed for Community Reviews Commissioners will be asked for their work preferences.

8.4. The HoPP will share the Community Review desk instructions and the decision template with Commissioners. It was **agreed** this will be beneficial to have consistency across the board and will help the Commission keep a record of the decision-making process. It was **agreed** a workshop will be organised for early next year to discuss the review process.

8.5. **Action:** HoPP to send Commissioners Community Review desk instructions and decision template.

8.6. **Action:** The CE to organise a workshop for early next year for Commissioners to discuss the review process.

9. Calendar of Events

9.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.

9.2. Arrangements for the Inter-Commission meeting have been made for November and more information will be provided closer to the date. An informal dinner between Commissioners and staff will take place the evening before the meeting. The meeting will be in two sections, the first will be a guest speaker and the second an update from all Commissions. The CE will ask Richard Wyn Jones to be the guest speaker at the Inter-Commission meeting.

9.3. It was **noted** that Commissioners are welcome to attend the WLGA conference and the CE will inform the Commission when a new date has been confirmed. The Chair will present the Community Review Guidance and provide input from the Commission in relation to the White Paper at the conference.

9.4. **Action:** The CE to add the White Paper as an agenda item for the next meeting.

9.5. **Action:** The CE to ask Richard Wyn Jones to be the guest speaker at the Inter-Commission meeting.

10. Any Other Relevant Business

10.1. It was **noted** that BCW will publish its Revised Proposals on 19 October 2022. As the next LDBCW meeting is on the same date, the CE and HoPP informed the Commission they may have to leave during the meeting to do press.

Date of Next Meeting: 19 October 2022

Comisiwn Ffiniau a Democratiaeth Leol Cymru

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission For Wales

The Commission welcomes correspondence, e-mails and telephone calls either in English or Welsh.
To contact the Commission, please write to:

Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales
Ground Floor, Hastings House, Fitzalan Court
Cardiff, CF24 0BL

Telephone: +44 (0)29 20464819
Telephone: +44 (0)29 21055521
E-mail: enquiries@boundaries.wales