

**LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING
HELD AT 10 AM ON 19 OCTOBER 2022 AT HASTINGS HOUSE AND VIA MS
TEAMS**

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).

Time Started: 10:03

Time Finished: 12:00

1. Declarations of Interest

1.1. No Declarations of Interest were made.

2. Chair's Briefing

2.1. The Chair updated the Commission on the publication of the White Paper:

- The Electoral administration and reform White Paper has been published. The 3-month consultation period has started, and a formal response must be submitted by 10th January 2023.
- Prior to publication, the Chair and CE met with the Minister and Chair of the IRP to discuss the proposed changes to the Commission's remit.
- There are also a number of proposals in the White Paper that have been previously highlighted in the Commission's Lessons Learnt exercise.
- The Commission will be seeking for assurances from Welsh Government that expansion of the Commission's powers will need to be adequately resourced.
- There are ongoing discussion with WG and Chair of the IRP to consider setting up a Project Board to support the proposed changes.
- The Commission released a holding press statement in response to the publication of the White paper.
- There will be a meeting on Friday 21st October with the Chair of the IRP, Lisa James, Elaine, the CE, and the Chair to look at funding and transitional arrangements. The need to have an independent Chair for ARAC will also be discussed.

- The IRP met yesterday to discuss the White Paper and will share its consultation response with the Commission. The Commission will share its response with the IRP once drafted.

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

- Lisa James gave positive feedback from the meeting between the Minister the Commission and the IRP.
- The Chair reinforced the importance of strategy and budget, and Lisa **agreed** to provide financial clarity on the budget in early December.
- A consultation engagement event on the White Paper will take place at the end of November/ early December. The Chair suggested that an event be held specifically to focus on the technicalities of the White Paper.
- The paper on Diversity and Democracy by WG has been published. A presentation and round table discussion by the Minister will take place on 15th December.
- Commissioner tenures was discussed. The Chair raised concerns that the current Commissioners will all finish in their posts around the same time and during the Senedd Review. It was **agreed** that after Royal Assent, the Commission will ask for transitional arrangements for Commissioners to extend their term to ensure stability over the key 2025 period. Lisa James has **agreed** to look into this and has asked the Commission to ensure the Commissioner job description has the correct requirements listed.
- The Commission will move forward with the recruitment of the fifth Commissioner. It was suggested that the fifth Commissioner could also be recruited to the IRP board.
- Lisa James **agreed** to confirm the restructure outcome in the next few weeks.
- The Chair congratulated the BCW on their publication of the revised proposals and wished them the best for the consultation period.

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

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 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 will undertake the Community Review of the Vale of Glamorgan. The CE will meet with Caerphilly and Pembrokeshire next week to discuss Community Reviews. The Commission has agreed to undertake the Community Review of Cardiff and a meeting with Lisa James is scheduled for next week to discuss timescales. It was **agreed** that Frank Cuthbert will be Lead Commissioner for the Pembrokeshire Community Review, Dianne Bevan for the VoG and Michael Imperato for Caerphilly.
- 4.3. It was **noted** that the Commission is currently in discussion with the Sponsor Division for funding for additional staff.
- 4.4. As previously mentioned, it was **agreed** that the CE will arrange a workshop on Community Reviews for Commissioners early next year.
- 4.5. The CE attended a meeting last Friday on Senedd Reform. The main items discussed were automaticity and naming and how to incorporate these into legislation. It was **noted** that the Senedd Reform Bill will be introduced approximately a month before the Electoral Reform Bill in 2023.
- 4.6. **(Issue 7)** – The Commission has looked at 8 potential properties and has narrowed down its options to 2 premises. Costs and incentives were discussed, and it was **noted** that further information on the 2 properties would be provided by the Agents. The CE informed the Commissioners that a video for each property was available to watch and that Commissioners were welcome to view the properties. The Chair asked for a comparison document of the properties, including the rationale for the Commission's decision to move accommodation, be drafted and discussed at the next meeting.
- 4.7. It was **noted** that Lisa James had accounted for a rise in accommodation costs when drafting the budget.
- 4.8. **Action:** The CE to share videos of the 2 potential properties with Commissioners.
- 4.9. **Action:** The HoB to draft a comparison document of the 2 potential properties, including the rationale for the Commission's decision to move accommodation, and share with Commissioners at next meeting.

5. Budget Monitoring

- 5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 19 October 2022 by the FM and the budget position to the end of September 2022 was **noted** and **approved**.

- 5.2. Members **noted** and **approved** the transfer of £6,000 from Directly Employed Staff Costs to Legal to address an estimated overspend.
- 5.3. It was **noted** that the Commission's current underspend for cash expenditure is £49,651. The main area of underspend is Directly Employed Staff Costs due to additional staff being recruited later than intended and the delay in Welsh Government agreeing the new staff structure.
- 5.4. It was **noted** that there was a strong possibility of a staff pay award being announced by Welsh Government later in the year which, if realised would be backdated to April 2022 and would take up some of the current underspend.
- 5.5. It was **noted** the Commission had received the reimbursement WG for the salary costs of the staff member currently on secondment.
- 5.6. It was **noted** that the Commissions underspend could be used for recruitment and refurbishment of new accommodation.
- 5.7. It was **noted** that the Commission will charge The Vale of Glamorgan for undertaking its community review in the 2023/ 24 financial year.

6. Risk Management

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 6 October 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** that the Commission should be innovative and have more targeted advertising for recruitment. The CE has asked the CEM to advertise job roles widely across different platforms. The CE has spoken with the Secretary of BCE regarding staff members being recruited to the Commission. The CE has informed BCE that start dates for staff can be negotiated and it was **agreed** that it would be beneficial to recruit staff from BCE as recruits will have experience of undertaking reviews. It was **agreed** that as 3 out of 4 Commissioners are currently based in Cardiff it is preferable for the fifth Commissioner to be based in another area of Wales. The Commission **agreed** to think about how to target recruits from other areas of Wales.
- 6.4. It was **agreed** to review the Future Work Programme Risk Register once the Commission has more clarity on its future work programme position and budget requirements. Following this the Future Work Programme Risk Register would be tabled for consideration at the next ARAC meeting.

- 6.5. Action:** The FM to add the reviewed Future Work Programme Risk Register as an agenda item for the next ARAC meeting.

7. WG Public Bodies Unit: Handy Assessment Risk Tool (HART)

- 7.1.** Consideration was given to the Report dated 11 October 2022 by the FM and the draft HART risk assessment tables were **noted**.
- 7.2.** It was **noted** that the HART is a standalone item and will be used by WG to compare risk scores across Welsh Public Bodies in order to assess which bodies required the most support to deliver ministerial priorities and also assess the requirements for tailored reviews of each of the Welsh Public Bodies.
- 7.3.** It was **noted** that the two HART Risk Assessment tables had been populated by the FM and reviewed by the CE. It was **noted** that whilst the majority of the risks had been lifted from the Commission's risk registers, some risks on the HART were generic risks created by WG and had not been previously considered on the Commission's risk registers. It was **agreed** that the Commission's risk registers would be reviewed to ensure that they were comprehensive.
- 7.4.** It was **noted** that the Sponsor Division would also complete the HART independently and the Secretariat would discuss its draft with them at the liaison meeting in early December. The final version of the HART must be submitted to WG for adoption by the end of January 2023.
- 7.5.** It was **noted** that ARAC will also consider and approve the HART. It was **agreed** that ARAC should consider if any risks on the HART could be added to the Corporate Risk Register and Future Work Programme Risk Register.
- 7.6. Action:** The FM to add the HART as an agenda item for the next ARAC meeting.

8. Discussion on the White Paper

- 8.1.** Consideration was given to the Report dated 14 October 2022 by the CE.
- 8.2.** The CE **highlighted** the proposals in the White Paper that affect the Commission. The Commission discussed the initial comments which had been drafted by the CE and proposed further comments and minor changes. The Chair and CE will draft a response which will be discussed at the next meeting.

- 8.3. It was **agreed** that the Commission should emphasise the need for it to be resourced appropriately to complete all future work.
- 8.4. **Action:** The CE and Chair to update the Commissions response to the White Paper and bring to the next meeting for further discussion.

9. Calendar of Events

- 9.1. The Commission **noted** the Calendar.
- 9.2. The Chair informed the Commission that she will be attending the November meeting virtually.
- 9.3. Frank Cuthbert informed the Commission that he will partake in Jury Service from 5th December and therefore may not attend the meeting on 14th December.
- 9.4. The following dates were agreed for meetings in 2023 18th January, 22nd February, 22nd March, 19th April, 24th May and 21st June.
- 9.5. Michael Imperato is to confirm his availability for the July meeting.
- 9.6. **Action:** Michael Imperato to confirm if he can attend the Commission meeting on the 19th or 20th July.
- 9.7. **Action:** RO to send out invites for agreed meeting dates.

10. Any Other Relevant Business

- 10.1. Richard Wyn Jones has accepted the Commissions invitation to be guest speaker at the Inter-Commission meeting in November. There will also be a talk about understanding Welsh places.

Date of Next Meeting: 16 November 2022