

**LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING
HELD AT 9:30 AM ON 24 APRIL 2024 AT HASTINGS HOUSE AND VIA MS
TEAMS**

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

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

Guest: Kalwant Grewal (Independent ARAC member); Shamala Govindasamy (Public Health Wales)

Time Started: 09:59

Time Finished: 11.02

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 progress of the Elections and Elected Bodies (Wales) Bill and the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill with late amendments being proposed.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 21 February 2024

- 3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 as a correct record of the matters considered subject to minor amendments.

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 1)** It was **noted** that the Commission received 3 FOI requests between 15 February 2024 and 16 April 2024
- 4.3. **(Issue 2)** It was **noted** that the Commission is currently undertaking Community Reviews for the Vale of Glamorgan, Caerphilly, Ceredigion, Swansea and Pembrokeshire. Further details are included in a separate agenda item.

- 4.4. **(Issue 3)** It was **noted** that the Commission has confirmed with Welsh Government that it is content to proceed with accommodation move to CP2 and has requested for the necessary paperwork to be finalised. Welsh Government has granted a £10k capital grant to support the move.
- 4.5. **(Issue 4)** It was **noted** that a draft of the report has been shared by ORS. A final meeting of the Steering Group will be held to finalise the report and once agreed, will be published and shared with stakeholders. As a result of the recommendations, it is proposed that a sub-committee is formed with 2 Commissioners to begin work on drafting the Council Size Policy for the next Electoral Review Programme.
- 4.6. **(Issue 5)** It was **noted** that a draft of the proposed objectives for the 24/25 remit letter has been shared with the Commission.

Action: Invite ORS to present their findings at the next Commission meeting and for IRP members to be invited.

5. Transition Programme (for discussion)

- 5.1. It was **noted** that there was no update as the transition meeting has been moved to May.

6. Future Work Programme

- 6.1. Consideration was given to the Future Work Programme Report dated 17 April 2024 by the CE.
- 6.2. Consideration was given to Option 1 of the Commissioner Recruitment proposal and was **agreed** subject to some minor changes. The Commission will be working closely with the Sponsor Division and Public Appointments Team in Welsh Government to support the recruitment of additional Commissioners, including the Chair for EMB.
- 6.3. It was **noted** that 3 JDs have been submitted to Welsh Government to be Job Evaluated, these roles are; Chief Executive, Head of Democratic Health and Senior Democratic Health Manager.

7. Budget Report 2023-24

- 7.1. Consideration was given to the Budget Monitoring Report dated 5 April 2024 by the FM, which showed the budget position to the end of the year 2023-24.
- 7.2. The main areas of underspend and overspends, and the explanations for them were **noted**.

- 7.3. It was **noted** that some funds had been transferred across several budgets to cover some overspends at the year end.
- 7.4. Members noted that the year-end budget position for 2023-24 which was an underspend of £12,289, approximately £250 of which was in respect of the DLUHC BCW funding.

8. Budget 2024-25

- 8.1. Consideration was given to the budget report set for 2024-25 dated 11 April 2024.
- 8.2. It was **noted** that the Commission's budget for 2024-25 has been agreed by Welsh Government as £1,330,000. This should be confirmed in their 2024-25 Remit Letter when issued.
- 8.3. It was **noted** that the BCW budget for 2024-25 of £230,000 has been agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). In addition to this, the Commission has a prior year debtor of £7,830 from Ceredigion County Council relating to an outstanding invoice for recovery of 2023-24 Community Review expenditure. The Commission will continue to reclaim Community Review expenditure from the local authorities throughout 2024-25.
- 8.4. It was **noted** that the IRP will be paying for 7.5% of the Communications & Engagement Manager's salary costs which amounts to £4,267.
- 8.5. It was **noted** that the total amount of cash funding available to the Commission for 2024-25 is £1,584,242. A breakdown of the budget category allocations is given at Item 08.1. These allocations are mainly based on known requirements together with historical expenditure.
- 8.6. The budget for 2024/25 was **agreed** by the Commissioners.

9. Risk Management

- 9.1. Consideration was given to the LDBCW Risk Register dated 9 April 2024.
- 9.2. Attention was given to risk CR3 from the 31 January 2024 Commission meeting regarding the move to Cathays Park which was discussed further at the ARAC meeting held on 28 February 2024. At the 28 February meeting, ARAC members received an update on the accommodation move from the CE and HoB and decided that an additional ARAC meeting be held in June specifically to discuss the risks involved in accommodation move.

- 9.3. The Commission **noted** the current Risk Register and **agreed** that no further changes were required at this time.

Action: Additional ARAC meeting to be held in June.

10. LDBCW Future Work Programme Risk Register

- 10.1. Consideration was given to the LDBCW Future Work Programme Risk Register dated 12 April 2024.
- 10.2. The Commission **noted** that the ARAC reviewed the Future Work Programme Risk Register at their meeting held on 28 February 2024 and proposed that the register include the proposed recruitment timeline for the appointment of new members.
- 10.3. The current Risk Register was **agreed** by the Commission and with no further changes required at this time.

11. Report of ARAC Meeting 28 February 2024

- 11.1. Consideration was given to the report of the ARAC meeting minutes dated 28 February 2024.
- 11.2. The Commission **noted** and **approved** the minutes of the report.

12. Draft Governance Statement

- 12.1. Consideration was given to the LDBCW Draft Governance Statement 2023-24 Report dated 25 March 2024.
- 12.2. The Commission **agreed** that the final version of the 2023-24 Governance Statement will be included within the Commission's annual accounts and signed off at the same time that the accounts are signed.

13. Whistleblowing Policy 2024 Review

- 13.1. Consideration was given to the Whistleblowing Policy 2024 Review Report dated 10 April 2024.
- 13.2. The Commission **noted** that the report was noted and approved at the last ARAC meeting.

14. Reviews Progress Report

- 14.1. Consideration was given to the Reviews Progress Report dated 17 April 2024.
- 14.2. It was **noted** that the Vale of Glamorgan review has now been completed. A briefing was given to council officials on 12 April and the Final Recommendations were published on 16 April 2024.
- 14.3. It was **noted** that a briefing will be given to Caerphilly council officials on 7 May and the Final Recommendations Report for Caerphilly will be published on 9 May.
- 14.4. It was **noted** that the Ceredigion draft proposals consultation is open and closes on 13 May.
- 14.5. It was **noted** that the Swansea draft proposals were due to be published in May.
- 14.6. It was **noted** that the Pembrokeshire draft proposals are due to be published in June.

15. Calendar of Events

- 15.1. Consideration was given to the Calendar of Events.

16. Any Other Relevant Business

- 16.1. No other relevant business was noted.

Date of Next Meeting: 22 May 2024