LOCAL DEMOCRACY AND BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES MEETING HELD AT 10.30 AM ON 22 MARCH 2023 AT HASTINGS HOUSE AND VIA MS TEAMS

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

LDBCW Officers attending: Mr Tom Jenkins (Head of Policy and Programmes); Mr Dave Carr (Finance Manager); Mr David Burley (Head of Business); Miss Carys Vaughan (Review Officer); Miss Caitlin Lowry (Team Support Officer); Mr Christian Lovatt (Team Support Officer).

Apologies: Mrs Shereen Williams (Chief Executive)

Time Started: 10:34
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 meeting held yesterday with Lisa James from the Commission's Sponsor Division in Welsh Government (WG):

- Progress on the White Paper was discussed and comments from the consultation have been considered. The Council General statement will be released before Easter.
- It was **noted** there were no objections to the merger of the IRP and the Commission. There were a few negative comments which were due to a misunderstanding and councillor renumeration in general.
- Recruitment for the IRP and Commission Board is in progress. 2 candidates for the Commission Board Member have been proposed to the Minister. It was **noted** that although the second candidate scored lower in the interview, the Chair felt that the candidate would be an asset to the board and would provide vital skills regarding community engagement. The Chair has asked Lisa if there is a possibility for an Assistant Commissioner (AC) post. The Commission **agreed** that an AC position would be beneficial and would bring extra capacity and resource.

- The IRP has approved a single tender for the Commission to undertake work on a Communication and Engagement strategy and review its current website. The work will be carried out by the CEM.

3. Minutes of the Commission meeting held on 18 January 2023

3.1. It was **Resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023 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) –** The Commission received 3 FOI requests between 11 January 2023 and 13 March 2023. 2 of the requests have been completed and the 3rd is currently being processed by the HoB.

4.3. **(Issue 2)** – It was **noted** that this item will be discussed under agenda item 5.

4.4. **(Issue 3) –** This item is currently ongoing with WG.

4.5. **(Issue 4) –** Commission staff will attend a portal demo on Friday and final testing will take place next week. It is anticipated that the portal will be ready mid to end of April 2023.

4.6. **(Issue 5) –** No progress from WG has been made on the guidance.

4.7. **(Issue 6) –** A Strategic Reform Delivery Board has been set up by Welsh Government to support Senedd Reform and the Commission will be represented by the CE. The first meeting will take place tomorrow.

4.8. **(Issue 7) –** The Commission are still awaiting details from WG. The Chair requested a list of outstanding details be sent to her along with information from BT on connection timescales. The Chair will forward the information to Lisa and query when the Commission will receive the information.

4.9. **(Issue 8) -** A tender panel was held to assess submissions for the research tender. A contract has been issued to ORS (Opinion Research Services). An Initiation Document has been received and once agreed a board will be set up with the Commission, WG, WLGA and the IRP. ORS provided the best overall tender and met the required standards as set out in the Specification Document.

4.10. **Action:** The HoPP and HoB to send the Chair a list of outstanding accommodation details along with information from BT on connection timescales. The Chair to forward the information to Lisa and query when the Commission will receive the information.

5. Review Progress Report

5.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 14 March 2023 by the HoPP.

5.2. It was **noted** that the new Risk Register considered in the Senior Management Meeting was attached at item 5.2. It was **noted** that the Commission will update the register as the reviews progress.

5.3. It was **noted** that the consultation for the Vale of Glamorgan Community Review had commenced and will finish on 28 March. The Options Paper for the review will be considered in the May meeting and the Draft Proposals Report in the June meeting.

5.4. Meetings with the Council Working Group and Town and Community Council representatives for the Caerphilly Community Review will take place this week. The consultation will open on 24 March and close on 18 May. The Options Paper will be considered in the June meeting and the Draft Proposals Report in the July meeting.

5.5. It is anticipated that the Community Reviews for Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire will start in June.

5.6. It was **agreed** that the new Commissioner will lead the Pembrokeshire Community Review.

5.7. Dianne Bevan gave a brief update on the VoG Community Review so far. The initial meetings with the VoG Council Working Group and Town and Community Council representatives were a success. Representations received so far have been processed. It was **noted** that so far not all TCC's had submitted a response to the review. A meeting to discuss options is scheduled for 19 April.

5.8. The VoG Council have published a report on the Community Review and will be discussing its contents at the Community Liaison meeting tomorrow. It was **noted** that a number of recent representations are in response to this report.

6. Budget Report 2022-23

6.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 22 March 2023 by the FM and the budget position to the end of February 2023 was **noted** and **approved**.

6.2. Members **noted** and **approved** the changes to budget categories to address some estimated overspend.

6.3. It was **noted** that the underspend was £53,201 at the end of February, and the Commission would have an estimated year-end underspend of £64,000. It was **noted** that the LDBCW underspend would be used as part payment for the research exercise and the rest would be carried over into the new year.

6.4. It was **noted** that the Commission would receive approx. £4,000 from the IRP to undertake Communication and Engagement work.

6.5. It was **noted** that the end of financial year budget report will be presented at the May meeting.

6.6. It was **suggested** that the budget category Bottled Water be updated to properly reflect the category due to the Commission purchasing an Eco Water Dispenser last year.

6.7. It was **agreed** that the FM should consider scaling back the detail in the Budget Report for Commission meetings by only reporting significant variances.

6.8. **Action:** The FM to consider scaling back the detail in the Budget Report for Commission meetings.

7. Risk Management

7.1. Consideration was given to the Report dated 8 March 2023 by the FM.

7.2. It was **noted** that there had not been any changes made to the Corporate Risk Register at the last meeting. The Commission considered that no further changes to the risk register were required.

8. Report of the ARAC Meeting held 9 February 2023

8.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 9 March 2023 by the FM and the Commission **noted** the items considered at the ARAC meeting.

8.2. It was **noted** that the ARAC recommended the Commission include a standing item on future Commission meeting agendas for update reports on the future work programme. Also, the Committee proposed that the Commission's Complaints Policy be amended to stipulate that complaints made against the Commission Chair should be referred to the Deputy Director of the Welsh

Government Sponsor Division. The Commission discussed and **agreed** both recommendations.

8.3. **Action:** The FM to add update reports on the future work programme as a standing agenda item for Commission meetings and amend the Complaints Policy.

9. Chair of ARAC Annual Report 2022- 23

9.1. Consideration was given to the report dated 7 March 2023 by the FM and its contents were **noted**.

9.2. The Chair acknowledged the ARAC's role in governing effectively and providing robust scrutiny for the Commission's work programme.

9.3. It was **agreed** that Deep Dive exercises should be one of the first agenda items in the ARAC meetings to ensure there is adequate time for discussion.

9.4. **Action:** The FM to ensure Deep Dive exercises are one of the first agenda items for future ARAC meetings.

10. Calendar of Events

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

11. Any Other Relevant Business

11.1. There was no AOB.

Date of Next Meeting: 24 May 2023