

Confirmed on 14 November 2002

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION HELD
ON 4 OCTOBER 2002.**

Present: Sam Younger (Chair) (SY)
Pamela Gordon (PG) for items 14 – 18 inclusive
Glyn Mathias (GM)
Sir Neil McIntosh (NM)
Karamjit Singh (KS)

In attendance: Roger Creedon (RC)
Jacqui Dixon (JD)
Nicole Smith (NS)
Anne Hinds (AH)
Rael Zackon (RZ)
Martine Padwell (MP) for items 1 – 13 inclusive
Derek Little (DL) for items 1 –13 inclusive
Alice Cuninghame (AC) for items 1 – 13 inclusive
Anne Devine (AD) for items 1 – 13 inclusive

Boundary Committee: Pamela Gordon (PG) for items 1 – 13 inclusive
Archie Gall (AG) for items 1 – 13 inclusive

Apologies: Professor Graham Zellick

1. District of Breckland

1.1 SY presented the report. Only one representation had been received, which was in favour of the recommendations.

1.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

1. District of Broadland

2.1 SY presented the report. The main areas of concern for those who made representations were:

- Multi-members wards
- The composition of wards in the eastern area
- The size of wards in Thorpe St Andrew Parish
- Eynesford ward
- Tavernham North and South wards

- 2.2 PG advised that the issue of single or multi-member wards was linked to electoral cycles; the Boundary Committee would respond to local wishes provided other criteria were met. SY affirmed that it would not be appropriate to change policy in the middle of a review cycle, and the Commission would continue to take a pragmatic view during this review phase. A policy paper would be submitted by the Boundary Committee in due course.
- 2.3 RC reported that the Commission had received a request from ODPM for a review of electoral cycles for local authorities in England. The ODPM wishes the review to begin in January 2003 for a period of nine months. RC had requested more time to complete the review. An initial paper would be submitted to the Commissioners in December or January.
- 2.4 The Implementation Team recommended a change to the boundary between Taverham North and Taverham South wards. The Boundary Committee had indicated that the boundary line should be to the rear of the properties on the south side of Fakenham Road.
- 2.3 The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations, with the modification to the boundary between Taverham North and Taverham South wards, which was agreed on behalf of the Boundary Committee by the Director.**

3. Borough of Great Yarmouth

- 3.1 SY presented the report. No representations had been received.
- 3.2 The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

4. Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk

- 4.1 SY presented the report. There were six main issues which concerned those who made representations:
- Valley Hill ward
 - Gaywood Chase ward
 - Denton ward
 - West Winch ward
 - The inclusion of Denver, Ryston and Fordham parishes in Denver with Hilgay ward
 - Dividing West Lynn ward

Late representations had been received from Snettisham Parish Council and Councillor Tilbury from Snettisham ward; the matters

contained in these representations had already been taken into account.

- 4.2 Suggestions for name changes had also been received; these had been referred to the local authority for consideration. The Commissioners requested a brief statement for the next meeting on the approach and criteria to be taken into account in considering name changes.
- 4.3 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

5. District of North Norfolk

- 5.1 SY presented the report. No representations had been received.
- 5.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

6. City of Norwich

- 6.1 SY presented the report. No representations had been received.
- 6.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

7. District of South Norfolk

- 7.1 SY presented the report. The only representations received concerned suggested name changes; these would be referred to the local authority for consideration.
- 7.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

8. District of Bromsgrove

- 8.1 KS presented the report. The local authority had made a representation in respect of the Boars Head Public House, which was shown in Charford district ward in its submission. The Boundary Committee had indicated that this modification would be acceptable.
- 8.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations, with the modification that the Boars Head Public House should be in Charford district ward. This modification was agreed on behalf of the Boundary Committee by its Director.**

9. District of Malvern Hills

9.1 KS presented the report. The sole representation received had agreed with the proposals.

9.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

10. Borough of Redditch

10.1 KS presented the report. There were three main areas of concern in the representations:

- the process of consultation by the local authority
- the naming of Astwood Bank and Feckenham wards
- community identity in Astwood Bank and Feckenham, and Crabbs Cross wards

10.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

11. City of Worcester

11.1 KS presented the report. There was one area of concern in the representations which identified that the maps at the back of the Final Report did not match those proposed by the local authority. The Boundary Committee agrees with this clarification.

11.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations, supported by the maps provided by the local authority.**

12. District of Wychavon

12.1 KS presented the report. There were three areas of concern in the representations:

- The transfer of Bricklehampton parish to Fladbury ward
- The inclusion of Evesham town centre in Bengeworth ward
- The creation of a parish ward for Westmancote

12.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

13. District of Wyre Forest

13.1 KS presented the report. There was one concern expressed in the representation in respect of Aggborough and Spennells ward, which concerned electoral projections.

13.2 **The Commissioners agreed to accept the recommendations.**

14. Government consultation on e-democracy policy – Electoral Commission response

14.1 NS presented the report which outlines the key points of the proposed policy and suggested responses. The response was due by 31 October 2002. The response would be signed by SY and will be made publicly available.

14.2 The response would include:

- The expectation that the Commission would be involved in future discussions on infrastructure
- Concern that the paper confused e-participation with e-voting
- The role of the Commission in relation to voting, rather than political communication

14.3 The Commissioners agreed the principal points to be included in the Commission's response, as indicated in the report.

15. PPERA (Disapplication of Part IV for Northern Ireland): extension of scope

15.1 RC presented the report which sought the views of the Commissioners on the proposal from the SDLP to extend the exemption from donation controls in Northern Ireland to notional campaign spending and donations to candidates.

15.2 A further paper would be submitted in due course on the policy of exemption.

15.2 The Commissioners agreed to respond to the SDLP in the following terms:

- **That for the Assembly elections, the campaign expenditure form does not require the provision of the name and address of individuals and companies who are the source of notional expenditure. Parties should keep such information for subsequent inspection.**
- **That the Electoral Office for Northern Ireland is advised that, while the Commission regards transparency as important, it is of the view that donations to candidates should be treated on the same basis as donations to parties; if one is exempt, so should the other be exempt.**

- **That a further paper should be submitted to the Commissioners to review the Commission's policy position on the continued exemption from donation controls in Northern Ireland so that the Commission can respond to the NOI consultation process when it is launched.**

16. Pilot evaluation report: Monmouthshire

- 16.1 NS tabled this report; GM indicated that he was content with its contents.
- 16.2 **The Commissioners agreed the report.**

17. The Electoral Commission's Youth Voter Awareness Design Competition: briefing paper

- 17.1 AH presented the briefing paper. The proposal was part of a longer term approach, and would be built into the outreach strategy. Additional resources were already included in the operational plan. The timing of the launch of the competition in London and the regions would be subject to taking advice from education departments. However it was intended to run the project from the week after the autumn half-term to the week after spring half-term, to enable ideas to be used in the final weeks of the voter awareness campaign for 2003. The Commissioners agreed that this was an imaginative approach.
- 17.2 **The Commissioners agreed to the launch of the national youth design competition in November 2002 as part of the Youth Voter Awareness campaign.**

18. Additional items

- 18.1 RC advised that the ODPM had requested the LASER contract from IdeA. The consultation paper on registration which was due in November would not be deferred.
- 18.2 NS reported on procurement for pilots. Commissioners would be involved in the selection of local authorities and so procurement rules require that they should not have any contact with the potential technical suppliers until the supplier list is finalised. The supplier list for pilots would apply for three years. NM wished it to be recorded that he will cease to be a non-executive director of BT in December 2002.
- 18.3 RC reported that Central and Eastern European electoral officials would be holding their conference in Oxford in September 2003 and

were seeking technical and financial help. SY indicated that the Commission may prefer to offer a speaker or sponsor a dinner for the event, rather than becoming deeply involved in its organisation.

- 18.4 A timetable for the business planning weekend was circulated.
- 18.5 SY advised that he had had a good meeting with the Lord Chancellor and Yvette Cooper MP the previous week. The commitment for legislation in autumn 2003 had been taken on board.
- 18.6 The consultation papers on Absent Voting and Internet Campaigning had been put on the website; the paper on the New Initiatives Fund would be published next week.
- 18.7 KS reported that the PPP for Northern Ireland had met on 3 October 2002. The concerns of the parties in relation to ID cards and the register were put to the NOI. Take-up of the helpline had been twice that estimated. NS indicated that the specification for reviewing and evaluating the process was being drawn up.