

LGBCE (25-26) 5th meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2025 at 10:00am
All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams

Commissioners present:

Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
Amanda Nobbs OBE
Andrew Scallan CBE
Steve Robinson
Liz Treacy

LGBCE officers present:

Ailsa Irvine	Chief Executive
Rachel Barker	Director of Reviews, Strategy & Engagement
Bipon Bhakri	Director of Corporate Services
Alison Evison	Review & Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Hayley Meachin	Communications and Engagement Manager
Jonathan Ashby	Senior Review Officer
Yemi Fagun	Review Officer (item 1)
Paul Nizinskyj	Review Officer (item 2)
Angela Hendry	HR Lead (minutes)

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Wallace Sampson and Brendan Connell-French.

Declarations of interest

Amanda Nobbs and Jonathan Ashby declared an interest in Dacorum (item 1) and took no part in the discussion of that item.

1. Dacorum Final Recommendations - LGBCE(25/26) 026

Amanda Nobbs and Jonathan Ashby left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on this item.

The review of Dacorum Council had commenced on 25 April 2024. According to the latest available electoral figures, 24 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent.

At its meeting on 25 April 2024, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 51. However, after further consideration and on the basis of the available evidence, the team proposed that the Commission move away from its original opinion on council size and instead agreed a council size of 52, as part of its Draft Recommendations, at its meeting on 19 November 2024.

Following publication, 40 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all the submissions into account, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 5 three-, 16 two-, and 5 single-member wards.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Draft Recommendations, and was minded to agree them.

Agreed

The Board agreed the Final Recommendations for Dacorum as presented. In light of the Government's White Paper on English Devolution, the Board agreed to the publish the final report but not lay a draft Order before Parliament at this time.

Amanda Nobbs and Jonathan Ashby returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

2. Middlesbrough Final Recommendations – LGBCE(25/26) 027

The review of Middlesbrough Council had commenced on 12 December 2023. According to the latest available electoral figures, 25 per cent of wards had variances greater than 10 per cent, with 1 ward having a variance of over 30 per cent.

At its meeting on 12 December 2023, the Board had been minded to agree a council size of 46 and had subsequently, on 21 May 2024, agreed Draft Recommendations.

Following publication, 244 submissions had been received commenting on the Draft Recommendations which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

At its meeting on 17 December 2024, the Board agreed to conduct a period of further consultation for three discrete areas in the east, south-east and south-west of the authority. The Board agreed, in principle, to the Final Recommendations for the remaining areas of the authority.

Following publication of the Further Draft Recommendations, 57 submissions had been received which had been considered carefully in the context of the statutory criteria.

Taking all the submissions into account, for the reasons highlighted in the team's report, it was felt that there was sufficient evidence to move away from the Draft Recommendations in some aspects and these changes were reflected in the Final Recommendations put to the Board for consideration.

The Final Recommendations proposed a pattern of 7 three-, 12 two-, and 1 single-member wards.

The Board considered the Final Recommendations in detail, informed by the statutory criteria and taking into account the submissions received following publication of the Further Draft Recommendations, and was minded to agree them.

Agreed

1. The Board agreed the Final Recommendations for Middlesbrough Council as presented.
2. The Board agreed to the laying of a draft Order before Parliament giving effect to its final recommendations for Middlesbrough Council.