

LGBCE (26-27) 2nd meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 at 10.00am

All Commissioners and officers attended the meeting via Teams

Commissioners present:

Bev Smith (Chair)
Amanda Nobbs OBE
Andrew Scallan CBE
Liz Treacy
Janet Waggott

LGBCE officers present :

Ailsa Irvine	Chief Executive
Rachel Barker	Director of Reviews, Strategy and Engagement
Bipon Bhakri	Director of Corporate Services
Alison Evison	Review and Programme Manager
Richard Buck	Review Manager
Hayley Meachin	Communication and Engagement manager
Jonathan Ashby	Senior Review Officer
Brendan Connell-French	Senior Review Officer
Rafa Chowdhury	Finance Lead (minutes)

Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Dame Gillian Guy and Wallace Sampson.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of the LGBCE's meeting on 21 April 2026

The minutes were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Actions from previous Commission Board meetings

It was confirmed that an additional document outlining key communications activities for 2026-27 is being prepared, reflecting the approach taken in relation to the digital strategy, which will be tabled at the June Board meeting.

Chair's report

The Chair placed on record the Commission's gratitude to Amanda Nobbs for her contributions to the work of the Commission during her tenure as Commissioner. Amanda's term of office concludes in June.

The Chair highlighted the potential impact of the May 2026 election results on the organisation's review programme, noting the significant changes to the composition of some local authorities and the importance of ensuring that our engagement recognises this and supports effective engagement in the review process. Further consideration is being given to what this might mean in practice, with a paper on the 2026/27 review programme to be brought to the June Board meeting.

An update was provided on progress with work relating to Local Government Reorganisation and in particular responding to the latest consultation on East Sussex, in relation to which the Commission has been named as a consultee. The proposed response will be shared with the Board in advance of the next meeting for feedback, to help facilitate formal approval at the June Board meeting and enable swift subsequent submission to MHCLG.

1. ARC annual report to the Commission - LGBCE(26/27)011

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee presented the Committee's annual report to the Commission, and the Board noted its content. The ARC Chair highlighted the section on priorities for the coming year.

Board members discussed the visibility and scheduling of deep dives into strategic risks, with the DCS confirming that these are included in the ARC work plan.

Agreed

The Board approved the Audit and Risk Committee's priorities for 2026–27.

2. ARC Chair's report (May meeting)

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee highlighted the key items considered at the Committee's meeting on 18 May 2026.

- ARC members had their annual meeting with the auditors without officers present. The year-end audit was discussed with the NAO.
- The internal auditors provided substantial assurance, with no outstanding recommendations, and positive feedback on the organisation's risk management and financial controls.
- ARC endorsed the management response to the sustainability advisory review, opting for a proportionate approach by embedding responsibilities into existing processes rather than creating standalone governance structures.
- ARC considered the Annual Report and Accounts, along with the audit completion report and letter of representation, noting an expected unqualified opinion from the NAO, and were content to recommend them to the Board for approval.
- ARC discussed and approved the internal audit plan for 2026-27.
- The Committee noted the upcoming IT contract renewal, with a paper on next steps to be circulated to ARC members in June.

The Board noted the report.

3. Annual Report and Accounts - LGBCE(26/27)012

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Annual Report and Accounts. The DCS set out the expectation of an unqualified audit opinion, noting that while there are still some minor routine queries which were being worked through with the NAO, these would have no impact on the audit opinion. It was noted that the two recommendations that have been made are low risk and process-focussed, with actions to address these being incorporated into the year-end procedures.

The DCS highlighted that the resource underspend remains at 12%, as reported in the Q4 performance report at the April Board meeting.

It was highlighted that a potential contingent liability is under review, which has been assessed as non-material and not requiring disclosure and which the external auditors are content for management to handle.

The Board expressed thanks to all the officers involved in the work on the Annual Report and Accounts and the year-end audit.

Agreed

- The Board approved the Annual Report and Accounts.
- The Board delegated the completion of the ARA to the Accounting Officer, with final review by the NAO.

- The Board approved the signing of the ARA document by the Accounting Officer.
- The Board approved the letter of representation for signature by the Accounting Officer.

4. Workplan

The Chair confirmed that the next Board meeting will be held by Teams on 16 June 2026.