

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Stakeholder Engagement

Purpose

1. The Commission discussed Paper 15 'Summary of First Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and Planning for Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries' at its July 2022 meeting. This paper updates the Commission on recent engagement with the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee of the Scottish Parliament; plans for further discussions with the Committee; and an outline of other stakeholder engagement. It also provides an initial draft of a communications plan.

SPPA Committee

2. At its July meeting the Commission agreed that early engagement with the SPPA Committee would be helpful. The Chair and Secretary met the Convener and Clerk of the Committee on 24 August 2022. A note of the meeting is in Appendix A.
3. The Chair and Deputy Chair will attend an informal session of the Committee on 3 November 2022. An outline brief is in Appendix B and the Commission is invited to offer comment. It is envisaged that the Commission's eventual response to the forthcoming electoral reform consultation would cover similar points.
4. The session will cover a presentation from the Commission and questions from Committee members. Details of Committee membership are on the Parliament web site: [Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee](#). To note, the balance is two constituency MSPs (Colette Stevenson and Bob Doris) and three regional list MSPs (Martin Whitfield, Edward Mountain and Alexander Stewart).

MSPs

5. The Clerk to the SPPA Committee has offered to assist with organising a meeting or event with the Commission and MSPs.
6. The Clerk suggested a lunchtime session, chaired by the SPPA Convenor (Martin Whitfield) but cautioned it would be difficult to predict the level of turnout.
7. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with the Clerk on how to arrange an engagement session.

Political Parties

8. The Secretary attends quarterly meetings of the electoral Commission's Scottish Political Parties Panel where party officials discuss electoral matters. It is also attended by representatives from the Scottish Government Elections Team, the Electoral Management Board and others. The next meeting is scheduled for 9 November 2022 at 10 am. If the Commission thought it helpful, and a Commissioner is available, then a slot on the agenda could be requested in order to discuss the Scottish Parliament review. Alternatively that meeting on 9 November could be used to gauge interest from the parties in a separate session with the Commission.

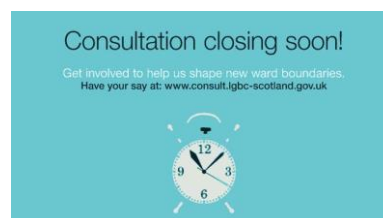
9. For information, the Boundary Commission for Scotland (BCS) traditionally holds a briefing session with the parties before commencing a review of UK Parliament constituencies.

Newspapers and Display Points

10. During the First Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries there was a requirement for publishing proposals in at least one newspaper circulating in each constituency; and to make the proposals available for inspection in at least one place in each constituency.
11. The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 amended the requirement to publicise “in at least one newspaper circulating in each constituency” to “such manner as it thinks fit.” The requirement to make the proposals available for inspection in at least one place in each constituency remains.
12. During the Island Reviews the Commission placed newspaper adverts in several publications, this included: a four-page wrap in the Stornoway Gazette; back page of the Shetland Times and a half-page advert in the Orcadian. Smaller adverts were placed in a spread of newspapers for the reviews of Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas.
13. During the BCS 2023 Review initial consultations, held in late 2021 and early 2022, BCS placed adverts in five newspapers at the start of the consultations: Herald, Scotsman, Metro, Press and Journal, and Courier. Further ‘consultation closing’ adverts were placed in the same five publications and the Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette, Ayrshire Advertiser Series, East Lothian Courier, Border Telegraph, Edinburgh Evening News and Glasgow Times. BCS also advertised on Facebook and Twitter. Most consultation respondents heard about the review on Facebook then newspapers, Twitter, other social media, websites, tv/ radio and a few from display points.
14. During the Island Reviews the Commission placed posters in display points such as libraries, council offices, community centres, places of worship etc. The Secretariat can liaise with councils on expanding the number of display point locations.

Social Media

15. The Commission used a range of GIFs to publicise the Island Reviews on social media. A selection of images from these are shown below.



16. User research reported that the social media graphics worked well and the Commission will wish to update these for the Scottish Parliament review.
17. The GIFs were shared on Facebook and Twitter as paid advertisements. Promoted posts and tweets reach a far greater number of users than can be reached purely by relying on the existing followers of the Commission’s social

media accounts. The Commission had also asked that Councils shared the details of consultations on their websites and social media channels.

18. The most common outlet for consultation respondents hearing about the Islands Reviews was Facebook. The second most popular outlets were newspaper adverts and Twitter.
19. The GIFs will be updated for the Scottish Parliament Review and the Commission may wish to develop these into short animated videos. The Secretariat will liaise with APS, who provide marketing services for Scottish Government public bodies, on updated designs.

Consultation Site – User Research

20. In early 2020 the Commission undertook user-research to seek ways to improve how it conducts public consultations. This followed feedback from some participants during the Islands Reviews.
21. The user research brief included: how well the current platform allows users to participate fully in the consultation process; and to identify areas that can be improved and gain insight into how to improve them from the users perspective.
22. The user research recommended that consultation materials should:
 - reinforce why users should be taking part in the consultation, why this is important.
 - simplify the terminology and information displayed at each section to ensure that users feel they have all the information they need to answer the questions.
 - simplify the maps and how to filter between ‘current’ and ‘proposed’ boundaries.
23. The Commission will wish to draw on the user-research when it designs its materials for consultations.

Local Government

24. The Commission agreed that engagement with COSLA and SOLACE (Scottish Branch of the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) would be helpful, reflecting their role in representing local government interests. The COSLA Chief Executive is Sally Loudon. The SOLACE Chair is Andrew Kerr, Chief Executive, City Of Edinburgh Council. A draft letter to both bodies is attached in Appendix C.

Other

25. During the Islands Reviews Community Councils were sent details of the proposals and asked to share them.
26. The Secretariat have a list of all community councils in Scotland and will aim to contact them during each consultation stage. However some areas in Scotland have few active community councils.
27. During the Islands Reviews the Commission considered several other methods of publicising the reviews, including:
 - mailing all households. However many residents have mailing preferences to receive no junk mail and it would be too costly for a nationwide consultation.

- attending a public event such as an Agricultural show, but were advised it would be unlikely to generate much engagement from local communities.
- meeting with community groups. During the island reviews the Commission met with a number of community groups but this would not be practical for a nationwide consultation.

Communications

28. The Commission asked for a detailed communications strategy and this will be prepared for the December meeting. Suggested draft key messages are at Appendix D and will be developed further as part of the strategy.

Conclusion

29. The Commission is invited to:

- comment on a draft brief for the November meeting with SPPA Committee (see Appendix B);
- confirm if it wishes to attend the Scottish Political Parties Panel meeting on 9 November or arrange another meeting date;
- consider whether it wishes to continue with a blend of newspaper and social media advertising or suggest alternatives;
- suggest fresh GIF or short video ideas for social media advertising;
- comment on a draft letter to COSLA and SOLACE (see Appendix C);
- provide feedback on the Communications Plan (Appendix D); and
- provide any further suggestions for publicising the review.

Secretariat
October 2022