

Risk Register

For discussion

1. The Commission asked for an updated risk register at its meeting on 14 November 2023 and made a number of suggestions which are now incorporated into the revised register at Appendix A. As requested the register had been re-ordered to reflect the risk score.
2. Risks 1, 2 and 3 relate to the current Scottish Parliament review, its political context, and the decision by the Minister not to amend the approval process in the forthcoming electoral reform bill and to review the framework instead. The Commission may wish to consider the inter-relationship between these.
3. For information the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland has offered training on its latest risk management procedures. This would be a helpful refresher to the Secretariat of risk management principles. It is intended that staff will also review latest Scottish Government advice and practice. The Secretariat will then consider the need for any revisions to the current risk management policy. The Business Continuity Plan is also due for review. Previous discussions with both sponsor departments for the Secretariat suggest they understand and agree that a proportionate approach to risk management is adopted.
4. The Commission is invited to consider the register, the risks identified and the proposed mitigations.

Secretariat
December 2023

**Scottish Boundary Commissions
Risk Register**

	Type of Risk	Description	Effect	Likelihood/Impact	Mitigating Action	Target Date	Mitigated likelihood/impact	Notes
1.	ER	Political lobbying by stakeholders Lack of political support from Ministers	Failure of proposals	H/H	Liaison with Scottish Government (SG) to ensure clarity over position Ensure any public consultation clear as to role of Commission and review purpose Ensure reports to Ministers and subsequent evidence to Parliament fully explain reasons for decisions, legislative compliance and constraints	Ongoing	H/M	
2.	T	Legislative change	Risk that SG planned electoral reform work will undermine Commission	H/M	Work with SG over detail of next steps following ministerial decision not to include change to approval process .	Ongoing	H/M	Meeting with Minister to be arranged for early 2024
3.	ER	Political interference	Risk that affirmative resolution procedure will result in unreasonable scrutiny and damage to democracy and reputation of Scottish Parliament / Boundaries Scotland	H/H	Scrutiny welcome and will work with SG and SPPA (Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments) Committee to ensure clarity over best practice scrutiny and decision making	ongoing	M/M	Meeting to be arranged with Convener/ Clerk of SPPA Committee
4.	R	Insufficient staff resource to complete review on time	Risk to completion of reviews on time and to sufficient standard. Impact on staff wellbeing.	M/H	Ensure Commission awareness; flag with sponsor department need for resources to bring in temporary staff, create new posts or pay overtime. Liaise with SG recruitment agencies over provision of temporary staff Ensure timely completion of Secretary recruitment	Ongoing	M/M	SP Review commenced Sept 2022 and concludes May 2025. No decisions have yet been taken over any reviews of electoral arrangements. Contacted ASA Recruitment who have ready supply of GIS staff – time estimate 1-2 weeks to fill a post.
5.	ER	Changes to, and events in, external political landscape	Delays to delivery of review milestones eg constraints around announcements.	M/M	Ensure effective liaison between Secretariat and sponsor department in order to build known events into project planning.	Ongoing	M/M	
6.	T	Outside bodies not supplying necessary data or data of poor quality	Inaccurate decision making resulting from inadequate data	L/H	Maintenance of regular contact with data suppliers. Data quality checks on receipt. Alternative sources of data may be available in some cases.	Ongoing	L/H	Electoral reform process to clarify access to electoral registers
7.	S	Loss of staff with appropriate skills and knowledge. Loss of Commissioner/commission experience	Unable to conduct business to full level of effectiveness.	M/M	Ensure appropriate documentation of procedures, and training in key skills for staff. Ensure recording of the reasons for all decisions taken at each stage Work with SG to ensure commissioner appointments support continuity of knowledge/skills. Liaise with SG over vacancy management; ensure appropriate training and induction of staff and Commissioners	Ongoing	M/L	If time permits hand-over meeting between outgoing and incoming Secretary
8.	ER	Ineffective consultation processes. Consultation portal doesn't deliver clarity and effectiveness Legality of hybrid or online only engagement	Loss of stakeholder confidence Damage to reputation of Commission. Failure of stakeholders to engage	L/H	Actively maintain stakeholder relationships. Early engagement with stakeholders Provide clear information and guidance to the public on the Commission's work and processes. Continue to explore functionality of Citizenspace consultation site and update staff training to ensure effectiveness Raise online/hybrid/in person inquiries with SG in context of electoral reform	Ongoing.	L/M	The Secretariat liaises with other UK Commissions and meets regularly with political parties, the Electoral Commission, EROs and others
9.	ER	Acting outside legislation.	Damage to reputation of Commission Possibility of Judicial review	L/H	Ensure clear internal guidance on powers and duties. Consider need for external legal advice as appropriate. Ensure transparency over consideration of consultation responses to ensure no grounds for judicial review, Secure legal advice as necessary	Ongoing.	L/M	

	Type of Risk	Description	Effect	Likelihood/Impact	Mitigating Action	Target Date	Mitigated likelihood/impact	Notes
10.	P/T	Unavailability of workplaces/theft or failure of equipment/computer systems	Inability to operate from usual workplaces including Thistle House or possible loss of access to computers, network and data.	L/M	Business Continuity Planning Data backups under SCOTS. Ensure appropriate physical security precautions. Use of SCOTS ensures technical support from Scottish Government. All staff have effective home-working arrangements.	Ongoing	L/M	Business Continuity Plan to be kept under continuous review.
11.	R	Budget	Insufficient budget undermining effectiveness of consultation	L/M	Project planning to match review process to budget availability; corporate planning to ensure SG aware of budget needs		L/M	SG allocation of £437k each year for next three expected to be sufficient
12.	ER	Future Covid outbreaks/public health pandemic	Risk to resources if staff sick, conduct of local inquiries if public gatherings restricted	L/M	Monitor health advice on ongoing basis Check legal position re virtual/hybrid local inquiries and seek legislative change if necessary.	Ongoing	L/M	

The risk register shows the weightings of each risk for likelihood and impact, each classified as high, medium or low.

Likelihood		Potential Impact	
High (H)	High probability of occurrence	High (H)	Risks that can have a major effect on Commission operations. May result in significant financial loss, major disruption to outputs or serious damage to the Commission's reputation.
Medium (M)	Conceivable might occur	Medium (M)	Risks that have a noticeable effect on Commission operations. Each will cause a degree of disruption to outputs and may affect budgets.
Low (L)	Unlikely to occur	Low (L)	Risks where the consequences and impact will not be severe and any associated losses relatively small. As individual occurrences they will have a negligible effect on Commission operations.

These are combined to determine the risk category: Red = HH, MH or HM, Amber = MM, HL, LH, Green = LL, ML, LM.

