

Draft Corporate Plan

1. The Commission is invited to consider the draft Corporate Plan for the period April 2018 to March 2021 which appears at Appendix A.

Background

2. The Commission previously considered an earlier version of the draft Corporate Plan at its meeting of 19 February 2018 (Paper LGBCS 2436) and asked for a further draft to be presented at this meeting.
3. The Commission also asked the Secretary to present the draft Corporate Plan to its sponsor department to take their views. The sponsor department, the Elections Team of the Scottish Government, were generally content and had no specific comments on the plan.
4. Since the Draft Corporate Plan was presented to the Commission on 19 February 2018 some of the uncertain costs which were budgeted for the first part of the 2018-19 financial year have become clearer, and the figures have been updated. Some adjustments have also been made to the plan to integrate it with the draft Project Plan which result in costs being moved between financial years.
5. The overall forecast for 2018-19 increases by c. £2,700 to £266,230. This is due to:
 - Commissioners' Fees and Expenses falling by a c. £5,800 chiefly due to fewer commission meetings being scheduled in the summer.
 - Administration costs increasing by £13,000 due to website refresh costs and cost of videoconferencing camera moving from 2017-18 to 2018-19;
 - Review Costs falling by c. £4,600 due to lower anticipated travel and accommodation costs for initial meetings with councils;
6. The overall forecast for 2019-20 decreases by c. £23,900 to £446,785. Commissioners' fees and expenses fall by c. £3,400 due to movement of costs associated with initial visits to Island-Mainland council areas from 2019-20 to 2018-19. The change is, however, chiefly due to changes to Review Costs of c. £20,500:
 - reduction of c. £22,000 in costs of public meetings during consultation on any Revised Proposals for wards for Island-Only council areas, due to changes to project plan timetable which move these costs to 2020-21.
 - Reduction of c £3,500 in costs associated with commencement of reviews in Island-Mainland council areas, such as meetings with councils and printing of policies and procedures booklets. These costs move to 2018-19 due to changes in draft project plan timetable.
 - Addition of £6,000 to cover the cost for local inquiries following consultation on initial proposals for wards for Island-Only council areas (previously allocated to 2020-21);
 - Remaining changes to Review Costs are due to reductions in cost estimates for visits to islands.

7. The overall forecast for 2020-21 increases by c. £14,000 to £563,634. This is due to adjustments to the provisional review timetable which transfers funds between financial years:
 - Reduction of £6,000 to cover the cost for local inquiries following consultation on revised proposals for wards for Island-Only council areas (transferred to 2019-20);
 - Addition of c. £22,000 costs of public meetings during consultation revised proposals for wards for Island-Only council areas – forecast moved from 2019-20.
8. As in the earlier version, the draft Corporate Plan assumes: that the Islands Reviews will begin in Summer 2018 with Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands; the Reviews of Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire will begin in the first part of 2019. The plan also assumes that the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries will begin in late 2019.
9. The figures in the plan are designed to give the Commission flexibility in its approach, and as such err on the side of higher expenditure.
10. Once the plan has been agreed with the Commission and the Elections Team within the Scottish Government, it will be placed on the Commission's website.

Public Meetings and Local Inquiries

11. The biggest costs with respect to the Islands Reviews are the cost of visits to the Islands for public meetings for staff and commissioners. In 2018-19, the draft Corporate Plan includes:
 - between September and November, during / prior to development of initial ward proposals, 6 public meetings on islands (an average of 2 per council area);
 - 2 commissioners and 3 members of the secretariat to attend these meetings, with associated venue, travel and accommodation costs.
12. The total cost of these meetings is forecast to be £27,490, shown under Review Costs. This figure would be reduced proportionately if the commission decided to hold fewer meetings. This cost does not include commissioners' fees, which are shown under Commissioners Fees and Expenses, and assume commissioners claim 3 days per meeting.
13. The plan also includes a set of public meeting in the Islands-only council areas during the public consultation on the initial proposals for wards in May – July 2019, and a further set of public meetings during the public consultation on any revised proposals for wards in March – May 2020. The costs of these meetings are forecast on the same basis as those during / prior to the development of the Initial Proposals. These are forecast to cost c. £28,000 and c £31,000 respectively.
14. Similarly, the plan includes 3 sets of public meetings in the Islands / Mainland council areas: during / prior to the development of the initial proposals for wards; during the public consultation on the initial proposals for wards and during public consultation on any revised proposals for wards. The cost of these meetings are forecast on the same basis as those for the Islands-only council areas. These are forecast to cost c. £40,000 and c. £41,000 respectively.

15. The plan includes provision for local inquiries. It assumes that the Commission would not choose to hold a local inquiry until after it had considered responses to its public consultations on wards. The plan assumes that local inquiries could take place after consultations on both Initial and Revised proposals for wards. The previous version of the plan had made provision for local inquiries only after consultation on revised proposals for wards. The overall amount forecast for local inquiries has not, however, been increased as it seems improbable that the Commission would require two local inquiries in a particular area: the amount forecast has been redistributed: providing for 2 local inquiries (over the 3 council areas) after the initial proposals for wards and 1 after any revised proposals for wards

Conclusion

16. The Commission is invited to provide any comments on the draft Corporate Plan.

Secretariat
May 2018