

## Scottish Boundary Commissions Risk Management Policy

### Background

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland and the Boundary Commission for Scotland are two separate advisory non-departmental public bodies, the former sponsored by Scottish Government and the latter by Scotland Office. Collectively this paper refers to them as the Scottish Boundary Commissions.
2. A shared Secretariat, staffed by employees assigned from Scottish Government, supports the Scottish Boundary Commissions in their work. Generally, only one review is formally under way at any one time. During a review the lead commission tends to meet monthly while the other commission will meet quarterly or less frequently.
3. This policy sets out the approach to be taken to Risk Management within the Scottish Boundary Commissions.
4. On an annual basis, the Scottish Boundary Commissions will review the operation of the Risk Management Policy, ensuring that the policy is supporting the effective and efficient operation of the organisation, that it helps the business respond to business risks, and that adequate controls are implemented.
5. Any changes to the Risk Management Policy should notified to the sponsor teams in Scottish Government and Scotland Office.

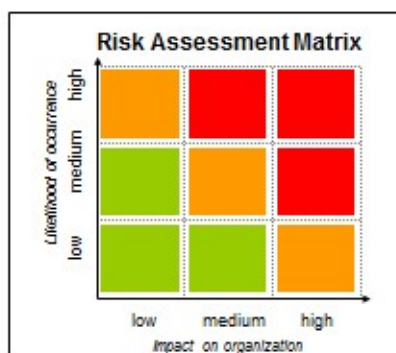
### Risk Register

6. The Secretary is responsible for preparing a risk register following guidance set out in the Scottish Government Public Finance Manual, and the HM Treasury Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (the "Orange Book").
7. The Secretary is responsible for identification of risks and their inclusion on the risk register, consulting sponsor teams and Scottish Boundary Commissions as necessary. The register should be updated at the start of each review and agreed with the Scottish Boundary Commissions.
8. The risk register shows the weightings of each risk for likelihood and impact, each classified as high, medium or low.

	<b>Likelihood</b>
<b>High (H)</b>	High probability of occurrence
<b>Medium (M)</b>	Conceivable might occur
<b>Low (L)</b>	Unlikely to occur

	<b>Potential Impact</b>
<b>High (H)</b>	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.
<b>Medium (M)</b>	Risks that have a noticeable effect on Commission operations. Each will cause a degree of disruption to outputs and may affect budgets.
<b>Low (L)</b>	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.



9. When considering the risk register, each Commission has the opportunity to :
  - flag up at an early stage any areas of concern;
  - identify and agree any significant change to the risk register
  - agree appropriate mitigating actions
10. The lead commission during any review should consider the risk register at least quarterly to ensure that appropriate mitigating actions are in place for any risks in the red or amber categories. Both Commissions should review the risk register annually.
11. The risk register lists for each risk mitigating actions, target timescales and any residual risk after these measures are carried out. Where a residual risk remains categorised as red, or where the mitigating actions require additional resource implications not included in the allocated budget, the Secretariat should escalate the risk to the sponsor teams in Scottish Government and Scotland Office for their consideration.
12. The Secretary is considered the risk owner for all risks, and may delegate responsibility to individual staff members as appropriate within the context of normal operations.

#### Other risks

13. Lower level risks (i.e. those not included on the risk register) will be managed as appropriate by the Secretariat as part of its normal operation.

#### Further Guidance

14. Further guidance on risk management is available in the Scottish Government Public Finance Manual, and the HM Treasury Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts (the "Orange Book").

Secretariat  
October 2018

	Type of Risk	Description	Effect	Likelihood/Impact	Mitigating Action	Target Date	Mitigated likelihood/impact	Notes
1.	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. Consider use of NRS published data rather than ERO supplied data.  Review relationship with NRS  Consider local authority data for forecasts	Ongoing	L/H	Expected transfer of responsibility to Electoral Commission has not happened. Need to pursue MoU
2.	S	Loss of staff with appropriate skills.  Unexpected loss of Commissioner	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  Filling of both current commissioner vacancies will increase resilience/reduce likelihood of meeting being inquorate.	Ongoing  Ongoing  Vacancies to be filled autumn 2018	M/L	Minutes record reasons for decisions
3.	ER	Ineffective public consultation processes.	Loss of stakeholder confidence  Damage to reputation of Commission.	L/H	Actively maintain stakeholder relationships.  Early engagement with islands councils  Provide clear information and guidance to the public on the Commission's work and processes.	Ongoing.  SAA attended 23/11/2017  SPPPP attended 27/02/2018  AEA attended 6/03/2018  Met 3 islands councils June/July 2018	L/M	The Secretariat liaises with other UK Commissions and meets regularly with political parties, the Electoral Commission, EROs and others

ER – External Relations; P –Property; S – staff; T – Technical; IR – Islands Review

	Type of Risk	Description	Effect	Likelihood/Impact	Mitigating Action	Target Date	Mitigated likelihood/impact	Notes
4.	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.	Ongoing.	L/M	
5.	ER	Changes to, and events in, external political landscape	Delays to delivery of review milestones eg constraints around announcements.  Uncertainty over electoral reform affecting decision making over review timing (islands review, interim reviews, Scottish Parliament).	M/M	Ensure effective liaison between Secretariat and sponsor department in order to build known events into project planning.	Ongoing	M/M	The Scottish Government work on electoral reform – Bill timing uncertain but likely 2019–20
6.	P/T	Unavailability of offices/theft or failure of equipment/computer systems	Inability to operate from usual offices or possible loss of access to computers, network and data.	L/H	Secretariat Business Continuity Plan Data backups under SCOTS. Ensure appropriate physical security precautions. Migration to SCOTS ensures technical support from Scottish Government. Staff access to alternative working from other offices/home	Ongoing	L/M	.
7.	S	Insufficient staff resource to conduct overlapping reviews	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 contingency resources to bring in temporary staff, create new posts or pay overtime. Liaise with SG recruitment agencies over provision of temporary staff	Ongoing	M/M	Contacted ASA Recruitment who have ready supply of GIS staff – time estimate 1–2 weeks to fill a post

ER – External Relations; P –Property; S – staff; T – Technical; IR – Islands Review

	Type of Risk	Description	Effect	Likelihood/Impact	Mitigating Action	Target Date	Mitigated likelihood/impact	Notes
8.	ER	Decisions taken by BCS impacting on secretariat resources	Risk to completion of review(s) within statutory deadline	M/H	Project planning and monitoring. Ensure sufficient funding to bring in temporary staff as required	Ongoing	M/M	Future review requirements of BCS should be known by late 2018
9.	IR	Expectations of islands councils in light of new legislation not met	Risk to reputation of Commission and that final recommendations not accepted	M/M	Effective communication with councils and consultation with communities. Liaison with SG to keep sighted on progress.	Ongoing	L/M	Initial meetings with councils conducted June/July 2018
10.	IR	Refresh of website not complete in time for public consultation	Undermine expectations of effective consultation	L/M	Project management of refresh to ensure on-time completion; explore contingency arrangement for hosting consultation materials (eg SG portal)	End 2018	L/L	Progress is slower than anticipated but completion still expected in good time for any LGBCS consultation.
11.	IR	Legislative delays/change	Uncertainty could affect delivery of all 6 reviews in time for 2022 elections	M/M	Monitor progress of Islands Bill and liaise with SG over progress of electoral reform work. Project planning to inform commission decisions about review timing in light of any change to powers (2 and 5 member wards) or term lengths	ongoing	M/L	Stage 3 Islands Bill expected May 2018; [post-electoral reform legislation may not allow use of 2 and 5 in hybrid councils

ER – External Relations; P –Property; S – staff; T – Technical; IR – Islands Review