

Name change to Boundaries Scotland

Purpose

1. This paper updates the Commission on the pending renaming of the “Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland” to “Boundaries Scotland”.

Background

2. Section 28 of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 provides for the change of name of LGBCS (“the Commission”) to “Boundaries Scotland”. This change reflects the outcome of discussions between the Commission and Scottish Government over the preference for a name that removes the exclusive focus on local government, given the Commission assumed responsibility for reviews of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions in 2017.

28 Boundaries Scotland

(1) The commission originally constituted under section 12 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is to continue to be a commission but is renamed and is to be known as Boundaries Scotland.

(2) Accordingly—

(a) in section 12(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, for the words from “Local” to the end of the subsection substitute “commission to be known as Boundaries Scotland which is to carry out the functions conferred on it by or under this Act or any other enactment.”,

(b) any reference in any enactment to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is, unless the contrary intention appears, to be construed as a reference to the commission’s new name, Boundaries Scotland.

(3)The schedule makes further provision in consequence of this section.

3. Section 28, along with other sections relating to the work of the Commission, has not yet been commenced but Scottish Government officials have indicated that they are planning a commencement date of 14 May 2021. This means that the Commission’s name will change before submission of the final reports on electoral arrangements arising from the Islands Reviews which are due by the end of May. The same commencement order will bring into force the provisions allowing for use of 2 and 5 member wards across Scotland as well as the new parliamentary procedures for implementation of the Commission’s recommendations.

Discussion

4. Without any steps taken to communicate the name change it is possible that confusion over the role of Boundaries Scotland will arise. This would compound the ongoing confusion in some places over the different responsibilities of the

Commission and the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is the reserved body responsible for reviews of Scottish constituencies in the UK parliament.

5. The renaming of the Commission provides an opportunity for a low-key rebranding and communications exercise to ensure stakeholders such as MPs, MSPs, councils, COSLA and others are aware of the change and clear as to the scope of the Commission's work.
6. The Commission will no doubt be reassured that the legislation provides for it to remain a commission and can continue to be referred to as such; commissioners will continue to be commissioners.

Rebranding

7. A low-key rebranding of both LGBCS and BCS took place in 2019 when the websites for both commissions were refreshed. New logos were commissioned at the time and the Secretariat took the opportunity to procure a logo for Boundaries Scotland which can be used to replace the existing LGBCS logo:



8. On social media, a new Facebook page will be created for Boundaries Scotland and the Secretariat will seek to either rename the existing Twitter account or create a new one. Both will use the new logo.
9. The website will be updated with the new logo and the name will be changed as appropriate. The domain boundaries.scot has been reserved to replace lgbc-scotland.gov.uk. Guidance documents, for example, will be updated with the new name but historical documents will retain the name of LGBCS. The consultation site used by the Commission will become consult. boundaries.scot.
10. Other administrative issues include securing a new email address to replace lgbcscottishboundaries.gov.uk, new headed paper and it is proposed that the numbering of agendas and meeting papers will restart at one.
11. It is not intended that any abbreviation of the new name will be used.

Communications

12. While the rebranding outlined above is largely administrative, the renaming does provide an opportunity to publicise the Commission's work. It is suggested that the Commission write to key stakeholders such as Cosla, councils, political parties, MSPs and others alerting them to the name change but also setting out the Commission's responsibilities and the legislative framework within which it works. This would include the changes arising from the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 and the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020. An outline of future work priorities could also be set out. This would be timely given the 2020 Act also changes the parliamentary procedure which will apply to the reports arising from the Islands reviews and the misunderstanding in some quarters over the legislation governing the Commission's review work.

13.If the Commission would like to pursue this then a draft letter will be provided for consideration. It might be worth considering producing this professionally in the form of a publicity flier rather than a traditional letter.

Costs

14.There will be minimal costs associated with any of this work. The cost of the new logo was included in the 2019 website rebranding work. There will be no cost other than staff time for changing the website and social media although some assistance may be needed from the website host or from the design agency APS if a flier is to be designed.

Conclusion

15.The Commission is invited to:

- note plans for rebranding
- agree use of the new logo from 14 May 2021
- consider whether it wishes to either write to stakeholders in May or issue a publicity flier
- consider if there are further actions it wishes to take forward in support of the renaming

Secretariat
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