

**Minutes of Meeting held in person and by videolink at
10:00am on Thursday 9 February 2022**

Present

Mr R Hinds, Chair
Prof. A Henderson, Deputy Chair
Mr R Bean
Mr J Collins
Mr G Macmillan
Dr S Walker

Mr C Wilson
Mr D Campbell
Mrs Y Croll
Mr A Grant

Apologies

1. Ms I Drummond-Murray, Secretary

Declaration of Interests

2. The Chair and Deputy Chair declared an interest in Paper 35 as they both reside within the council area grouping of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas. Dr Walker declared an interest in Paper 34 as she resides within the council area grouping of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas.

Minutes of previous meeting

3. The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2022 without amendment.

Matters arising

4. The Commission were updated that an individual has verbally accepted the position of Finance and Governance Officer. A start date has still to be agreed.
5. The Commission were informed that interviews are scheduled to take place mid-February for a new Chair and new Commissioner(s).
6. The Commission were informed that the Boundary Commission for Scotland (BCS) is in the middle of developing its Final Recommendations and will submit a report to Parliament in late June 2023.
7. The Secretariat advised they were still awaiting an update from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) regarding their work on customer satisfaction and council size. The Commission asked the Secretariat to pursue LGBCE.
8. The Chair and Deputy Chair gave a brief update of their recent meeting with the Chief Executive of Scottish Parliament, as the Commission prepares for the first consultation stage of the Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries.

9. The Chair advised he plans to meet with the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and the Minister for Parliamentary Business before the Chair's term in office concludes at the end of May 2023.

Business update

10. The Chair informed the Commission of his recent meeting with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA).

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries (oral update)

11. The Commission were informed that draft provisional proposals for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas will be brought to the 9 March 2023 meeting.
12. The Secretariat and Mr Macmillan provided a brief update on their initial meeting with APS regarding designing publicity materials for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries.
13. The Secretariat provided a brief update on a demonstration they had received from Citizen Space on the geospatial functionality of their consultation platform. The Commission asked the Secretariat to bring a paper to the next Commission meeting detailing sample questions and how it may structure a consultation questionnaire.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft Provisional Proposals for Fife Council area (Paper BS 30)

14. At its December 2022 meeting the Commission had considered Paper 28 (Draft Provisional Proposals for Fife Council area) but asked the Secretariat to refine the boundaries in Option 2 in a way that better recognised Rule 3 of the legislation, by Burntisland and Lochgelly.
15. The Commission re-considered the three options from the earlier paper and an Option 2A which had refined the proposed boundary by Burntisland and Lochgelly. All of the options presented considered Rule 1 and had proposed five constituencies within Fife Council area.
16. The Commission preferred Option 2A because it offered an improved boundary and improvement on the existing variation from the electoral quota.
17. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 2A as its Provisional Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft Provisional Proposals for East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas (Paper BS 31)

18. The Commission discussed Paper BS 31 and the three options presented for East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas. All of the options presented proposed five constituencies within the three Ayrshire Council areas.
19. The Commission preferred Option 1A as it retained three of the existing constituencies; improved variation from the electoral quota from Option 1 (existing constituencies); proposed a recognized boundary – the M77 motorway;

and retained an Ayr constituency, maintaining local ties between Ayr, Prestwick and Troon.

20. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 1A as its Provisional Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft Provisional Proposals for Highland Council area (Paper BS 32)

21. Prior to discussing the four options presented in Paper BS 32 the Secretariat informed the Commission on an area limit rule used during recent reviews of UK Parliament constituency boundaries. This is that no constituency should be larger than 13,000 km². Options 1 and 4 had proposed all constituencies within 13,000 km². Option 2 had proposed a constituency over 13,000 km² and Option 3 had proposed a constituency over 14,000 km².
22. All of the options presented proposed three constituencies within Highland Council area.
23. The Commission agreed that Option 1 was an acceptable arrangement because: it avoided Kyle of Lochalsh and the Isle of Skye, areas linked by the Skye Bridge, being in separate constituencies; retained one urban and two rural constituencies rather than two urban-rural constituencies as shown in Option 4; and proposed smaller constituencies by area than Options 2 and 3.
24. Prior to agreeing its Provisional Proposals, the Commission asked the Secretariat to refine the boundaries in Option 1: at Fort Augustus; by Tomatin and area of the Monadhliath Mountains; and to improve variation from the electoral quota in the proposed Inverness and Nairn constituency. The Commission also asked the Secretariat to present a Highland-Moray constituency for consideration.
25. The Commission felt Options 2, 3 and 4 did not sufficiently take account of the special geographical circumstances of the area.
26. The Commission asked the Secretariat to bring a paper with a revised Option 1 to the next Commission for consideration.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft Provisional Proposals for Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Council areas (Paper BS 33)

27. The Commission discussed Paper BS 33 and the three options presented for Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Council areas.
28. The Commission preferred Option 1A because it minimised change to the existing constituency boundaries while offering improved variation from electoral quota.
29. The Commission noted Option 2 may break local ties in Stirling and Option 1 had proposed a Clackmannanshire and Dunblane constituency with wider variation from the electorate quota.
30. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 1A as its Provisional Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft Provisional Proposals for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas (Paper BS 34)

31. The Commission discussed Paper BS 34 and the two options presented for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas.
32. The Commission agreed that Option 1 was an acceptable arrangement but asked the Secretariat to refine the boundaries in Option 1 in a way that improved variation from the electoral quota and recognised community ties by Keith in Moray and Maud in Aberdeenshire.
33. The Commission felt Option 2 proposed higher than desirable variation from the electoral quota.
34. The Commission asked the Secretariat to bring a paper with a revised Option 1 to the next Commission for consideration.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft Provisional Proposals for City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas (Paper BS 35)

35. The Commission discussed Paper BS 35 and the five options presented for City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas.
36. The Commission noted the challenge for this grouping in respecting local government areas, while offering improved variation from the electoral quota, and taking account of local ties.
37. The Commission preferred Option 3 but asked the Secretariat to refine the boundaries in Option 3 in a way that took better account of Rule 3 of the legislation at Fountainbridge and to the south of Edinburgh airport.
38. The Commission felt Options 1 and 2 proposed wide variation from electoral quota.
39. The Commission asked the Secretariat to provide larger scale maps when developing a revised Option 3.
40. The Commission asked the Secretariat to bring a paper with a revised Option 3 to the next Commission meeting for consideration.

Electoral reform consultation (Paper BS 36)

41. The Commission discussed Paper BS 36 and considered how it wished to respond to the electoral reform consultation.
42. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare a draft response for comment at the next Commission meeting, which will include the advantages and disadvantages of all the options presented and also include Appendix B from Paper 36.

Finance update (Paper BS 37)

43. The Commission noted the finance update.

Future meetings (oral)

44. The Commission will next meet on 9 March 2023. The Secretariat were asked to canvass for dates in early April and mid May 2023.

Any other business

45. There was no other business.