

Minutes of Meeting held by videolink at 10am on Thursday 12 October 2021**Present**

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

Ms I Drummond-Murray, Secretary
Mr C Wilson
Mr D Campbell
Mr D Logue

Apologies:

Dr S Walker

Declaration of Interests

1. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

2. The Commission agreed the minutes of its 6 September 2021 meeting without amendment.

Matters arising

3. There were no matters arising that would not be covered in the rest of the agenda.

Business Update

4. The Secretary updated the Commission that the Boundary Commission for Scotland would publish its Initial Proposals for the UK Parliament 2023 Review on 14 October 2021.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements Update (Boundaries Scotland Paper 004)

5. The Commission discussed Boundaries Scotland Paper 004. The Commission noted that the Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee had written to the Chair in response to his letter on behalf of the Commission, offering to meet.
6. The Commission discussed its disappointment at the decisions made by Parliament not to approve its recommendations for Argyll & Bute and Highland council areas, and its objections to the rationale for those decisions given in the report of the Local Government and Housing and Planning Committee. The Commission thought that the report did not respect its independence, and implies that councils should have a veto over its recommendations, which is incompatible with the terms of the reviews set out in legislation. The Commission also expressed concern that a precedent may have been set that may undermine its review of Scottish Parliament boundaries, expected to begin in 2022.
7. The Commission noted that the Scottish Ministers are obliged by legislation to request it to give further consideration to its recommendations for Argyll & Bute

council area and Highland council area, but noted that any revised recommendations approved by Parliament could not be implemented in time for the May 2022 local government elections, given the need to provide 6 months' notice.

8. The Commission asked the Secretary to discuss with Scottish Government officials the timing and terms of the anticipated request from Scottish Ministers that the Commission carry out a further review of its recommendations in Argyll & Bute council area and Highland council area, and to communicate the problems with carrying out such a review for the Commission in the light of Parliament's considerations of its Islands Reviews recommendations.
9. The Commission also agreed to meet with the Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee.

Future meetings (oral update)

10. The Commission agreed to schedule its next meeting by correspondence

Any other business

11. There was no other business.