

**Minutes of Meeting held at  
Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh  
10 am on Thursday 16 May 2024**

**Present**

Prof. A Henderson, Chair  
Mr S Jones, Deputy Chair  
Ms A McNab  
Mr G Macmillan  
Mr A Stewart  
Mr M Smith

Ms K Mavor, Secretary  
Mr C Wilson  
Mr D Campbell  
Mr P Allan  
Ms Y Croll

**Apologies**

1. None

**Declaration of Interests/Connections**

2. The Commission noted previous declarations about the constituency each Commissioner resides in. Mr Jones declared that he resides within the constituency grouping of East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Council areas.
3. The Chair formally welcomed Mr Jones to his first meeting as Deputy Chair and Ms Mavor to her first meeting as Secretary.

**Minutes of previous meeting**

4. The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting of 22 February 2024 with minor amendments.

**Matters arising**

5. The Secretary reported that a date is still being sought for the Chair to meet with the Convenor of the SPPA (Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments) Committee.
6. The Secretary advised that a link to the published Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill was shared with the Commission.
7. The Secretary advised that the Commission for Ethical Standards had acknowledged Boundaries Scotland's response to their Draft Strategic Plan 2024-28.
8. The Commission noted that Ms McNab is planning to attend a Scottish Government Board Member Induction training event at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh on 21 May 2024. Mr Jones expects to attend a similar event later in 2024.
9. The Secretary reported that a letter had been sent to the previous Minister for Parliamentary Business George Adam following his meeting with the Chair and

Mr Wilson on 8 February 2024. A further letter had been sent to the Minister encouraging him to ask MSPs to provide more measured responses to the consultation on Revised Proposals.

### **Business update**

10. The Secretary advised she had received a letter from Kate Forbes MSP regarding her constituents having an issue with their current polling place and ward boundary in Knoydart. The Commission suggested that the response should include reference to the cancelled Electoral Review of Highland Council which would have resolved this issue in Knoydart. The Secretary will share a draft response with the Chair.
11. The Commission was informed that the recruitment process had started for a new Commissioner for Boundary Commission for Scotland.
12. The Chair updated the Commission that she had met with Daniel Johnson MSP to discuss his and the Labour Party's concerns regarding local inquiries. Following the meeting the Chair wrote to Mr Johnson clarifying the legislation relating to local inquiries.

### **Electoral Reform (oral)**

13. The Chair and Mr Wilson had appeared before the SPPA Committee on 28 March 2024. The Chair had sent a follow up letter to the Committee restating the points made. The Secretary agreed to share a link to the transcript of the Committee session.
14. The Chair, Secretary and Mr Wilson met with the Elections Team on 25 April 2024. A number of issues were discussed and agreement was made to meet on a more regular basis.
15. The Commission was informed a letter had been sent to Jamie Hepburn, MSP congratulating him on his new appointment as Minister for Parliamentary Business. The Chair offered to meet with him to discuss the Commission's current work.

### **Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Revised Proposals constituency boundaries – oral update**

16. The Commission heard that the Chair had hosted a press conference on 15 April 2024 to publicise the commencement of the public consultation on the Commission's Revised Proposals. The Commission believed there was some merit in hosting similar events at the start of future public consultations.
17. The Commission was pleased with the coverage the marketing company had gathered by managing the Commission's Facebook page. The Commission agreed that the marketing company should continue to be used for any future consultations.
18. The Commission noted the summary of responses to the consultation on its Revised Proposals. The Secretariat will analyse all the responses and alert the Commission if any of the statutory triggers have been met for holding a local inquiry. The Secretariat will email the Commission before the next meeting.

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Revised Proposals constituency boundaries – media coverage (Paper BS 92)**

19. The Commission noted the media coverage regarding the public consultation on Revised Proposals for constituencies.

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Final Recommendations Draft Paper (Paper BS 93)**

20. The Commission discussed Paper BS 93 and the draft style of its Final Recommendations/ Further Proposals meetings papers. The Commission provided some suggestions on content and structure.

**Finance update (Paper BS 94)**

21. The Commission noted the finance update.

**Risk Register (Paper BS 95)**

22. The Commission discussed the risk register and provided some suggested amendments.

**Island Communities Impact Assessment (Paper BS 96)**

23. The Commission discussed Paper BS 96, agreed an Island Communities Impact Assessment should be conducted and asked for a paper to be brought to the next meeting.

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, Revised Proposals – Local Inquiries (Paper BS 97)**

24. Following the meeting of 16 May 2024 the Commission separately considered Paper BS 97 via email. Paper BS 97 provided an overview of the consultation responses received and asked the Commission to reach a preliminary view whether any local inquiries should be held. It was noted that a more detailed summary of consultation responses will be provided at the 19 June 2024 Commission meeting. Any decisions made in relation to paper BS 97 did not preclude the Commission from agreeing to further local inquiries at the June meeting.

25. The Commission agreed it must hold a local inquiry (if there has been no previous local inquiry held) where a Council had objected to the Revised Proposals for constituencies and objections had been received from: Falkirk Council and East Lothian Council. It was agreed that a local inquiry should be held in Falkirk as there was a clear objection from Falkirk Council and a request for a local inquiry. Also, no previous local inquiries have been held in relation to the proposed constituencies within Falkirk Council area.

26. The Commission considered East Lothian Council's objection to the Revised Proposals. It was noted that the Commission has a discretion to not hold a further local inquiry if there has already been a local inquiry held in respect of the constituency. Before reaching a view on whether a second local inquiry should be held the Commission agreed that it should consider all consultation responses at the June meeting.

27. The Commission noted that only two constituencies received over 100 responses: Edinburgh North Eastern and Edinburgh Eastern, Tranent and

Musselburgh. Four bodies with over 100 electors objected to the revised proposals in East Renfrewshire Council area, East Lothian Council area and Falkirk Council Area. Before reaching a decision whether a local inquiry should be held in those constituencies with over 100 responses, the Commission agreed that it should consider the detail of all the consultation responses received at the June meeting.

28. The Commission confirmed its decision that a local inquiry should be held in Falkirk. It was agreed that a similar format to that taken at the Provisional Proposal stage should be taken in relation to the Falkirk local inquiry and details of possible venues were provided.

#### **Future meetings**

29. The Secretariat was asked to canvass for a meeting date in mid-June and mid-July 2024.

#### **Any other business**

30. The Commission had a general discussion with the Secretariat about the approach to be taken to the upcoming review of regions and the likely timescales.