

**Minutes of Meeting held in person and by videolink at
10:00am on Wednesday 27 July 2022**

Present

Mr R Hinds, Chair
Mr R Bean
Mr J Collins
Mr G Macmillan
Dr S Walker

Ms I Drummond-Murray, Secretary
Mr C Wilson
Mr D Logue
Mrs Y Croll

Apologies:

Prof. A Henderson, Deputy Chair

Present for pre-meeting only

Kenneth Pentland, Elections and FOI Division, Scottish Government
Angus Reid, Elections and FOI Division, Scottish Government

Pre-meeting

1. Angus Reid and Kenneth Pentland from the Elections and FOI Division of the Scottish Government introduced themselves to the Commission and discussed the role the Elections team has in supporting the work of the Commission.
2. They advised the Commission of Scottish Government thinking on future scrutiny of proposals, potential future electoral reform consultation and next steps on the Islands Reviews which were not accepted by Scottish Parliament.
3. The Commission thanked the officials for the update, and advised that they are keen to arrange a meeting between the Chair and the Minister responsible for the Commission's work.

Declaration of Interests

4. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

5. The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting of 7 April 2022 without amendment.

Matters arising

6. The Secretary reported that no update has been received from the Acting Ethical Standards Commissioner regarding the behaviour of a councillor during the Islands Review.
7. The Secretary updated the Commission that she has not heard back yet from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) regarding their work on customer satisfaction and council size.
8. The Secretary advised that Scottish Government recommend the use of Excel rather than specific Programme Management software for developing project

plans. The Secretariat will present an updated Scottish Parliament Review project management plan to a future meeting.

9. The Secretary advised that dates had been scheduled for the Chair to undertake Commissioner appraisals.
10. The Chair reported that he had met with Scottish Government but there was no update on the process of recruiting a new Chair and new Commissioners.

Business Update

11. The Secretary advised that David Logue is moving to a new post. The Commission thanked him for his long service and wished him well in his new role. The Secretary and Chair were discussing plans for David's replacement.
12. The Secretary reported that Scottish Ministers had issued the Commission with a Revised Code of Conduct and that the Secretariat will liaise with them to update the Register of Interests accordingly.
13. The Secretary advised that responsibility for the Commission had temporarily been transferred to the Minister of Parliamentary Business, George Adam MSP.

Future scrutiny of Commission proposals (oral)

14. The Commission noted the update from Kenneth Pentland that the Deputy First Minister met with the Presiding Officer on 17 March 2022 and that the Deputy First Minister wrote to the Chair outlining the outcome of that meeting.
15. The Commission also noted that the Clerk to the Standards Procedure and Public Appointments Committee (SPPA) Committee, Katy Orr, would be happy to have an informal meeting after the summer recess to discuss the work of Boundaries Scotland and the forthcoming review.
16. The Commission agreed to have regular discussions at its future meetings on the future scrutiny of Commission proposals.

Electoral Reform Consultation (oral)

17. The Secretary informed the Commission that she had been advised that hybrid in-person and online local inquiries were permissible during the Scottish Parliament Review: that changes to legislation to make this possible were not required.
18. The Commission agreed to provide a response on the planned SG consultation topics by mid-August, which would include the Commission's views on potential scrutiny of its proposals and other issues relating to future Scottish Parliament and Local Government reviews.

Islands Review (oral)

19. The Commission noted the pre-meeting update from SG officials that they will get back to the Commission outlining the next steps regarding the Minister formally asking the Commission to reconsider its proposals for Argyll & Bute council area and Highland council area.

Scottish Parliament Review - preparations for start of review (Paper BS 13)

20. The Commission discussed Paper BS 13, and suggested minor edits to the draft news release, and agreed a soft media launch when the Second Review commences on 1 September, noting there will be more media interest when the Commission publishes its initial proposals in Spring 2023.
21. The Commission asked the Secretariat to bring a more detailed communications and engagement plan paper to a future meeting, with details of key stakeholders and the interests they might have.

Scottish Parliament Review – 2021 Electorate (Paper BS 14)

22. The Commission discussed Paper BS 14 and noted the analysis of the current electorate of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions.
23. The Commission discussed that boundaries may be impacted in some areas where there has been no or low population growth due to the knock-on effect of higher population change in other areas.
24. The Commission asked the Secretariat to map the current divergence between constituencies and regions and bring them to the next meeting.

Scottish Parliament Review – Approach to designing constituencies and regions (Paper BS 15)

25. The Commission considered Paper BS 15 and discussed its approach for designing constituencies and regions for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries. The Commission asked the Secretariat to take forward the two approaches discussed in the paper.
26. The Commission asked the Secretariat to develop some draft boundary designs, based on the 2021 electorate, for discussion at a future workshop.
27. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare maps highlighting how the existing Scottish Parliament boundaries reflect council area boundaries.

Annual Report 2021-22 (Paper BS 16)

28. The Commission considered Paper BS 16 and agreed the draft Annual Report subject to some minor changes.

Finance Update (Paper BS 17)

29. The Commission noted the finance update.

Future meetings (oral)

30. The Commission asked the Secretariat to canvass for dates in early October and December 2022 for its next meetings.

Any other business

31. There was no other business.