

**Minutes of Meeting held in person  
1pm on Monday 18 December 2023**

**Present**

Prof. A Henderson, Chair  
Dr S Walker, Deputy Chair  
Mr G Macmillan  
Mr A Stewart  
Mr M Smith

Ms I Drummond-Murray, Secretary  
Mr C Wilson  
Mr D Campbell  
Mr P Allan  
Mrs Y Croll

**Declaration of Interests**

1. There were no declarations of interest.

**Minutes of previous meeting**

2. The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting of 14 November 2023 without amendment.

**Matters arising**

3. 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.
4. The Secretary stated that she still awaits the final version of the transcript of the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill session attended by the Chair and will circulate a link in due course.

**Business update**

5. The Secretary advised that she had circulated the Ethical Standards Commissioner Draft Strategic Plan 2024-28. The Commission were asked to review the plan and offer any comments and feedback to the Secretariat by 9 January 2024.
6. The Chair reported that interviews for the vacant Deputy Chair and Commissioner posts should be concluded before the festive break. The Chair also advised that interviews for a new Secretary are scheduled to take place in early January 2024.
7. The Commission discussed the UK Commissions Meeting held in Edinburgh on 7-8 December 2023. The meeting was jointly hosted by the Boundary Commission for Scotland and Boundaries Scotland. The Chair agreed to share a list of actions from the meeting in due course.

**Electoral Reform (oral)**

8. The Secretary advised that the Chair plans to meet with the Minister for Parliamentary Business in early 2024 but a date has still to be agreed. The Commission were advised that the Electoral Reform Bill is scheduled to be introduced in early 2024 and was now unlikely to contain any reference to

boundaries issues other than the date change for reviews of electoral arrangements from 2028 to 2031. The Commission expressed its concern over the absence of changes to the approval process and the serious implications for its work.

#### **Risk Register (Paper BS 80)**

9. The Commission discussed the risk register and asked the Secretariat to make some amendments including a specific risk around electoral reform and the proposed review of legislation. The Commission asked the Secretariat to design two risk registers, one for boundary reviews and another for corporate matters.

#### **Data Protection – Shared Service (Paper BS 81)**

10. The Commission considered whether to participate in a data protection shared services agreement. The Commission asked the Secretariat to draft a paper with further information such as expected costs for a future next meeting.

#### **Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Local Inquiries on Provisional Proposals for Constituencies (oral)**

11. The Commission were given a brief update on the local inquiries conducted so far. The Secretary updated the Commission on the concerns raised over whether or not an inquiry had been triggered by a relevant representation in Edinburgh. The Commission noted no response had yet been received from the body raising the concern and that an inquiry could be held later in the review process.
12. The Commission asked the Secretariat to circulate the transcripts and Assistant Commissioner reports of the inquiries when they were available.

#### **Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – next steps**

13. The Commission noted that two local inquiries are scheduled to take place in early January 2024.
14. The Commission suggested publishing the transcripts of the local inquiries in mid January 2024. The Assistant Commissioner reports are to be published after the next Commission meeting.

#### **Finance update (Paper BS 82)**

15. The Commission noted the finance update and agreed the Secretary should review the budget for 2024-25 and if necessary report back an concerns over the budget reduction proposed by Scottish Government

#### **Future meetings**

16. The next meeting is scheduled for 22 February 2024.

#### **Any other business**

17. The Chair, on behalf of the Commission, thanked the Secretary for her nine years of service to the Commission and wished her well in her retirement. The Chair also thanked the Deputy Chair for her support and service on the Commission as her appointment concludes at the end of December.