

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

**Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh
Tuesday 30 May 2017**

Present

Mr R Hinds, Chair
Mr R Bean
Prof. A Henderson
Dr S Walker

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

Declaration of Interests

1. There were no changes to any declarations previously given.

Minutes of previous meeting

2. The Commission confirmed its agreement of the minutes of the 14 March 2017 meeting.

Matters arising

3. The Secretary updated the Commission regarding the ongoing process to appoint a new deputy chair, reappoint existing members of the Commission and potentially appoint a further Commission member. The Secretary agreed to keep the Commission informed of any developments.
4. The Secretary confirmed that the research commissioned into Councillors' Roles and Workload had been published on the Commission's website and COSLA, SOLACE and councils invited to offer any comments. The Commission noted that to date there had been little response and restated its aim to work closely with stakeholders wishing to engage in further dialogue.

Business Update

5. The Secretary highlighted key activity since the March meeting including the local government elections in May and the calling of the UK General Election for 8 June.
6. The Secretary gave a brief update on the work of the Boundary Commission for Scotland with the on-going 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies.
7. The Commission noted that its website was recently attacked by a ransomware virus. No data was lost during the attack but public users were unable to access the website for over a week while a new server was installed. A new maintenance contract has been established to improve security of the website. The Secretariat are also investigating the possibility of hosting the websites within the Scottish Government's IT network in the future, so that all of the Secretariat IT support is supplied within the Scottish Government IT network.

8. The Chair reminded the Commission that he will be meeting the Minister for Parliamentary Business, with Prof Henderson, on 13 June 2017. The Chair agreed to feedback to the Commission after the meeting.

Scottish Parliament Review (Paper LGBCS 2416)

9. The Commission assumed responsibility for reviewing Scottish Parliament constituency boundaries on 18 May 2017, following commencement of section 8 of the Scotland Act 2016. The Commission requested further information from the Secretariat to assist in preparations for their meeting with the Minister for Parliamentary Business in June 2017 and also to further inform their decision regarding scheduling of the next review of Scottish Parliament constituencies.

Islands Review (LGBCS Paper 2415)

10. The Commission discussed Paper 2415 and noted a number of issues which the Commission wished to consider prior to undertaking any review under the remit of the Bill. The Commission asked that a summary of these be included in the briefing for the meeting with Scottish Ministers.

Reviews of Local Government Electoral Arrangements (LGBCS Paper 2417)

11. The Commission considered LGBCS Paper 2417 and welcomed the Secretary and Mr Bean's feedback following their recent visit to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The Commission noted with interest the LGBCE's differing approach to a number of aspects of Electoral Review processes. These included earlier consultation with Councils regarding councillor numbers and boundaries, and also the steps taken to ensure Council engagement with the public during consultation periods. The Commission agreed, where legislation permits it, to consider these alternative processes when undertaking future reviews.
12. The Commission agreed that the report of the Local Government and Communities Committee on the 5th Reviews should be discussed with the Minister for Parliamentary Business with a view to determining a remit and timescale for progressing its recommendations with Scottish Government colleagues.
13. The Commission noted the recent letter from the Minister for Parliamentary Business where he indicated his intention to issue a further Direction to limit the scope of any administrative reviews undertaken under s14(2) of the 1973 Act. The Commission accepted the rationale for such a Direction but considered that it would be helpful to retain flexibility and discretion to consider requests. With that in mind it was agreed that it would be suggested to Scottish Government that 500 affected electors should generally be the limit for an ad hoc review. The Commission noted that any such Direction would have implications for the review requested by Dundee Civic Trust.

Administrative Review: Cardowan/Stepps (Oral Update)

14. The Commission agreed that the public consultation on the Commission's initial proposals for the Administrative Area boundary review at Cardowan will take place after the UK General Election on June 8. The consultation will be hosted

online using the Scottish Government's consultation hub. The Secretariat agreed to share details of the website with the Commission prior to the commencement of the consultation period.

LGBCS Annual Report 2016-2017 (Paper LGBCS 2418)

15. The Commission considered the draft Annual Report for 2017-2018 and agreed it subject to a number of amendments.

Review of Governance (Paper LGBCS 2419)

16. The Commission considered Paper 2419 and agreed the Standing Order template document at Appendix A, subject to some minor amendments and asked the Secretary to work towards updating all governance documents listed in Paper 2419 and keep the Commission updated on progress.

Finance Update (Paper LGBCS 2420)

17. The Commission noted the current financial position and asked that greater detail be included in the narrative that accompanies the Financial Update in Appendix A. The Commission also asked that year to date expenditure and year to date budget figures are included in future finance updates. The Commission noted that the current 2017-18 budget is £184k rather than the figure of £171K previously notified by Scottish Government.

Future Meetings(Oral Update)

18. The Commission asked the Secretariat to canvass for suitable dates for the next Commission meeting in late August or early September 2017 unless an earlier date is warranted by urgent business.

Any Other Business

19. There were no items for consideration.