

**Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland**

**Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh  
Tuesday 12 September 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 Campbell  
Mr D Logue

**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 30 May 2017 meeting.

**Matters arising**

3. The Secretary advised the Commission that the Scottish Government had agreed in principle to fund the appointment of an additional Commissioner to assist with future reviews. The timing would be agreed with Scottish Government but the Commission saw no reason to delay commencement of the process.
4. The Secretary and Chair advised the Commission that they plan to meet with Sally Loudon, Chief Executive of COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) on 18 October 2017 to discuss the research into councillor workload published by the Commission earlier this year, and future work priorities.
5. The Secretary advised the Commission of the progress of the 2018 UK Parliament Review being carried out by the BCS (Boundary Commission for Scotland). The BCS expects to consult on its Revised Proposals for UK Parliament constituencies in October 2017.
6. The Secretary noted that she and the Chair had met with the Minister for Parliamentary Business in June and that this meeting had been discussed at a recent teleconference of the Commission.
7. The Secretariat advised the Commission that following the attack on its website in May it had made improvements to the security of its websites.

**Business Update**

8. The Secretary advised the Commission that the Scottish Government's Programme for Government had recently been launched, including a commitment to "decentralise power to a more local level in Scotland and launch

a comprehensive review of local governance ahead of a Local Democracy Bill later in this Parliament". No further information is yet available and the Secretary advised that she will continue to monitor this.

9. The Secretariat advised the Commission that a draft order had now been prepared by Scottish Government to implement its recommendations as a result of the Administrative Boundary review at Keltybridge, which was completed in October 2015. The Commission discussed publicising the change to the council area boundaries in the area when its recommendations come into effect.
10. The Secretary advised that the COSLA conference is due to be held in Crieff on 5 and 6 October 2017. The Secretary and Commissioners will decide whether to attend once the agenda is published.
11. The Commission discussed the UK Boundary Commissions' meeting in Cardiff scheduled on 16 and 17 November. The Commission suggested that building more time into the agenda for plenary discussion would be helpful. The Secretary agreed to feed back views on this matter to the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales. The Chair agreed to represent the Commission at the meeting diary permitting.
12. The Commission discussed the Scottish Government's upcoming consultation on electoral reform, which is intended to inform a future Elections Bill. The Commission asked the Secretary to write to Scottish Government to seek more information and invite officials to a future Commission meeting to provide an update.
13. The Secretariat advised the Commission that the new B1 post created as a consequence of the restructuring of the Secretariat is due to be advertised shortly within Scottish Government.

#### **Scottish Parliament Review timing (Paper LGBCS 2421)**

14. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2421, and having duly considered Option 2 and Option 3, decided to adopt Option 1: to commence the process of reviewing the constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament on a timescale to ensure that any changes can be in place for the next Scottish Parliament elections, expected in May 2021.
15. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare the necessary arrangements to announce the review on a timetable to be agreed and to include plans for communications and engagement with external interests, including Scottish Government, the Scottish Parliament and political parties.
16. It was noted that commencing the review now would mean that Na h-Eileanan Iar constituency would not yet have the protection proposed by the Islands (Scotland) Bill.
17. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare a paper on the Review process, including the legislative process once the Commission makes its recommendations.
18. The Commission noted that the electoral register data of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 would be likely to be the most up to date available for use during the Review.

**Islands (Scotland) Bill: draft Stage 1 evidence (Paper LGBCS 2422)**

19. The Commission considered Paper LGBCS 2422, and asked the Secretary to amend the draft written evidence to the Scottish Parliament Rural Economy & Connectivity Committee in Appendix C to clarify some of the points made and to recirculate for further consideration before submitting it to the Committee by 25 September. The Secretary would prepare briefing for attendance by the Chair at the Committee on 27 September.

**Administrative Review: Cardowan / Stepps (oral update)**

20. The Secretariat advised the Commission that the public consultation on the Commission's proposals for the Administrative Area Review of the boundary between Glasgow City council area and North Lanarkshire council area at Cardowan, Stepps, had closed on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The consultation had received around 190 responses. The Secretariat will present a paper summarising these responses to the next meeting and inviting the Commission to consider next steps.

**Risk management policy (Paper LGBCS 2423)**

21. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2423. The Commission considered whether some of the risks which are owned by the Secretary in the Risk Register might properly lie with the Commission itself or the Chair. The Commission wished to discuss this further at a future meeting before deciding its position.

**Website Refresh and Rebranding (Paper LGBCS 2424)**

22. The Commission discussed the options for website refresh and rebranding in Paper LGBCS 2424. The Commission approved plans to refresh its website. The Commission agreed its preference to badge itself as "Boundaries Scotland" to reflect that its remit now includes recommending Scottish Parliament Boundaries, whilst retaining (the) "Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland" as its formal name on official documents until such time as its name could formally be changed by legislation. It agreed to adopt the domain name "boundaries.scot" as part of the website refresh.
23. The Commission discussed a new logo, and agreed that it should be complementary to, but distinct from, any new logo for Boundary Commission for Scotland (BCS), which also intends to refresh its website. Commissioner Roland Bean agreed to assist the Secretariat and a Commissioner from the BCS in working with a design company to create a new logo for each Commission.

**Finance Update (Paper LGBCS 2425)**

24. The Commission noted the current financial position.
25. The Secretariat advised that it had held preliminary discussions with the Scotland Office and Scottish Government about the possibility of dividing all of the Secretariat's staff costs equally in future between the Commission and the BCS. This would simplify forecasting for the Secretariat, and should be broadly cost-neutral for both Commissions. The Secretariat advised that it would discuss this with auditors who are reviewing Scotland Office governance of BCS. The Commission agreed that it was satisfied in principle with dividing the staff costs in this manner.

### **Future Meetings (oral)**

26. The Commission asked the Secretariat to canvass for a suitable dates for its next meeting in the second half of November, and for monthly meetings in 2018, which will be agreed by email.

### **Any Other Business**

27. The Secretariat discussed that it was investigating the possibility of providing the Commission with electronic meeting papers which would allow the Commission to see options for constituencies in greater detail, as an additional alternative to printed papers. The Commission was content to explore this, and Commissioner Dr Susan Walker agreed to assist the Secretariat with testing electronic papers.

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