

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh Monday 19 February 2018

Present

Mr R Hinds, Chair
Prof. A Henderson, Deputy Chair
Mr R Bean

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

Apologies

Dr S Walker

Declaration of Interests

1. The Deputy Chair stated that she would be submitting a response to the Scottish Government consultation on Electoral Reform in her professional capacity and focussing only on questions unrelated to the work of the Commission. It was agreed that on that basis there was no conflict in relation to item 5 on the agenda for this meeting.

Minutes of previous meeting

2. The Commission approved the minutes of the 4 December 2017 meeting subject to a number of minor amendments.

Matters arising

3. Following discussions at its December 2017 meeting the Commission received an update on the number of EU nationals that may be added to the electorate in the event that there were changes to the franchise in any upcoming Scottish Parliament elections.
4. The Commission received an update from the Secretary following recent discussions with the sponsor department regarding the best way to fill the vacant Commissioner positions. The Commission agreed that recruitment should be carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible within the Scottish Government's framework.
5. The Commission noted that it is still awaiting the ministerial direction which would restrict the scope of administrative reviews undertaken under section 14(2) of the 1973 Act, to those affecting no more than 500 electors.
6. The Commission noted that the Order implementing the Administrative Area Boundary Review by Keltybridge in Fife came in to force at the beginning of February 2018.

Business Update

7. The Secretary reported on the progress of the Boundary Commission for Scotland's (BCS) 2018 Review of UK Parliament boundaries, including the on-going uncertainty for the future workload for BCS.
8. The Secretary informed the Commission that the recruitment process is progressing to fill the Secretariat's vacant B1 position and bring the Secretariat back up to the agreed staffing levels. Interviews are scheduled for 21 February 2018 and should a suitable applicant be found it is hoped that they may be in post before the end of March 2018.
9. The Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary will meet with the Minister for Parliamentary Business for a regular update on Tuesday 20 February 2018; a report will be given at the next meeting.
10. The Secretariat are planning to visit the Welsh Boundary Commissions in Cardiff before the end of March with a view to sharing ideas and best practice.
11. The Secretary gave an update regarding two aspects of the Commission's corporate governance responsibilities. A new Scottish Government action plan on cyber resilience was published in December 2017 to support and protect Scotland's public sector against cyber-attacks and thought was being given to what was required of LGBCS. Second, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) regarding how personal data is processed and stored come into effect in May 2018 and a review of its requirements was underway.
12. The Commission had a brief discussion regarding the annual meeting of UK Boundary Commissions which will be hosted by the Scottish Commissions towards the end of 2018. It was agreed that the Secretary will canvass the other Commission Secretaries for suggestions regarding potential changes to the meeting's style and content.

Electoral Reform consultation – draft response (Paper LGBCS 2433)

13. The Commission had a broad-ranging discussion in response to the Draft Response to the consultation on Electoral Reform.
14. The Secretary received a number of drafting suggestions which included clarification of the Commission's position on rolling reviews, and highlighting the importance of the legislative framework within which the Commission works and its independence. The Secretary agreed to include these and other suggestions in the final submission to the consultation which closes on 12 March 2018. A further draft would be circulated for comment.

Islands Review: approach to review (Paper LGBCS 2434)

15. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2434 and its general approach to the Islands Review and agreed the content subject to a number of minor suggestions.
16. The Commission agreed that preliminary discussions should start in the spring of 2018 and that the Secretariat will continue to prepare supporting materials as outlined in the paper. It was also agreed that the Secretary will write to council Chief Executives and the Chair will write to Island Council Leaders to make arrangements for face to face meetings when the review commences.

Administrative Review: Cardowan/Stepps (Paper LGBCS 2435)

17. The Commission discussed Paper 2435 and agreed its final recommendations as outlined in the draft report subject to a number of minor amendments. The Commission agreed that all Councils should be notified when the final recommendations are submitted to Scottish Ministers.

Risk Register (Paper LGBCS 2430)

18. The Commission discussed the Draft Risk Register and made a number of amendments and agreed to consider a revised draft at its next meeting.

Corporate Plan 2018–19 to 2020–21 (Paper LGBCS 2436)

19. The Commission discussed the Draft Corporate Plan and made a number of amendments and agreed to consider a revised draft at its next meeting. The Secretary would share the draft with the sponsor team to take their views.

Commission Rebranding

20. The Commission viewed the final version of its logo and also agreed to consider further alternative names for the Commission to recognise its new responsibilities regarding the Scottish Parliament boundaries, noting that recent advice from Scottish Government may preclude use of the preferred option of “Boundaries Scotland”. Commissioners agreed to forward their suggestions for alternative names to the Secretariat by 23 February 2018.

Finance update (Paper LGBCS 2437)

21. The Commission noted the current financial position and the full year forecast position with less than two months until the end of the financial year.

Future Meetings (oral)

22. The Commission agreed to meet towards the end of May and to make provision for a meeting in April should that be required.

Any Other Business

23. The Deputy Chair informed the Commission that she had accepted an invitation to take part in Scottish Government training for publicly appointed officials and agreed to share details of the training with the Chair.