

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh Tuesday 22 May 2018

Present

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

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

Declaration of Interests

1. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

2. The Commission approved the minutes of the 19 February 2018 without amendment.

Matters arising

3. The Secretary informed the Commission that the recruitment process for additional Commissioners was on-going and would be complete by November 2018. The Deputy Chair agreed to take part in a short video, produced by the Secretariat, as part of the attraction strategy for the recruitment round.
4. 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.
5. The Commission heard a brief update from the Secretariat regarding updating of the Commission's website. Work to update the new website should be concluded by the end of the summer.
6. The Deputy Chair advised she had attended a public appointments training event run by the Scottish Government. The Deputy Chair stated the course was useful and recommended that other members of the Commission take advantage of training opportunities provided by the Scottish Government. The Commission asked the Secretary to circulate details of further training opportunities.

Business Update

7. The Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary met with the Minister for Parliamentary Business on Tuesday 20 February 2018. There was a broad-ranging discussion covering topics such as the Islands Bill and the Electoral Reform Consultation and follow-up correspondence had been circulated to the Commission.

8. The Secretary gave an update on the Commission's plans to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) regarding how personal data is processed. The regulations come into effect in late May 2018. The Secretary has arranged to meet with the Scottish Government's Data Protection Officer for advice on the impact of GDPR for the Commission. The Secretary will update the Commission further at the next Commission meeting.
9. The Secretariat reported that members of the Secretariat had visited the Welsh Boundary Commissions in Cardiff in March 2018. The Secretary informed the Commission that this had been a worthwhile visit and had highlighted areas of common working and best practice whilst also recognising the different ways of working that exist in each Secretariat.
10. The Commission considered a recent letter from Jamie Hepburn MSP requesting an administrative area boundary review. Mr Hepburn had had discussions with North Lanarkshire Council officials and been alerted to a 500m stretch of road on the B802 that travels from North Lanarkshire council area, through East Dunbartonshire council area and then back into North Lanarkshire council area. Mr Hepburn stated that this meant that North Lanarkshire Council are unable to maintain the whole length of the road in this area. Mr Hepburn asked that the boundary be realigned to ensure the entire road was within North Lanarkshire Council area. The Commission asked the Secretariat to write to the councils involved and seek some background to the issue in an effort to establish the impact this issue is having on "effective and convenient local government" in the area, particularly since no electors are involved in this request for a review and the boundary is long-established. The Commission asked for Mr Hepburn to be advised accordingly.

Electoral Reform consultation – Update (Oral Update)

11. Maria McCann from the Scottish Government Elections Team had apologised for not being able to attend the meeting but provided a written update on the recent consultation on Electoral Reform.
12. The Commission agreed a number of actions for the Secretary to progress including asking for sight of the consultation responses and considering in more depth the post-consultation process and timing so that the Commission can maximise their input. The Commission also agreed to consider commissioning a literature search on international processes for decision-making around boundaries in an effort to inform the Commission's understanding of Parliament's role. The Secretary was asked to progress this issue.

Islands Review: update on legislation (Paper LGBCS 2438)

13. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2438 and noted the progress of the Islands Bill as it passes through the legislative process. The Commission took particular note of the amendments that may impact the Commission's work. The Commission agreed that legal advice would be helpful in considering the island-proofing duty and this should be considered further once Ministerial guidance is available.
14. The Commission discussed correspondence from North Ayrshire Council relating to a possible Stage 3 amendment to the Bill which would dis-apply parity requirements from wards with inhabited islands within the mainland

council areas. It agreed to brief Scottish Government officials on this matter and the Secretary was asked to circulate a draft response for comments.

Islands Review: project planning (Paper LGBCS 2439)

15. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2439 and the proposed project plan for the Islands Review and also its general approach to review work in the next 2 to 3 years. The Commission agreed to monitor the project plan on an on-going basis and consider the impact of rolling or interim reviews of local government wards as part of the sixth review of electoral arrangements. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare a paper on possible Interim Reviews.

Islands Review: meetings with island councils (Paper LGBCS 2440)

16. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2440 and agreed a number of amendments to the paper and to the draft letter to councils (Appendix A). The Commission went on to discuss its general approach to meeting with Councils and agreed a number of actions to be taken forward by the Secretary in planning the visits to the Islands.

Risk Register (Paper LGBCS 2441)

17. The Commission discussed the Draft Risk Register and made a number of minor amendments and agreed to consider further on an on-going basis.

Corporate Plan 2018–19 to 2020–21 (Paper LGBCS 2442)

18. The Commission discussed the Draft Corporate Plan and made a number of minor amendments before approving its contents for submission to Scottish Government and publication on the website.

Annual Report (Paper LGBCS 2443)

19. The Commission discussed the Draft Annual report and made a number of minor amendments before approving its contents.

UK Commissions Meeting (Paper LGBCS 2444)

20. The Commission discussed the UK Commissions meeting to be hosted in Edinburgh in 2018. It was agreed that the meeting would be held on 15 and 16 November 2018 [NB date changed to 1/2 November following discussion with other Commissions] and the Commission agreed that a city centre hotel would be more convenient for attendees travelling to represent the other UK Commissions. The Commission asked the Secretariat to continue to progress the booking of a suitable venue and inform attendees that a date had been agreed. The Secretary will consider possible themes as areas of discussion and possible guest speakers.

Administrative Review: Cardowan/Steps (Oral Update)

21. The Commission heard that the report containing the Final Recommendations to Ministers regarding the Administrative Boundary Review at Cardowan by Steps was published on 20 April 2018. The report sits with the Minister for 6 weeks after which it can be laid before Parliament. This six week period ends on 1 June 2018. To date there have been no representations submitted to the

Commission's sponsor team. The Commission agreed that they were keen to remain updated as to the outcome of the Minister's decision and progress of the order to enact the boundary change.

Finance update (Paper LGBCS 2445)

22. The Commission noted the current financial position.

Future Meetings (oral)

23. The Commission agreed to meet again in early September, late October and early December 2018. The Secretariat agreed to canvass the Commission for suitable meeting dates.

Any other business

24. No other business was discussed.