

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh Monday 10 September 2018

Present

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

Maria McCann, Scottish Government for Item 5.

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 22 May 2018 without amendment.

Matters arising

3. The Chair gave an update to the Commission regarding the ongoing recruitment process for additional Commissioners. The Chair hopes to be in a position to confirm the successful applicants at the Commission's next meeting in late October 2018. The Secretary informed the Commission that work to update the Commissioners' induction materials is ongoing and asked for any input.
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 but it is hoped that it will be received soon.
5. The Commission heard a brief update from the Secretariat regarding the process to refresh the Commission's website. Commissioners were invited to inspect the ongoing work on the BCS website at the conclusion of the meeting. Work to update the new website should be concluded by the end of the 2018.
6. The Secretary informed the Commission that the Scottish Government that the Scottish Government offer ad hoc training on finance and to new appointees and that any opportunities would be circulated when available.
7. Following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) in late May 2018 the Secretary had met with the Scottish Government's Data Protection Officer who had offered reassurance over the current processes followed and confirmed that the Secretary could undertake the role of DPO for the

organisation. The Secretariat's retention schedule for data would be reviewed in the near future and an update on any implications given to the Commission once complete.

8. The Commission discussed Jamie Hepburn MSP's recent request to review the council area boundary between East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire council areas at Howe Road on the B802. The Secretary informed the Commission that since writing to the councils concerned there has been no meaningful response from either council. The Commission agreed to contact the councils again to canvass opinion prior to commencing a review in the area.
9. The Secretary informed the Commission that a paper considering Interim Reviews would be discussed at the Commission's next meeting in October 2018.
10. The Secretary advised that Scottish Government have still to publish the Minister's decision regarding the completed administrative area boundary review at Cardowan, Steps.

Business Update

11. Following a cabinet reshuffle, Michael Russell MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Government Business and Constitutional Relations, is responsible for LGBCS and its work. A meeting would be arranged as soon as possible to discuss a range of matters including the Electoral Reform Bill announced in the Programme for Government.
12. The Secretary informed the Commission that the Boundary Commission for Scotland would be publishing its 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies Report on the afternoon of 10 September 2018. While some uncertainty over the future of the report remained, the Secretariat's work on it was complete for the time being.

Electoral Reform – Update (Oral Update – Maria McCann)

13. Maria McCann from the Scottish Government Elections Team provided an update following the conclusion of the consultation on Electoral Reform and discussed with the Commission a number of areas of relevance to future work. These included around term length, rolling reviews, use of 2 and 5 member wards and the role of Ministers and the Parliament in determining outcomes of reviews. With regard to the latter, the Commission emphasised the importance it attaches to its independence and concern that any changes should not undermine that position.

Electoral Reform—implementing boundary recommendations: international comparisons (Paper LGBCS 2446)

14. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2446 and thanked the Secretariat for providing such a wide ranging analysis.
15. The Commission agreed that it would be helpful to know more about what has happened when other UK and international boundary commissions have submitted recommendations in cases where they do not have the final say in determining electoral arrangements.
16. The Commission wished to further understand the processes whereby ministers or legislatures have made decisions upon recommendations, how often recommendations were not accepted, and how often recommendations were

amended before being implemented and what the nature and grounds of those amendments were. The Commission asked the Secretariat to explore this in a paper for its next meeting.

Islands Reviews: summary of Councils visits and issues arising (Paper LGBCS 2447)

17. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2447 and agreed a number of principles to consider when considering ward design for the Islands Reviews. The Commission also provided some guidelines for developing a policy and procedures booklet and its general approach for the reviews.

18. The Commission agreed to consider early draft options for one of the Island council areas at their next meeting as well as a draft policies and procedures booklet.

Scottish Parliament (Paper LGBCS 2448)

19. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2448 and considered the timing of the next review of Scottish Parliament constituencies. The Commission agreed that the Chair should include the timing of the review as a topic for discussion when meeting with the Cabinet Minister. The Commission's preferred approach is to defer the next review as the current statutory deadline of May 2022 is 3 years in advance of the next scheduled election.

UK Commissions Meeting (Paper LGBCS 2449)

20. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2449 and agreed that the Chair, Deputy Chair and Dr Walker would represent the Commission at the meeting of UK Boundary Commissions in Edinburgh on 1 and 2 November 2018. The Secretary advised that she had contacted a keynote speaker but was awaiting a response and was considering alternative speakers. It was agreed that a guided tour of Edinburgh Castle would be offered to delegates.

Local Governance Review (Paper LGBCS 2450)

21. The Commission discussed the Local Governance review and acknowledged the importance of the review to local stakeholders. The Commission agreed that the Secretary would draft a response and circulate amongst Commissioners for comment prior to submission.

Finance update (Paper LGBCS 2445)

22. The Commission noted the current financial position.

Future Meetings (oral)

23. The Commission agreed to meet again 30 October and 3 December 2018. The Secretariat agreed to canvass the Commission for suitable dates for a further meeting in late January or early February 2019.

Any other business

24. No other business was discussed.