

## Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

### Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh Tuesday 30 October 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 meeting on 10 September 2018 without amendment.

#### Matters arising

3. The Chair advised the Commission on the progress of appointments of additional Commissioners. The Secretary asked the Commissioners to give her feedback on the induction process for Commissioners once the appointments are made.
4. The Secretary noted that the Commission 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 Secretariat advised that the project to update the Commission's website remains in progress.
6. The Secretariat advised the Commission that North Lanarkshire Council and East Dunbartonshire Council had replied to the Secretariat's enquiries in regards to Jamie Hepburn MSP's request to review the council area boundary between East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire Council areas at Howe Road on the B802. The Commission agreed to consider the Councils' responses at the next meeting and asked the Secretariat to present these in a paper.
7. The Secretariat advised the Commission that an Order to implement the recommendations of the Commission's administrative review of the boundary between Glasgow City Council area and North Lanarkshire Council area at Cardowan, was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 25 October. The Secretariat will discuss publicising the change to the boundary with Scottish Government officials.

8. The Secretary advised the Commission that she had submitted the Commission's response to the Scottish Government's Local Governance Review, and would follow up with any further engagement required.

### **Business Update**

9. The Secretary advised the Commission that the Boundary Commission for Scotland had discussed its policy for the naming of constituencies at its most recent meeting, and hoped to be able to agree a joint policy over naming constituencies with the Commission, or to avoid having naming policies which conflict. The Commission agreed that it would be helpful to consider this at the appropriate time.

### **Electoral Reform update (Paper LGBCS 2461) and Electoral Reform – implementing boundary recommendations: international comparisons (Paper LGBCS 2452)**

10. The Commission discussed these papers together, as well as the Scottish Government's recently published "Analysis of Electoral Reform Consultation". The Commission noted the responses to the electoral reform consultation, in particular the high level of support for rolling reviews of electoral arrangements, the range of views on the numbers of councillors per ward the Commission should recommend, and what role Ministers and Parliament should have in approving, rejecting or amending its recommendations.
11. The Commission noted the conclusions of LGBCS Paper 2452 that for the jurisdictions it examined, it was rare for Ministers or Legislatures to reject or amend recommendations by Boundaries Commissions.
12. The Commission discussed possible changes to be included in the expected Electoral Reform Bill and agreed to engage with Scottish Government to ensure that the principle of the Commission's independence was highlighted and that any proposed changes to process respected that principle.

### **Islands Review: announcement of start of reviews (Paper LGBCS 2453)**

13. The Commission agreed to announce the commencement of the Islands Reviews in December, and would agree the final version of the news release and associated documents by correspondence.

### **Islands Reviews: draft guidance booklet (Paper LGBCS 2454)**

14. The Commission were content with the overall approach to guidance in the draft guidance booklet, and agreed to send the Secretariat editorial suggestions by email.

### **Islands Reviews: Shetland – draft communications and engagement plan (Paper LGBCS 2455)**

15. The Commission considered the options for communication and engagement outlined in the paper, including how to evaluate the success of different methods. The Commission asked the Secretariat to discuss the engagement strategy with the relevant Councils before the public consultation.

**Islands Reviews: Shetland ward design options (Paper LGBCS 2456)**

16. The Commission discussed the online and hardcopy versions of the draft meeting paper, and asked the Secretariat to make some adjustments to the format and content for future papers. The Commission agreed to trialling the use of both online and hardcopy meeting papers for future meetings.
17. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare some options which made full use of Commission's new powers under the Islands Bill, using 1, 2, 3 or 4 member wards

**Islands Reviews: Style Guide (Paper LGBCS 2460)**

18. The Commission noted the draft style guide, and asked the Secretariat to incorporate a number of amendments.

**Interim Reviews – principles and methodology (Paper LGBCS 2457)**

19. The Commission discussed its approach to interim reviews as presented in the paper, and noted that that the Scottish Government may make proposals for rolling reviews of local government boundaries. The Commission considered that its current criteria for identifying council areas for interim review may be useful in prioritising local authorities in a schedule of rolling reviews.
20. The Commission asked the Secretariat to prepare a paper for a future meeting which would provide the Commission with a framework for its consideration of how interim reviews could interact with a schedule of rolling reviews of local government areas.
21. The Commission asked the Secretariat to explore alternative presentations of the variations from electoral parity of wards shown in Appendix B. The Commission also asked the Secretariat to highlight differences in the Commission's electoral forecast and actual electorate data. An explanation of trends and changes would help the Commission better analyse and understand changes in variation from parity.

**Risk Register (Paper LGBCS 2458)**

22. The Commission was content with the updates to the Risk Register.
23. The Commission noted that the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) are key stakeholders, and agreed to write offering to meet them to discuss the Islands Reviews following the announcement of the start of the Reviews in December.
24. The Commission asked the Secretary to add a specific additional risk covering the planned electoral reform legislation, and to consider any risks arising from the UK's leaving the European Union.

**UK Commissions meeting (oral)**

25. The Commission discussed preparations for the UK Boundaries Commissions meeting in Edinburgh later in the week, and noted that this would provide a good opportunity to learn from other Commissions' efforts at public engagement in their recent reviews.

**Finance update (Paper LGBCS 2459)**

26. The Commission noted the Finance Update.

27. The Secretary advised that prior to the meeting she had received a request from the sponsor team in the Scottish Government to identify savings from the 2019–20 budget. The Commission agreed that the Secretariat should identify savings of up to 10% of the budget for 2019–20 as set out in the 2018–21 Corporate Plan and notify the sponsor team accordingly.

**Future Meetings (oral)**

28. The Commission agreed to confirm the date and time of the first Commission meeting of 2019 by email.

**Any other business**

29. No other business was discussed.