

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh at 10:00am on Monday, 25 March 2019

Present

Mr R Hinds, Chair
Prof. A Henderson, Deputy Chair (by video conference)
Mr R Bean
Dr S Walker
Mr G Macmillan

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 19 February 2019 without amendment.

Matters arising

3. The Secretary informed the Commission that the Scottish Government had announced the appointment of new Commissioner, Jonathan Collins on 18 March 2019.
4. Mr. Macmillan reported to the Commission on his recent public appointees' training course. The Chair asked Mr. Macmillan to share any transferable knowledge including details of the online portal when available.
5. The Secretary updated the Commission on the recent meeting with Whitespace, the contractor refreshing the Commission's website. Project completion is expected in time for the start of the public consultation on the Islands Reviews. The Secretariat will be meeting separately with Citizen Space regarding provision of an online consultation platform.
6. The Secretary advised there had been no further correspondence from Jamie Hepburn MSP regarding a request for an Administrative Area Boundary Review between East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire council areas at the B802 Howe Road.
7. The Secretary informed the Commission she had received no further information regarding the hosting of the 2019 meeting of UK Boundary Commissions; she would seek further information before the next meeting.

8. The Secretary advised that she had discussed the corporate plan with the Sponsor Team and is expecting to receive a letter of allocation for 2019–20 shortly. The Secretariat will publish the corporate plan on the website once the letter is received. The Secretary agreed to discuss the format of future Corporate Plans with the Sponsor Team.

Business Update

9. The Secretary informed the Commission that National Records of Scotland (NRS) had published electoral data from the 1 December 2018 electoral register. The Commission asked the Secretariat to review the data and produce a paper for the next meeting highlighting any key points and whether any interim reviews should be considered at this stage.

Electoral Reform (oral update)

10. The Commission discussed the impact of the uncertainties around the expected Electoral Reform legislation on the Commission's future planning of reviews, in particular a programme of rolling electoral reviews of local government areas. The Secretary will further discuss with Scottish Government colleagues and update the Commission in due course.
11. In response to correspondence from Scottish Government, the Commission agreed that it would support a change to the parliamentary process for implementation of administrative reviews if that was required to ensure consistency with the process for electoral reviews.
12. The Commission asked the Secretariat to produce a paper outlining options for completion of electoral reviews under different scenarios for electoral term lengths.

Electoral Reform – implementation of recommendations (Paper LGBCS 2476)

13. The Commission discussed the information provided on other jurisdictions and asked the Secretariat to prepare a chart summarising the types of objections that are raised and how these are addressed.
14. The Commission asked the Secretariat to revisit examples of 5th Review reports to consider how content might be presented differently in future in anticipation of changes to the approval process.
15. The Commission asked for further clarification of the process involved in the “Motion of Minister recommending approval” outlined in Appendix A.

Islands Reviews update (oral update)

16. The Commission were given an oral update on media coverage since its news release was published on 20 March 2019. The Secretariat will email the Commission links to the articles for their information.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements: council consultation (Paper LGBCS 2477)

17. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2477 and decided its representation and general approach to the upcoming meetings with Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council and agreed the content subject to a number of minor amendments.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements: communication and engagement (Paper LGBCS 2478)

18. The Commission considered Paper 2478 and asked the Secretariat to give further thought to monitoring the effectiveness of various means of publicising the public consultation, for example, to record as accurately as possible how respondents found out about the Commission's proposals and the number of unique users of the Commission's website/portal during the consultation.
19. Mr Macmillan offered to support the Secretariat in meeting prospective designers of publicity materials and in ensuring public exposure is maximised via digital channels.
20. The Commission asked that the Secretariat add a standing item about consideration of equality and diversity in papers relating to public consultation.

Finance Update (Paper LGBCS 2479)

21. The Commission noted the latest Finance Update. The Commission noted that new office doors had been installed to improve security and disabled accessibility.

Risk Register (Paper LGBCS 2480)

22. The Commission discussed the Risk Register and made a number of amendments.
23. The Commission asked the Secretariat to provide an update on staff training and development at a future meeting.

Future Meetings (oral)

24. The Commission agreed not to meet on 13 May 2019. The next meeting will be on 17 June 2019.

Any other business

25. The Chair informed the Commission that he will be in touch in due course to arrange dates for appraisals.