

Minutes of Meeting held by videolink at 10am on Tuesday 15 December 2020**Present**

Mr R Hinds, Chair
Prof. A Henderson, Deputy Chair
Mr R Bean
Mr G Macmillan
Dr S Walker
Mr J Collins

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

Apologies:

None

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the 400th meeting of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland. The Chair provided a brief summary of the Commission's work since it was established in 1974.
2. The Chair congratulated Dr Walker on her appointment as Commissioner for the Boundary Commission for Scotland.

Declaration of Interests

3. Dr Walker declared an interest on item 7 of the agenda BCS 2023 Review (Paper 2542).

Minutes of previous meeting

4. The Commission approved the minutes of the meeting on 12 October 2020 without amendment.

Matters arising

5. The Secretary informed the Commission that Scottish Government has now rolled out Microsoft Teams, videoconferencing software. It is hoped that Microsoft Teams can be used for future Commission meetings. The Commission was asked to liaise and feedback to the Secretariat if they expect to have any issues using Microsoft Teams in advance of the next Commission meeting.
6. The Secretary advised that discussions are still ongoing with Scottish Government officials on appointments for a new Chair and new Commissioners as their terms are due to end in Autumn 2021.
7. The Secretary provided an update on the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions that took place by videoconference on Friday 27 November 2020. The Commission was represented by the Chair and members of the Secretariat. The Deputy Chair also attended in her capacity as a member of the Boundary Commission for Scotland. A note would be circulated in due course.
8. The Secretary advised that she had circulated correspondence following the meeting with Graeme Dey, Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans, which took place on 30 September 2020.

9. The Secretary informed the Commission that the Order to enact the Commission's recommendations to align Scottish Parliament boundaries with the revised local authority boundaries at Cardowan by Stepps, was approved by Privy Council on 11 November 2020 and will come in to force at the time of next year's Scottish Parliament Elections in May 2021.
10. The Secretary informed the Commission that work to prepare a draft Final Report template for the Islands Reviews will be brought to the next Commission meeting.

Business Update

11. There were no additional items to be covered under Business Update.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements – Argyll and Bute (oral update)

12. The Commission noted a summary of the responses received to date for the public consultation on Initial Proposals for Argyll and Bute council area. The Commission discussed evidence that a large number of responses received on the Consultation Portal appeared to be from the same respondent and expressed its strong concern at what appeared to be a deliberate attempt to skew the consultation. After discussing how the Commission would handle these responses, it was agreed the Secretariat would first write out to the respondent in question seeking clarification before taking further steps.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements – Highland (oral update)

13. The Commission noted a summary of the responses received to date for the public consultation on Initial Proposals for Highland council area.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements – North Ayrshire (oral update)

14. The Commission noted a summary of the responses received to date for the public consultation on Initial Proposals for North Ayrshire council area.

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements – next steps (oral update)

15. The Commission asked the Secretariat to continue to regularly monitor responses to the public consultation on Initial Proposals for Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas and to alert the Commission to any contentious issues that may arise in advance of the consultation closing date on 26 January 2021.
16. The Commission agreed to issue a news release 3 weeks before the public consultation closes. The Chair volunteered to conduct press interviews for any interested news outlets.

Admin Request Liff, Angus (Paper LGBCS 2541)

17. The Commission considered Paper LGBCS 2541 and the request for an administrative area boundary review between Dundee City council area and Angus council area at Church Road, Liff. The Commission agreed that there was no strong evidence provided in the request to suggest that a review of the council area boundary in this location was required in the interests of convenient and effective local government.

BCS 2023 Review – (Paper LGBCS 2542)

18. The Commission noted Paper LGBCS 2542 and the main changes for the Boundary Commission for Scotland’s 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies that will commence in January 2021.

Board Members Model Code of Conduct (Paper LGBCS 2543)

19. The Commission discussed Paper LGBCS 2543, and agreed that it would not submit a response to the consultation although it was open to individual commissioners to do so.

Corporate Plan (Paper LGBCS 2544)

20. The Commission approved the Corporate Plan subject to some minor amendments.

Finance Update (Paper LGBCS 2545)

21. The Commission noted the Finance Update.

Future meetings (oral update)

22. The Commission agreed to liaise with the Secretariat to confirm provisional meeting dates for February, March, April and May 2021.

Any other business

23. There was no other business.