

**Minutes of Meeting held at  
Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh  
10:00 on Monday 21 July 2025**

**Present**

Prof. A Henderson, Chair  
Mr S Jones, Deputy Chair  
Ms A McNab  
Mr G Macmillan  
Mr M Smith  
Mr A Stewart

Ms K Mavor, Secretary  
Mr C Wilson  
Mr D Campbell  
Mr P Allan

**Declaration of Interest or Connection**

1. There were no declarations of interest.

**Minutes of previous meeting**

2. The Commission agreed the minute of the 5 June 2025 meeting with minor amendments.

**Matters arising**

3. There were no matters arising that were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**Business update**

4. The Commission reflected on the Chair and Secretary's recent appearance before the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments (SPPA) Committee on 12 June 2025. They also noted that Jamie Hepburn MSP, Minister for Parliamentary Business, had given evidence to the SPPA Committee on 26 June 2025. It was brought to the Commission's attention shortly after the Commission meeting that the SPPA Committee had completed its report.
5. The Secretary reported that a minor error had been identified in the Executive Summary of the Final Report on the Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries. The error has been corrected and both the SPPA Committee and Minister for Parliamentary Business have been notified. The published version of the Final Report has also been updated.
6. The Secretary advised that Kate Forbes, MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch, had asked for an update regarding her constituents' request for the Commission to undertake a review of electoral arrangements to address an anomaly with the polling place used for some electors in Knoydart. The Commission agreed that the use of a postal vote would seem an appropriate solution in the short term until the Commission undertakes its next review of electoral arrangements in Highland Council area, scheduled to be completed before 31 October 2030.
7. The Commission discussed the planned webinar being held by the Scottish Government Elections team on 22 July 2025 to raise awareness of the consultation on the Independent Review of the process for determining electoral

boundaries in Scotland (Independent Review). Some members of the Commission and the Secretary will attend and observe the webinar.

8. The Secretary advised that the Scottish Government Elections Team had received a FOI request relating to correspondence with Boundaries Scotland and a response was sent out before it had been shared with the Commission. The Chair agreed to write to the Elections Team raising concern with the approach taken and to ensure that protocol is followed in the future.
9. The Commission noted the UK Government had recently published a strategy paper for election reforms which included extending the franchise for UK Parliament elections to 16 and 17-year-olds and moving towards automatic voter registration. The Commission asked to be kept informed if a further review of UK Parliament boundaries might be required by the Boundary Commission for Scotland.
10. The Secretariat informed the Commission that they are working towards updating the website and ensuring that it is on a more secure platform.
11. The Chair reported that Commissioner appraisals were ongoing and scheduled to be completed in the next few weeks.

#### **Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Lessons Learned Action list (BS 186)**

12. The Commission discussed the Lessons Learned Action List and agreed several amendments to be made to the list including the way it is presented. It was further agreed that the list should be finalised after the Second Review is complete and then shared with both the Elections Team and the Convener of the SPPA Committee.

#### **Scottish Parliament Reviews: Local Inquiries (BS 187)**

13. The Commission considered Paper BS 187 and agreed to include several discussion points in its response to the consultation on the Independent Review.

#### **Independent Review of the process for determining electoral boundaries (BS 188)**

14. The Commission discussed Paper BS 188 at length and asked the Secretary to prepare a draft response to be shared with all Commissioners. Commissioners were asked to submit their comments on the draft to the Secretariat and the final version will be agreed with the Chair prior to the submission deadline of 7 August 2025.

#### **Future Reviews of Electoral Arrangements (BS 184)**

15. The Commission considered Paper BS 184 which had been deferred from the Commission's 5 June 2025 meeting.
16. The Commission considered the timing of any future reviews and agreed that it is likely they will commence after the next local government elections in May 2027. This would still allow sufficient time for a phased approach to reviewing electoral arrangements in those 28 council areas which are due to report before 31 October 2030. The Commission agreed the reviews should be named the 2032 Reviews.

17. The Commission asked the Secretariat to undertake further analysis and research regarding how it may wish to conduct the 2032 Reviews. This included: timing of reviews and elections; which council areas should be reviewed first; analysis of different approaches to consultation and engagement during the reviews; who to consult with if there are to be changes to the methodology for determining councillor numbers; and analysis of methodologies used by other Commissions.

**Finance update (BS 189)**

18. The Commission noted the finance update.

**Annual Report (BS 190)**

19. Commissioners were asked to submit their comments on the draft Annual Report to the Secretariat.

**Corporate Plan (BS 191)**

20. Commissioners were asked to submit their comments on the draft Corporate Plan to the Secretariat.

**Risk Register (BS 192)**

21. The Commission noted the risk register and agreed that a risk regarding website security be added following recent news items regarding large organisations having their websites hacked. The Commission also suggested some amendments to risk 4 (lack of understanding about the role of the Commission and reviews).

**Future meetings**

22. The Secretariat was asked to canvas for a date in the second half of September 2025.

**Any other business**

23. There was no further business.