

**Minutes of Meeting held at
Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh
10:00 on Tuesday 23 September 2025**

Present

Prof. A Henderson, Chair
Mr S Jones, Deputy Chair
Ms A McNab (via teams from 10:30am)
Mr M Smith
Mr A Stewart

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

Apologies

Mr G Macmillan

Declaration of Interest or Connection

1. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

2. The Commission agreed the minute of the 21 July 2025 meeting without amendment.

Matters arising

3. A paper on consultations will be brought to the next meeting to inform the Commission's approach to engagement during the 2032 reviews. The remaining items are either complete or on the agenda.

Business update

4. The Secretary confirmed that the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies and Regions) Order 2025 was approved by Parliament on 3 September 2025. The Order will implement the recommendations from the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries. The Order is expected to be considered by the Privy Council on 9 October 2025.
5. The Chair gave an update following her recent informal meeting with Andrew Kerr (Chair of the Independent Review) and James Newman (Elections and FOI Division, Scottish Government). The Independent Review Chair's draft report is expected in October 2025.
6. The Commission was provided with an update of the meeting on 20 August 2025, when the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary met with the Minister for Parliamentary Business, Jamie Hepburn MSP. Following this meeting, the Minister sent a letter discharging the outstanding duty to formally notify the Commission to carry out section 17A further reviews of the electoral arrangements for Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council. The Minister's letter did not contain any direction on the nature and extent of the further review.

7. The Secretary reported that Mr Hepburn had recently resigned from his ministerial post and been replaced by Graeme Dey MSP (who previously held this post from 2018-2021). The Chair will send a letter to the new Minister congratulating him and referring to the direction to further review Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council.
8. The Secretariat provided an update following the administrative area boundary review at Cardowan conducted in 2018. The Commission noted that it had taken over four years from when the review was complete for the school catchment boundaries to be amended by North Lanarkshire Council.
9. The Secretariat informed the Commission that work is ongoing to update the website to ensure it is on a more secure platform. The new website should be ready for user acceptance testing in the next few weeks and go live by mid-October 2025.
10. The Secretary informed the Commission that members of the Review Team had met with LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England) and DBCC (Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru) in August 2025 to exchange knowledge regarding the approach to designing electoral wards.
11. The Secretary is scheduled to meet with the Heads of the Secretariat for LGBCE, DBCC and BCE (Boundary Commission for England) to discuss several action points from the UK Commissions' meeting.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Lessons Learned Action list (BS 193)

12. The Commission discussed Paper BS 193 and agreed several amendments. Final approval of the lessons learned document was delegated to the Chair/Deputy Chair and it will be shared with both the sponsor team and Convener of the SPPA Committee after the Second Review is concluded.
13. The Commission agreed that once the review has concluded a survey of stakeholders (MSPs, Councils, political parties and members of public) should be conducted to hear their experiences from the Second Review and obtain feedback.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Consultation responses and council engagement (BS 194)

14. The Commission discussed Paper BS 194 and provided some suggestions for engaging with councils and all interested parties prior to the 2032 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. The Commission requested further analysis on council engagement via their social media channels during the Second Review.
15. It was noted that facebook was the most effective way of engaging with the public during the Second Review. It was agreed that steps should be taken to improve engagement via youtube and other social media channels. The Secretariat should continue to liaise with the Scottish Youth Parliament to establish ways of improving the Commission's engagement with younger audiences.

2032 Reviews: Approach to Scheduling Rolling Reviews (BS 195)

16. The Commission considered Paper BS 195 and agreed to defer making a decision until after it has consulted with stakeholders on its methodology and approach to the 2032 Reviews. It was noted that the further review of Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council was a separate process. The consultation on methodology and approach for the 2032 reviews is likely to take place in early 2026. It was agreed that a draft list of consultation questions should be presented at the next meeting.

17. While no formal decision was made about scheduling rolling reviews, the Commission's initial view was that there should be three phases with the groupings being based on geographical location. The outcome of the Independent Review will help inform the Commission's approach to scheduling rolling reviews.

2032 Reviews: Methodology for Determining Councillor Numbers (BS 196)

18. The Commission discussed Paper BS 196 and agreed to defer making a decision on its methodology until further background information has been researched. The Commission was particularly interested in learning more about the impact of social inequality on both participation and involvement in local government.

2032 Reviews: Electoral Ward Size (BS 197)

19. The Commission considered Paper BS 197 and provided some comments and suggestions for further analysis which will help inform its pre-review engagement with Councils ahead of the 2032 Reviews.

Naming Policy: Scottish Parliament Boundaries (BS 198)

20. The Commission discussed Paper BS 198 and agreed to adopt the draft constituency naming policy for Scottish Parliament boundary reviews subject to some minor amendments. It was agreed that final approval of this document should be delegated to the Chair and Deputy Chair.

Finance Update (BS 199)

21. The Commission noted the finance update. The Commission asked that the next update provide further detail about future spend on possible research and communications costs ahead of the 2032 Reviews.

Risk Register (BS 200)

22. The Commission noted the risk register and agreed to downgrade risk 1 (risk of not meeting submission deadline) to low and suggested some further amendments.

Freedom of Information (BS 201)

23. The Commission noted the FOI requests submitted from April to August 2025. The Commission commended the Secretariat for the prompt response to these requests.

Future meetings

24. The Secretariat was asked to canvass for a meeting date in late November or early December 2025.

Any other business

25. The Commission noted that Mr Macmillan's term comes to an end in November 2026 and the Public Appointments recruitment team should be advised of the need to appoint a replacement Commissioner. The Secretariat was asked to circulate a skills matrix to Commissioners to inform the recruitment process.
26. The Commission discussed its approach to sharing information and agreed to consider this further at its next meeting.