

**Boundary Commission for Scotland
Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, Edinburgh
Monday 13 June 2016**

Present

The Hon Lord Matthews, Deputy Chairman
Professor Ailsa Henderson, Commissioner
Mrs Paula Sharp, Commissioner
Mr Tim Ellis, Registrar General, National Records of Scotland
Ms Michaela Gordon, Ordnance Survey, Assessor to the Commission

Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray, Secretary
Mr Douglas Campbell, Secretariat
Ms Laura Cregan, Secretariat
Mr Colin Wilson, Secretariat

Introduction and Declarations of Interest

1. The Deputy Chair introduced and welcomed Tim Ellis, Registrar General to the meeting. Professor Henderson declared an interest in Item 5 on the agenda.

Minutes of the previous meeting

2. The minutes of the 16 May 2016 meeting were agreed.

Matters arising

3. Following the recent meeting with Political Parties, the Commission agreed to commence the public consultation on its initial proposals for the 2018 UK Parliament Review after the completion of the Political Party Conference season in October 2016.
4. The Secretary informed the Commission that dates for the meeting of UK Boundary Commissions were being considered by the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland and that a date in December was expected.

Consultation Portal (oral update)

5. The Commission received an update on progress of the development of the consultation portal for the 2018 Review of UK Parliament constituencies. The Secretariat agreed to ask the developer whether it would be possible in the time available to provide a presentation of the portal prior to user acceptance testing which is due to commence in July 2016. The Secretariat agreed to keep the Commission updated on the portal's development.

Constituency design – Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray (Paper 2016/15)

6. The Commission considered 2 options for 4 constituencies exactly covering the combined extent of Highland, Argyll and Bute and Moray council areas and noted that both were in some way constrained by a constituency's need to be within 5% of the electoral quota and within the 13,000km² maximum area limit.
7. The Commission noted that in Option 1 three wards are divided between constituencies and in Option 2 seven wards are divided between constituencies.
8. While both options considered by the Commission contained large constituencies, Option 2 proposed a constituency that stretched from Kintyre to Kingussie which was considered by the Commission to be challenging for a Member of Parliament.
9. The Commission agreed that Option 1 was closer in design to the existing Scottish Parliament boundaries, required the division of fewer wards than Option 2, that the Argyll constituency in Option 1 would be more manageable than that in Option 2, and that constituencies meeting the electorate and area requirements were reasonably possible in the circumstances.
10. The Commission agreed to adopt Option 1 as its Initial Proposals for constituencies in the combined area of Highland, Argyll and Bute and Moray council areas, subject to identification of satisfactory proposals elsewhere in Scotland.

Constituency design – Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling (Paper 2016/16)

11. The Commission considered 2 Options for 3 constituencies exactly covering the combined extent of Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Falkirk council areas. It noted that in both options 2 wards are divided between constituencies.
12. The Commission noted the main challenges of constituency design in this group and acknowledged that the distribution of the electorate in this group necessitated the division of the city of Stirling between two constituencies.
13. The Commission expressed a preference for Option 1 but asked that the Secretariat consider whether an alternative option might be developed to offer an improved division of the city of Stirling.
14. The Commission discussed naming the northernmost constituency in the grouping Clackmannanshire and Stirling North in recognition that Clackmannanshire is a whole council area.

Corporate Plan 2016-17 (Paper 2016/17)

15. The Commission agreed the draft Corporate Plan subject to some minor amendments, noting that the Scotland Office had agreed that the plan should be for 2016-17 only, pending discussions about transfer of resources when responsibility for Scottish Parliament boundaries moves to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland.

2018 Review Project Plan (Paper 2016/18)

16. The Commission agreed the outline project plan subject to some minor amendments. The Commission agreed that the 2018 Review Project Plan should remain a standing item on the agenda.

Risk Register (Paper 2016 /19)

17. The Commission agreed the Risk Register subject to some minor amendments. The Commission noted that the outcome of the Triennial Reviews and increased oversight from its sponsor department (Scotland Office) may have an impact on the risk register as the review progresses. Tim Ellis undertook to work with the Secretary regarding risk 3.

Finance Update (Paper 2016 / 20)

18. The Commission noted the finance update.

Any other business

19. The Commission agreed that further refinement of the Policy and Procedures Booklet should be considered following early constituency design discussions.

20. The next meeting will be held on Monday 18 July at 10.30am.

Secretariat

June 2016