
Annual Report 2016-17

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider the draft Annual Report for the period April 2016 to March 2017, attached as Appendix A and provide any comments.
2. The Secretariat is awaiting advice from the sponsor department on the treatment of VAT. Once that advice has been accounted for in the Annual Report, a further draft will be tabled for consideration by the Commission.

Secretariat
June 2017

Boundary Commission for Scotland



Annual Report 2016-17

Deputy Chairman's foreword

This year, the Commission has been fully engaged on the 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies, which is being conducted simultaneously with the other parliamentary boundary commissions in the UK.

During the year we developed our Initial Proposals for constituencies across all of Scotland, and presented them for public scrutiny during public consultation periods and at Public Hearings. We now embark on our examination of all of the evidence which has emerged from that public consultation, and will decide on any resulting revisions to our proposed constituencies before consulting on these later in 2017.

During the year we also completed the upgrade of our IT systems.

We attended the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in December 2016 in Belfast. The meeting provided a useful opportunity to hear how the other UK Parliamentary Commissions are approaching the 2018 Review and for Commissioners and Secretariat members to learn from each other's experiences.

With the implementation of the Scotland Act 2016, the task of reviewing Scottish Parliament boundaries passes to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland who will become responsible for the next statutory review.



The Hon Lord Matthews
Deputy Chairman, Boundary Commission for Scotland
June 2017

Boundary Commission for Scotland

Annual Report 2016-17

Contents

Deputy Chairman's foreword	i
1 The Commission	1
1.1 Background	
1.2 Membership	
1.3 Meetings	
1.4 Code of Practice	
1.5 Register of Commissioners' Interests	
2 Secretariat	2
3 Governance	3
3.1 Legislation - UK Parliament reviews	
3.2 Legislation - Scottish Parliament reviews	
3.3 Financial Memorandum	
3.4 Data protection	
3.5 Equality issues	
3.6 Risk Management	
4 Enquiries and public information	4
4.1 Enquiries	
4.2 Website	
4.3 Maps of constituencies	
4.4 Information Papers	
4.5 Review information	
5 Review activity.....	6
5.1 UK Parliament constituencies	
5.2 Scottish Parliament boundaries	
6 Other activities.....	7
6.1 IT systems	
6.2 Staffing and training	
6.3 Liaison with others	
7 Expenditure.....	8
7.1 Staff salaries	
7.2 Commissioners' fees	
7.3 Accommodation	
7.4 Administration	
7.5 Travel and subsistence	
7.6 Review costs	
7.7 Reportable transactions	
8 Work programme for 2017-18.....	9
9 Further information.....	10

This report covers the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. Copies are available from our website www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk, or by request from our Secretariat.

1 The Commission

1.1 Background

The Boundary Commission for Scotland was established in its current form by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986.

Our duties and powers are detailed in the 1986 Act and in Schedule 1 to the Scotland Act 1998. We are currently responsible for reviews of:

- United Kingdom Parliament constituencies in Scotland; and
- Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions.

We are an advisory Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and wholly funded by the Scotland Office. We are an independent and non-political body.

1.2 Membership

The 1986 Act specifies that our membership comprises a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and two further Commissioners. In addition, the Act specifies that our officers shall include two ex-officio Assessors.

1.2.1 Chairman

The ex-officio Chairman of all four of the parliamentary Boundary Commissions in the United Kingdom is the Speaker of the House of Commons, as specified by the 1986 Act. In practice, the Chairman takes no active part in the business of any of the Commissions.

1.2.2 Deputy Chairman

The Deputy Chairman is a judge of the Court of Session, appointed by the Lord President of the Court of Session, as specified by the 1986 Act. The current Deputy Chairman is the Honourable Lord Matthews who was appointed on 1 January 2016 for a 3-year term.

1.2.3 Commissioners

The Commissioners other than the Chairman and Deputy Chairman are appointed on a term basis through open competition using the procedures laid down by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointments are made by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

In the year 2016-17, the Commissioners were:

- Mrs Paula Sharp, appointed until 31 December 2018, having originally been appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 January 2011;
- Professor Ailsa Henderson, appointed from 16 February 2016 until 15 February 2020.

1.2.4 Assessors

Our two ex-officio Assessors are the Registrar General for Scotland and the Director General of Ordnance Survey. We are very grateful to our Assessors and their representatives for their valuable contributions to our work.

1.3 Meetings

We met on ten occasions in 2016-17. We place minutes of meetings and copies of our discussion papers on our website on a phased basis at appropriate stages during our reviews.

We attended the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in Belfast in December 2015. The Commission was represented by Paula Sharp, accompanied by a member of the Secretariat. The meeting provided a helpful forum for the Commissions to learn from each other's experience.

1.4 Code of Practice

We have a Commissioners' Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

1.5 Register of Commissioners' Interests

We maintain a Register of Interests of Commissioners, in accordance with the Commissioners' Code of Practice. The Register of Interests is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

2 Secretariat

We are supported by a small Secretariat. Schedule 1 to the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 provides that the Secretary of State shall appoint a Secretary to the Commission. The Secretary, who is the Secretariat's senior officer, is normally a civil servant assigned from the Scottish Government, and the Secretary of State is invited to approve the appointment following a recommendation by Scotland Office senior management.

The work of the Secretariat includes:

- facilitating boundary reviews;
- dealing with the everyday administrative matters relating to our business, such as finance, purchasing and accommodation;
- liaising with other UK Commissions and government departments with an interest in boundary matters; and
- responding to general and other correspondence concerning boundary issues.

The Secretary is Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray who has been in post since October 2014.

The Secretariat is accommodated in Thistle House, near Haymarket, Edinburgh.

Staff of the Secretariat are assigned from the Scottish Government. The number of staff assigned is dependent on the volume of review activity and the need to develop, maintain and update information systems, respond to enquiries and undertake other work in support of the Commission's activities. During the year 2016-17, the assignment of Secretariat staff to support this Commission was as follows:

Post	Full-time equivalent
Secretary	0.50
Casework Managers	1.80
Casework Officers	1.80
IT Manager	0.24
General Office Manager	0.5
Total	4.84

Staff members are employed on a full-time basis, with their time allocated between support for us and for the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, which is responsible for reviewing electoral ward and local authority areas in Scotland, and from 18 May 2017, Scottish Parliament boundaries. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scottish Government for that work.

3 Governance

3.1 Legislation - UK Parliament reviews

Our reviews of UK Parliament constituencies are governed by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The text of the legislation, incorporating current amendments, is available from our website or a copy can be provided on request.

The Act (as amended) specifies that the number of UK Parliament constituencies shall be 600, and specifies how the number of constituencies in each of Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales shall be calculated, based on the numbers of electors in each part of the United Kingdom.

The Act sets out a series of rules for constituency design. The rules require that the electorate of each constituency shall be within 5% of the average electorate of mainland constituencies in the United Kingdom. In Scotland, exceptions are made for the Orkney and Shetland islands and Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles), and for any constituency larger than 12,000 square kilometres. In addition, no constituency can be larger than 13,000 square kilometres. So long as a constituency satisfies these numerical requirements, we are also able to take into account:

- special geographical considerations, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- local government boundaries;
- boundaries of existing constituencies; and
- local ties that would be broken by changes to constituencies

The legislation specifies that we have to review UK Parliament constituencies every 5 years, with the next such review to be completed in September 2018, using electorate data from 1 December 2015. Until completion of the 2018 Review there will continue to be 650 UK Parliament constituencies of which 59 are in Scotland.

3.2 Legislation - Scottish Parliament reviews

Our reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries are governed by Schedule 1 to the Scotland Act 1998.

The 1998 Act specifies that there shall be 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies and 8 Scottish Parliament regions. 2 constituencies are specified as being the Orkney Islands and the Shetland Islands.

For the rest of the constituencies, there are a series of rules which require that:

- regard must be had to local government boundaries;
- the electorate of each constituency must be as close to the average as is practicable;
- we may depart from the preceding rules if special geographical considerations, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency make that desirable; and
- we must take into account inconveniences attendant on alterations to constituencies and local ties that would be broken by changes to constituencies.

The legislation specifies that Scottish Parliament reviews are to be carried out every 8 to 12 years. We carried out our most recent such review between 2007 and 2010 and the boundary changes took effect for the Scottish Parliament election in May 2011.

Following the passage of the Scotland Act 2016, responsibility for review of Scottish Parliament boundaries transfers to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, effective 18 May 2018.

3.3 Financial Memorandum

We operate within a Financial Memorandum issued by the Scotland Office. It is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

3.4 Data protection

We handle personal information in conformance with the Data Protection Acts, and we have notified the Information Commissioner's Office of the personal data which we handle.

We have a Privacy Policy for handling any personal information contained in representations made during public consultations on our proposals.

3.5 Equality issues

We have an Equality Statement which sets out our approach to equality and diversity issues. The Statement is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

3.6 Risk Management

The Secretariat has developed a Risk Management policy covering our work and the work of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland which is available on our website.

4 Enquiries and public information

During reviews, we undertake extensive public consultation, hold public hearings, issue news releases, meet with political parties and provide an online consultation portal to enable public scrutiny of, and comment on, our proposals for constituencies.

We also use our website and social media to inform the public about our work. We publish our meeting papers and minutes of our meetings on our website. In addition, the Secretariat responds to requests for information made by email, letter or phone.

We have a freedom of information policy which incorporates the Information Commissioner's Office model publication scheme for public bodies under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Our freedom of information policy and the model publication scheme are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

4.1 Enquiries

Between April 2016 and March 2017, the Secretariat recorded 37 enquiries relating to us and our work. Of these, 12 stated that they were being made under the Freedom of Information Act. No requests for review or appeals to the Information Commissioner's Office were made regarding our handling of information requests. We assess enquiries to see whether they indicate possible improvements or additions to our website.

4.2 Website

Our website remains a primary means for us to make information available. We update the website with all material which we publish.

4.3 Maps of constituencies

In conjunction with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, we provide an interactive Map Browser. The Map Browser allows anyone with internet access to view maps showing some of the current and past electoral boundaries that we have been responsible for since our establishment in 1944 on a background of current Ordnance Survey mapping.

The Map Browser includes 6 sets of UK Parliament constituencies, 2 sets of Scottish Parliament boundaries and 3 sets of European Parliament constituencies. The Map Browser also shows data from the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland since 1995.

We have also made downloadable data of past constituencies available on the website. These are in shapefile format which is widely used for geographic data.

4.4 Information Papers

We have a series of Information Papers which explain our work. The Information Papers are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

4.5 Review information

We publish the minutes and meeting papers of our meetings on a staged basis during a review. Thus, we publish the minutes and meeting papers relating to our decision-making on our Initial Proposals for constituencies after those Initial Proposals have been published for consultation, and publish the final set of minutes and meeting papers relating to a review when we submit our report to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

During a review, we publish our proposals for public scrutiny on a web-based consultation portal that allows users to compare proposals with other electoral boundaries on an interactive map, comment on our proposals, and view and

comment on others' comments. We also publish information on our proposals at display points which we agree with local authorities, typically libraries and council offices.

5 Review activity

5.1 UK Parliament constituencies

We started our *2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies* in February 2016. The review is being conducted simultaneously with the other 3 parliamentary boundary commissions in the UK. The existing UK Parliament constituencies in Scotland, which resulted from our Fifth Review, have been in use since 2005.

Under the current legislation, the number of constituencies in the United Kingdom to result from our review will be 600. The number of constituencies in Scotland, and in each of the other home countries, is calculated in proportion to each country's parliamentary electorate on 1 December 2015. As a consequence, we will make recommendations for 53 constituencies in Scotland. The legislation specifies that 1 constituency will cover the Orkney and Shetland islands, and another constituency will cover Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles). The remaining constituencies in Scotland will result from our deliberations and recommendations. We are required to submit our recommendations from this review in September 2018.

In 2016-17 we developed and published for public scrutiny our Initial Proposals for constituencies in Scotland and the comments we received on these proposals.

At our monthly meetings we considered each area of Scotland in turn, and finalised our Initial Proposals at our meeting of 3 October 2016. We published these Initial proposals for public consultation between 20 October 2016 and 11 January 2017. At the same time we published our Initial Proposals, we also published relevant meeting papers and minutes of meetings up to that point in the review.

We sought to ensure that our Initial Proposals were as widely available as practicable. In order to do this we developed an online consultation portal in partnership with the other UK parliamentary commissions, which allowed members of the public to view our proposals against an interactive map background, to submit comments on our proposals for constituencies and to view others' comments.

As part of the initial consultation process, we held 5 Public Hearings in Glasgow, Dundee, Ayr, Inverness and Edinburgh. These Public Hearings were chaired on our behalf by Sheriffs Principal who are senior Scottish judges.

During the initial consultation period we received around 1500 responses.

The legislation requires that we publish all of the responses received during the initial consultation, along with records of the Public hearings, for a secondary consultation period of 4 weeks. That secondary consultation period took place from 28 February to 27 March 2017. During the secondary consultation period we received around **X** responses.

5.2 Scottish Parliament boundaries

Our most recent general review of Scottish Parliament boundaries was our *First Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries* whose recommendations were implemented for the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2011.

In October 2013 we made recommendations for amended Scottish Parliament boundaries in Robroyston, following an amendment to the administrative boundary in 2011.

6 Other activities

6.1 IT systems

During the year, we completed the migration of our IT systems from in-house to a platform provided by the Scottish Government.

6.2 Staffing and training

During the year, there have been no changes to staffing. Training has continued to meet staff and review requirements.

6.3 Liaison with others

6.3.1 Scotland Office

We continue to have regular contact and dialogue with the Scotland Office as our sponsoring department and have agreed a new Memorandum of Understanding setting out governance arrangements between us and which is available on our website.

6.3.2 Ordnance Survey

The Secretariat continues to work with Ordnance Survey to ensure that we have access to the optimum set of mapping data products to support our work, and that we receive technical advice on the deployment of those products. The Secretariat and Ordnance Survey continue to work together to ensure the smooth flow of accurate information about our decisions, so that they can be included in Ordnance Survey's products. The licensing of Ordnance Survey data to Scottish public bodies is covered by an agreement, known as the One Scotland Mapping Agreement, and the Secretariat has participated actively in the management and implementation of that agreement.

6.3.3 National Records of Scotland

The Secretariat liaises regularly with staff of the National Records of Scotland on shared interests concerning geographic information and electoral statistics.

6.3.4 Office for National Statistics

The Secretariat continues to liaise with the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

6.3.5 Other organisations

The Secretariat maintains and develops contacts with the Association of Electoral Administrators; the Scottish Assessors' Association Electoral Registration Committee; the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR); the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE); the Electoral Commission; and other UK Boundary Commissions. This has been through attendance at meetings of the Scotland and Northern Ireland Branch of the

Association of Electoral Administrators, the Electoral Commission's Political Parties Panel in Scotland, liaison meetings with other UK Boundary Commissions and written correspondence.

7 Expenditure

Our expenditure for the year 2016-17 is set out under broad headings in the table below. After agreeing the initial budget with the Scotland Office, the Secretariat re-forecasts expenditure during the year, and keeps the Scotland Office informed of the likely expenditure for the year. Any required resources have to be approved by the UK Parliament.

Financial Performance April 2016 - March 2017		
	Budget (£)	Actual (£)
Staff salaries	189,766	193,352
Commissioners' fees	22,200	16,733
Accommodation	18,250	17,029
Administration	37,843	25,217
Travel and subsistence	1,570	1,126
Review costs	130,371	62,360
Total	400,000	315,817

7.1 Staff salaries

Salary costs are determined by the pay arrangements for our staff, who are employees of the Scottish Government. The overspend in salaries was due to unanticipated expenditure.

7.2 Commissioners' fees

Commissioners' fees are determined by the Secretary of State for Scotland and cover attendance at all of our scheduled meetings and associated preparation, meetings held with other UK Boundary Commissions and ad hoc meetings held with other bodies. Commissioners' fees are paid on a per diem basis. The fee rate for Commissioners during the year has been £505.50 per day, and has been unchanged since April 2009. The underspend in Commissioner fees was due to lower average claims per meeting than budgeted for.

7.3 Accommodation

We share accommodation with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland. The figures shown in the above table in respect of accommodation reflect our share of these costs.

7.4 Administration

Administration costs include office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables, telephone, email, publications and advertising, staff and Commissioner training, computer software maintenance, support and licence fees. The underspend in administration costs was due to lower than anticipated costs for upgrading the Secretariat's IT systems and software licences, and no outside training being purchased.

7.5 Travel and subsistence

Travel and subsistence includes rail, air and car-hire costs incurred by the Secretariat and Commissioners in the course of official business. Travel and subsistence costs necessarily and actually incurred in the course of official business are reimbursed, on the production of receipts, within civil service limits.

7.6 Review costs

Review costs cover those items directly attributable to the conduct of our boundary reviews, and include newspaper advertising, our consultation website and printing. The underspend in review costs occurred because: in line with practice elsewhere in the UK, we did not issue public notices when publicising consultations our 2018 Review of UK Parliament constituencies; the Commission did not appoint an Assistant Commissioner, as the budget had provided for; the costs associated with the consultation portal were lower than anticipated; the costs of Public Hearings were lower than budgeted; travel costs associated with the review were lower than budgeted; and miscellaneous costs were lower than budgeted.

7.7 Reportable transactions

In line with UK Government policy, we publish data on all single transactions greater than £25,000 and all Government Procurement Card (GPC) transactions over £500. Since we share some costs with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, we have included items that are jointly purchased by both Commissions where the cost to us exceeds £250 for GPC transactions or £12,500 for other transactions.

We made one transaction exceeding £12,500. This was a payment of £49,690 for our share of the costs associated with the consultation portal, which is shared with the other UK Boundary Commissions. We made no reportable GPC transactions in 2016-17.

8 Work programme for 2017-18

Our planned activities for 2017-18 are set out in our Corporate Plan for the period 2017-18 which is available on our website.

United Kingdom Parliament Reviews

We will continue to progress our 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies in 2017-18. We expect to:

- consider the evidence submitted during our initial and secondary public consultations on our Initial Proposals;
- develop Revised Proposals for constituencies;
- publish Revised Proposals for constituencies;
- consider the evidence submitted during the public consultation on the Revised Proposals;
- develop our Final Recommendations for constituencies, and start drafting the report of the review; and
- in January 2018 we will report on our progress to the Speaker of the House of Commons, as required by statute.

Scottish Parliament Reviews

No review activity expected. Following the passage of the Scotland Act 2016, responsibility for review of Scottish Parliament boundaries transfers to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, effective 18 May 2017.

Other activity

We will carry out our governance functions throughout the year to ensure that we manage the Commission's operations efficiently and cost effectively, and meet the Government's requirements of an advisory Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB).

9 Further information

If you have a query which cannot be answered by this report or our website (www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk) please do not hesitate to contact us either by email, telephone or in writing.



Boundary Commission for Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD
0131 244 2001
bcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk