

2018 Review – Lessons Learned

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to reflect on the 2018 Review with a view to producing recommendations to inform the 2023 Review.

Discussion

2. The main themes for consideration are listed in Appendix A and cover the Secretariat thoughts on a number of issues. Commissioners will have their own views on how the Review was conducted and suggestions for future approach. The next review is currently required to report in 2023.

Next steps

3. The Secretariat will liaise with the Boundary Commission for England, Northern Ireland and Wales to gain any useful suggestions and feedback from their 2018 Reviews. This is also a topic for discussion at the UK Commissions annual meeting on 2 November as is communications and engagement which BCE will lead a session on.
4. The Commission is invited to consider the 2018 Review and provide feedback and suggestions for the 2023 Review. The Secretariat will then collate all the views received into an action plan for the next Review.

**Secretariat
October 2018**

2018 Review – lessons learned**Consultation****Public Hearings**

1. At each Public Hearing the Secretary read a 10 minute statement. 2 other members of the Secretariat attended each hearing. 71 people attended the 5 Hearings, mainly elected officials, with 63 making verbal comments. All Public Hearings were concluded within 1 to 4 hours, although accommodation and transcript services were booked for 2 days.
2. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland held 4 one-day Public Hearings and offered an evening session. The Boundary Commission for Wales held 5 two-day Public Hearings with an evening session (74 individuals spoke). The Boundary Commission for England also offered evening sessions for their Public Hearings and recorded both a transcript and video of each Hearing (attendance at their Hearings varied from less than 10 to hundreds).
3. The Commission may wish to consider recording each Public Hearing by video as well as providing a transcript.
4. Instead of a statement read by the Secretary a short video could be presented at each venue. Most conference facilities have suitable IT and audio equipment.
5. MP's or MSP's may prefer a morning Hearing to enable them to travel to the Parliament for voting later in the day.
6. The Commission may wish to consider holding the Public Hearing in a morning, afternoon or evening. Alternatively the Commission could host an informal daytime or evening road-show on the same day as the Hearing with proposals on display with Secretariat staff available to discuss and explain the proposed boundaries. A road-show could be more accessible for those working 9 -5, may help raise public awareness and provide a less formal environment to submit comments (facilities such as online consultation tool would be available or a post-box for written submissions).
7. The availability of Sheriff Principals and suitable accommodation to host an event during the daytime and evening would need to be considered.

Display Points

8. The Commission must display its proposals at a specified place within each proposed constituency. During the 2018 Review the Commission used up to 90 display points. Each display point location was sent a poster, policies and procedures booklet and booklet with its all Scotland proposals.
9. The Commission could consider creating less display materials but sending these to more display point locations. For example a leaflet instead of a booklet could be printed with basic information about the review this would direct users to the Commissions website for more detailed information.

Social Media

10. The Commission trialled paid Twitter advertising during the secondary consultation on its Initial Proposals but it was cut short following a Cabinet Office instruction in the wake of the Westminster Bridge terrorist attack.
11. The Twitter advertising trial was too short to fully analyse the results. However, the Secretariat will ask the Boundary Commission for England to share any findings from their use of social media during the 2018 Review (YouTube, Twitter, radio advertising, linkedin, .gifs etc) to inform the cost effectiveness of future marketing campaigns.

Commission Meetings

12. During the 2018 Review, Commission meetings were held every 4 – 6 weeks. The Commission considered up to 3 groupings of constituencies at each meeting which usually lasted half a day. Meeting papers were posted a week before each meeting.
13. The Commission may wish to consider its preference for shorter Commission meetings or less frequent all-day or 2 day meetings with a fuller agenda and if one week was sufficient time for Commissioners to consider meeting papers.
14. The papers presented to the Commission when it considered its final recommendations were designed to be incorporated in the final report as Appendix A. This enabled the report to be drafted more quickly. For future reviews the Commission may wish to design meeting papers to form its final report.
15. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS) will consider adopting online meeting papers at its next meeting. Meeting papers will also be printed for LGBCS Commissioners. The Commission may also wish to trial online meeting papers.
16. Style guidelines could be agreed before a review for textual and map consistency. The Secretariat could engage with Ordnance Survey earlier for standardised map styles.

Legislation

17. The Commission must consider “local government boundaries as they exist on the most recent ordinary council-election day before the review date.” For the 2018 Review this was 3 May 2012. During the 2018 Review, ward boundaries changed following the implementation of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland’s (LGBCS) 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in May 2017. LGBCS are considering rolling electoral reviews which will result ward boundaries changing more frequently during a UK Parliament Review.

18. The Commission may wish to consider legal advice on how it considers local government boundaries when these may change more frequently.

Survey

19. Consultation Portal users were invited to complete an online survey. Over 1,200 responses were submitted via the portal.
20. During the initial consultation stage 44 responded to the survey. Most users found the portal easy to use and understand. 80% commented on a single constituency, the others commented on more than one constituency. Most users were male, aged 45 to 74.
21. During the revised consultation stage there were 40 responses to the survey, providing similar results.
22. The Secretariat will ask the other Commissions to share any feedback or suggestions they received during the 2018 Review.

Environmental strategy

23. During each consultation stage, over 250 copies of an all Scotland summary of proposals booklet, policies and procedures booklet, maps, news release were printed for distribution to interested parties and display points.
24. At the start of each consultation stage, Secretariat staff hand delivered proposals to MPs at Westminster. The Boundary Commission for England and Boundary Commission for Wales delivered their proposals to MPs at the same time.
25. For the publication of the Commission's Final Report, the report was only available to download from its website, only a few copies of the Report were printed.
26. The Commission may wish to consider minimising printed materials for future reviews, directing interested parties to the Commission's website instead and emailing its proposals to MP's at Westminster, rather than sending staff to London to distribute them.

Misinformation during Reviews

27. The Commission received a number of responses and queries from the general public who were misinformed on the role and impact of the 2018 Review. These included a desire to reduce the size of the House of Lords instead and concern over changes to local services.
28. FAQs were published on the Commission's website stating: the proposals do not affect: your council boundary, ward boundary or community council boundary; your council tax and the services your council provides; your school catchment area; your postcode or postal address; access to public or private facilities or transport; policing or fire service areas; or, NHS services, i.e. your GP or local hospital.

29. The Commission may wish to make a more prominent statement on the impact of a review of UK Parliament constituencies.

Consultation Portal

30. The Commission shared development and running costs for a shared consultation portal with the Boundary Commission for England and Boundary Commission for Wales. The Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland developed their own consultation site.

31. The Commission received 3,236 consultation responses during the 2018 Review. Approximately 1,600 of these were submitted by email, 1,200 via the portal, 400 by post and 60 at Public Hearings.

32. As part of its new website development, a consultation function will be available to enable users to comment on reviews. This should provide significant cost savings for future reviews.

Constituency Names

33. The Commission may wish to review its policy for naming constituencies for the 2018 Review: there was some debate about use of compass points, the length of names if all relevant communities within a large geographic area were to be considered; and in a review where there was significant change across Scotland, use of existing names for constituencies that had changed.

Most commented areas

34. The Commission may wish to note for future reviews the areas where its proposals received the most comments during the 2018 Review. They included:

- support for linking Ayr with Prestwick and Troon;
- opposition to placing Banchory in a separate constituency from other communities in Deeside;
- opposition to linking urban Fife with rural Perthshire;
- opposition to splitting Bearsden between constituencies; and
- opposition to the whole of Dumfries and neighbouring communities not being included within the same constituency.

Budgeting

35. The table below shows the costs of the 2018 Review, broken down by year.

	Staff Costs	Commissioner Fees and Expenses	Review Costs				Total Review Costs	TOTAL
			Consultation Portal	Report Printing & Proofreading	Public Hearings	Miscellaneous Review Costs		
2015-16	£27,777	£1,071	£0	£0	£0	£210	£210	£29,058
2016-17	£193,352	£16,733	£51,158	£4,826	£5,737	£638	£62,360	£272,445
2017-18	£217,690	£15,629	£15,972	£4,062	£0	£837	£20,871	£254,190
2018-19 to end of Oct (estimate)	£95,602	£4,161	£10,090	£7,906	£0	£417	£18,413	£118,176
TOTAL	£534,421	£37,594	£77,220	£16,794	£5,737	£2,102	£101,854	£673,869

36. The table above does not show the full expenditure of the Commission, as some costs are incurred independent of a particular review, and relate to the Secretariat also working for the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, and sharing, for example, accommodation costs.

37. As of March 2018, the costs of the 2018 Review incurred by the other UK Boundaries Commissions were:

- Boundary Commission for England: £4,125,912
- Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland: £602,900
- Boundary Commission for Wales: £697,420.

38. However, the Secretariat is not aware of the method(s) by which these costs were determined, so like-for-like comparison between commissions may not be possible.