

Boundary Commission for Scotland

Corporate Plan 2020 - 2023

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This Corporate Plan is published in draft form due to the uncertainty of the future timetable of the Commission's Review work. It is based on the legislative requirements for the timetable for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies, which is due to be completed by 1st October 2023, though it makes provision for an earlier submission date. The costs included match those submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland as part of the Cabinet Office 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review.

At the time of writing the UK Parliament is considering changes to the structure and timetable of the next Review of UK Parliament Constituencies. When the structure and timing of the next Review of UK Parliament Constituencies is confirmed, this will be incorporated in an updated version of the 2020-23 Corporate Plan, or in the 2021-24 Corporate Plan.

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1 Introduction

This Corporate Plan sets out the main activities to be undertaken by the Boundary Commission for Scotland (“the Commission”) during the period 2020-21 to 2022-23 and forecasts the required resources and expenditure. For the second and third years covered, the information in the plan is designed to assist with budgeting and planning. The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for those years will be expanded and confirmed in subsequent corporate plans.

There is a significant degree of uncertainty over the Commission’s future work, as the recommendations of the UK Boundaries Commissions in the 2018 Review have not been implemented by Parliament, which is, at the time of writing considering changes to the legislation which govern the structure and timing of the next review of UK Parliament constituencies.

Against that uncertain background, this Corporate Plan reflects the Commission’s understanding of the current position but may need to change in light of the legislation. If the requirements and timing of the next Review (the “2023 Review”) do change significantly, the Commission may require to adjust its estimate of funding required from the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland to complete its work.

The Commission will keep its forecast expenditure under review until the timing and requirements of the UK Parliament Review are confirmed, and continue to liaise with the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland regarding this.

2 Boundary Commission for Scotland

2.1 Duties and Powers

The Commission was established in its current form by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. Our duties and powers are detailed in the 1986 Act. We are responsible for reviews of United Kingdom Parliament constituencies in Scotland.

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

2.2 Membership

Our membership comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair and two further Commissioners. In addition, we also have two ex-officio Assessors.

2.2.1 Chair

Our ex-officio Chair is the Speaker of the House of Commons. In practice, the Chair takes no active part in our business.

2.2.2 Deputy Chair

The Deputy Chair is a judge of the Court of Session, appointed by the Lord President of the Court of Session. The Deputy Chair is currently The Honourable Lord Matthews who was appointed from 1 January 2016 for a 3 year term. He was re-appointed for a further 3 year term from 1 January 2019.

2.2.3 Commissioners

In addition to the Chair and Deputy Chair, Commissioners are appointed on a term basis and posts are filled through open competition using the procedures laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointments are made by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

These Commissioners are:

- Mrs Paula Sharp, appointed from 1 January 2011 for a 4 year term, subsequently re-appointed for a further 4 years, and re-appointed for a further 2 years ending on 31 December 2020;
- Professor Ailsa Henderson, appointed from 15 February 2016 for a 4 year term, and reappointed for a further 4 year term, ending on 31 January 2024.

2.2.4 Assessors

Our two ex-officio Assessors are the Registrar General for Scotland and the Director General of Ordnance Survey.

2.3 Secretariat

We are supported by a small Secretariat. 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 Boundary Commissions and government departments with an interest in boundary matters;
- maintaining contact with Ordnance Survey and other relevant bodies on boundary related issues;
- maintaining links with organisations involved with electoral matters;
- improving and extending our published information explaining our work;
- responding to correspondence on our work and constituency boundary issues;
- providing ongoing training as appropriate to meet staff and review requirements; and
- continuing to meet all financial and other requirements of our Memorandum of Understanding and other key sponsorship documents.

The Secretariat also supports the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS) which is responsible for reviewing electoral ward and local authority areas in Scotland as well as reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries. The Secretariat supports the LGBCS in the same manner that it supports the Commission. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scottish Government for that work.

Secretariat staff are assigned from the Scottish Government. Staff numbers are dependent on the volume of review activity and the need to develop, maintain and update information systems and respond to enquiries etc. For the purposes of this Corporate Plan, staff costs have been shared equally between the Commission and the LGBCS.

3 Planned activities

3.1 Year 2020-21

3.1.1 Review activity

United Kingdom Parliament Reviews

We submitted our 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies to the Secretary of State for Scotland in September 2018. As of February 2020 those recommendations have not been implemented by Parliament. Unless the legislation governing the 2018 Review is changed, our next review will be the 2023 Review, which we expect to commence work on in early 2021.

3.1.2 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).

3.1.3 Membership

Mrs Paula Sharp's current term as a Commissioner ends on 31 December 2020. The Secretariat will work with the OSSS to ensure appropriate continued membership of the Commission.

3.1.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2020-21 are expected to be:

- £270,035

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Commission and the LGBCS during 2020-21 is expected to be:

- 6.48 Full Time Equivalent Staff

The Commission will meet 50% of staff costs with the remainder met by the LGBCS

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A. These costs are expected to be met by a resource allocation which is subject to the approval of the UK Parliament.

3.1.5 Performance indicators

We will consider ourselves to have met our performance requirements when we have met the following:

Review Work:

- initiation of 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies;
- delivery of the early stages of the 2023 Review;

Governance and Other Requirements:

- maintenance of information about the Commission and its work on our website;
- responding to any queries about us and our work during the year;
- delivery within budget;
- given due consideration to equality and diversity in our work;
- used our resources with consideration for the environment;

3.2 Year 2021-22

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2021-22 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans. Funding has not been confirmed for this year, as the UK Parliament has not yet voted on provision for 2021-22.

3.2.1 Review activity

United Kingdom Parliament Reviews

We expect to develop Initial Proposals for constituencies, and hold a statutory public consultation upon these in 2021. We expect to hold a statutory secondary consultation on our Initial Proposals in early 2022. Precise timings and duration will depend on the legislation currently in Parliament.

3.2.2 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).

3.2.3 Membership

The Deputy Chair The Honourable Lord Matthews' term ends on 31 December 2021. The Secretariat will liaise with the office of the Lord President of the Court of Session to ensure appropriate continued membership of the Commission.

3.2.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2021-2022 are expected to be:

- £413,215

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Commission and the LGBCS during 2021-22 is expected to be:

- 6.48 Full Time Equivalent Staff

The Commission will meet 50% of staff costs with the remainder met by the LGBCS

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A. These costs are expected to be met by a resource allocation which is subject to the approval of Parliament.

3.2.5 Performance indicators

- development of our Initial Proposals for UK Parliament constituencies;
- public consultation on our Initial Proposals, and subsequently a secondary public consultation on the comments received from the consultation on our Initial Proposals;
- maintenance of information about the Commission and its work on our website;
- responding to any queries about us and our work during the year;
- delivery within budget;

3.3 Year 2022-23

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2022-2023 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans. Funding has not been confirmed for this year, as the UK Parliament has not yet voted on provision for 2022-23.

3.3.1 Review activity

United Kingdom Parliament Reviews

We expect to consider responses to our secondary consultation on our Initial Proposals and develop Revised Proposals for constituencies. We expect to hold a statutory 8-week public consultation upon our Revised Proposals. In early 2022 we expect to consider responses to our Revised Proposals, and begin development of our Final Recommendations.

3.3.2 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).

3.3.3 Membership

The Commission does not expect any changes to its membership in this year.

3.3.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2022-23 are expected to be:

- £410,033

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Commission and the LGBCS during 2022-23 is expected to be:

- 7.48 Full Time Equivalent staff

The Commission will meet 50% of staff costs with the remainder met by the LGBCS

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A. These costs are expected to be met by a resource allocation which is subject to the approval of Parliament.

3.3.5 Performance indicators

- development of our Revised Proposals for UK Parliament constituencies;
- public consultation on those Revised Proposals;
- maintenance of information about the Commission and its work on our website;
- responding to any queries about us and our work during the year;
- delivery within budget.

4 Long term outlook

We submitted our recommendations for the 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies in September 2018. We expect to carry out the next Review of UK Parliament Constituencies between 2021 and 2023, and submit our next report in 2023 by the deadline required under the current draft legislation.

UK Parliament constituency reviews are currently required to take place every 5 years. The next review of UK Parliament Constituencies after the 2023 Review is therefore expected to be completed in 2028, subject to the current draft legislation.

Any changes to this timetable would require primary legislation.

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Appendix A – Costs

Overall Costs

The overall costs of the Commission are forecast to be as follows:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
staff costs	£188,603	£201,962	£243,772
commissioner costs	£11,321	£23,803	£21,731
accommodation	£22,451	£25,819	£29,692
administration	£39,660	£36,866	£38,709
travel and subsistence	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
review costs	£6,000	£122,765	£74,129
TOTAL	£270,035	£413,215	£410,033

Staff costs

The allocation of staff by grade, and the salary range for each of those grades is as follows:

Grade	FTE 2020-21	FTE 2021-22	FTE 2022-23	Salary range (£) (April 2020)
C1	1	1	1	48,930 to 61,006
B3	1	1	1	38,541 to 46,599
B2	1	1	1	30,652 to 35,110
B1	2.48	2.48	3.48	26,155 to 29,192
A3	1	1	1	20,064 to 22,232
Total	6.48	6.48	7.48	

Overall staffing costs include National Insurance and pension contributions, in addition to the salary in the listed range. The staffing costs are divided 50/50 between the Commission and the LGBCS. Staffing costs include an additional 20% VAT due to the arrangement by which the Scottish Government provides staff to the Commission.

The staffing costs increase notably in 2022-23, as they allow for the recruitment of the equivalent of an additional B1 as both commissions are likely to be very active in 2022-23, although LGBCS has not yet confirmed its timetable.

Commissioners' fees and expenses

Estimates for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 are based on the estimated number of meetings which will be held each year: 5, 11 and 10 respectively, which reflect the timetable of review work.

Accommodation

Accommodation costs cover rent and utility bills, and are divided equally with the LGBCS.

Administration

Covers training, IT costs, Geographic Information Software licences, postage, telephony and other office costs. Administration costs are equally shared between the Commission and the LGBCS, unless they are clearly attributable to one commission or the other.

Travel and subsistence

Covers travel and subsistence costs for Commissioners and staff excluding travel costs specifically related to a Review.

Mapping

We are licensed to use Ordnance Survey data through the One Scotland Mapping Agreement (OSMA), a collective agreement negotiated by Scottish Government on behalf of public bodies in Scotland. The licence fee for OSMA is met centrally by the Scottish Government, and is not shown as a separate cost.

Review costs

The major variable elements are the costs associated with the next review, the 2023 Review, which we expect to begin work on in early 2021. The substantial elements of those costs during the planning period are:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Publicity	£0	£35,000	£30,000	£65,000
Professional fees	£5,000	£76,949	£40,629	£122,578
Public Hearings	£0	£7,316	£0	£7,316
Subtotal	£5,000	£119,265	£70,629	£194,894
Miscellaneous	£1,000	£3,500	£3,500	£8,000
Total	£6,000	£122,765	£74,129	£202,894

Publicity – We publicise our proposals as part of our public consultation at certain stages of a review. In 2021-22 we have made provision for publicising our consultation on Initial Proposals for constituencies, and our secondary consultation on those Initial Proposals. In 2022-23 we have made provision for our consultation on our Revised Proposals. Potential publicity costs include print advertising and associated design costs and social media promotion.

Professional fees - From time to time, we may require external professional assistance. For the 2023 Review, we have made provision for professional fees and external resources in order to make available an online consultation facility, and for printing and proofreading. Legal costs are included under this heading.

Public Hearings – There is a statutory requirement for the Commission to hold Public Hearings as part of Reviews of UK Parliament constituencies. Costs include venue hire, transcription and transport.

Miscellaneous – Provision for miscellaneous additional costs which may be incurred in carrying out the 2023 Review.

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