

Boundary Commission for Scotland

Corporate Plan 2021 - 2024

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Boundary Commission for Scotland Corporate Plan 2021 - 2024

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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 2021-22 to 2023-24 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.

At the time of writing there is a degree of uncertainty over the Commission’s future work, as Parliament is considering changes to the legislation which governs the structure and timing of the next review of UK Parliament constituencies. The Corporate Plan is written on the basis that the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill is passed by Parliament. This would end the 2018 Review without its implementation, and change aspects of the timing of the 2023 Review with respect to the length of public consultations, the timing of public hearings and the submission date.

Against that uncertain background, this Corporate Plan reflects the Commission’s understanding of the likely timetable and structure of the 2023 Review, but may need to change in light of the final legislation. If the requirements and timing of the next 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 (OSSS) 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 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:

- Dr Sue Walker, appointed from 1 January 2021 for a 4 year term;
- 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 or their representatives.

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 2021-22

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 November 2020 those recommendations

have not been implemented by Parliament and if passed the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill would end that review without implementation. The Bill provides for the next review, the 2023 Review, on which we expect to commence work in early 2021.

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 spring 2022, which would also include holding Public Hearings.

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

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 from 1 January 2022.

3.1.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2021-22 are expected to be:

- c. £423,000

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 the UK Parliament. The costs are indicative since funding has not yet been agreed.

3.1.5 Performance indicators

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

Review Work:

- developed our Initial Proposals for UK Parliament constituencies;
- held a public consultation on our Initial Proposals, and subsequently a secondary public consultation on the comments received from the consultation on our Initial Proposals, and the successful hosting of Public Hearings during the secondary consultation period;

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 2022-23

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2022-23 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

3.2.1 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 4-week public consultation upon our Revised Proposals. In early 2023 we expect to consider responses to our Revised Proposals consultation, and begin development of our Final Recommendations.

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

3.2.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2022-2023 are expected to be:

- c. £392,000

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

This is higher than 2021-22 as the Commission and the LGBCS are both expected to be engaged in significant Review Work this year. 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. The costs are indicative as funding has not yet been agreed.

3.2.5 Performance indicators

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

Review Work:

- developed our Revised Proposals for UK Parliament constituencies;
- held a public consultation on those Revised Proposals;

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.

3.3 Year 2023-24

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2023-2024 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

3.3.1 Review activity

United Kingdom Parliament Reviews

We expect to agree and submit our Final Recommendations in June 2023.

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 2023-24 are expected to be:

- c. £377,000

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Commission and the LGBCS during 2023-24 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. The costs are indicative as funding has not yet been agreed.

3.3.5 Performance indicators

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

Review Work:

- Agreement and submission of our Final Recommendations by the deadline of 1 July 2023

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.

4 Long term outlook

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. However, the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill 2019-21 under consideration by Parliament at the time of writing would extend this to every 8 years.

Appendix A – Costs

Overall Costs

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

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
secretariat staff costs	£201,962	£243,772	£257,252
commissioner costs	£23,803	£21,731	£9,299
accommodation	£25,819	£29,692	£34,146
administration	£39,700	£40,950	£43,450
travel and subsistence	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
review costs	£129,765	£54,047	£30,656
TOTAL	£423,049	£392,192	£376,803

Staff costs

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

Grade	FTE 2021-22	FTE 2022-23	FTE 2023-24	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	3.48	3.48	26,155 to 29,192
A3	1	1	1	20,064 to 22,232
Total	6.48	7.48	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 for BCS 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 undertaking review work in 2022-23 and 2023-24.

Commissioners' fees and expenses

Estimates for 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 are based on the estimated number of meetings which will be held each year: 11, 10 and 4 respectively, which reflect the timetable of review work. Commissioners are paid £505.50 per day.

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 Public Sector Geospatial Agreement, a collective agreement negotiated by Scottish Government on behalf of public bodies in Scotland. The licence fee 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:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Publicity	£42,000	£20,000	£0	£62,000
Professional fees	£76,949	£30,547	£27,949	£135,445
Public Hearings	£7,316	£0	£0	£7,316
Subtotal	£126,265	£50,547	£27,949	£204,761
Miscellaneous	£3,500	£3,500	£2,708	£9,708
Total	£129,765	£54,047	£30,656	£214,469

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 -We may require external professional assistance to conduct our work. 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. Budget for securing legal advice, if necessary, are also 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, including for example costs of delivering the final report to Parliament.
