



Annual Report 2021-22

www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk

Deputy Chair's foreword

This year we continued our work on the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies, at the conclusion of which we are required to submit our recommendations for UK Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland to the UK Parliament, before 1 July 2023.

We completed development of our initial proposals, and held an 8-week public consultation on those proposals beginning on 14 October 2021.

We then held a 6-week secondary public consultation on our initial proposals, beginning on 10 February 2022, at the start of which we published all the comments we had received during the first consultation.

During this secondary consultation we also held five public hearings, the maximum allowed under the legislation governing the Review, in Edinburgh, Perth, Glasgow, Inverness and Oban, where members of the public could make comments on our proposals.

Professor Henderson participated in the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions, where we discussed the Commissions' experiences of carrying out the Reviews during the coronavirus pandemic, and considered whether holding public hearings in a hybrid online / in-person fashion might be possible during future reviews.

As a result of the pandemic we continued to conduct our meetings by videoconference, and our secretariat worked both from home and at our office. Despite the challenges, business continued to be delivered effectively. We would like to thank our Secretariat for adapting to the trying circumstances.

The Hon Lord Matthews
Deputy Chair, Boundary Commission for Scotland
July 2022

Boundary Commission for Scotland

Annual Report 2021-22

Contents

1	The Commission	1
1.1	Background	1
1.2	Membership	1
1.3	Code of Practice.....	1
1.4	Register of Commissioners' Interests	2
2	Secretariat.....	2
3	Review activity.....	3
3.1	Meetings.....	3
3.2	UK Parliament constituencies	3
4	Other activities	3
4.1	Staffing and training	3
4.2	Liaison with others	3
5	Governance	4
5.1	Legislation - UK Parliament reviews	4
5.2	Memorandum of Understanding.....	4
5.3	Data protection.....	4
5.4	Equality issues	4
5.5	Risk Management	5
6	Enquiries and public information	5
6.1	Freedom of Information	5
6.2	Website.....	5
6.3	Maps of constituencies	5
6.4	Information Papers	5
6.5	Minutes and meeting papers.....	6
7	Expenditure.....	6
7.1	Staff salaries	6
7.2	Commissioners' fees.....	6
7.3	Accommodation.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7.4	Administration.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
7.5	Travel and subsistence	7
7.6	Review costs	7
7.7	Reportable transactions	7
8	Work programme for 2021-22	7
8.1	United Kingdom Parliament Review	8
8.2	Funding for 2021-22.....	8
8.3	Other activity.....	8
9	Further information	8

This report covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. 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 (as amended). 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. We are an independent and non-political body.

1.2 Membership

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

1.2.1 Chair

The ex-officio Chair 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 Chair takes no active part in the business of any of the Commissions.

1.2.2 Deputy Chair

The Deputy Chair is a judge of the Court of Session, appointed by the Lord President of the Court of Session, as specified by the 1986 Act. The current Deputy Chair is the Honourable Lord Matthews who was appointed from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2018, re-appointed from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2021, and again until 31 December 2024.

1.2.3 Commissioners

The Commissioners, other than the Chair and Deputy Chair, 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 2021-22, the Commissioners were:

- Professor Ailsa Henderson, appointed from 16 February 2016 until 15 February 2020, and re-appointed until 31 January 2024,
- Dr Sue Walker, appointed 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2024.

1.2.4 Assessors

Our two ex-officio Assessors are the Registrar General for Scotland, Paul Lowe, and the Director General of Ordnance Survey, represented by Dominic Cuthbert.

1.3 Code of Practice

The Cabinet Office Code of Practice for Members of Non-Departmental Public Bodies is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

1.4 Register of Commissioners' Interests

We maintain a Register of Interests of Commissioners, in accordance with the 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 officials in the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Secretary is Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray who has been in post since October 2014.

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;
- responding to general and other correspondence concerning boundary issues; and
- managing workload across commissions.

The Secretariat is accommodated in Thistle House, in Central 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 2021-22, the average assignment of Secretariat staff to support the Commission was as follows:

Post	Full-time equivalent
Secretary	0.5
Review Manager	0.5
Deputy Review Manager	0.5
Review Officer	0.5
Finance and Governance Officer	0.5
IT Database Manager	0.22
General Office Manager	0.5
Total	3.22

Staff members' time is allocated between support for us and for Boundaries Scotland, which is responsible for reviewing electoral ward and local authority areas in Scotland and Scottish Parliament boundaries. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scottish Government for that work.

3 Review activity

3.1 Meetings

We met on seven occasions in 2021-22. Our meetings were held by videoconference this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. We place minutes of meetings and copies of our discussion papers on our website on a phased basis at appropriate stages during our reviews (see section 6.5 below).

3.2 UK Parliament constituencies

We began work on the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies in January 2021.

We worked on our initial proposals for constituencies for most of 2021, and published them for an 8-week public consultation, beginning on 14 October 2021.

We held a secondary 6-week public consultation on our initial proposals, beginning on 10 February 2022, at the start of which we published all the comments received during the first consultation.

During the secondary consultation period we held public hearings in Edinburgh, Perth, Glasgow, Inverness and Oban, where members of the public could make representations regarding our initial proposals.

We will submit our recommendations for the constituencies in Scotland which are under review before 1 July 2023. Two of the fifty-seven constituencies allocated to Scotland, Na-h Eileanan Iar (Western Isles) and Orkney and Shetland, are protected in legislation, and so will not be included in our recommendations.

4 Other activities

4.1 Staffing and training

Training has continued to meet staff and future review requirements as well as mandatory requirements from the Scottish Government as employer, such as data protection training.

4.2 Liaison with others

4.2.1 Other UK Boundary Commissions

On 26 January 2022, we participated in the annual UK Boundaries Commissions meeting, this year held by video conference where we were represented by Professor Henderson. At the meeting we discussed the ongoing 2023 Review with the other Commissions as well as working arrangements during the coronavirus pandemic, and the possible use of hybrid online / in-person public hearings at future reviews.

4.2.2 Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland

We continue to have regular contact and dialogue with the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (OSSS) as our sponsoring department (see 5.2 below).

4.2.3 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.

4.2.4 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.

4.2.5 Other organisations

The Secretariat maintains and develops contacts with the Association of Electoral Administrators; the Scottish Assessors' Association, Electoral Registration Committee and the Electoral Commission. This has been through attendance at meetings of the Scotland and Northern Ireland Branch of the Association of Electoral Administrators, the Electoral Commission's Scottish Parliament Political Parties Panel in Scotland, and written correspondence.

5 Governance

Our Governance documents below are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request. Please see: [Corporate Documents | The Boundary Commission for Scotland \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)

5.1 Legislation - UK Parliament reviews

Our reviews of UK Parliament constituencies are governed by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the UK Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020. The text of the legislation, incorporating current amendments, is available from www.legislation.gov.uk

5.2 Memorandum of Understanding

We have a Memorandum of Understanding setting out governance arrangements between us and our sponsoring department, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (OSSS). This was adopted in May 2017, following a review in conjunction with the OSSS.

5.3 Data protection

We handle personal information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We have notified the Information Commissioner's Office of the personal data which we handle. All staff have completed annual mandatory training in data protection issues.

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

5.4 Equality issues

We have an Equality Statement which is available on our website which sets out our approach to equality and diversity issues.

5.5 Risk Management

The Secretariat has developed a Risk Management policy covering our work. In line with this policy we maintain a risk register which is reviewed regularly.

6 Enquiries and public information

We use our website and social media to inform the public about our work, including answers to Frequently Asked Questions. 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 2018. Our freedom of information policy and the model publication scheme are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

6.1 Freedom of Information Requests

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, the Secretariat recorded 9 Freedom of Information requests. All were complied with and no requests for review were received.

6.2 Website

Our website remains the primary means for us to make information available. We update the website with all the material which we publish. An archive version of our website containing historical material is maintained by the National Records of Scotland and is available via our website and here:

<https://webarchive.nrsotland.gov.uk/20190111180034/http://www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk/>.

6.3 Maps of constituencies

In conjunction with Boundaries 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 the last 6 sets of UK Parliament constituencies (from 1950 to date), the last 2 sets of Scottish Parliament boundaries (from 1999 to date) and 3 sets of European Parliament constituencies (from 1979 to date). The Map Browser also shows data from Boundaries Scotland since 1995.

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

6.4 Information Papers

We have a series of Information Papers which explain our work. They cover:

- UK Parliament constituencies in Scotland: 1832 – present day;
- Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions 1999 – present day;
- UK and Scottish Parliament constituency names 1950 – present day;
- European Parliament constituencies in Scotland 1979-1999; and

- A General Guide to the Commission.

The Information Papers are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

6.5 Minutes and meeting papers

We publish the minutes and meeting papers of our meetings on a staged basis during a review. Our minutes and meeting papers relating to the 2018 Review are available to view on our website. Where meeting papers include a draft of a document which is later published in its own right (such as our Information Papers, Annual Reports and Corporate Plans), we do not normally publish the draft.

7 Expenditure

Our expenditure for the year 2021-22 is set out under broad headings in the table below. After receiving an initial budget allocation from the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland (OSSS), the Secretariat re-forecasts expenditure monthly during the year and keeps the OSSS informed of the likely expenditure for the year. Any required resources have to be approved by the UK Parliament.

The budget allocation to the Commission from the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland in 2021-22 was £408,000. The forecast as shown below is based on that in the 2021-24 BCS Corporate Plan, reduced from £423,049 to match the budget allocation.

Financial Performance		
April 2021 – March 2022		
	Forecast	Spend
Staff costs	£201,962	£198,136
Commissioners' fees and expenses	£23,803	£10,346
Accommodation	£22,752	£22,963
Administration	£39,700	£17,878
Travel and subsistence	£2,000	£0
Review costs	£117,783	£93,643
Total	£408,000	£342,966

7.1 Staff salaries

Salary costs are determined by the pay arrangements for our seven staff, who are employees of the Scottish Government. The Commission agrees the number of staff it requires with the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and agrees an apportionment of staff costs shared with Boundaries Scotland.

7.2 Commissioners' fees and expenses

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 cost were significantly lower than forecast as the Commission held fewer meetings than budgeted for, with lower average cost per meeting. The fee rate for Commissioners during the year was

£505.50 per day, and has been unchanged since April 2009. No additional expenses were claimed in 2021-22. The Deputy Chair post is not remunerated.

7.3 Administration

Administration costs include office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables, telephone, website costs, internet and email, training, computer software maintenance, support and licence fees and other IT costs.

The underspend in Administration costs is chiefly due to contingency funds not being required to be spent, in addition to lower training and office costs than budgeted, due in part to working arrangements during the coronavirus pandemic, and savings on some IT costs.

7.4 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, which does not relate directly to a review (such costs fall under Review Costs). 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. Due to the continued impact of coronavirus we did not have any such costs in 2021-22.

7.5 Review costs

Review costs cover those items directly attributable to the conduct of our boundary reviews, and include our consultation portal, newspaper and social media advertising, public hearing costs, legal advice and printing. The underspend in Review Costs is chiefly due to lower costs than budgeted for our Consultation Portal and for the design costs of the publicity materials for our public consultations.

7.6 Reportable transactions

In line with UK Government policy, we publish data on all single transactions greater than £25,000 and all Electronic Purchasing Card (ePC) transactions over £500 on our website. In 2021-22 we made no transactions greater than £25,000, and made 15 ePC transactions over £500.

8 Work programme for 2022-23

8.1 United Kingdom Parliament Review

We will continue our work on the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies throughout 2022-23.

We held two public consultations and 5 public hearings on our initial proposals for constituencies in 2021-22, and we will consider all the comments we received on these proposals in summer 2022.

Once we have considered these comments, we may choose to revise our proposals. If we do this, we will hold a further public consultation on these revised proposals in autumn 2022, before submitting our recommendations to the UK Parliament before 1 July 2023.

8.2 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).
- We expect one of our commissioners to attend the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions.
- We will meet with our sponsor department, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland on a regular basis.
- We will keep under review any developments in the area in which we work.

8.3 Funding for 2022-23

The Commission has been allocated £408,000 by Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland for 2022-23.

The Commission's Corporate Plan for 2022-25, which is available on our website, forecast spending of £389,673.

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