

Minutes of Hybrid Meeting held at 10:30am on 25 November 2024

Present:

The Right Hon Lord Matthews, Deputy Chair (via teams)
Dr Sue Walker, Commissioner (via teams)
Mrs Gillian McGregor, Commissioner (via teams)
Mr Dominic Cuthbert, Assessor, Ordnance Survey (via teams)

Kirsty Mavor, Secretary
Douglas Campbell
Pat Allan

Apologies and Declarations of Interest

No apologies as all present. There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes of previous meeting

1. The minutes of the 25 May 2024 meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

2. The Secretary reported that the Annual Report and Corporate Plan had both been published.

Business Update

3. It was noted that a recently elected MP had written to the Commission regarding the large geographical size of his constituency and the challenges that posed in effectively representing his constituents.
4. The Secretary informed the Commission that Rushnara Ali MP had recently been appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the government post with responsibility for electoral matters. The Commission also considered the implications of any possible expansion of the franchise to include those 16 and over.
5. The Secretary referred to the Electoral Commission report which was recently shared by email and the reference to challenges around implementing new electoral boundaries.
6. The Commission received an update on the progress of Boundaries Scotland's ongoing review of Scottish Parliament boundaries and it noted with interest the upcoming Local Inquiries in Paisley and Whitburn.

Action Grid (2024/06)

7. The Commission noted that all actions were either complete or on the Agenda.

Lesson Learned - Action List (2024/07)

8. The Commission discussed the lessons learned paper further and noted the attached Action List. The Commission was particularly keen that legislative change be addressed as a priority with the 2025 UK Commissions meeting

potentially providing the opportunity to progress with the other Commissions. It was agreed that an updated Action List should be considered at future meetings.

9. The Commission noted Mr Cuthbert's comments that Ordnance Survey will work proactively with the Secretariat to ensure the boundary defining process is more streamlined for future reviews. Also, the way in which OS supply and manage data will change as technology evolves and more data is held in cloud environments.

Risk Register (2024/08)

10. The Commission discussed the risk register and mentioned the impact of legislative change and asked for that to be prioritised and under continual review.

Equality Statement (2024/09)

11. The Commission noted the draft equality statement and agreed it without amendment.

Freedom of Information Report (2024/10)

12. The Commission noted the Freedom and Information Report and noted most requests were commercial in nature but were responded to quickly.

Finance Update (2024/10)

13. The Commission noted the finance update.

Any Other Business

14. The Commission discussed the forthcoming 2025 meeting of UK Boundary Commissions. The Secretary informed the Commission of the possibility that it will be a one-day event and a networking dinner may not be held like previous years. The Commission agreed that was a disappointment as the dinner was a worthwhile way of sharing information and developing contacts. It is likely that those travelling to London will need to stay overnight to ensure they make the meeting at the scheduled time the day after.
15. The Commissioners shared ideas about possible discussion topics and reiterated that this forum would provide the opportunity to agree a common approach to legislative change.

Dates of next meetings

16. The Commission agreed to meet again online in early 2025 when more details of the UK Boundary Commissions meeting were known. It was agreed that the first in person meeting of the year would likely be in late Spring or early summer of Summer 2025.

Secretariat
November 2024