

Minutes of Meeting held by video-conference at 10am on Monday 20 July 2020.

Present

The Hon Lord Matthews, Deputy Chair
Mrs Paula Sharp, Commissioner
Professor Ailsa Henderson, Commissioner

Isabel Drummond-Murray, Secretary
Colin Wilson
Douglas Campbell
David Logue
Yvonne Croll

Apologies

Mr Dominic Cuthbert, Ordnance Survey, Assessor
Mr Paul Lowe, National Records of Scotland, Assessor

Minutes of previous meeting

1. The Commission approved the minutes of the meeting on 17 February 2020 with minor amendments.

Matters arising

2. There were no matters arising that would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda.

Business Update

3. The Secretary highlighted that due the current circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Secretariat now all have laptops and are working from home. The Secretariat are allowed limited access to Thistle House to collect mail and office supplies.
4. The Secretary advised that the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS) were continuing with the second phase of their Island Reviews and had recently commenced its consultation with Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire Councils.
5. The Secretary reported that the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill was enacted on 8 July 2020. The Act will rename the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland as Boundaries Scotland and includes other factors such as amending the timing of its reviews and adding to the number of councillors per ward that LGBCS can recommend.
6. The Commission noted that the next UK Commissions meeting, due to be hosted by Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in November 2020, will be a virtual meeting. The Secretary will confirm the meeting date once it is known.

2023 Review: preparations (oral update)

7. The Secretary updated the Commission on preparations for the 2023 Review, to be discussed further in the next items.
8. The Secretary will consider a separate meeting with Mrs Sharp to record her experiences before her term on the Commission ends in December 2020.

Parliamentary Constituencies Bill and 2023 Review Plan (Paper 2020/04)

9. The Commission noted the content of the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill and the provisional 2023 Review timetable based on the Bill. The Commission noted that the Bill is still to be considered by the House of Lords, and that the timing and structure of the 2023 Review is at this point remains uncertain.

2018 Review: Lessons Learned (Paper 2020/05)

10. The Commission reflected on the 2018 Review, and considered the suggestions in the paper. The Commission were positive about increasing social media engagement; holding Public Hearings in an evening; considered holding additional public meetings and preferred more frequent shorter half-day Commission meetings.
11. The Secretariat advised that it had received a quote for the 2023 Review consultation portal that could be shared with the Boundary Commission for England and the Boundary Commission for Wales. The Commission asked the Secretariat to retain some flexibility for consultation portal costs when finalising the 2020-23 Corporate Plan.

2023 Review: naming constituencies (Paper 2020/06)

12. The Commission considered its approach on the naming and designation of constituencies ahead of the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies. The Commission was content to continue with its current policy but agreed to consider feedback from LGBCS on naming Scottish Parliament constituencies, before confirming this.

2023 Review: presentation of maps (Paper 2020/07)

13. The Commission compared its style of maps used during the 2018 Review with those adopted by the other UK Boundary Commissions. It was agreed minor amendments would be made to maps going forward for the 2023 Review. The Commission asked the Secretariat to provide an example showing initial proposals, revised proposals and final recommendations on the same map.

Appointments (oral update)

14. The Commission was advised that the Deputy Chair will be conducting interviews on 15 October 2020 as part of the recruitment process to find a replacement for Mrs Sharp.

Annual Report (Paper 2020/08)

15. The Commission discussed the annual report and agreed it subject to a number of minor amendments.

Finance update (Paper 2020/09)

16. The Commission noted the finance update.

Future meetings (oral update)

17. The Commission confirmed that it will schedule its next meeting in early October 2020.

Any other business

18. The Commission asked the Secretariat to finalise the Corporate Plan.

19. The Commission agreed to await the completion of Parliament's consideration of the UK Parliament Constituencies Bill, and the verdict of the Appeal of the Judicial Review of the Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland's Final Recommendations for the 2018 Review at future meetings, before considering taking legal advice before the start of the 2023 Review.

Secretariat

July 2020