

Minutes of Meeting held by video conference at 10am on 23 November 2020.**Present**

The Hon Lord Matthews, Deputy Chair
Mrs Paula Sharp, Commissioner
Professor Ailsa Henderson, Commissioner
Mr Dominic Cuthbert, Ordnance Survey, Assessor

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

Apologies

Mr Paul Lowe, National Records for Scotland, Assessor .

Minutes of previous meeting

1. The Commission approved the minutes of the meeting on 5 October 2020.

Matters Arising

2. The Secretary advised that the Secretariat are still working from home due to the ongoing circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Secretariat advised that the Scottish Government is making new videoconferencing software available, and would arrange to trial using 'MS Teams' for future Commission meetings.
3. The Secretary advised the Commission that the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCS) recently began a public consultation as part of its Islands Reviews, and are using social media proactively to publicise the consultation. The Secretariat will consider any lessons learned from this consultation which may benefit the Commission during the 2023 Review.
4. The Secretary advised the Commission that the LGBCS had recently agreed a broad set of principles for naming the Scottish Parliament constituencies it recommends, and asked her to formally advise the Commission of this. The Commission agreed that it would work with the LGBCS to minimise potential confusion regarding the names of UK Parliament and Scottish Parliament constituencies covering similar geographic areas.
5. The Secretariat advised the Commission that it was working with the Office of the Advocate General for Scotland and Scottish Government Procurement to set up a contract which would allow it to obtain legal advice when required over the period of the 2023 Review.

Business Update

6. There were no items under Business Update that would not be covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2023 Review: preparations (oral update)

7. The Secretary advised the Commission that the Parliamentary Constituencies Bill is in the "Ping Pong" stage where the House of Commons and House of Lords consider amendments to the Bill made by the other House until agreement is reached. She advised that she expects that the Bill will be agreed in early December

2020, with Royal Assent to follow, and will keep the Commission informed of progress.

8. The Secretary advised that the Secretariat is still awaiting the publication date of the electorate data to be used for the 2023 Review. Once the data has been published, and the UK Parliamentary Constituencies Bill discussed above is passed, the UK Boundary Commissions can confirm the number of MPs Scotland be allocated, and can begin preliminary work on the 2023 Review.
9. The Secretary advised the Commission that the Secretariat had agreed to be included in the procurement process for a consultation portal for the 2023 Review with the Boundary Commission for England (BCE). The costs have not yet been confirmed, but funds have been allocated for this in the draft Corporate Plan.
10. The Secretariat advised that the BCE are taking legal advice on whether public hearings can be held virtually during the 2023 Review as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, and if not, will work with Cabinet Office if changes to legislation are necessary.

Appointments (oral update)

11. The Deputy Chair advised that he had carried out interviews for a new Commissioner in November, and that the Secretary of State for Scotland would likely announce the appointment on 1 December 2020.

UK Commissions Meeting (Paper 2020/12)

12. The Secretary advised the Commission of the arrangements for the UK Boundary Commissions meeting to be held by video conference on Friday 27 November 2020. Professor Henderson will attend on behalf of the Commission, and the Deputy Chair may also be able to attend depending on other work commitments.

2023 Review – Map Styles (Paper 2020/13)

13. The Commission discussed the various map styles shown in Paper 2020/13. The Commission preferred the maps styles which showed some of the area surrounding proposed constituencies, in order to show which areas were not included in the proposed constituency for context.
14. The Commission commented on the strengths and weaknesses of the other maps in the paper, and asked the Secretariat to continue to work with Ordnance Survey and to bring a further set of maps to its next meeting for consideration.

Draft Corporate Plan (Paper 2020/14)

15. The Commission agreed the Draft Corporate Plan subject to minor amendments.

Finance update (Paper 2020/15)

16. The Commission noted the finance update.

Future meetings (oral update)

17. The Commission provisionally agreed to meet on Monday 18 January 2021, pending confirmation of the availability of the new Commissioner.

Any other business

18. The Deputy Chair thanked Paula Sharp, whose term of appointment will end on 31 December, for her many years of valuable contributions to the work of the Commission and wished her well for the future.

Secretariat
November 2020