

Boundary Commission for Scotland

Corporate Plan 2010 - 2013

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Boundary Commission for Scotland Corporate Plan 2010-2013

- 1 Introduction 1
- 2 Boundary Commission for Scotland 1
 - 2.1 Duties and Powers 1
 - 2.2 Membership 1
 - 2.2.1 Chairman..... 1
 - 2.2.2 Deputy Chairman..... 1
 - 2.2.3 Commissioners..... 1
 - 2.2.4 Assessors 2
 - 2.3 Secretariat 2
- 3 Planned activities..... 2
 - 3.1 Year 2010-11..... 2
 - 3.1.1 Review activity 2
 - 3.1.2 Other activity..... 2
 - 3.1.3 Membership 3
 - 3.1.4 Finance and staffing 3
 - 3.1.5 Performance indicators 3
 - 3.1.6 Changes from previous Corporate Plan 3
 - 3.2 Year 2011-12..... 4
 - 3.2.1 Review activity 4
 - 3.2.2 Other activity..... 4
 - 3.2.3 Membership 4
 - 3.2.4 Finance and staffing 4
 - 3.2.5 Performance indicators 4
 - 3.2.6 Changes from previous Corporate Plan 5
 - 3.3 Year 2012-13..... 5
 - 3.3.1 Review activity 5
 - 3.3.2 Other activity..... 5
 - 3.3.3 Membership 5
 - 3.3.4 Finance and staffing 5
 - 3.3.5 Performance indicators 5
- 4 Long term outlook..... 6
- Appendix A – Costs 7

1 Introduction

This Corporate Plan sets out the main activities to be undertaken by the Boundary Commission for Scotland during the period 2010-11 to 2012-13 and forecasts the required resources and expenditure. The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for the latter years covered by this Plan will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

2 Boundary Commission for Scotland

2.1 Duties and Powers

The Boundary Commission for Scotland was established in its current form by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. The Commission's duties and powers are detailed in the 1986 Act and in Schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998. It is responsible for reviews of:

- constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament; and
- constituencies in Scotland for the Westminster Parliament.

The Commission is an advisory Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and wholly funded by the Scotland Office. It is an independent and non-political body.

2.2 Membership

The Commission's membership comprises a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and two further Commissioners. In addition, the Commission also has two ex-officio Assessors.

2.2.1 Chairman

The ex-officio Chairman of the Commission is the Speaker of the House of Commons. In practice, the Chairman takes no part in the business of the Commission.

2.2.2 Deputy Chairman

The Deputy Chairman is a judge of the Court of Session, appointed by the Lord President of the Court of Session. The Deputy Chairman is currently The Honourable Lord Woolman who was appointed on 1 January 2009.

2.2.3 Commissioners

In addition to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, Commissioners are appointed on a term basis and posts are filled 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.

These Commissioners are:

- Dr Elspeth Graham, re-appointed on 1 January 2007 for a 4 year term ending on 31 December 2010, having served as a Commissioner since 1999 ;
- Mr Kenneth McDonald, appointed on 7 June 2007 for a 4 year term ending on 6 June 2011.

2.2.4 Assessors

The two ex-officio Assessors to the Commission are the Registrar General for Scotland and the Director General of Ordnance Survey.

2.3 Secretariat

Support to the Commission is provided by a small Secretariat. The work of the Secretariat includes:

- facilitating boundary reviews;
- dealing with the everyday administrative matters relating to the Commission's business such as finance, purchasing, accommodation;
- liaising with other UK Commissions and government departments with an interest in boundary matters;
- responding to general and other correspondence concerning boundary issues.

The Secretariat also supports the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviewing electoral ward and local authority areas in Scotland. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scottish Government for that work.

Secretariat staff are assigned to the Commission 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.

3 Planned activities

3.1 Year 2010-11

3.1.1 Review activity

Scottish Parliament Reviews

The Commission began its First Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries in 2007-08, and will conclude the review by 30 June 2010. Stages expected during the year 2010-11 are:

- completion of final report; and
- submission of report to Secretary of State for Scotland and simultaneous laying of report before the Scottish Parliament.

Westminster Parliament Reviews

- On completion of the Scottish Parliament Review, the Commission will consider whether to conduct an interim review of Westminster constituency boundaries to reflect any changes to local authority area boundaries arising from Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland reports.
- If there is a change in the legislation governing reviews of Westminster constituencies, then there may be a need to begin a review of Westminster constituencies during 2010-11.

3.1.2 Other activity

During the year, the Secretariat will continue to carry out a range of activities in support of boundary reviews, including:

- moving office accommodation at the end of the lease on the current office;

- in conjunction with the accommodation move, migrating IT provision to a centrally managed service;
- liaising with other UK Boundary Commissions, including hosting the annual liaison meeting in Edinburgh in April 2010;
- providing ongoing training as appropriate to meet staff and review requirements;
- maintaining contact with Ordnance Survey and other relevant bodies on boundary-related issues;
- maintaining links with organisations involved with electoral matters; and
- continuing to meet all financial and other requirements of our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

3.1.3 Membership

The current term of Dr Graham as a Commissioner is due to end on 31 December 2010. Mr McDonald's current term is due to end on 6 June 2011. The Secretariat will support the Scotland Office in their consideration during the year of the future membership of the Commission.

3.1.4 Finance and staffing

Subject to the approval of Parliament, the overall costs of the Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2010-11 are expected to be:

- £282,696

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2010-11 is expected to be:

- 3.3 Full Time Equivalent Staff

3.1.5 Performance indicators

Success in the year will be judged by the following indicators:

- completion of Scottish Parliament Review, submission of the report to the Secretary of State by 30 June 2010 and simultaneous laying of the report before the Scottish Parliament;
- completion of accommodation move;
- implementation of centrally managed IT service after accommodation move;
- successful hosting of UK Boundary Commissions' meeting; and
- delivery within budget.

3.1.6 Changes from previous Corporate Plan

Significant changes in the plan for the year 2010-11 since the publication of the previous Corporate Plan have been:

- the UK Boundary Commissions liaison meeting is taking place early in 2010-11, rather than late in 2009-10;
- accommodation move has been added at the end of the current lease;
- migration to managed IT service deferred until after completion of accommodation move;
- reduction in staffing costs due to not replacing temporary staff at the end of current review activity; and
- recognition of the possibility that the next review of Westminster constituencies starting in this year.

3.2 Year 2011-12

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2011-12 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

3.2.1 Review activity

Scottish Parliament Reviews

After the Scottish Parliament elections of May 2011, the Commission will consider whether an Interim Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries is required arising from the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's review of the boundary between East Dunbartonshire and Glasgow City council areas.

Westminster Parliament Reviews

The Commission submitted the report from its Fifth Periodical Review of Westminster Parliament constituencies in December 2004. Under the current legislation, the Commission must submit its next report between December 2012 and December 2016. Recent experience shows that a review typically takes 3 years to complete, and so the Commission currently intends that the next Review will begin in late 2011, with preparatory work earlier in 2011. If there is a change in the legislation governing reviews of Westminster constituencies, then this may also change.

3.2.2 Other activity

During the year, the Secretariat will continue to carry out a range of activities in support of boundary reviews, including:

- liaising with other UK Boundary Commissions;
- providing ongoing training as appropriate to meet staff and review requirements;
- maintaining contact with Ordnance Survey and other relevant bodies on boundary related issues;
- maintaining links with organisations involved with electoral matters; and
- continuing to meet all financial and other requirements of our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

3.2.3 Membership

As noted under year 2010-11, Mr McDonald's current term as a Commissioner is due to end on 6 June 2011. During the year the Secretariat will support the Scotland Office in their consideration during the year of the future membership of the Commission.

3.2.4 Finance and staffing

Subject to the approval of Parliament, the overall costs of the Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2011-12 are expected to be:

- £280,896

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2011-12 is expected to be:

- 3.9 Full Time Equivalent Staff

3.2.5 Performance indicators

Success in the year will be judged by the following indicators:

- Completion of agreed stages in the review of Westminster constituencies
- Delivery within budget.

Performance indicators for the year will be developed further prior to 2011-12.

3.2.6 Changes from previous Corporate Plan

Significant changes in the plan for the year 2011-12 since the publication of the previous Corporate Plan have been:

- addition of a possible Interim Review of certain Scottish Parliament constituencies;
- reduction in staffing costs due to not replacing temporary staff at the end of current review activity.

3.3 Year 2012-13

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2012-13 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

3.3.1 Review activity

Scottish Parliament Reviews

No activity expected.

Westminster Parliament Reviews

The Commission will continue to progress the review of Westminster Parliament constituencies referred to in 3.2.1.

3.3.2 Other activity

During the year, the Secretariat will continue to carry out a range of activities in support of boundary reviews, including:

- liaising with other UK Boundary Commissions;
- providing ongoing training as appropriate to meet staff and review requirements;
- maintaining contact with Ordnance Survey and other relevant bodies on boundary related issues;
- maintaining links with organisations involved with electoral matters; and
- continuing to meet all financial and other requirements of our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

3.3.3 Membership

No changes to the membership of the Commission are expected during the year.

3.3.4 Finance and staffing

Subject to the approval of Parliament, the resource allocation for the Boundary Commission for Scotland for 2012-13 will be:

- £667,054

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2012-13 is expected to be:

- 5.1 Full Time Equivalent Staff

3.3.5 Performance indicators

Success in the year will be judged by the following indicators:

- successful delivery of agreed stages of Westminster reviews;
- delivery within budget.

Performance indicators for the year will be developed further prior to 2012-13.

4 Long term outlook

The current review of Scottish Parliament boundaries will report in 2010. The interval between these reviews is 8 to 12 years, and recent experience shows that a review typically takes 3 years to complete. Therefore, the Commission expects to commence its Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries in 2017.

Appendix A – Costs

Overall Costs

The overall costs of the Boundary Commission for Scotland during the planning period are expected to be as follows.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Staffing costs	122,696	143,896	187,054
Commissioners' fees and expenses	14,000	14,000	24,000
Accommodation, rent and rates	56,000	47,000	47,000
Administration	43,000	34,000	34,000
Mapping	40,000	40,000	40,000
Travel and Subsistence	2,000	2,000	2,000
Review costs	5,000	0	333,000
Total	282,696	280,896	667,054

Commissioners' fees and expenses

These are approximately £2000 per meeting, and the figures are based on monthly meetings during a review, and meetings every 2 months otherwise.

Accommodation

Accommodation costs cover rent and utility bills, and are divided equally with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland. It is expected that the office accommodation of the Commissions will move during 2010. A provision of £10,000 has been carried forward from 2009-10 to 2010-11 for the costs associated with such a move.

Administration

Covers training, IT costs, postage, telephones etc. A provision of £10,000 has been made in 2010-11 to cover the costs of migrating to a managed IT service, and of £5,000 annually for the recurrent costs of such a service.

Mapping

The majority of this item covers licence fees for use of Ordnance Survey data through a collective agreement negotiated by the Scottish Government on behalf of the Scottish public sector.

Travel and subsistence

Covers travel and subsistence costs for Commissioners and staff.

Review costs

The major variable elements in the cost of running the Secretariat are the costs associated with a Review. The substantial elements of those costs during the planning period are:

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Newspaper advertising	0	0	300,000
Local Inquiries - venue hire and facilities	0	0	2,000
Local Inquiries - travel and subsistence	0	0	1,000
Local Inquiries - transcription service	0	0	30,000
Report publication	5,000	0	0
Total	5,000	0	333,000

Newspaper advertising – Legislation requires the placement of statutory notices to make the public aware of certain stages of a review. In addition, the Commission places public notices at other stages of a review, where the legislation requires the Commission to publicise its proposals, but does not explicitly require newspaper advertisement. It costs around £200,000 to place a full set of notices in newspapers for all of Scotland.

In 2012-13, the Commission expects that it will advertise its Provisional Proposals for constituencies as part of its next review of Westminster constituencies, and a round of advertising for Local Inquiries.

Local Inquiries

The Commission expects to undertake Local Inquiries during 2012-13 as part of its next review of Westminster constituencies. Recent reviews have each resulted in between 8 and 10 Local Inquiries at the corresponding stage.

Venue hire and facilities – Venues are arranged in conjunction with local authorities. Some local authorities provide facilities free of charge, while others charge a commercial rate for use of premises. The average cost per day is £100.

Travel and subsistence – The Commission meets the necessary travel and subsistence costs incurred by Assistant Commissioners in the course of conducting Local Inquiries.

Transcription service – full verbatim transcripts of Local Inquiry proceedings are prepared in order to help the Assistant Commissioner in writing his report, and in order to form part of the public record of the Commission's decision making. Transcription services cost around £1500 per day.

Report publication costs – At the conclusion of a Review, the Commission submits a report to the Secretary of State for Scotland and lays a copy of the report before the Scottish Parliament. Although the predominant means of disseminating the report is electronic, there is still a requirement to produce a limited number of hard copies.