

**Local Government  
Boundary Commission for Scotland**

**Annual Report 2007-08**

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This report covers the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008, and is available from the Commission's website [www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk), or by request from the Commission.

## Chairman's foreword

The year 2007-08 has been a year of significant change for the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland.

It has been a great privilege for me to take over as Chairman of the Commission, in succession to John Marjoribanks. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Mr Marjoribanks for his leadership of the Commission during his 7 years as Chairman.

Although his retirement preceded my appointment, on behalf of Commissioners past and present, I would also like to thank Mr Bob Smith for his service as Secretary to the Commission. Under him the Commission pioneered the application of Geographical Information Systems to the work of electoral reviews in the United Kingdom. The recognition of his service through the award of the MBE in the New Year Honours was very well deserved.

The Commission has not conducted any boundary reviews during the year being reported on. This is a direct result of the cyclical nature of the role of the Commission, and continued Ministerial direction to the Commission. During the previous reporting year, the Commission completed its Fourth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements, and it was very gratifying to see the resulting multi-member ward boundaries brought into successful operation at the local government elections in Scotland in May 2007. This was a major achievement, unprecedented in Great Britain, and it is a tribute to the professionalism of our staff and the judgement of the then Commissioners that it was achieved on time and without significant challenge.

During the year Professor Hugh Begg and Dr Ann Glen retired after 8 years as members of the Commission. We thank them most sincerely for their contribution during these busy years. In their place Scottish Ministers appointed Professor Brian Clark and Paula Sharp, who each bring valuable relevant experience to the Commission.

During the year, we have been discussing with Ministers their intentions for future Ministerial Directions to the Commission. New Directions were made at the end of the year which will allow the Commission to undertake some administrative boundary reviews during the year 2008-09. In doing so we expect to concentrate on a few relatively small boundary anomalies where boundaries appear not to reflect the changes brought about by housing development and may therefore be prejudicial to achieving the "effective and convenient local government" which is the statutory objective of our reviews.

In this we will depend as before on our small team of dedicated and highly professional staff, in the knowledge that in addition to serving us they also have to serve the parliamentary Boundary Commission, which deals with constituency boundaries for the Westminster and Holyrood parliaments. In doing so they have to juggle the relative priorities of the two Commissions, and we fully appreciate that there is much to be done on the parliamentary side, which may impinge on resources available to us. However, we are satisfied that despite these pressures, the work plan outlined in this report for 2008/2009 is deliverable.

Peter Mackay  
Chairman  
Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland  
30 April 2008

# 1 The Commission

## 1.1 Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and its constitution and work is governed by that Act as amended.

The Commission is required to

- conduct periodic reviews of local government administrative areas and electoral arrangements
- consider requests for ad hoc reviews of administrative areas and electoral arrangements

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and wholly funded by the Scottish Government. The Commission is an independent and non-political body.

During the year, responsibility for the Commission moved within the Scottish Government from the Local Government Division, to the Constitutional Policy Unit.

## 1.2 Membership

The 1973 Act specifies that the Commission's membership comprises a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and up to four further Commissioners.

Members 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 in Scotland. Appointments are made by Scottish Ministers.

### 1.2.1 Chairman

The Chairman of the Commission is Peter Mackay, CB who took up post on 1 November 2007, in succession to John Marjoribanks. Peter Mackay has been appointed for a 3 year term, from 1 November 2007 to 31 October 2010. John Marjoribanks served as Chair of the Commission from 1 November 2000 until 31 October 2007.

### 1.2.2 Deputy Chairman

The Deputy Chairman is Brian Wilson, OBE. Brian Wilson was first appointed as Deputy Chairman on 1 October 1999. He was reappointed for a second term between October 2003 and September 2007, and that second term was extended until May 2008 to provide continuity with the incoming Chairman.

In March 2008, the Scottish Government advertised the post of Deputy Chairman, and an appointment is expected during the summer of 2008.

### 1.2.3 Commissioners

There are currently 4 Commissioners in addition to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman.

- Kenneth McDonald was appointed on 24 May 2004 for a 4 year term ending on 23 May 2008;
- Richard Millham was appointed on 24 May 2004 for a 4 year term ending on 23 May 2008;

- Professor Brian Clark was appointed on 1 November 2007 for a 3 year term ending on 31 October 2010.
- Paula Sharp was appointed on 1 November 2007 for a 3 year term ending on 31 October 2010;

Two Commissioners completed their service as Commissioners during the year:

- Professor Hugh Begg was first appointed on 1 October 1999, and reappointed for a second term in October 2003 which ended in September 2007;
- Dr Ann Glen was first appointed on 1 October 1999, and reappointed for a second term in October 2003 which ended in September 2007.

### **1.3 Meetings**

The Commission met on 6 occasions in 2007-08.

Peter Mackay, Ken McDonald and Paula Sharp attended the Annual Meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in Cardiff on 6 and 7 March 2008. The meeting provides a valuable opportunity for the Commissions to exchange ideas and learn from each other's experience. Peter Mackay reported to the meeting on the current work of the Commission.

### **1.4 Code of Practice**

The Commission has had a Code of Practice since 1999, which it updated in 2004. The Commission has reviewed that Code in the light of the Code of Conduct for Members of the Commission issued by Scottish Ministers under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000, and expects to publish revised guidance to its members early in 2008-09.

The current Code of Practice is available on the Commission's website ([www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)), or a copy can be provided on request.

### **1.5 Register of Commissioners' Interests**

The Commission maintains a Register of Interests of Commissioners, in accordance with the Commissioners' Code of Practice. The Register of Interests is available on the Commission's website ([www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)), or a copy can be provided on request.

### **1.6 Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**

The Commission has a publication scheme under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The scheme was approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner in 2004 for 4 years, and that approval has been extended to June 2011. The Commission reviews the scheme from time to time to ensure it remains relevant. The Scheme is available on the Commission's website ([www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)), or a copy can be provided on request.

During 2007-08, the Secretariat received and responded to 1 request made under the terms of the Act. The Secretariat also continues to provide information through the website, and in response to ad-hoc enquiries.

## **2 Secretariat**

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

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

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary, Dr Hugh Buchanan. Dr Buchanan took up post on 23 October 2007, on the retirement of Mr Bob Smith. Mr Smith had served as Secretary to the Commission since September 1996. Mr Smith's contribution to the work of the Commission was recognised by the award of the MBE in the New Year Honours announced in December 2007.

Staff of the Secretariat are assigned to the Commission from the Scottish Government. The number of staff assigned to the Commission is dependent on the volume of review activity and the need to develop, maintain and update information systems and respond to enquiries etc. During the year 2007-08 support to the Secretariat was provided by staff deployed as follows:

<b>Post</b>	<b>Full-time equivalent</b>
Secretary	0.6
Casework Manager	1.0
Casework Officer	1.0
Network Manager	0.5
General Office Manager	0.5
General Office Assistant	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.0</b>

Almost all staff members are employed on a full-time basis, with their time allocated between support for the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland and for the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviewing constituency boundaries for the Westminster Parliament and constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament. Staff costs for support to the Boundary Commission for Scotland are funded separately by the Scotland Office.

### **3 Statutory framework**

#### **3.1 Legislation**

The work of the Commission is governed by sections 12 to 28 and Schedules 4 to 6 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended. There were no amendments to that legislation during the year. The text of the legislation as amended is available on the Commission's website.

#### **3.2 Direction from Ministers**

The Commission continues to operate under two Directions from Ministers dated 31 March 2004. The first of these instructs the Commission not to undertake a review of any local government area between 1 April 2004 and 31 March 2008, other than a review which potentially directly affects not more than 50 electors. The second

alters the period between periodic reviews of local government areas to be not less than 12 nor more than 16 years.

As reported below, the Commission has discussed with Scottish Ministers the Direction that Ministers will give the Commission for the period from 31 March 2008.

## 4 Objectives and performance

### 4.1 Principal objectives and performance

The Commission's principal objectives and performance for 2007-08 were as follows:

#### 4.1.1 Members of the Commission

**Objective:** Support the Scottish Government as it appoints a new Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Commissioners

**Performance:** As reported above, during the year a new Chairman and Commissioners were appointed, and the appointment of a Deputy Chairman is in hand.

#### 4.1.2 Secretary to the Commission

**Objective:** Support the Scottish Government as it appoints a new Secretary on Bob Smith's retirement

**Performance:** As reported above, Hugh Buchanan was appointed as Secretary in October 2007.

#### 4.1.3 Plan future reviews

**Objective:** Discuss with Scottish Ministers the intended programme of reviews in the light of the expiry of the current Directions issued by Scottish Ministers with effect from 1 April 2004 which will expire in March 2008. Respond to requests for interim administrative reviews in accordance with the Directions issued by Scottish Ministers with effect from 1 April 2004.

**Performance:** The existing Ministerial Directions have meant that no reviews have been commenced during the year.

During the year, discussions have taken place with the Scottish Government on what Ministerial Direction will be in place for the period after 31 March 2008. Ministers have made Directions which will take effect after 31 March 2008 which prevent a general review of local authority boundaries, and which require the Commission to review the boundary between Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire in an area east of Steps, and allow the Commission to review other boundaries where the review will directly affect no more than 300 electors.

#### 4.1.4 Training

**Objective:** Provide ongoing training as appropriate to meet staff and review requirements.

**Performance:** Staff have been sent on appropriate software training courses. New Commissioners have been offered the opportunity of training on fulfilling an appointed role on a public body, and Paula Sharp has completed this training.

#### 4.1.5 Website development

**Objective:** Continue to review and develop the Commission's website, ensuring that it remains a valuable archive of present and past review activity undertaken by this Commission.

**Performance:** The website content has been reviewed and updated, with the addition of documents giving the current text of the relevant legislation affecting the Commission; information papers on the development of local authority boundaries in Scotland since 1973; expanded Frequently Asked Questions; and a complete list of the reports produced by the Commission since 1973. In addition, information on Commissioners, including the Register of Interests, has been updated in line with the current membership of the Commission.

#### 4.1.6 Work with Ordnance Survey

**Objective:** Maintain contact with Ordnance Survey and other relevant bodies on boundary related issues.

**Performance:** This has continued through email, phone and personal contact to ensure that the Secretariat have access to the optimum set of mapping data products to support their work; to receive technical advice in the deployment of those products; and to ensure that the Secretariat and Ordnance Survey work together to ensure the smooth flow of accurate information from Commission decisions to Ordnance Survey's boundary products.

### 4.2 Other Tasks

#### 4.2.1 Liaison with Office for National Statistics

**Objective:** Continue with input to the group led by the Office for National Statistics on statistical geographies.

**Performance:** This has continued by email correspondence through the year.

#### 4.2.2 Liaison with other organisations

**Objective:** Maintain and further develop contacts with Association of Electoral Administrators, Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

**Performance:** Contact has been maintained through attendance at meetings of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Branch of the Association of Electoral Administrators and email correspondence.

## 5 Expenditure

The Commission's expenditure for the year 2007-08 is set out under broad headings in the table below.

<b>Budget and Outturn Performance</b>			
<b>April 2007 – March 2008</b>			
	<b>Expenditure</b>		<b>Variance</b>
	<b>Forecast (£)</b>	<b>Actual (£)</b>	<b>%</b>
Staff Salaries	220,000	103,808	-52.8
Commissioners' Fees	18,000	17,225	-4.3
Accommodation	50,200	48,112	-4.2
Travel and Subsistence	8,300	2,431	-70.7
General Expenses	52,300	23,930	-50.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>348,800</b>	<b>185,730</b>	<b>-46.8</b>

## 5.1 Staff salaries

The Scottish Government determines staff salaries. The significant underspend arose as a result of a greater than expected proportion of staff time being spent on parliamentary boundary work, and unfilled vacant posts.

## 5.2 Commissioners' fees

Commissioners' fees are determined by the Scottish Government and cover attendance at all scheduled Commission 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 daily basis for each meeting. The fee rates during the year 2007/08 for Commissioners were:

Chairman	£347 per day
Deputy Chairman	£250 per day
Commissioner	£217 per day

## 5.3 Accommodation

The Commission shares accommodation with the Boundary Commission for Scotland, which is responsible for advising the Secretary of State for Scotland on matters relating to parliamentary constituency boundaries. The figures shown in the above table in respect of accommodation etc. reflect the Local Government Boundary Commission's share of rent, business rates, utilities and services such as insurance, management fees and office cleaning.

## 5.4 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, such as site visits required in conjunction with administrative review activities. Travel and subsistence costs are paid at the same rate that applies to staff of the Scottish Government.

## 5.5 General expenses

General expenses include office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables, telephone, facsimile and e-mail, publications and advertising, staff and Commissioner training and computer software maintenance, support and licence fees.

# 6 Work programme for 2008-09

In the financial year 2008-09 the Commission expects to:

- Enable newly appointed Chair and Commissioners to become fully conversant with and confident in the work of the Commission. Support Scottish Government in selecting and appointing a new Deputy Chairman.
- Progress the review of the boundary between Glasgow City and North Lanarkshire in the area east of Stepps, as required by Ministerial Direction
- Consider whether to conduct ad hoc reviews of local government areas where requests have previously been made, operating at all times within any Direction to the Commission from Scottish Ministers. Similarly, consider any new requests for ad-hoc reviews.

- Monitor changes in electorate in wards in Scotland, and keep ward boundaries in Scotland under review, in accordance with section 16(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
- Consider ad-hoc reviews of electoral ward boundaries in response to requests.
- Recruit permanent staff to fill posts currently occupied by temporary staff.
- Review Risk Management Scheme
- Raise public awareness of the work of the Commission
- Maintain and improve existing website with agreed minutes and discussion papers on a rolling basis. Develop common website portal and email address for both Scottish Boundary Commissions.
- Add past Commission documents from past reviews to the website in a suitable format.
- Progress the digitisation of the first and second statutory review boundaries. Undertake quality assurance checks to ensure the accuracy of these boundaries before creating a dataset of the district wards and electoral divisions at district, region and Scotland level in ESRI shapefile formats. Prepare suitable mapping in a PDF format for the website.
- Continue the strong links that have been developed with Ordnance Survey in advancing the boundary making process. Continue to assist each other in identifying more effective and efficient ways of conducting the boundary making process that have mutual benefits.
- Advise Scottish Government officials on questions relating to administrative and electoral boundaries.
- Continue with input to group led by Office for National Statistics on statistical geographies.
- Maintain and further develop contacts with Association of Electoral Administrators, Electoral Registration Officers, Society of Local Authority Lawyers & Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR), Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), Electoral Commission, and other UK Boundary Commissions.