

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Corporate Plan 2011 - 2014

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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland Corporate Plan 2011-2014

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1 Introduction

This Corporate Plan sets out the main activities to be undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland during the period 2011-12 to 2013-14 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 Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

2.1 Duties and Powers

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Our duties and powers are detailed in the 1973 Act and Schedule 1A to the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978. We are responsible for:

- reviews of local authority areas in Scotland;
- reviews of electoral arrangements for local authorities; and
- advising on electoral wards for elections to Health Boards.

We are an advisory Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and wholly funded by the Scottish Government. We are an independent, non-political body.

2.2 Membership

Our membership comprises a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and up to four further Commissioners.

2.2.1 Chairman

Our Chairman is Peter Mackay who was appointed on 1 November 2007 for a 3 year term, and reappointed for a further 3 years until 31 October 2013.

2.2.2 Deputy Chairman

Our Deputy Chairman is William Magee who was appointed on 1 September 2008 for a 4 year term ending on 31 August 2012.

2.2.3 Commissioners

In addition to the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, up to 4 further 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 in Scotland. Appointments are made by Scottish Ministers.

There are currently 3 such Commissioners who are:

- Brian Clark, appointed until 31 October 2013, having been initially appointed on 1 November 2007 for a 3 year term, and reappointed for a further 3 years;
- Kenneth McDonald, appointed until 23 May 2012, having been initially appointed on 24 May 2004 for a 4 year term, and reappointed for a further 4 years;
- Paula Sharp, appointed until 31 October 2013, having been initially appointed on 1 November 2007 for a 3 year term, and reappointed for a further 3 years.

2.3 Secretariat

We are supported by a small Secretariat. The work of the Secretariat includes:

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

The Secretariat also supports the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviews of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament and constituencies in Scotland for the United Kingdom Parliament. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scotland Office for that work. The staff of the Secretariat are assigned from the Scottish Government.

The number of staff assigned to support us is dependent on the volume of review activity and the need to develop, maintain and update information systems and respond to enquiries etc.

3 Scottish Government guidance

3.1 Direction from Ministers

Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Scottish Ministers are able to direct us on what reviews of administrative area boundaries we should or should not undertake.

Section 14(1) of the 1973 Act requires us to carry out a review of all administrative area boundaries every 8 to 12 years after 1996. Scottish Ministers have issued a Direction to us instructing us not to carry out any such reviews in the period to 31 March 2012. Previous Directions have prevented us from carrying out any reviews under section 14(1) since 1996.

3.2 Outcome based approach

In line with the Scottish Government's intention that all public bodies should align the outcomes of their activity with the Government's stated Purpose, we have reviewed the associated National Outcomes, and concluded that our work should contribute to the following National Outcomes:

- *NO10 – We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.*
- *NO11 – We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*
- *NO14 – We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.*
- *NO15 – Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.*

NO10 and NO11 reflect the desired result from successful definition of local government boundaries where access to services is supported, and communities feel that boundaries support and reflect their communities of interest.

NO14 reflects the environmental desirability of effective use of resources.

NO15 reflects the way in which well-designed administrative boundaries support the effective delivery of local government services. In addition, it reflects our aspiration to conduct our work efficiently and effectively, and in a way which involves the public.

4 Planned activities

4.1 Year 2011-12

4.1.1 Review activity

Administrative area reviews

We will conduct minor reviews of administrative areas as required. As at March 2011, we are not aware of any cases where such a review will be required.

Local government electoral reviews

We will consider any requests for interim reviews and respond. In preparation for our Fifth General Reviews of electoral arrangements (due to start during 2013-14), we are conducting a consultation on the appropriate means of determining the number of councillors on each council. The consultation will engage with existing local authorities and members of the public.

Health Board ward reviews

No activity expected.

4.1.2 Other activity

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

- improving and extending our published information explaining our work;
- 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.

4.1.3 Membership

No changes to our membership are expected during 2011-12.

4.1.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2011-12 are expected to be:

- £177,488

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

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

- 1.90 Full Time Equivalent Staff

4.1.5 Performance indicators

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

- completion of consultation on determining councillor numbers;
- delivery within budget;
- continuing to meet all financial and other sponsorship requirements as required under our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

4.1.6 Changes from previous Corporate Plan

The one significant change in the plan for the year 2011-12 since the publication of the previous Corporate Plan has been:

- the addition of the consultation on councillor numbers.

4.2 Year 2012-13

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

4.2.1 Review activity

Administrative area reviews

We will conduct minor reviews of administrative areas as required. As at March 2011, we are not aware of any cases where such a review will be required.

Local government electoral reviews

We will consider any requests for interim reviews and respond. We will continue planning for our Fifth General Reviews of electoral arrangements, which are due to start in 2013-14.

Health Board ward reviews

No activity expected.

4.2.2 Other activity

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

- improving and extending our published information explaining our work;
- 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.

4.2.3 Membership

Kenneth McDonald's current term of office is due to end on 23 May 2012, and William Magee's on 31 August 2012. The Secretariat will support the Scottish Government in their consideration during the year of our future membership.

4.2.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2012-13 are expected to be:

- £182,418

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

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

- 1.90 Full Time Equivalent Staff

4.2.5 Performance indicators

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

- preparation for Fifth Reviews of electoral arrangements;
- delivery within budget;
- continuing to meet all financial and other sponsorship requirements as required under our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

4.2.6 Changes from previous Corporate Plan

There have been no significant changes in the plan for the year 2012-13 since the publication of the previous Corporate Plan.

4.3 Year 2013-14

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2013-14 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

4.3.1 Review activity

Administrative area reviews

We will conduct minor reviews of administrative areas as required. As at March 2011, we are not aware of any cases where such a review will be required. Since from October 2013 we expect to be conducting general electoral reviews, from that time, we will only conduct administrative area reviews if we judge that there is an urgent need to do so.

Local government electoral reviews

We conducted our Fourth Reviews of electoral arrangements for local government during the period 2004-06. Such reviews are required to take place every 8 to 12 years. We currently expect to start our Fifth General Reviews of electoral arrangements around October 2013. We anticipate that the reviews will cover all 32 local authorities in Scotland, and will be completed in order to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers in time for the local government elections scheduled to take place in May 2017.

Health Board ward reviews

No activity expected.

4.3.2 Other activity

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

- improving and extending our published information explaining our work;
- 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.

4.3.3 Membership

The current terms of office of Peter Mackay, Brian Clark and Paula Sharp each end on 31 October 2013. The Secretariat will support the Scottish Government in their consideration during the year of our future membership.

4.3.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2013-14 are detailed in Appendix A and are expected to be:

- £425,290

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland during 2013-14 is expected to be:

- 3.22 Full Time Equivalent Staff

4.3.5 Performance indicators

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

- commencement of Fifth Reviews of electoral arrangements;
- delivery within budget;
- continuing to meet all financial and other sponsorship requirements as required under our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

5 Long term outlook

We are required to give advice to Scottish Ministers on electoral wards for Health Boards only if elections to Health Boards are to use multiple wards. The pilot elections to Health Boards took place during 2010, but did not use multiple wards. After the completion of the pilots, and their evaluation, a decision will be made on whether future Health Board elections will use multiple wards. It is currently expected that decision will not be taken before 2012.

The UK Government's most recent Public Spending Review covers the period 2011-12 to 2014-15. In order to provide consistency with that exercise, Appendix A includes costs for 2014-15, in addition to the years covered by this Corporate Plan.

Appendix A – Costs

The UK Government's most recent Public Spending Review covers the period 2011-12 to 2014-15. In order to provide consistency with that exercise, this Appendix includes costs for 2014-15, in addition to the years covered by this Corporate Plan.

Overall Costs

The overall costs of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland are expected to be as follows

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Staffing costs	75,842	77,356	124,038	192,084
Commissioners' fees and expenses	8,000	8,000	16,320	20,808
Accommodation, rent and rates	12,650	13,915	15,307	16,837
Administration	19,578	20,263	20,972	21,706
Mapping	39,848	41,242	42,686	44,180
Travel and Subsistence	2,070	2,142	2,217	2,295
Review costs	19,500	19,500	203,750	203,750
Total	177,488	182,418	425,290	501,660

Commissioners' fees and expenses

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

Accommodation

Accommodation costs cover rent and utility bills, and are divided equally with the Boundary Commission for Scotland. Accommodation costs have reduced by more than 50% after the Secretariat's office move of May 2010.

Administration

Covers training, IT costs, postage, telephones etc.

Mapping

This item covers licence fees for use of Ordnance Survey data through the One Scotland Mapping Agreement (OSMA), a collective agreement negotiated on behalf of public bodies in Scotland by Scottish Government. OSMA lasts until 31 March 2013, and the fee is increased in line with the Retail Price Index in that period. This item is assumed to continue in future years on the same basis, and is divided equally with the Boundary Commission for Scotland.

Travel and subsistence

Covers travel and subsistence costs for Commissioners and staff excluding travel costs specifically related to a Review.

Review costs

The major variable elements in the cost of running the Secretariat are the costs associated with a Review. We assume for planning purposes that we will conduct 2 local administrative area reviews in each of 2011-12 and 2012-13. In 2013-14 and 2014-15, when we will be conducting general electoral reviews, we assume that we will conduct 1 local administrative area review in each year, although we will only do so if we judge that there is an urgent need. It is possible that such local administrative area reviews will not be required.

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Advertising	16,000	16,000	200,000	200,000
Local Inquiry costs	2,000	2,000	1,000	1,000
Travel	1,000	1,000	2,500	2,500
Report publication	500	500	250	250
Total	19,500	19,500	203,750	203,750

Advertising – We publicise our proposals as part of our public consultation at certain stages of a review. It costs around £4,000 to place the relevant public notice in relevant newspapers for a local review. In 2011-12 and 2012-13, provision has been made for advertising on 2 occasions in connection with the completion of each of 2 local reviews in each year. In 2013-14 and 2014-15, provision has been made for advertising on 2 occasions in connection with the completion of 1 local review in each year.

2013-14 and 2014-15 include provision for advertising costs associated with General Reviews of electoral arrangements in each council area.

Local Inquiries

In 2011-12 and 2012-13, we have made financial provision to cover 1 Local Inquiry per year, lasting one day. In 2013-14 and 2014-15 combined, we have made financial provision to cover 1 Local Inquiry, lasting one day, with the costs spread across the 2 financial years. Such Local Inquiries are conducted by an Assistant Commissioner appointed for the purpose, to whom a fee may be payable. Other costs associated with Local Inquiries are:

- **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 £200.
- **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 our decision making. Transcription services cost around £1800 per day.

Travel – During a review, there is an increased requirement for Secretariat staff to travel to meet officials from local councils.

Report publication costs – At the conclusion of a Review, we submit a report to Scottish Ministers. Although the predominant means of disseminating findings is electronic, there is still a requirement to produce a limited number of hard copy reports. Provision has been made of £250 per review for this.