

Introduction

The Sponsor

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is an Advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and wholly funded by the Scottish Executive Finance and Central Services Department (formerly Scottish Executive Development Department).

The Commission

2. The Commission was created by section 12 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. It is an independent, non-political, and totally impartial body. Members are appointed on a term basis and posts are filled through open advertisement using the procedures laid down by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointments are confirmed by The Scottish Ministers following consultation with the principal political parties in Scotland.
3. Schedule 4 to the 1973 Act specifies that the Commission should comprise a Chairman, Deputy Chairman and a maximum of four Commissioners.
4. The Commission has responsibility for all functions conferred on it for the purpose of undertaking reviews set out in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended by the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994. In this respect the Commission is required to conduct statutory reviews of electoral and administrative arrangements, respond to requests for ad hoc reviews of administrative arrangements and monitor electoral arrangements to identify areas where changes to the density or distribution of the electorate indicate that existing arrangements do not sufficiently comply with the requirements of the statutory rules so that the need for a review can be considered. Administrative boundary reviews undertaken by the Commission may be the subject of direction given by Scottish Ministers under section 15 of the 1973 Act.

Chairman

5. The Chairman of the Commission is Mr John Marjoribanks. Mr Marjoribanks was appointed Chairman of the Commission on 1 November 2000 for a period of 3 years.

Deputy Chairman

6. The Deputy Chairman is Mr Brian Wilson OBE. Mr Wilson was appointed Deputy Chairman on 1 October 1999 for a period of 4 years.

Commissioners

7. There are normally three Commissioners, although the legislation allows for a fourth. Dr Elspeth Graham was first appointed to the Commission in April 1994. She will complete her third term in May 2003. Professor Hugh Begg and Dr Ann Glen were appointed from 1 October 1999 until 30 September 2003.

Code of Practice

8. The Commission in 1998 introduced a Code of Practice. It follows the Guidance on Codes of Practice for Board Members to Public Bodies, published by the Cabinet Office.
9. The document includes a commitment to observe stated public service values including the need to:
 - observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice provided to Scottish Ministers regarding proposals for the revision of local government electoral or administrative boundary arrangements;
 - be accountable to the Scottish Parliament and the public more generally for its activities and for the standard of advice it provides; and
 - comply fully with the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information in accordance with Government policy on openness.
10. The Code of Practice states that Commissioners must:
 - follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life;
 - comply with the Code, and ensure they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the function and role of the Commission and any relevant statements of Government policy;
 - not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations;
 - not hold any paid or high-profile unpaid posts in a political party, and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of the Commission; and

- be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion when engaging in other political activities.

11. The Code of Practice can be inspected at the Commission's Offices at the address on page 12 of this report. Alternatively, a copy can be provided on request.

Register of Commissioners' Interests

12. Members of the Commission are required to declare any financial or other business or personal interests which may conflict with the duties and responsibilities set out in the Commission's Code of Practice. Commissioners are asked to notify the Commission of any appointments which might lead to an allegation of a conflict of interest, and to report within one month any change to the information provided in this register. In making returns for inclusion in the register, Commissioners have declared that the information is, to the best of their knowledge, complete and correct.

13. The register shows whether Commissioners:

- were paid employees, partners or proprietors of a company, partnership, trust or other body at any time since 1 January 1991;
- held any Company Directorships at any time since 1 January 1991; and
- held membership of a local health authority, health authority and trust, training enterprise council or other relevant voluntary sector body since 1 January 1991.

14. The register shows also companies and organisations in which either Commissioners, their family members or close associates could be involved in the supply of goods or services to, or have business dealings with, the Commission. In practice the Commission's Secretariat deal directly with all purchases and contracted works following the procedures set out in the Scottish Executive procurement manual. Commissioners are not, therefore, involved in purchasing or contractual issues.

15. The Register of Interests can be inspected at the Commission's Offices at the address on page 12 of this report. Alternatively, a copy can be provided on request.

Secretariat

1. Support to the Commission in undertaking its statutory functions is provided by a small Secretariat. The work of the Secretariat includes monitoring changes in the electorate and dealing with the everyday administrative matters relating to the Commission's business such as finance, purchasing, accommodation etc., liaison with other UK Commissions and government departments with an interest in boundary matters and responding to general and other correspondence concerning boundary issues.
2. Staff of the Secretariat is assigned to the Commission from the Scottish Executive. The number of staff assigned to the Commission is wholly 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 2001/2002 support to the Commission was provided by 4 full-time and two part-time staff deployed as follows:

Post	Whole - Time Equivalent
Secretary	0.20
Senior Case Officer	1.00
Network Manager (from Oct 2001)	1.00
Case Officer	0.50
General Office Manager	1.00
Assistant General Officer Manager (from Oct 2001)	1.00

3. From 1 April 1999, the Commission's Secretary fulfils the role of Secretary to the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviewing parliamentary constituency boundaries and the boundaries of regions for the election of additional members to the Scottish Parliament. A Network Manager post to manage the Commission's internal computer network and Internet applications was created in October 2001.

Objectives and Performance

Statutory Functions

1. The Commission is required by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to undertake periodic statutory reviews of electoral and administrative arrangements, to keep electoral arrangements under continuous review and to respond to requests for interim reviews of administrative boundaries.

Principal Objectives and Performance

2. Our principal objectives and performance for 2001/2002 were as follows:

- **Monitoring Third Review Outcome**

Objective – To continue monitoring progress towards parity at 2001 by assessing the movement of electorate relative to the 2001 forecasts. Using the Commission's Geographic Information System (GIS), to produce spatial analysis of expected, compared to actual, electorate at 2001 for all 32 Council areas. To present findings to Commissioners for consideration. To compile electorate outputs required by the Boundary Commission for Scotland for its forthcoming review of parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Performance – A number of database applications were developed that could be attached to a GIS application and displayed graphically as an aid to assist Commissioners with monitoring and evaluating various aspects of the third statutory review of electoral arrangements at ward and council level.

A presentation given at the November meeting of the Commission provided comparisons between Councils' 5 year forecasts of electorate for their Council areas, GRO(S) 1996 projections of 18+ population, forecasts of electorate prepared by the Secretariat and the electorate on the 2001 Register. The data indicated that in most areas the adjusted forecasts were as good as, or bettered, those provided by Councils. Further, the GRO(S) data were more in line with the adjusted forecasts than those provided by Councils. The Commission generally agreed that for future reviews of electoral arrangements it would be sensible to use the latest available GRO(S) projection of 18+ population or to request that GRO(S) provide forecasts for each Council area.

At ward level, a comparison of the expected and actual distribution of electorate by divergence from electoral parity indicated that, with few

exceptions, electorate in wards which had been the subject of revision by the Secretariat were within ± 10 per cent of the outturn figure.

The analysis demonstrated that the Commission's forecasts of electorate at ward level had taken into account geographical factors and, as far as practicable, community ties. This was evident by the wide divergences that were allowed in many rural areas to address special geographical circumstances and/or community issues. It also verified that the design of wards had not been based solely on achieving numerical parity.

Further, the divergence from electoral parity expected in each Council area in most instances mirrored the outturn electorate figures at 2001. With regard to the accuracy of forecasting electorate, which the Commission continues to believe is central to the stability of electoral geography, the analysis indicated in 91 per cent of electoral wards throughout Scotland the electorate was within $\pm 10\%$ of the expected figure. Further, in 74 per cent of the wards the outturn electorate was within $\pm 5\%$ of the expected figure.

Commissioners concluded that no interim reviews of electoral arrangements should be considered at the present time as the relatively few imbalances that had been identified in the analysis would be resolved if changes to local government electoral arrangements recommended by the Renewing Local Democracy working group (the 'Kerley Report') were introduced.

Electorate data required by the Boundary Commission for Scotland were prepared by June 2001.

- **Requests for Reviews considered by the Commission**

Objective – To consider any new requests received for administrative reviews or for reviews of electoral arrangements.

Performance – No new requests for administrative boundary reviews were received during this reporting year. The Commission's reports on 4 administrative area reviews – Glasgow City/Renfrewshire, Argyll and Bute/West Dunbartonshire, Aberdeen City/Aberdeenshire and City of Edinburgh/West Lothian were submitted to Scottish Ministers and made available to the public in January 2001. A decision was taken by the Scottish Executive to submit simultaneously all 4 reports to Scottish Ministers for consideration. An announcement was made by the Scottish Executive on Monday, 8 January 2002 that the Commission's recommendations detailed in all 4 reports had been accepted by Scottish Ministers. Scottish Statutory Instruments would be prepared to bring the agreed changes into effect from 1 June 2002.

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Angus Council submitted a request seeking a review of electoral arrangements between electoral wards 12 (Montrose West) and 13 (Montrose Hillside), to correct a perceived anomaly that existed at Kinnaber Road. The request for a review was rejected, as it could not be justified in terms of effective and convenient local government.

In March, July and December 2001 the Council submitted further letters to the Commission for consideration, supporting the need for a review and asking the Commission to reconsider its decision. The Commission concluded that there was no good reason which would lead it to depart from its original decision that a review of the boundary between wards 12 and 13 in Angus Council area could not be justified in terms of effective and convenient local government.

- **Procedural Guidance for Administrative Reviews**

Objective – To complete revised guidance on Interim Administrative Review processes and procedures for internal use and for publication on the Commission's web site.

Performance – After the Commission's initial consideration of preliminary drafts of a revised written Procedure for Progressing Interim Administrative Reviews in December 2000, it was agreed that it would be useful to prepare a flow diagram showing the stages and processes involved.

A flow diagram was agreed and will be published on the Commission's web site in due course.

- **Creation of a Knowledge Base**

Objective – To progress the conversion of scanned images of the Commission's discussion documents and associated papers, minutes of meetings and reports to the Secretary of State for Scotland (now Scottish Ministers), which had been produced since the creation of the Commission in 1975, into text-searchable PDF files.

Performance - The Office Support Post in the Commission was utilised to convert the scanned images into more useful text searchable formats. The

process also afforded the opportunity to undertake quality control checks on the finished documents. Technical issues arising from the conversion software were resolved and by the end of the reporting year 140 of the 220 published Commission Reports had been successfully converted. On completion of the exercise the information will be made available on the Commission's web site and to interested parties on CDROM.

- **Web Site Development**

Objective – To oversee the creation of the Commission's web site and ensure that it complies with the structure agreed by Commissioners. Compile and create information for inclusion on the web site in required formats, in order that the Internet service provider could install it onto the web site.

Performance - In April 2001 the Secretariat commenced development work on the Commission's web site by converting the most recent administrative review reports, together with reports relating to the Third Statutory Review of electoral arrangements into the required PDF and HTML formats. By July an operational version of the web site was in place but not accessible to the public. The developmental version consisted of a home page and contained PDF and HTML versions of the Third Statutory Review of electoral arrangements reports and the most recent administrative review reports. During the year the Secretariat developed revised artwork for the web site home page and agreed the presentation requirements with the service provider.

Enquiries concerning postcode databases, which would allow wards to be located on the various maps, ascertained that GRO could provide the information which could be adapted by the Commission as the basis of a search facility. The Commission agreed that postcode information should be obtained and adapted for use on the web site.

The Secretariat completed the production of the Ordnance Survey maps showing electoral ward and Council area boundaries in a format suitable for distribution over the Internet.

Expenditure 2001/2002

1. The Commission's running costs for the year 2001-2002 are set out under broad headings in the table below. Figures are rounded to the nearest £1,000.

Budget and Outturn Performance April 2001 - March 2002			
	Expenditure		Variance
	Forecast (£)	Actual (£)	%
Commissioners' Fees	16,000	11,000	-32
Staff Salaries	100,000	84,000	-16
Accomodation, Rent etc	33,000	33,000	0
Travel & Subsistence	5,000	5,000	0
General Expenses	82,000	73,000	-11
Total	236,000	205,000	-13

Commissioners' Fees

- Commissioners' fees are determined by the Scottish Executive and cover attendance at all scheduled Commission meeting and associated preparation, meetings held with other UK Boundary Commissions and ad hoc meetings held with other bodies. From November 1999, Commissioners' fees moved from an agreed annual fee paid in 12 monthly instalments to a fee paid for each meeting.
- Commissioners are reimbursed for any travelling and subsistence costs incurred whilst undertaking Commission business. Rates paid are those which apply to staff of the Scottish Executive. The amounts paid to Commissioners are included in the global travel and subsistence figure shown in the above table.
- Due to the lack of review activity the Commission required to meet on only 7 occasions during 2001 – 2002. The reduced number of meetings is reflected in the amount paid in Commissioners' fees.

Staff Salaries

5. Staff salaries are determined by the Scottish Executive. The shortfall in Staff Salaries occurred because the Network Manager (Technical) post and General Office Support post were not filled until October 2001.

Accommodation

6. Since April 1999, the Commission's accommodation has been shared 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, office cleaning etc.

Travel and Subsistence

7. 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 Executive. Actual expenditure on travel and subsistence remained at the same level as last year.

General Expenses

8. General expenses cover office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables, telephone, facsimile and e-mail, etc, publications and advertising, staff and Commissioner training and computer software maintenance, support and licence fees.
9. The amount shown for 2001/2002 shows an under spend of £9,000 which occurred due to lack of review activity and the Commission not having to respond to any matters relating to the introduction of proportional representation for local government.

Work Programme for 2002/2003

1. For the financial year 2002-2003 the Commission's planned expenditure is £240,000. The Commission expects to: -

- process requests for ad hoc reviews of administrative boundaries or for reviews of electoral arrangements;
- continue to monitor annual changes in electorate, calculate and plot year on year change, identify areas where imbalances of electorate are occurring, research reasons for divergences and, where necessary, consider remedial action;
- plan for the expected availability of the electoral register in electronic form from December 2002 and take forward work with GRO(S) to consider how postcode geography could be used in the Commission's work on electoral and administrative reviews;
- consider the Commission's approach to previous reviews of administrative boundaries, determine any research requirements for formulating the Commission's approach to the next statutory review and develop processes and procedures for undertaking the review as well as an outline plan for completing the review;
- configure, build and install Commission-owned web server, manage the transfer of the LGBCS web site, mapping components and other Knowledge Base information, and continue to develop and update information on the site;
- arrange and complete formal staff training in the use of ArcView 8.1;
- continue to collect and digitise boundary geographies used by Councils which potentially enhance the Commission's understanding of settlement patterns and other local community issues so that the information can be spatially analysed within the GIS;
- consider the use of Arcview 8.1 by Commissioners in the light of developments led by OS with regard to the introduction of GIS applications at other UK Commissions which could provide benefits to the LGBCS.

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for Scotland**

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