

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.

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 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 first appointed Chairman of the Commission on 1 November 2000. He was reappointed for a second term of office in November 2003 which will end in October 2007.

Deputy Chairman

6. The Deputy Chairman is Mr Brian Wilson OBE. Mr Wilson was first appointed as Deputy Chairman on 1 October 1999. He was reappointed for a second term in October 2003 which will end in September 2007.

Commissioners

7. There are currently three Commissioners, although the legislation allows for a fourth. Dr Elspeth Graham completed her maximum continuous period of service with the Commission in April 2004. Professor Hugh Begg and Dr Ann Glen were first appointed on 1 October 1999. Both were reappointed for a second term in October 2003 which will end in September 2007.

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 11 of this report. Alternatively, a copy can be provided on request. It can also be accessed through the Commission's website at www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk.

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 1993;
- held any Company Directorships at any time since 1 January 1993; and
- held membership of a local health authority, health authority and trust, training enterprise council or other relevant voluntary sector body since 1 January 1993.

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 deals 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 11 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 are 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 2003-2004 support to the Commission was provided by 5 full-time and one part-time staff deployed as follows:

Post	Whole - Time Equivalent
Secretary	0.20
Casework Manager	1.00
Casework Officer	1.00
Network Manager	1.00
General Office Manager	1.00
Assistant General Office Manager	1.00

3. From 1 April 1999, the Commission's Secretary has also fulfilled 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.

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 2003-2004 were as follows:

Interim Administrative Review Requests

Objective – to respond to requests for interim electoral or administrative reviews within the terms of any Scottish Ministers’ Direction currently in force.

Performance – during 2003-2004 the Commission received four requests for reviews of electoral arrangements relating to Aberdeenshire (EWs 58 and 61), East Lothian (EWs 4 and 6), Renfrewshire (EWs 35, 39 and 40) and North Lanarkshire (EWs 68 and 70) council areas. After full and careful consideration of each request the Commission concluded that no substantial case had been made for the proposed changes in terms of effective and convenient local government.

Two requests for interim review of administrative boundaries were received. Both requests were with regard to the Glasgow City/North Lanarkshire Councils’ shared administrative boundary in the vicinity of Stepps and centred on an incomplete housing/commercial development which straddled the existing boundary. The Commission determined that, in line with its general policy, it could not instigate a review until the site was fully developed and the positions of buildings and infrastructure were in place.

Monitoring Third Review and Performance

Objective – to continue to monitor changes in electorate at ward level. Plot year on year change and identify areas where divergences are occurring. Examine reasons for divergences and where necessary consider remedial action.

Performance – electorate data at ward level for 2003 was added to the electorate data already held by the Commission, in respect of previous

years, in order to aid monitoring and evaluate aspects of the third statutory review of electoral arrangements at ward and council level. Although some imbalances in a small number of ward electorates were observed, because of the commencement of the passage of the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill which would introduce a proportional representation voting system to local government in Scotland for the elections in 2007, the Commission concluded that it would not be necessary to review areas where imbalances in the electorates had been observed.

Local Governance (Scotland) Bill

Objective – to provide advice to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Executive on aspects of the Bills proposals.

Performance – the Commission concluded that it would not be appropriate for it to comment on policy issues, particularly those concerning proportionality. The Commission was, however, represented on the Single Transferable Vote Working Group which was set up by Scottish Ministers to provide advice on a wide range of issues regarding the electoral process.

In January 2004 the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Secretary were invited to give evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Transport Committee.

Electoral Register

Objective – to develop interim processes for handling the electronic electoral register including reformatting, postcode clean up for missing and invalid data, and handling of monthly updated information.

Performance – the Commission has in place appropriate systems for standardising the format of the data files containing the electoral register which are received on a monthly basis. The information, with names removed, is maintained on a secure file server.

Development of web site and Knowledge Base

Objective – to progress development of the web site, build a library of Councils' digital boundary datasets showing locally held geographies and capture boundary information from earlier reviews.

Performance - website development continues as material is converted to digital and image formats.

Significant progress was made with the collection of local digital geographies held by Councils. A data library now holds information provided by 24 of the 32 Councils. The digital boundary datasets held include polling districts, community councils, primary and secondary school catchment areas, police beats, local plans, census output areas and community forum areas. This material will be used to inform the Commission's work during future reviews.

Continuing progress was made on the project to digitise all First Review (1976-1984) boundaries, however, due to the relocation of the member of staff responsible, this exercise required to be temporarily suspended after the completion of four Regions. Action on the project will be reactivated when there is suitable opportunity.

Expenditure 2003-2004

1. The Commission's running costs for the year 2003-2004 are set out under broad headings in the table below. Figures are rounded to the nearest £100.

Budget and Outturn Performance			
April 2003 - March 2004			
	Expenditure		Variance
	Forecast (£)	Actual (£)	%
Commissioners' Fees	16,000	14,900	-7
Staff Salaries	112,000	117,200	4
Accommodation (fixed costs) etc	33,800	34,300	1.5
Travel & Subsistence	4,900	6,700	14
General Expenses (mapping, admin. etc.)	73,300	66,200	-10
Total	240,000	239,300	-1

Commissioners' Fees

2. Commissioners' fees are determined by the Scottish Executive 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. From November 1999, Commissioners' fees moved from an agreed annual fee paid in 12 monthly instalments to a fee paid for each meeting.

3. 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 travel and subsistence figure shown in the above table.

4. The Commission met on ten occasions in 2003 – 2004 and attended the Annual Meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in Cardiff in April 2003.

Staff Salaries

5. The Scottish Executive determines staff salaries. The overspend in staff salaries occurred due to the August 2003 pay offer.

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 and office cleaning.

7. Following protracted negotiations a new lease was agreed with effect from the 12 January 2004. For this reason, and because of expenses incurred relating to renegotiation of the lease, a small overspend occurred.

Travel and Subsistence

8. 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. An overspend occurred because of accounting arrangements at the centre which resulted in monies being attributed to the current rather than previous accounting period.

General Expenses

9. 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.

10. The underspend of £5,900 occurred due to the lack of review activity during the reporting year.

11. Overall, the figures for 2003-2004 show a slight underspend of £700.

Work Programme for 2004-2005

1. For the financial year 2004-2005 the Commission's planned expenditure is £510,000
The Commission expects to: -

- commence a full review of electoral arrangements for all Council areas following enactment of the Local Governance (Scotland) Bill.
- respond to requests for interim administrative reviews in accordance with the revised Directions issued by Scottish Ministers' with effect from 1 April 2004.
- design and finalise procedures and processes for statutory review activity.
- ensure that the 2004 Electoral Register is loaded and fully functional in preparation for the forthcoming review of electoral arrangements.
- induct new staff joining the Commission for the review and ensure that they are trained in ArcGIS.
- arrange for Commissioners to have dial-in access to the Commission computer network.
- further develop the Commission website as a public information resource. Take the necessary steps so that the web site can be used to publish proposals during the STV Review and ensure that the Commission is able to receive representations via e-mail. Develop a postcode look-up facility to enhance review ward mapping and provide individual ward maps.
- maintain links with Ordnance Survey on re-engineering the boundary making process. Continue to develop links with related organisations including the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Office of National statistics (ONS) led group on statistical geographies.

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