

**Local Government
Boundary Commission for Scotland**

Annual Report 2005-06

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This report covers the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, and is available from the Commission’s website www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk, or by request from the Commission.

1 The Commission

1.1 Introduction

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 Executive Finance and Central Services Department. The Commission is an independent and non-political body.

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 Commissioner for Public Appointments. Appointments are made by Scottish Ministers.

1.2.1 Chairman

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.

1.2.2 Deputy Chairman

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.

1.2.3 Commissioners

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

- Professor Hugh Begg was first appointed on 1 October 1999 and reappointed for a second term in October 2003 which will end in September 2007.
- Dr Ann Glen was first appointed on 1 October 1999 and reappointed for a second term in October 2003 which will end in September 2007.
- Mr Richard Millham was appointed on 24 May 2004 for a four-year term ending on 23 May 2008.
- Mr Kenneth McDonald was appointed on 24 May 2004 for a four-year term ending on 23 May 2008.

1.3 Meetings

The Commission met on 15 occasions in 2005-06.

Commission members attended the Annual Meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in March 2006 in London. That meeting provides a valuable opportunity for the Commissions to exchange ideas and learn from each other's experience.

1.4 Code of Practice

The Commission has a Code of Practice for Commissioners. It follows the Guidance on Codes of Practice for Board Members to Public Bodies, published by the Cabinet Office.

The Code of Practice is available on the Commission's website (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), 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 the Commission reviews it from time to time to ensure it remains relevant. The publication scheme is published on the Commission's web site.

During 2005-06, the Secretariat responded to 4 requests made under the terms of the Act.

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, government departments with an interest in boundary matters;
- responding to general and other correspondence concerning boundary issues.

The Secretariat is headed by the Secretary, Mr Bob Smith.

Staff of the Secretariat are assigned to the Commission from the Scottish Executive. 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 2005-06 support to the Commission was provided by seven full-time and two part-time staff deployed as follows:

Post	Full-time equivalent
Secretary	0.8
Casework Leader	2.0
Casework Officer	3.0
Network Manager	1.0
General Office Manager	1.0
General Office Assistant	0.5
Total	8.3

The Secretariat also supports the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviewing constituency boundaries for the Westminster Parliament and constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scotland Office for that work.

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 2005-06.

The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced a system of proportional representation for the local government elections to be held in May 2007, and required the Commission to undertake a statutory review of local government electoral arrangements. That Review began in September 2004, and formed the workload of the Commission during 2005-06, and is reported below.

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.

4 Objectives and performance

4.1 Principal objectives and performance

The Commission's principal objectives and performance for 2005-06 were as follows:

4.1.1 Review of electoral arrangements

Objective: Continue management of the review timetable agreed with Ministers and ensure that the various stages during the year are satisfactorily completed.

Respond appropriately to emerging issues arising from Councils' consideration of the Commission's initial proposals. Endeavour to ensure that Councils' responses are received within the allocated 2-month period. Provide Commissioners with comprehensive analysis of Councils' comments on the initial proposals to enable

them to make informed decisions on the development of provisional proposals for public consultation

Performance: Stages 4 – 6 of the review timetable were completed within the required timescales and to the satisfaction of Commissioners. Progress against the timetable has been monitored closely and the Commission remains on course to complete the review by August 2006.

The Secretariat maintained contact with Councils at officer level throughout the initial consultation period and arranged meetings with a number of Councils to discuss emerging issues. Through reminder letters and telephone calls the Secretariat ensured that Council responses were received on time. Discussion papers provided sufficient detail from which Commissioners were able to make sound judgements concerning the development of provisional proposals.

4.1.2 Reports on electoral arrangements

Objective: Prepare report layout and draft common sections of the report that apply to all Council areas, by the end of the statutory public consultation process.

Draft final reports for submission to Ministers once the Commission’s final recommendations have been agreed. Arrange for the publication of the finalised report to meet agreed publication dates. Respond appropriately to inquiries arising from the publication of the report of the Commission’s final recommendations.

Performance: A draft report layout was produced prior to the end of the provisional proposals consultation stage. A template was also prepared to assist the different officers involved in the drafting process maintain a consistent approach.

By the end of the planned year reports of final recommendations had been successfully published for 13 Council areas, as listed below. Of these there were only two areas where inquiries arising from the publication required to be addressed.

Report no.	Council area	Date of report
E06004	Argyll & Bute	January 2006
E06009	East Dunbartonshire	January 2006
E06010	East Lothian	January 2006
E06003	Angus	March 2006
E06007	Dundee City	March 2006
E06011	East Renfrewshire	March 2006
E06013	Falkirk	March 2006
E06017	Inverclyde	March 2006
E06019	Moray	March 2006
E06023	Orkney Islands	March 2006
E06024	Perth & Kinross	March 2006
E06029	South Lanarkshire	March 2006
E06030	Stirling	March 2006

4.1.3 Work with Ordnance Survey to align boundaries to map detail

Objective: Ensure that provisional proposal boundaries are accurately snapped to linear features within OS MasterMap® to enhance spatial accuracy of ward mapping by effectively linking boundary lines to OS MasterMap® feature identifiers (TOIDS).

Maintain and develop links with Ordnance Survey with regard to boundary making process throughout the STV Review.

Performance: As this was the first time for boundaries to be defined digitally a few unforeseen difficulties were experienced but in all cases the Secretariat devised acceptable solutions. Defining boundaries digitally provides better long-term accuracy than was possible with written descriptions.

The Secretariat and Ordnance Survey have worked closely on a number of issues arising from the move to defining boundaries by means of unique feature identifiers contained within OS MasterMap®. The Commission is the first to use GIS techniques in this way to streamline the boundary making process.

4.1.4 Public consultation

Objective: Publish all provisional proposals within appropriate timescales as set out in the review timetable. Acknowledge receipt of all representations and record and summarise on the database created for this purpose. Analyse representations and provide Commissioners with options for and consequences of possible design changes. Where necessary, arrange republishing of amended proposals and local meetings.

Performance: All provisional proposals were published for public consultation by the end of July 2005. Representations were acknowledged, recorded and summarised on the representation database. The database proved to be a useful tool in producing summary reports of representations received within each Council area and in the creation of mail merges to disseminate information to interested parties. Discussion papers provided sufficient detail for Commissioners to make soundly based decisions. In 3 Council areas, Commissioners agreed to publish revised proposals. The necessary arrangements were completed satisfactorily.

4.1.5 Commission website

Objective: Continue to review and develop the Commission's web site. Publish reports of final recommendations once agreed, and publish agreed minutes and discussion papers on a rolling basis.

Performance: The website continues to be reviewed on a regular basis. Information is added and deleted where necessary, in most cases using Secretariat rather than contracted resources.

4.1.6 Requests for reviews

Objective: Consider and respond to requests for Administrative Reviews.

Performance: There was only one request for an administrative review received. Commissioners concluded, under the terms of the Ministerial Direction that is currently in force that it was not possible to undertake a review under the terms of the Direction which expires on 31 March 2008.

4.2 Other Tasks

4.2.1 Liaison with ONS

Objective: Continue with input to ONS-led Group on statistical geographies.

Performance: This has continued by email correspondence through the year, with a focus on issues potentially affecting Scottish Administrative and Electoral geography.

4.2.2 Liaison with officials involved in election administration

Objective: Maintain and further develop contacts with Association of Electoral Administrators and other public officials.

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.

The Secretariat has also worked closely with Electoral Registration Officers to develop new practices, using GIS, which will cut considerably the time currently required to update the electoral register to take account of the new electoral arrangements.

5 Expenditure

The Commission's expenditure for the year 2005-06 is set out under broad headings in the table below.

Budget and Outturn Performance April 2005 - March 2006			
	Expenditure		Variance
	Forecast (£)	Actual (£)	%
Staff Salaries	290,000	197,564	-31.9
Commissioners' Fees	38,000	20,423	-46.25
Accommodation	37,000	42,807	15.7
Travel and Subsistence	14,000	9,754	-30.3
General Expenses	195,000	149,023	-23.6
Total	574,000	419,571	-27.0

5.1 Staff salaries

The Scottish Executive determines staff salaries.

5.2 Commissioners' fees

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. Commissioners' fees are paid on a daily basis for each meeting.

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 Executive.

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 2006-07

In the financial year 2006-07 the Commission expects to:

- Continue to manage the timetable agreed with Ministers for the 4th statutory review of electoral arrangements for local government, and complete the review by August 2006.
- Prepare reports for the 19 council areas not yet published.
- Reconcile the new ward boundaries with existing map detail shown on OS MasterMap®
- Review the alignment between postcode boundaries and ward boundaries.
- Undertake a risk assessment of the Commission, and implement a risk register.
- Continue to review and develop the Commission's website
- Digitise historic boundaries from the first and second statutory reviews of electoral arrangements