

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Corporate Plan 2020 - 2023

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Annotation – August 2020

The Corporate Plan shows expenditure and planning as of February 2020. The Commission agreed with its sponsor department in the Scottish Government at that time that it would not spend more than £387,000. Following the impact of the coronavirus on its plans, the Commission agreed that it would not spend more than £337,000 in 2020-21.

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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 (“the Commission”) during the period 2020-21 to 2022-23 and forecasts the required resources and expenditure. For the second and third years covered, the information in the Plan is designed to assist with budgeting and planning. The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for those years will be expanded and confirmed in subsequent Corporate Plans.

2 Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

2.1 Duties and Powers

The Commission was established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Our duties and powers are detailed in the 1973 Act. We are responsible for:

- reviews of council areas in Scotland;
- reviews of electoral arrangements for councils; and
- reviews of Scottish Parliament constituency and regional boundaries

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

2.2 Membership

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

2.2.1 Chair

Our Chair is Ronnie Hinds who was appointed on 1 September 2013 for a 4 year term. He was reappointed on 1 September 2017 for a further 4 year term.

2.2.2 Deputy Chair

Our Deputy Chair is Ailsa Henderson who was appointed on 1 December 2017 for a 4 year term. She was previously a commissioner, who was reappointed on 1 September 2017 for a 4 year term, having first been appointed on 1 September 2013 for a 4 year term.

2.2.3 Commissioners

In addition to the Chair and Deputy Chair, 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 commissioners who are:

- Roland Bean, reappointed on 1 November 2017 for a 4 year term, having served as a commissioner since 1 November 2013;
- Susan Walker, reappointed on 1 November 2017 for a 4 year term, having served as a commissioner since 1 November 2013; and
- Gordon Macmillan, appointed on 19 November 2018 for a 4 year term.
- Jonathan Collins, appointed on 21 May 2019 for a 4 year term.

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 and accommodation;
- liaising with other UK Boundary Commissions and government departments with an interest in boundary matters;
- maintaining contact with Ordnance Survey and other relevant bodies on boundary related issues;
- maintaining links with organisations involved with electoral matters;
- improving and extending published information explaining our work;
- responding to correspondence on our work and local government boundary issues;
- providing on-going training as appropriate to meet staff and review requirements; and
- continuing to meet all financial and other requirements of our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

The Secretariat also supports the Boundary Commission for Scotland (“the BCS”) which is responsible for reviews of United Kingdom Parliament constituencies in Scotland. The Secretariat supports the BCS in the same manner as it supports the Commission. 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. For the purposes of this Corporate Plan, staff costs have been shared equally between the Commission and the BCS.

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 local government area boundaries we should or should not undertake.

Section 14(1) of the 1973 Act requires us to carry out a review of all local government administrative area boundaries every 8 to 12 years after 1996. On 17 March 2017 Scottish Ministers issued a Direction to us instructing us not to carry out any such reviews in the period to 31 May 2022. Previous Directions have prevented us from carrying out any reviews under section 14(1) since 1996.

Section 14(2) of the 1973 Act allows us to carry out reviews, which could result in us making proposals for the alteration, constitution or abolition of local government administrative areas. On 23 November 2018 Scottish Ministers issued a direction to us instructing us not to carry out any such reviews in the period to 30 September 2023, apart from reviews which would potentially directly affect not more than 500 electors.

3.2 National Performance Framework

Scottish Government intends that public bodies should align the outcomes of their activity with the Government's National Performance Framework and the associated National Outcomes. We have concluded that our work should contribute to the following National Outcomes:

- *We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe.*
- *We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination.*
- *We value, enjoy and protect and enhance our environment.*

The first and second of these reflect the desired result from successful definition of local government boundaries where electoral representation is fair, access to services is supported, and communities feel that boundaries support and reflect their communities of interest.

The third reflects the environmental desirability of effective use of resources.

Further information on the National Performance Framework is available at <http://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

4 Planned activities

4.1 Year 2020-21

4.1.1 Review activity

Administrative Area reviews

The Commission is prevented from carrying out administrative area reviews of all administrative area boundaries under Section 14 (1) of the 1973 Act by ministerial direction (see 3.1 Direction from Ministers, above). However the Commission may decide to conduct a review into a particular council area boundary under Section 14 (2) of the Act, and is obliged to consider a request to do so from an interested party under Section 14(3).

We will consider requests for such reviews, and conduct them as required. Based on the frequency with which the Commission has previously carried out administrative reviews under Section 14 (2), the Corporate Plan budgets for two such reviews to take place, the first spanning the 2020-21 and 2021-22 financial years, and the second to begin in 2022-23.

Local Government Electoral Reviews

We expect to continue our reviews of electoral arrangements for the council areas with inhabited islands.

Having begun in 2018-19 our Reviews of the Island-Only council areas (Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands), and in 2019-20 our Reviews of the Island-Mainland council areas (Argyll and Bute, Highland, and North Ayrshire); we expect to progress these throughout 2020-21 in order to submit our recommendations in May 2021 for use at the next scheduled council elections in May 2022.

The Commission has the power to carry out interim reviews of electoral arrangements for council areas, but this Corporate Plan assumes that no such reviews will take place during the period of the Plan.

Interim Reviews of Scottish Parliament Boundaries

At the time of writing the Commission is carrying out an Interim Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries at Cardowan, by Stepps. This review is a consequence of the local authority boundary between Glasgow City council area and North Lanarkshire council area being amended in this area, as a result of an Administrative Area Review carried out by the Commission, which was implemented in April 2019. The Secretariat expects this Review to be completed in the 2019-20 financial year.

This Corporate Plan does not make additional provision for further such Interim Reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries due to the imminence of the Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, discussed below.

4.1.2 Other activity

We will continue to liaise with Scottish Government as it takes forward its work on electoral reform ensuring the independence of the Commission is preserved and that we are prepared to take forward in a timely manner any changes introduced by the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill 2019.

These changes may include changing the name of the Commission to “Boundaries Scotland”, to reflect that the Commission has, since 2017, had responsibility for Scottish Parliament boundaries. We will update our website and all the documents we produce to reflect this, as appropriate.

We will carry out our governance functions throughout the year to ensure that we manage our operations efficiently and cost effectively, and meet the requirements of our Management Statement and Financial Memorandum with the Scottish Government.

We will refresh our IT facilities.

We will maintain ongoing dialogue with stakeholders including COSLA, the Electoral Commission and others.

We will participate in the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions.

4.1.3 Membership

The Commission does not expect any changes to its membership in 2020-21.

4.1.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2020-21 are expected to be:

- £436,240

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat during 2020-21 is expected to be:

- 6.48 Full Time Equivalent staff

The Commission will meet 50% of staff costs with the remainder met by the BCS.

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

4.1.5 Performance indicators

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

- complete our electoral reviews of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands and make significant progress on our reviews Argyll & Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas;
- progress any administrative reviews which may be necessary;
- 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 Year 2021-22

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2021-22 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

4.2.1 Review activity

Administrative Area Reviews

We will conduct administrative area reviews of council area boundaries as required (see 4.1.1)

Local Government Electoral Reviews

We expect to submit our recommendations for the 6 council areas with inhabited islands detailed in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018: Argyll & Bute, Highland, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, North Ayrshire, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas.

4.2.2 Other activity

We will carry out our governance functions throughout the year to ensure that we manage our operations efficiently and cost effectively, and meet the requirements of our Management Statement and Financial Memorandum from the Scottish Government.

We will maintain ongoing dialogue with stakeholders including COSLA, the Electoral Commission and others.

We will participate in the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions.

4.2.3 Membership

The appointments of the Chair, the Deputy Chair and 2 of the commissioners are due to end in autumn and winter 2021. The Commission will work with the Scottish Government to support the appointment process to ensure continuity of membership.

4.2.4 Finance and staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2021-22 are expected to be:

- £349,656

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat during 2021-22 is expected to be:

- 6.48 Full Time Equivalent staff

The Commission will meet 50% of staff costs with the remainder met by the BCS.

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

4.2.5 Performance indicators

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

- Completion of our reviews of electoral arrangements for council areas with islands;
- progress of any administrative reviews which may be necessary;
- delivery within budget;
- continuing to meet all financial and other sponsorship requirements as required under our Financial Memorandum and other key sponsorship documents.

4.3 Year 2022-23

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2022-23 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

4.3.1 Review activity

Administrative Area Reviews

We will conduct administrative area reviews of council area boundaries as required (see 4.1.1 Administrative area reviews).

Second Periodic Review Scottish Parliament Boundaries

Legislation currently requires submission of the report of the Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions by May 2022. However, the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill 2019, currently under consideration by the Scottish Parliament, proposes to delay this until May 2024, and this is likely to be amended to May 2025. This Corporate Plan budgets on the basis that we will submit the next Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries in May 2025.

Based on the timetable of the First Periodic Review, we will begin that review in summer 2022, during the third year of the Corporate Plan. We expect to decide upon our initial proposals for constituencies, and to hold a public consultation on those proposals in early 2023.

Other activity

We will carry out our governance functions throughout the year to ensure that we manage our operations efficiently and cost effectively, and meet the requirements of our Management Statement and Financial Memorandum from the Scottish Government.

We will maintain ongoing dialogue with stakeholders including COSLA, the Electoral Commission and others.

We will participate in the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions.

4.3.2 Membership

The appointments of two of the commissioners are due to end in autumn 2022 and in spring 2023 respectively. The Commission will work with the Scottish Government to support the appointments process to ensure continuity of membership.

4.3.3 Finance and Staffing

The overall costs of the Commission during 2022-23 are expected to be:

- £471,741

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat during 2022-23 is expected to be:

- 7.48 Full Time Equivalent staff

The Commission will meet 50% of staff costs with the remainder met by the BCS.

A breakdown of costs is given in Appendix A.

4.3.4 Performance indicators

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

- progress any administrative reviews which may be necessary;
- commencing and making significant progress on our Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries;
- 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 do not anticipate that we will be required to undertake reviews of the external boundaries of administrative areas, other than any localised reviews of cases where development has taken place across an existing administrative area boundary.

As discussed earlier in the plan the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill 2019, is under consideration by the Scottish Parliament. The plan has detailed the assumptions it has made taking this into account. Amendments to the Bill could lead to changes in the Commission's workload which may require resources additional to those outlined in the plan, particularly for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Appendix A – Costs

Overall Costs

The overall costs of the Commission are expected to be as follows:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
staff costs	£167,673	£187,555	£235,659
commissioner costs	£41,547	£29,934	£40,959
accommodation	£23,557	£27,091	£31,155
administration	£39,660	£35,081	£36,835
travel and subsistence	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
legal and research	£34,500	£49,500	£27,000
review costs	£127,302	£18,496	£98,134
TOTAL	£436,240	£349,656	£471,741

Staffing costs

The allocation of staff by grade, and the salary ranges for each of those grades is as follows:

Grade	FTE 2020-21	FTE 2021-22	FTE 2022-23	Salary range (£) (April 2019)
C1	1	1	1	47,504 to 59,229
B3	1	1	1	37,418 to 45,241
B2	1	1	1	29,759 to 34,087
B1	2.48	2.48	3.48	25,367 to 28,341
A3	1	1	1	19,314 to 21,482
Total	6.48	6.48	7.48	

Overall staffing costs include National Insurance and pension contributions, in addition to the salary in the listed range. The staffing costs are assumed to be divided 50/50 between the Commission and the BCS.

The staffing costs increase notably in 2022-23, to reflect possible overlap of activity for both the Commission and BCS in that year: we expect to begin the 2nd Periodic Scottish Parliament Review and assume BCS will be undertaking the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies. The costs assume recruitment of the equivalent of an additional B1.

Commissioners' fees and expenses

The figures are based on 10 meetings per year as the commission will be very active with the Islands Reviews and Scottish Parliament Review. The cost of additional meetings commissioners may attend on behalf of the Commission are also included, as well as fees for commissioners to attend meetings in council areas with inhabited islands throughout the course of the reviews.

Accommodation

Accommodation costs cover rent and utility bills, and are divided equally with the BCS. The building which is used by the secretariat is expected to be revalued in 2020-21, which may lead to an increase in capital charges in 2021-22 and subsequent years. The plan budgets for an increase of 15% per year in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

Administration

Covers training, website costs, IT costs, postage, telephones and other office costs.

Travel and subsistence

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

Legal and Research

Covers legal advice costs associated with the Commission's strategy seminars. This includes costs for surveys and research.

Review costs

The review costs during the period of this plan will predominantly be on the Islands Reviews in 2020-21 and 2021-22. In 2022-23 the costs of the Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries will predominate.

Our budgets for the remainder of the Islands Reviews take into account the amounts we have spent in 2019-20

We may also carry out administrative area reviews of local authority areas if requested to do so. We assume that we will conduct 2 local administrative area reviews over the 3 years of the Corporate Plan. In this Corporate Plan we have assumed that the first review would begin in 2020-21, concluding in 2021-22, and the second review would begin in 2022-23, concluding in 2023-24, outwith the scope of the Corporate Plan.

Review Costs by Year:

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Islands Reviews	£123,802	£11,220	£0	£135,022
Local Administrative Reviews	£3,500	£7,276	£3,500	£14,276
Interim / Rolling Reviews	£0	£0	£0	£0
Scottish Parliament Review	£0	£0	£94,634	£94,634
TOTAL	£127,302	£18,496	£98,134	£243,932

Breakdown of Review Costs:

Advertising / Publicity

Advertising / Publicity costs cover publicising our proposals which may include placing public notices in newspapers, newspaper advertising and the use of social media advertising, as well as associated design costs.

Consultation Portal

We use web-based consultation facilities during our reviews.

Local Inquiries or public meeting costs

We may hold Local Inquiries during Scottish Parliament Reviews or administrative area or electoral reviews of local authorities. 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 include venue hire and facilities, transport, transcription services and publicising the event.

We may choose to hold public meetings other than Local Inquiries during Reviews. These are budgeted on the basis of similar costs to Local Inquiries.

Other travel or meetings costs

This includes provision for commissioners and secretariat staff to travel to meet with councils or community groups during the course of the Reviews.

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.