



Local Government  
**Boundary Commission**  
for Scotland

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Coimisean Crìochan na h-Alba  
airson Riaghaltas Ionadail

# Annual Report 2019-20

[www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)



## Chair's foreword

Our main task during 2019-20 was to progress our reviews of the six councils covered by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2020. We are undertaking this work in two phases, starting with the three wholly islands council areas, Orkney, Shetland and Na h-Eileanan Siar and continuing with the three that are predominantly mainland council areas, Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire. The focus on a smaller number of councils at one time has given us the opportunity to adjust how we work and to spend more time engaging with each council and exploring opportunities to maximise effective public consultation. We expect to be able to apply the learning from this approach to future reviews.

Throughout the year we engaged closely with Scottish Government as the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill progressed. This legislation, now enacted, brings a number of changes for us not least the prospect of a name change to Boundaries Scotland, reflecting that we are now responsible not only for local government reviews but also for reviews of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions. In addition there will be changes to term lengths, review scheduling and, for local government, the flexibility to use 2 or 5 member wards across Scotland as well the current 3 or 4. Use of single member wards will remain possible where such a ward contains an inhabited island. We will reflect on the points raised about multi member wards during the passage of the legislation. We may also consider initiating research into the use of multi member wards in Scotland since their introduction in 2007 and the implications of the new legislation in this context.

We welcomed a new Commissioner, Jonathan Collins, into post during the year. With further vacancies arising in 2021 I would encourage anyone who has an interest in our work to consider applying at that time.

As the period of this report came to an end we as a Commission were not immune to the changes brought about to working life by Covid-19. All staff within the Secretariat have worked at home since the middle of March and face to face meetings with the Commission and stakeholders have not been possible. We continue to meet as a Commission online and are adapting successfully to the challenges that brings.



**Ronnie Hinds**

Chair, Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland  
July 2020

# Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland Annual Report 2019-20

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This report covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020. Copies are available from our website ([www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)), or by request from our Secretariat.

# 1. The Commission

## 1.1. Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. We are responsible for:

- reviews of local authority areas in Scotland;
- reviews of electoral arrangements for local authorities; and
- reviews of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions.

Our duties and powers pertaining to local authority areas and electoral arrangements for local authorities are detailed in the 1973 Act. Our duties and powers pertaining to the Scottish Parliament are detailed in the Scotland Act 1998 (as amended in 2016).

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.

## 1.2. Membership

The 1973 Act specifies that our membership comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair and up to four further Commissioners.

Members are appointed on a fixed-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.

### 1.2.1. Chair

The Chair is Ronnie Hinds who was appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 September 2013, and reappointed for a further 4 years until 31 August 2021.

### 1.2.2. Deputy Chair

The Deputy Chair is Ailsa Henderson who was appointed for a four year term starting on 1 December 2017. She was previously a Commissioner, having been appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 September 2013, and reappointed for a further four years until 31 August 2021.

### 1.2.3. Commissioners

The Commission can have up to 4 Commissioners in addition to the Chair and Deputy Chair. Currently there are 4 such Commissioners:

- Roland Bean, appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 November 2013 and reappointed for a further four years until 31 October 2021;
- Susan Walker, appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 November 2013 and reappointed for a further four years until 31 October 2021;
- Gordon Macmillan, appointed for a 4 year term starting on 19 November 2018; and
- Jonathan Collins, appointed for a 4 year term starting on starting on 21 May 2019.

## 1.3. Code of Conduct

We have a Code of Conduct issued in 2014 by Scottish Ministers under the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000. The Code of Conduct is available on our website. A copy can be provided on request.

## 1.4. Register of Commissioners' Interests

We maintain a Register of Interests of Commissioners, in accordance with the Commissioners' Code of Conduct. The Register of Interests is reviewed annually and is available on our website. A copy can be provided on request.

## 2. Secretariat

We are supported by a small Secretariat. Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 provides that Scottish Ministers may appoint a Secretary to the Commission, after consultation with us. The Secretary, who is the Secretariat's senior officer, is normally a civil servant assigned from the Scottish Government.

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

The Secretary is currently Isabel Drummond-Murray who has been in post since October 2014.

Staff of the Secretariat are also normally assigned from the Scottish Government. The number of staff assigned 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 2019-20, the assignment of Secretariat staff to support the Commission was as follows:

<b>Post</b>	<b>Full-time equivalent</b>
Secretary	0.5
Review Manager	0.5
Deputy Review Manager	0.5
Review Officer	0.5
Finance and Governance Officer	0.5
IT and Database Manager	0.24
General Office Manager	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.24</b>

Most staff members are employed full-time, with their time allocated between support for us and for the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviewing constituencies for the United Kingdom Parliament. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland for that work.

## 3. Review activity

### 3.1. Meetings

The Commission met 6 times during 2019-20, reflecting the workload in undertaking reviews of electoral arrangements for six local authority areas with inhabited islands, and an Interim Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries at Cardowan, by Steps. We place minutes of meetings and copies of our discussion papers on our website on a phased basis at appropriate stages during our reviews.

### 3.2. Administrative Boundary reviews

From November 2016 to April 2018 we carried out an Administrative Boundary Review of Glasgow City council area and North Lanarkshire council area at Cardowan by Steps to Scottish Ministers. Scottish Ministers agreed to adopt our recommendations, which came into force on 1 April 2019.

In 2019-20 we gave consideration to a number of boundary anomalies we had been alerted to by National Records of Scotland but did not pursue administrative boundary reviews in these cases at this time.

### 3.3. Electoral reviews

#### 3.3.1. Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries

In anticipation of a delay to the statutory deadline of May 2022 for submission of the next Review, we chose to defer the Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries until closer to the date of the next deadline.

In June 2020, the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament, which moved the statutory deadline to May 2025.

#### 3.3.2. Interim Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries at Cardowan, by Steps.

The implementation of the Administrative Area Boundary Review at Cardowan, by Steps, on 1 April 2019, transferred an area of Glasgow City council area to North Lanarkshire council area. This change meant that the boundary of the Scottish Parliament Glasgow Region was no longer coterminous with Glasgow City council area.

The constituency rules for Scottish Parliament boundaries state that “so far as is practicable, regard must be had to the boundaries of local government areas”. We decided to hold an interim review of the boundaries of the constituencies and regions which contained or abutted the area transferred between the council areas, with a view to amending them to align with the revised council area boundaries.

We published initial proposals, which aligned the constituencies and regions with the revised council area boundaries, for public consultation between 1 and 31 October. The public consultation received 25 responses, the majority of which were supportive of the proposed change.

Having considered the consultation responses, we agreed to adopt our initial proposals as our Final Recommendations. We submitted our final recommendations to Scottish Ministers in March 2020. If accepted, they will be implemented in time for the next scheduled Scottish Parliament elections in May 2021.

### **3.3.3. Islands Reviews**

Following the passage of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 in the Scottish Parliament in May 2018, we prepared for and commenced, on 14 January 2019, reviews of electoral arrangements for the six council areas specified in the Act. These are Argyll and Bute, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Highland, North Ayrshire, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. The reviews will result in recommendations for the number of councillors on each council and the number and boundaries of wards for the election of those councillors. The Act allows for the use of 1 and 2 member wards, in addition to the current 3 or 4-member wards, where a ward includes an inhabited island.

We decided to conduct the reviews in 2 phases, focusing first on Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas.

#### *Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas*

From 20 March 2019 to 20 May 2019 we consulted with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council on our Initial Proposals for electoral arrangements for those council areas.

Having considered the responses of the councils, we held a public consultation on proposals for each of the council areas from 10 September 2019 to 2 December 2019.

In December 2019 and in the first quarter of 2020 we considered the responses to the public consultations. We expect to submit our Final Recommendations for Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas to Scottish Ministers by May 2021.

#### *Argyll and Bute, Highland, and North Ayrshire council areas*

In autumn 2019 we began considering options for Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas. We expect to consult with councils on Initial Proposals for those council areas in summer 2020, with public consultations on proposals in autumn 2020 and to submit our Final Recommendations for Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas to Scottish Ministers by May 2021.

### **3.3.4. Interim Reviews of Local Authority Electoral Arrangements**

During 2019-20 we considered whether to carry out Interim Reviews of electoral arrangements for some councils areas before the next scheduled local government elections in May 2022. We decided to defer any decision to initiate such reviews until the Scottish Parliament had completed its consideration of the Electoral Reform (Scotland) Bill, noting that the Bill, if passed, could change the number of councillors we could recommend in each ward, as well as make it possible for us to conduct the next scheduled set of reviews of electoral arrangements for all council areas in a phased manner.

## **4. Other activities**

### **4.1. UK Boundaries Commissions' Annual Meeting**

In November 2019 we were represented by the Chair and Mr Roland Bean at the annual meeting of the UK Boundaries Commissions. The Deputy Chair, Professor Henderson, also participated in her capacity as a member of the Boundary Commission for Scotland.

### **4.2 Electoral Reform (Scotland Bill)**

Throughout 2019-20 we monitored the Scottish Parliament's consideration of the Electoral Reform (Scotland) Bill, which had the potential to affect several aspects of our future work, such as the timing and scheduling of our reviews, the use of 2 and 5-member wards for electoral reviews and the re-naming of the Commission to "Boundaries Scotland". We provided evidence to Parliament to support its consideration of the Bill:

- on 4 November 2019 we submitted written evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee;
- on 6 November 2019 the Chair gave evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee;
- on 13 November 2019 the Chair, the Deputy Chair and the Secretary met the Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans to discuss the Bill;
- on 21 November the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary gave evidence to the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

### **4.2. Risk Management**

Jointly with the Boundary Commission for Scotland, we have developed a risk management policy which is available on our website. A copy can be provided on request. In line with the policy we maintain a risk register which is reviewed regularly.

### **4.3. Staffing and training**

We continue to review our staffing level, and staff and Commissioners' training requirements in order to ensure we can meet our review requirements.

### **4.4. Liaison with others**

#### **4.4.1. Scottish Government**

We continue to have regular contact and dialogue with the Elections and FOI Division within the Scottish Government who are our sponsor department.

#### **4.4.2. Ordnance Survey**

The Secretariat continues to work with Ordnance Survey to ensure that we have access to the optimum set of mapping data products to support our work, and that we receive technical advice on the deployment of those products. In October 2019 members of the Secretariat visited Ordnance Survey's headquarters in Southampton to learn more about its mapping technology and observe all aspects of its cartographic processes.

#### **4.4.3. National Records of Scotland**

The Secretariat liaises regularly with staff of the National Records of Scotland on shared interests concerning geographic information and electoral statistics.

#### **4.4.4. Other organisations**

The Secretariat has maintained its contacts with other interests including the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Association of Electoral Administrators; the Scottish Assessors' Association Electoral Registration Committee; the Electoral Commission, Electoral Management Board and other UK Boundary Commissions.

## **5. Governance**

### **5.1. Legislation**

Our local government work is governed by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, specifically sections 12 to 28 and Schedules 4 and 6. There were no amendments to this legislation during 2019-20.

The number of councillors in each local authority electoral ward is governed by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2004, which was amended by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, which allowed for 1 and 2 member wards in local authority areas with inhabited islands (see Islands reviews 3.2.2, above).

Our reviews of Scottish Parliament constituencies are governed by the Scotland Act 1998 (as amended in 2016).

We are preparing for the implementation of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill, which we expect to be enacted in summer 2020.

The relevant legislation can be found at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

### **5.2. Direction from Ministers**

Section 14(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires us to carry out a review of all administrative area boundaries every 8 to 12 years after 1996. Scottish Ministers have issued a further Direction to us instructing us not to carry out any such reviews in the period to 31 May 2022. The Commission has never carried out a review of all administrative boundaries under Section 14(1) due to Ministerial Directions in force in earlier years.

This Direction does not prevent us from carrying out ad-hoc reviews under section 14(2) of the 1973 Act. However, such reviews are currently limited by a second Direction from Scottish Ministers instructing us not to undertake reviews under section 14(2) of the Act in the period ending on 30 September 2023 other than a review that would potentially directly affect not more than 500 electors.

When we have carried out such reviews in the past, this has been in cases where a new development has taken place across council area boundaries, such as in our recent review of the local authority boundary between Glasgow City council area and North Lanarkshire council area at Cardowan, by Steps.

### 5.3. 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, last updated in 2018. Our work contributes to the following National Outcomes:

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

The first and second of these reflect the desired result from successful definition of effective and convenient local government electoral arrangements, so that as far as possible people's votes have equal weight, and electoral boundaries do not divide communities.

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

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

### 5.4. Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

We have a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum agreed with the Scottish Government. The Management Statement sets out the broad framework within which we operate, while the Financial Memorandum sets out certain aspects of the financial framework in greater detail. Both are in the process of being reviewed. The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

### 5.5. Data protection

We handle personal information in conformance with the Data Protection Act, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We have notified the Information Commissioner's Office of the personal data which we handle.

We have a privacy policy for handling any personal information contained in representations made during public consultations on our proposals.

### 5.6. Equality issues

We have an Equality Statement setting out our approach to equality and diversity issues. The Statement is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

### 5.7. Reporting requirements

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 specifies certain reporting requirements for Scottish public bodies. For ease of reference, we have placed all of the information required in Appendix A.

## 6. Enquiries and public information

We use our website to inform the public about our work. In addition, the Secretariat responds to requests for information made by email, letter or phone.

### **6.1. Information Papers**

We keep up to date our series of Information Papers and Quick Guides. The full set of Information Papers and Quick Guides is available on our website.

### **6.2. Enquiries**

We have adopted the Scottish Information Commissioner's Model Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, and published our resulting Guide to Information: these are available from the Publications section of our website.

During 2019-20, the Secretariat recorded 8 FOI enquiries addressed to the Commission. These did not relate to the review work of the Commission, and all were handled to the standard required. No requests for a review were made. All enquiries are reviewed to assess whether they indicate possible improvements to our procedures or the need for additions to our website.

### **6.3. Website**

Our website remains the primary means for us to make information available. We update the website with all the material which we publish. We completed a project to refresh our website in summer 2019. An archive version of our website containing historical material is maintained by the National Records of Scotland, and a link to the archive is available on our website.

<https://webarchive.nrsotland.gov.uk/20190111180009/http://lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/>

### **6.4. Minutes and meeting papers**

We publish the minutes of our meetings on our website periodically.

Our meeting papers since 2017 are available on our website and earlier meeting papers are available on our archive website. Normally, we publish meeting papers once we have concluded our discussions on a particular topic or on completion of a particular stage of a review, and have agreed and published the minutes for the relevant meeting. Where the meeting papers include a draft of a document which is later published in its own right (such as our Information Papers, Annual Reports and Corporate Plans), we do not normally publish the draft.

## **7. Expenditure**

Our expenditure for the year 2019-20 is set out under broad headings in the table below. After setting the initial budget, the Secretariat re-forecasts expenditure during the year, and keeps the sponsor department informed of the likely expenditure for the year.

The underspend is largely due to lower spending on Commissioners' Fees, Administration and Review Costs than budgeted for.

<b>Financial Performance April 2019 – March 2020</b>		
	<b>Expenditure</b>	
	<b>Budget (£)</b>	<b>Actual (£)</b>
Staff Costs	139,027	150,512
Commissioners' Fees	49,780	19,942
Accommodation	21,963	20,485
Administration	41,801	23,022
Travel and Subsistence	2,000	1,218
Review costs	136,775	41,315
<b>Total</b>	<b>391,347</b>	<b>256,493</b>

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 requires public bodies to report on specified elements of financial expenditure. That information is at Appendix A.

### **7.1. Staff salaries**

Salary costs are determined by the pay arrangements for our staff, who are employees of the Scottish Government.

### **7.2. Commissioners' fees and expenses**

Commissioners' fees and expenses are determined by the Scottish Government and cover attendance at our scheduled 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. The fee rates during the year 2019-20 were:

Chair	£347 per day
Deputy Chair	£252 per day
Commissioner	£219 per day

The Chair's fee has remained unchanged since August 2007 and the fees for the Deputy Chair and a Commissioner increased by £2 per day in 2013-14.

The underspend in Commissioners' Fees and expenses is chiefly due to holding fewer meetings than budgeted for in 2019-20 and not holding public meetings in Island council areas as part of our public consultations and choosing instead to focus on print and electronic advertising.

### **7.3. Accommodation**

We share accommodation with the Boundary Commission for Scotland. The figures shown in the above table in respect of accommodation reflect our share of rent,

business rates, utilities and services such as insurance, management fees and office cleaning.

#### **7.4. Administration**

Administration costs include office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables, telephone, website costs, internet and email, publications and advertising, staff and commissioner training, computer software maintenance, support and licence fees.

The underspend in Administration costs is chiefly due to funds set aside for work on website being spent late in 2018-19 and deferring our IT refresh to 2020-21.

#### **7.5. 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, which does not relate directly to a review (such costs fall under Review Costs). Travel and subsistence costs are paid at the same rate that applies to staff of the Scottish Government.

#### **7.6. Review costs**

Review costs cover those items directly attributable to the conduct of our reviews of electoral arrangements, such as newspaper advertising, the use of a consultation portal or specialist printing costs, and holding public meetings.

The underspend on Review Costs in 2019-20 is chiefly due to: not holding public meetings during our public consultations; deferring our public consultations for proposals for Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas to 2020-21; and not holding Interim Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for several council areas in 2019-20 (See Interim Reviews of Electoral Arrangements 3.2.4, above)

## **8. Work programme for 2020-21**

### **Local government electoral reviews**

We will complete our reviews of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas. We will progress our reviews of Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas; in time for them to be submitted to Scottish Ministers in May 2021.

We will engage with COSLA, local authorities and others during the course of the reviews.

### **Administrative area reviews**

We will conduct minor reviews of administrative area boundaries as required.

### **Scottish Parliament Reviews**

We will develop our plans for the Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliamentary boundaries.

### **Boundaries Scotland**

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill will introduce a new name for the Commission that reflects its additional responsibility for reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries. The

Commission will be re-named Boundaries Scotland. We will update and rebrand our website, logo and other corporate documents.

**Other activity**

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

**9. Further information**

If you have a query which cannot be answered by this report or our website ([www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)) please do not hesitate to contact us either by e-mail, telephone or in writing. Please see the front page of this report for our contact details.

## Appendix A - specified reporting

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 requires public bodies to publish specified items of information at the end of each financial year. This Appendix provides that information.

### **Expenditure on named items**

The Act requires us to report expenditure on the following items:

<b>Expenditure item</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Public relations	nil
Overseas travel	nil
Hospitality and entertainment	£243
External consultancy	£3,920

#### *Public relations*

In the course of our reviews we may publicise our proposals or recommendations through public notices in newspapers or posts on social media. We do not consider that this constitutes public relations expenditure. We do not consider expenditure on restructuring and refreshing our website to be public relations.

#### *Overseas travel*

We have made no expenditure on overseas travel during the year.

#### *Hospitality and entertainment*

The figure recorded comprises the cost of working lunches and light refreshments at Commission meetings and at training events.

#### *External consultancy*

The figure recorded comprises £3,920 spend on external consultants assisting us with assessing the usability of our consultation portal.

### **Expenditure in excess of £25,000**

The Act requires us to publish details of any payment made during the year in excess of £25,000. No such payments were made during 2019-20.

### **Remuneration above £150,000**

The Act requires us to publish details of any Commissioners or staff remunerated above £150,000 during the year: there were no such individuals.

### **Sustainable growth**

The Act requires us to publish a statement on the steps taken to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of our functions.

We align our work with the Scottish Government's purpose of delivering sustainable growth through identification of the relevant parts of the National Performance Framework to which our work contributes, as reported in section 3.3.

**Efficiency, economy and effectiveness**

The Act requires us to publish a statement on the steps taken to improve efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the exercise of our functions.

Scottish Government encourages improvement of efficiency, economy and effectiveness through shared services. We participate in shared services through:

- occupation of office accommodation owned and managed by another public sector body;
- a shared Secretariat with the Boundary Commission for Scotland;
- use of Scottish Government contracts and electronic purchasing card for purchase of supplies and services, including stationery, computers and travel.

Use of collaborative contracts realised estimated cash savings of £1485 across both Commissions during 2019-20.

	<b>Amount</b>
Electronic Purchasing Card	£899
Office Equipment	£153
Travel	£434
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,485</b>



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