

# Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

## Corporate Plan 2021 - 2024

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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 financial years 2021-22 to 2023-24 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

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.

### **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 4 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 Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland for that work.

The staff of the Secretariat are assigned from the Scottish Government. The number of staff assigned to support us is largely dependent on the volume of review activity. For the purposes of this Corporate Plan, staff costs have been shared equally between the Commission and the BCS. This is subject to review.

## **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 2021-22**

#### **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 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years, and the second to begin in 2023-24.

Local Government Electoral Reviews

In May 2021 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. If accepted by the Scottish Parliament, our recommendations will be implemented for use at the next scheduled of 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. This is because no interim reviews could be completed in time for their recommendations to be implemented at the next scheduled council

elections in May 2022; and the next set of reviews of electoral arrangements for local government electoral areas, discussed below, are due to commence in 2023-24 and will be completed in time for their recommendations to be used in the council elections in May 2027.

#### Interim Reviews of Scottish Parliament Boundaries

The Commission has the power to carry out Interim Reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries. This Corporate Plan does not make provision for any such Reviews due to the imminence of the Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, discussed below.

### **4.1.2 Change of Name**

The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 changes the name of the Commission from the **“Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland”** to **“Boundaries Scotland”**, to reflect that the Commission has, since 2017, had responsibility for Scottish Parliament boundaries as well as local government boundaries.

To avoid any risk of public confusion, the Commission will not change its name until after the completion of the Islands Reviews. We will update our website and all the documents we produce to reflect this, as appropriate.

### **4.1.3 Other activity**

We may undertake research into and hold seminars on relevant aspects of local government in Scotland, such as multi-member wards. The Commission had planned to undertake such activity in 2020-21, but this was not possible due to the impact of coronavirus on the **Commission’s** work.

We will continue to engage with stakeholders including MSPs, political parties, councils, COSLA, the Electoral Commission and others with an interest in our work.

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

### **4.1.4 Membership**

The appointments of the Chair, the Deputy Chair and 2 of our 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.

### **4.1.5 Finance and staffing**

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

- £322,618

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.

### **4.1.6 Performance indicators**

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

- completion of our reviews of electoral arrangements for the 6 council areas with inhabited islands;
- participation as required in the parliamentary process to approve our recommendations;
- progress of any administrative reviews which may be necessary;
- **rebranding to “Boundaries Scotland”**;
- 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 2022-23**

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2022-23 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 / Interim Reviews

We do not expect to carry out any Interim Reviews of local government electoral arrangements this year, as we expect to commence the next set of reviews in 2023-24.

#### Second Periodic Review Scottish Parliament Boundaries

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

### **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 continue to engage with stakeholders including MSPs, political parties, councils, COSLA, the Electoral Commission and others with an interest in our work.

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

### **4.2.3 Membership**

The appointment of one of our commissioners is due to end in autumn 2022. The Commission will work with the Scottish Government to support the appointments process to ensure continuity of membership.

#### **4.2.4 Finance and staffing**

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

- £446,742

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

- 7.48 Full Time Equivalent staff

The provision for additional staffing is designed to ensure the Secretariat can meet the pressures of overlapping reviews.

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:

- progress of 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.

### **4.3 Year 2023-24**

The planned activities, resource forecasts and performance indicators for 2023-24 will be expanded and refined in subsequent Corporate Plans.

#### **4.3.1 Review activity**

##### Administrative Area Reviews

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

##### Local Government Electoral Reviews

We completed our 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for local government in 2016. Legislation requires the next set of electoral reviews, for the 26 councils not covered by the islands reviews, to be completed by December 2028. We currently plan to start the next reviews during the second half of 2023-24, with the reviews to be completed by May 2026 in time for use at the council elections scheduled for May 2027. Further legislative change is expected which may change the scheduling of these reviews.

##### Second Periodic Review Scottish Parliament Boundaries

We expect to be fully engaged in the Reviews of Scottish Parliament Boundaries this year. Based on the timetable of the First Periodic Review we expect to carry a public consultation on our Provisional Proposals for Scottish Parliament Regions, as well as hold any statutory local inquiries in support of the review, and carry out public consultations on any Revised or Further Proposals we may make for constituencies or regions.

### 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 continue to engage with stakeholders including MSPs, political parties, councils, COSLA, the Electoral Commission and others with an interest in our work.

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

### **4.3.2 Membership**

The appointment of one of our commissioners is due to end in May 2023. 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 2023-24 are expected to be:

- £496,961

The overall staffing assigned to the Secretariat during 2023-24 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;
- 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.

We expect to continue our reviews of electoral arrangements for local authorities, which we expect to submit in May 2026 for use at the council elections scheduled for 2027.



## Appendix A – Costs

### Overall Costs

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

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
<b>staff costs</b>	£168,301	£203,143	£214,377
<b>commissioner costs</b>	£22,974	£31,110	£27,153
<b>accommodation</b>	£25,819	£29,692	£34,146
<b>administration</b>	£44,700	£40,950	£43,450
<b>travel and subsistence</b>	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
<b>legal and research</b>	£42,000	£42,000	£42,000
<b>review costs</b>	£16,824	£97,847	£133,835
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£322,618</b>	<b>£446,742</b>	<b>£496,961</b>

### Staffing costs

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

Grade	FTE 2021-22	FTE 2022-23	FTE 2023-24	Salary range (£) (April 2020)
C1	1	1	1	48,930 to 61,006
B3	1	1	1	38,541 to 46,599
B2	1	1	1	30,652 to 35,110
B1	2.48	3.48	3.48	26,155 to 29,192
A3	1	1	1	20,064 to 22,232
Total	6.48	7.48	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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 7, 10 and 10 meetings per year. The Commission will be less active in 2021-22 after the completion of the Islands Reviews, but will be very active in 2022-23 and 2023-24 when the Second Periodic Scottish Parliament Review is underway. The costs include additional commission meetings in relation to strategy seminar work, as well as any additional meetings commissioners may attend, such as appraisals, meetings with ministers or the annual meeting of the UK Boundaries Commissions.

### 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 before the end of 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 2022-23, and 2023-24, based on historical increases.

### 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, and **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 Second Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries.

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:

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Total
Islands Reviews (concluding May 2021)	£16,074	£0	£0	£16,074
6th Local Govt. Reviews (commencing in 2023-24)	£0	£0	£3,000	£3,000
Admin. Area Reviews (as required)	£750	£3,620	£750	£5,120
2 <sup>nd</sup> Periodic Scottish Parliament Review (commencing in 2022-23)	£0	£94,227	£130,085	£224,312
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£16,824</b>	<b>£97,847</b>	<b>£133,835</b>	<b>£248,506</b>

	Islands Reviews	6th Local Govt Electoral Reviews	Administrative Area Reviews	2nd Periodic Scottish Parliament Reviews	TOTAL
Advertising / Publicity	£0	£0	£3,000	£65,000	£68,000
Consultation Portal	£10,074	£0	£0	£22,768	£32,842
Local Inquiry or public meeting costs	£0	£0	£1,370	£108,424	£109,793
Report publication / Printing	£5,000	£0	£750	£7,121	£12,871
Miscellaneous	£1,000	£3,000	£0	£21,000	£25,000
Total	£16,074	£3,000	£5,120	£224,312	£248,506

### 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

We are likely to hold Local Inquiries during Scottish Parliament Reviews. Other Costs associated with Local Inquiries include venue hire and facilities, transport, transcription services and publicising the event.

#### Printing / 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.