



BCE/2020/2nd meeting

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

Notice of meeting

The presence of Commissioners is requested at a meeting to be held virtually, at 10am on 11 September 2020.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and minutes of the last meeting (PL)
2. Draft *Annual Report 2019/2020* (10.10) - **Paper 1** (TBe)
3. Preparing for the next Review (10.20) - **Paper 2** (TBo/TBe)
 - a. Timetable
 - b. Risk register
 - c. Highlight report
4. Introductory discussion on policies for the 2023 Review (10.50) - **no paper** (TBo)
5. Any other business (11.00)

Close (11.10)

Tim Bowden
Secretary to the Commission

4 September 2020

2023 Review programme update

Programme documentation will be provided to Commissioners for all scheduled Commission meetings, and will also be sent to them at regular intervals in between.

Update since the last meeting

1. Commissioners last met on 21 February 2020, since then progress has been made on a number of operational areas.

Staffing and recruitment

2. All Senior Leadership Team (SLT) appointments have been made. Tim Bowden has been appointed as Secretary to the Commission, Tony Bellringer will be Deputy Secretary and Head of Reviews, and Wotey Tannoh has been appointed as Head of Corporate. All SLT members will be in post by the beginning of October.
3. Recruitment for other positions in the secretariat is making good progress, including interviews for the Review Manager and Review Officer posts. We expect all posts to be filled by early November, accompanied by induction and training programmes.
4. We have started dialogue with Government Communications Service to appoint a Communications Officer who will work solely for the Commission during the course of the 2023 Review.

Finance

5. The Secretariat contributed forecast figures to the recent Spending Review process to provisionally agree allocations covering the duration of the next Review.

Accommodation

6. The sponsor and Estates teams in the Cabinet Office have indicated that 35 Great Smith Street will again be permanent accommodation for the Commission during the 2023 Review. An assessment is to be conducted on the space that is currently available whilst ensuring it complies with COVID requirements.

Parliamentary Constituencies Bill

7. The Bill is at Committee Stage in the House of Lords on 8 September 2020. A number of amendments have been tabled, including: increasing the total number of constituencies; amending the electoral variance from 5%; changes to the appointment process of future Commissioners; and time bounding the laying of the Order to give effect to the Commission's final recommendations. We will provide an oral update on the proceedings on the Bill at the meeting. Royal Assent might not be received until early 2021 meaning the Commission could not formally launch the 2023 Review before then.

Electorate data

8. The Bill requires the electorate data for the 2023 Review be based on the electoral registers from 2 March 2020. Therefore, a request was made to all local authorities in England to provide electorate data for this date. In some cases local authorities have needed to apply upgrades to electoral register software to ensure they can provide the correct data. We have started to receive electorate data at ward level from local authorities and are verifying the figures. At present the standard of data received is mixed, with a number of data sets being incorrect. We are working with electoral register suppliers and the Cabinet Office sponsor team to ensure local authorities provide the correct data.
9. In addition to collecting data at ward level we are also collecting this data broken down to polling districts. Collecting the data at this level is important as this is the standard unit used if the Commission decided to divide a ward between constituencies. Whilst we are capturing the data, we do not have the polling district mapping to connect with this data. The Secretariat does not have the resource to compile an England wide map of polling districts. This would need to be completed by Ordnance Survey at considerable cost.
10. Once electorate data for England has been collected we will liaise with the other three Parliamentary Boundary Commissions to agree the UK electorate, electoral quota figure, and distribution of constituencies to the four parts of the UK under the Act. With this data in place and agreed, the Commission will then be in a position to formally launch work on the Review and formulate initial proposals of constituencies.

Technology

11. A robust geographic information system (GIS) is imperative to support efficient and effective work of the Commission. A tender has been issued in alignment with Crown Commercial Service guidelines. We aim to evaluate bids from suppliers in September and award a contract in early October.
12. The tender to identify suppliers for the consultation website will be issued before November.

Timetable

13. An outline timetable for BCE's delivery of the 2018 Review is set out at **Annex A**. We intend to formulate a project plan built on this outline timetable. The project plan will include detailed component activities set out within each broad operational business area, with anticipated dates for each (actual dates for past activities). The project plan will be a 'living document', which is expected to reflect changes in the timetable as they are required.
14. The project plan will allow for the performance of the Commission to be accurately assessed throughout the life of the review by comparison of future updated versions with the baseline version.

Risk register

15. Good management of the review involves use of a specific risk register to expressly identify and track both the key risks to the success of the project, and the mitigating actions taken to keep those risks within acceptable levels.
16. A risk register for the 2023 Review is at **Annex B**, and we would welcome views from Commissioners on both the design of the risk register template (in terms of intelligibility) and the substantive content (e.g. any key risks or mitigating actions not included that should be).
17. The risk register is also maintained as a 'living document', with new risks added as they may arise, ongoing risks modified as they decrease/increase, and fully mitigated.

Highlight report

18. The Highlight report at **Annex C** is the key 'one-pager' summary document where Commissioners can see at a glance all the most recent developments in relation to the project, whether that be new activities, changes to significant risks, and/or shifts in the projected delivery dates for certain activities or milestones.

19. As with the Risk register in particular, we would welcome Commissioners' views on the structure of the proposed highlight report, as this will be the document most frequently issued to Commissioners going forward.

Frequency

20. In addition to issuing all three documents for Commission meetings, **we recommend the project plan and risk register be issued to Commissioners on a quarterly basis, and the highlight report issued monthly.**