



BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

REPORT FOR THE PERIOD

1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

August 2010

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

Membership of the Commission: -

The Speaker, The Rt. Hon John Bercow MP, Ex-Officio Chairman

The Hon Mr Justice Lloyd Jones, Deputy Chairman – appointed 18 December 2006 and re-appointed in October 2009.

Mr Paul Wood, Commissioner – first appointed 1 May 2008 until 30 April 2013

Mr John Bader, Commissioner – first appointed 1 May 2008 until 30 April 2013

The Registrar General for England and Wales (Assessor)
The Director General of Ordnance Survey (Assessor)

Mr E H Lewis, Joint Secretary (Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales Secretariat) – appointed 1 January 2002

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The Commission welcomes correspondence and telephone calls in English or Welsh

Boundary Commission for Wales

Annual Report 2009 to 2010

FOREWORD

During the period we have commenced an interim review of the parliamentary constituencies of Brecon and Radnorshire and Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney. This arose from a change to the local government boundaries in the area. The review began in December 2009 and we had intended publishing our Provisional Recommendations before the end of the financial year but in order to ensure an effective consultation was achieved we decided to delay the publication of this report until after the general election in May 2010. Due to the low level of work that was required of us, the Commission has met on only two occasions during the past year.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks and appreciation to, our Secretariat and everyone else who has assisted in the completion of the Commission's substantive work.

Sir David Lloyd Jones
Deputy Chairman

July 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Sponsor

1. The Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored and wholly funded by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ)¹. The Commission submits reports to the Secretary of State and it is his statutory duty to lay them before Parliament. Where the report recommends that alterations are required to Parliamentary constituency boundaries or the boundaries of the Assembly electoral regions, he must also lay before Parliament the draft of an Order in Council for giving effect to our recommendations. Should he decide to modify the recommendations, he must also lay a statement of his reasons for so doing. The Lord Chancellor appoints the Deputy Chairman, the Secretary of State appoints one of the members of the Commission, the Assistant Commissioners, and the two Joint Secretaries (see Membership below).

The Commission

2. The Commission is constituted under Section 2 and Schedule 1 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). It is an independent, non-political, and totally impartial body and every opportunity is taken to emphasise very strongly that the results of previous elections do not, and should not, enter into the Commission's considerations. The effects of the Commission's recommendations on future voting patterns are also not considered. In its guidance notes for Assistant Commissioners the Commission advises that such factors should not enter into consideration at public inquiries.
3. From the establishment of a permanent Commission in 1944 until 1 January 2002, the Secretariat was staffed in London, at arm's length from the Sponsor Department, by officials of the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and its two predecessors, the General Register Office and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. The ONS provided accommodation and other ancillary services to the Commission. The staff and other costs incurred by the ONS in supporting the Secretariat were recovered from the Sponsor Department on a quarterly in arrears basis. With effect from 1 January 2002, officials of the Secretariat to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (LGBCW), located in Cardiff, have staffed the Secretariat.

Membership

4. The Speaker of the House of Commons is the ex-officio Chairman of all four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions in the United Kingdom. The appointment of the Speaker emphasises the independence, impartiality, and non-political nature. The Speaker plays no part in the conduct of reviews. The Deputy

¹ From May 2010 MoJ responsibilities in respect of the Commission have been transferred to the Cabinet Office

Chairman, who presides over the meetings, is a High Court Judge: the Honourable Mr Justice Lloyd Jones (Sir David). The Members are Mr Paul Wood and Mr John Bader.

5. By agreement, the Secretary of State for Justice appoints one member to the Commission; the Secretary of State for Wales appoints the other.
6. The Commissioners are part-time appointees who meet, whenever the work programme demands, at the offices shared with the LGBCW in Cardiff. One meeting was held during the period covered by this report. Since the passing of the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, the Commission Members (not including the Deputy Chairman) have been paid a daily fee agreed by the Sponsor Department with the Treasury for work carried out on behalf of the Commission and, with the Deputy Chairman, are entitled to recover any expenses (such as travel and subsistence) incurred on Commission work.
7. The Commission has established both a Code of Practice and a Register of Members' Interests, which are updated annually. Copies of these documents are available on request.
8. The Commission has two statutory assessors. One is the Registrar General of England and Wales who is the Director of ONS, and the other is the Director General of Ordnance Survey. Deputies represent both at Commission meetings; Ms Alison Whitworth on behalf of the Registrar General and Mr Aaron Sollis on behalf of the Director General.
9. There are two Joint Secretaries: Mr Edward Lewis, who heads the Secretariat and is also the Secretary to the LGBCW, and the second, which is currently vacant is appointed by the MoJ.

The Secretariat

10. The role of the Secretariat is to service and assist the Commissioners in the conduct of their reviews and in executing their decisions. The Secretariat is based at the offices of the Secretariat to the LGBCW in Cardiff and liaison about staffing and accommodation now takes place with the Welsh Assembly Government.

Statutory Duties

11. The Commission's primary statutory function is to keep under continuous review the distribution of seats at Parliamentary elections, to conduct regular reviews of the boundaries of Parliamentary constituencies and to make reports with recommendations to the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). The Commission may also undertake discretionary or Interim reviews in one or more constituencies where the Commissioners believe this appropriate.

Liaison with Other Bodies

12. The Secretariat has maintained regular contact with the other Boundary Commissions by means of meetings and exchange of information. The Commission was due to be represented at a meeting of the Parliamentary and Local Government Boundary Commissions, which was scheduled to take place in Edinburgh in April 2010 but this event was cancelled due to travel difficulties. It is anticipated that this event will be rescheduled to later in the year. Regular contact was also maintained with the Welsh Assembly Government and Ordnance Survey.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective

13. To keep under continuous review the representation of Wales in the House of Commons and in the National Assembly for Wales.

Specific Objectives for 2009/2010

14. The Commission sets its own objectives for each year. For 2009/10 the objective was set to undertake an interim review of the parliamentary and Assembly constituencies of Brecon and Radnorshire and Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney. This review arose as a result of a change to local government boundaries arising from a review carried out by the LGBCW. The interim review began on 21 December 2009. It is anticipated that Provisional Recommendations will be published in June 2010 (following the general election in May).

Welsh Language Scheme

15. The Commission is required by the terms of our Welsh Language Scheme to submit annual reports to the Welsh Language Board on the operation of the scheme.

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

16. The following table compares the actual expenditure with the budget, during the financial year covered by this report, and shows any differences.

Budget and Expenditure by Subhead – 2009/2010

Budget Component	Budget	Expenditure	Difference
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	(£)	(£)	(£)
Salaries and NI	27,600	19,393	-8,207
Overheads	31,800	30,069	-1,731
T&S	1,100	824	-276
Miscellaneous	1,960	328	-1,632
Running Costs Total	62,460	50,614	-11,846
Advertising	12,800	0	-12,800
OS costs	0	0	0
Inquiry Fees	0	0	0
Commission Fees	9,600	2,022	-7,578
T&S	2,300	50	-2,250
Miscellaneous	5,890	163	-5,727
Other Current Total	30,590	2,235	-28,355
Grand Total	93,050	52,859	-40,201

17. The table below shows the planned and actual Secretariat staff levels by quarter during the financial year.

Staff Complement – 2009/2010

Grade	1/4/2009		1/7/2009		1/10/2009		1/1/2010	
	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan	Actual
Joint Sec.	0.60	0.02	0.06	0.09	0.60	0.07	0.60	0.13
WAG Band E	1.00	0.04	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.02	1.00	0.02
WAG Band C	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.11	2.00	0.17
WAG Band A/B	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00
Total	3.60	0.06	3.60	0.09	3.60	0.21	3.60	0.32

The planned staff complement was set by the Memorandum of Agreement for the transfer of the functions of the Boundary Commission for Wales to the Secretariat of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales and was based on estimated requirement of 60% of the Joint Secretary's time plus 100% of 1 x WAG Band E time and 100% of 2 x WAG Band C time in order to complete the Fifth Periodic Review.

Monitoring Expenditure

18. Each quarter, the Secretariat provides the sponsoring department with a report detailing quarterly expenditure and forecast over/ under spends.

OUTLINE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2010/2011

Programme

19. In the forthcoming financial year the budget will be £96,050. The staff complement will be 3.6 whole-time equivalents. Our specific objective will be to:
 - Complete the interim review began in 2009/10.
 - Ensure that the necessary support is provided to complete the passage of the interim review into legislation.
 - Make the necessary preparations for the any additional interim reviews that may be required.
 - Monitor any changes to the legislation that have an impact on the work of the Commission and to take whatever steps are necessary to accommodate such changes.