

Boundary Commission for Wales

Business Plan 2012/13



© Crown copyright 2012

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> or e-mail:
psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk

This document is also available from our website at www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk

BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES

BUSINESS PLAN 2012/13

APRIL 2012

Boundary Commission for Wales
Caradog House
1-6 St Andrews Place
Cardiff
CF10 3BE
Telephone: +44 (0)29 20395031
Fax Number: +44 (0)29 20395250
E-mail: bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Contents

Foreword	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Objectives	4
3. The 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies	5
4. Budget and Staffing	7

Foreword

In 2011 the Boundary Commission for Wales formally began its 2013 Review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries. This review follows the rules laid out in the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 and represents the most significant review since the Commission was created in 1944.

In accordance with the new legislation, the Commission developed proposals for a revised Parliamentary constituency map of Wales with 30, rather than 40, constituencies which were all within 5% of the United Kingdom electoral quota. These initial proposals were published on 11 January 2012. The release of initial proposals marked the beginning of a process of public consultation during which members of the public and other interested parties are invited to comment on the Commission's proposals. A lively and useful debate has begun and during 2012/13 the Commission will be listening to people's views and considering where changes to its initial proposals may be appropriate.

Carrying out a review which represents such an unprecedented level of change to Parliamentary constituencies is a real challenge. During the coming year the Commission, supported by its Secretariat, will move towards the final stages of the review. Our extensive public consultation will continue as we consider making changes to our initial proposals and formulating final proposals for submission to the Government by October 2013.

Through the course of the 2013 Review the Commission will continue to operate independently and impartially, and will be responsive to emerging needs and pressures.

This Business Plan sets out, briefly, the key priorities for the Commission and its Secretariat during the 2012/13 financial year, and the resources that will deliver these objectives.

The Hon. Mr Justice Lloyd Jones
Deputy Chair

Ben Whitestone
Secretary

1. Introduction

The Sponsor

1.1 The Boundary Commission for Wales is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored and wholly funded by the Cabinet Office (CO). The Commission submits reports to the Secretary of State and it is the Secretary of State's statutory duty to lay them before Parliament. Where the report recommends that alterations are required to Parliamentary constituency boundaries or the boundaries of the Welsh Assembly electoral regions, the Secretary of State must also lay before Parliament the draft of an Order in Council for giving effect to the Commission's recommendations. The Lord Chancellor appoints the Deputy Chairman, the Secretary of State appoints one of the members of the Commission, the Assistant Commissioners, and the Secretary to the Commission (see Membership below).

The Commission

1.2 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. The Commission does not take political factors into account and the effects of the Commission's recommendations on future voting patterns are not considered.

1.3 With effect from 1 January 2002, officials of the Secretariat to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales (LGBCW), located in Cardiff, have also staffed the Secretariat of the Boundary Commission¹. Although accommodation and some staff resources are shared the Secretariats of the two Commissions operate independently from each other.

Membership

1.4 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 of the Commissions. The Speaker plays no part in the conduct of reviews. The Deputy Chairman, who presides over the meetings, is a High Court Judge: the Honourable Mr Justice Lloyd Jones. The Members are Mr Paul Loveluck and Professor Robert McNabb.

¹ With the exception of the Secretary from December 2011 - see membership.

- 1.5** The Commissioners are part-time appointees who meet whenever the work programme demands. 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 HM 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.
- 1.6** 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.
- 1.7** The Commission has two statutory assessors. One is the Statistics Board (represented by the National Statistician), and the other is the Director General of Ordnance Survey. Deputies represent both at Commission meetings.
- 1.8** The Secretary of State also appoints a Secretary to the Commission, Mr Ben Whitestone, who heads the Secretariat and is Accounting Officer. The Secretary is formally employed by the Cabinet Office. Until December 2011 there was a Joint Secretary with the LGBCW, this post was held by Mr Edward Lewis.
- 1.9** 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 takes place with the Welsh Government.

Statutory Duties

- 1.10** 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.
- 1.11** The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 made substantial changes to the legislation governing distribution of Parliamentary seats. On 4 March 2011 the Boundary Commission for Wales announced the start of the 2013 Review of Parliamentary constituencies in Wales which would follow the changes to legislation.
- 1.12** The Act also removed the link between the Parliamentary constituencies and those of the Welsh Assembly. New legislation is now expected to put into place a mechanism for the regular review of the Welsh Assembly constituencies.

2. Objectives

General Objective

- 2.1** To keep under continuous review the representation of Wales in the House of Commons and in the National Assembly for Wales².

Specific Objectives for 2012/13

- 2.2** The Commission's key high level objectives for 2012/13 are:
- To progress the 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies pursuant to the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.
 - To ensure that all work of the Boundary Commission for Wales is carried out with a view to providing the best possible value for money.
 - To ensure that all interested stakeholders are effectively engaged in order that they are fully informed about Parliamentary constituency reviews and are able to contribute to the process of review.

Welsh Language Scheme

- 2.3** The Commission operates a fully bilingual policy. All official documentation published by the Commission will be available in Welsh and English. The Commission welcomes correspondence from individuals and organisations in Welsh and English.

² See paragraph 1.12

3. The 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies

Background

- 3.1** The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 made substantial changes to the legislation governing distribution of Parliamentary seats in the UK. The Act reduces the number of Parliamentary constituencies in Wales from 40 to 30 and requires each constituency to have a similar number of registered electors (between 72,810 and 80,473). The Boundary Commission for Wales' 2013 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies will develop proposals to the Government as to how the Act should be implemented in Wales.
- 3.2** On 11 January 2012 the Boundary Commission for Wales published its Initial Proposals. This was the beginning of a consultation process by which the Commission asked the people of Wales to help shape the revised Parliamentary constituencies. Between 11 January and 4 April 2012 the Commission received representations on its initial proposals, both in writing and orally at five public hearings.
- 3.3** During 2012/13 the main objective of the Commission will be to progress its 2013 review – the major tasks and milestones are set out below. Further information about the work of the Commission or the 2013 Review is available on the Commission's website www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk.

Tasks

- 3.4** The Commission's major tasks for 2012/13 are set out below and are based on statutory requirements. No specific timing is given as timing can be flexible to take account of factors such as the number of representations received, the complexity of the issues raised and the appropriate timing of consultation periods. However, the Commission is committed to the deadline of October 2013 for the submission of final recommendations.
 - a. To publish all responses received during the first phase of public consultation on the initial proposals, and to make these available for comment for a period of four weeks. In order to do this:

- Responses will be prepared for publication, this includes: the translation of all responses (written responses and transcripts of public hearings) in order that they are available in English and Welsh; redaction of personal information from responses; preparing design and content for web publication; printing responses for places of deposit.
 - We will communicate with key stakeholders (including MPs, AMs, Councils, and the public) to ensure that they are aware of the specific plans for the second consultation period and how they can contribute.
- b. To develop revised proposals as appropriate and consult on these for a period of eight weeks. In order to do this:
- The Assistant Commissioners will prepare a report and make recommendations to the Commission based on responses received during the first and second consultation periods.
 - The Commission will consider the representations received and the report of the Assistant Commissioners and will decide whether to make changes to its initial proposals.
 - A revised proposals report will be drafted, prepared for electronic publication, printed and distributed.
 - Responses from the second consultation period will be translated and prepared for publication in line with the launch of revised proposals.
 - Communication with key stakeholders to ensure that they are aware of the specific plans for the third consultation period and how they can contribute.
 - Responses to the consultation on revised proposals will be received, logged and considered by the Commission.

Risk Management Approach

- 3.5** In order to ensure the successful delivery of its 2013 Review and to encourage robust corporate management the Boundary Commission for Wales maintains a risk register and manages risk on a daily basis and in accordance with the HM Treasury guidance *Management of Risk: Principles and Concepts*.

Next Steps

- 3.6** Following the public consultation on revised recommendations, the Commission will prepare its final recommendations for submission to the Government by October 2013.

4. Budget and Staffing

Budget for 2012/13

- 4.1 Table 1 shows the Boundary Commission for Wales' budget for the 2012/13 financial year. The budget is provided by the Cabinet Office from the existing budget agreed as part of the most recent spending review.

Table 1 – Budget and Expenditure

Budget Component	Budget (£)
Salaries and NI	207600
Running Costs (i.e. Accommodation, Stationary, IT, Training, Publications, Legal)	78000
Travel and Subsistence	5000
Advertising, Marketing and Printing	118000
Translation	5000
Assistant Commissioners Fees	45000
Commissioners' Fees	20000
Commissioners' T&S	3000
Total	481,600

- 4.2 Table 2 shows the staff compliment that will be used to deliver the work of the Boundary Commission for Wales in 2012/13. As Secretariat support is shared with the LGBCW³, staffing resources are flexible depending on the priorities and workload of each commission.

Table 2 – Staffing

Position	Employment Status
Deputy Chair	Unpaid
Commissioners (x2)	Fee Paid
Assistant Commissioners (x3)	Fee Paid
Secretary	1 FTE
Review Manager	1 FTE
Other Secretariat Staff	3 FTE

³ See paragraph 1.3

