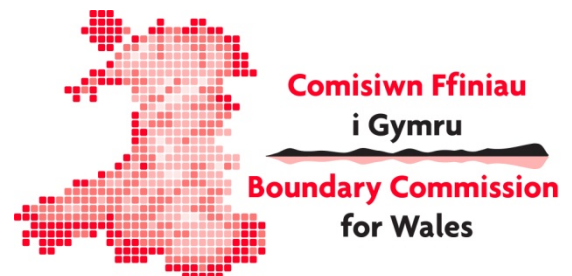


# Boundary Commission for Wales

## Annual Report 2017/18



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# **BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

**July 2018**

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# Foreword

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Boundary Commission for Wales for the financial year 2017-18.

The main activities during 2017-18 were centred around the 2018 review of parliamentary constituencies the formal start of which we announced on 23 March 2016. Following the consideration of all of the representations we had received in respect of our Initial Proposals, the transcripts of the public hearings and the Assistant Commissioners' report we produced a Revised Proposals report which was published in October 2017. During the following consultation period we received a number of helpful and informative representations. These together with all of the earlier representations and information we have received will inform our consideration of our Final Proposals. We anticipate submitting our Final Proposals in the autumn of 2018.

**The Hon. Mr Justice Lewis**  
**Deputy Chairman**

# 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 Minister for the Cabinet Office and it is the Minister's statutory duty to lay them before Parliament. Where the report recommends that alterations are required to Parliamentary constituency boundaries the Minister for the Cabinet Office 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 Minister for the Cabinet Office appoints 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 Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales (LDBCW)<sup>1</sup>, located in Cardiff, have also staffed the Secretariat of the Boundary Commission. Although accommodation and some staff resources are shared the two Commissions operate independently from each other.

## Membership

- 1.4** The Speaker of the House of Commons is the ex-officio Chair 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 Chair, who presides over the meetings, is a High Court Judge: the Honourable Mr Justice Lewis. The Members are Mr Paul Loveluck and Professor Robert M<sup>c</sup>Nabb.
- 1.5** The Commissioners are part-time appointees who meet whenever the work programme demands. Since the passing of the Boundary

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<sup>1</sup> The name was changed from the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales by the Local Government (Democracy) (Wales) Act 2013.

Commissions Act 1992, the Commission Members (not including the Deputy Chair) 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 Chair, 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. Both are represented by designated deputies at Commission meetings.
- 1.8** The Minister for the Cabinet Office also appoints a Secretary to the Commission. Under the joint Secretariat arrangements the Secretary, Mr Steve Halsall is also the Chief Executive of the LDBCW.
- 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 LDBCW in Cardiff and liaison about staffing and accommodation takes place with the Welsh Government. This working relationship is covered by a memorandum of understanding between the two Commissions and their respective sponsor bodies

### **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 Minister for the Cabinet Office in accordance with the provisions of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended).
- 1.11** The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 made substantial changes to the legislation governing the distribution of Parliamentary seats.
- 1.12** The Act also removed the link between the Parliamentary constituencies and those of the National Assembly for Wales. This has the effect that, until new legislation is put into place, there is no mechanism for the regular review of the National Assembly for Wales constituencies.
- 1.13** The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 amended the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011. This changed the date which the Commission is required to report its



recommendations to Parliament from 'before 1 October 2013' to 'not before 1 September 2018 and before 1 October 2018'.

## 2. Objectives

### General Objective

- 2.1** To keep under continuous review the representation of Wales in the House of Commons.

### Specific Objective for 2017/18

- 2.2** The objectives for the Commission during the 2016-17 financial year were:

- By the end of July 2017, to receive the Assistant Commissioners report and to consider the report's recommendations in conjunction with the representations received during the initial and secondary consultation period;
- By the end of October 2017, if appropriate, to publish a Revised Proposals report;
- By the end of December 2017, if appropriate, to have conducted a comprehensive 8-week statutory consultation on the revised proposals;
- By the end of January 2018, to have published the statutory 'Annual Report on Progress', which the Commission is required to provide to the Speaker of the House of Commons, updating on progress with a live review;
- During the course of the year the Commission will aim to hold three formal meetings to assess progress with the Review and will also be represented at the Annual Meeting of UK Boundary Commissions.
- During the year the transition will be made from the Welsh Language Scheme to the adoption and implementation of Welsh Language Standards;
- By the end of March 2018 work will be undertaken to consolidate the long-term arrangements for the Commission's accommodation;
- By the end of March 2018 to ensure arrangements are in place for the Commission's future IT provisions.

### Welsh Language Standards

- 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.

## **3. Outcomes**

### **Assistant Commissioners' Report**

**3.1** The Assistant Commissioners appointed to undertake the public hearings that were held during the initial consultation period (13 September to 5 December 2016) were also tasked to produce a report to the Commission setting out proposals for changes to the Commission's initial proposals based on the evidence submitted in writing and orally at public hearings. This report was submitted to the Commission in July 2017.

### **Revised Proposals Report**

**3.2** The Commission considered the Assistant Commissioners' report in conjunction with all of the representations that had been received throughout the review and the transcripts of the public hearings before forming revised proposals. A Revised Proposals report was published on 17 October 2017 and this began a further period of consultation that ended on 11 December 2017.

### **Annual Report on Progress**

**3.3** In January 2018, the Commission presented to Parliament a Progress Report on the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales as required by legislation.

### **Meetings**

**3.4** There were two meetings of the Commission during the financial year. In addition two of the Commissioners and the Secretary met with colleagues from the other UK Boundary Commissions in November 2017 to discuss new developments and the implementation of operational improvements.

### **Welsh Language**

**3.5** The Commission's annual report on the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme was submitted to the Welsh Language

Commissioner this was the last report in this format as the Commission moves to adopting Welsh Language Standards.

### **Accommodation**

- 3.6** In liaison with the LDBCW and Welsh Government the existing lease for the accommodation the LDBCW shares with the Commission was transferred from Welsh Government to the LDBCW.

### **Information Technology**

- 3.7** In conjunction with the LDBCW and Qualifications Wales an agreement was put in place to migrate the Commission's ICT services to a new platform during 2018/19.

### **Training**

- 3.8** Essential training courses that members of staff are required to attend and for personal development have continued this year and include: Active Listening, Analysis & Use of Evidence, Disability Awareness, Effective Dispersed Team Working, Information and Record Management, Welsh Language Awareness, Welsh Language Entry, Microsoft Access, Facilities Management, Procurement Overview, Sustainable Development, Project Management, Using Social Media in Public Services. Welsh Language coaching has been given on an informal basis to non-Welsh speaking staff. Members of staff continue to be reminded at the monthly team meeting of the support for and availability of Welsh Language training for any member of staff that is interested.

### **Information**

- 3.9** The Commission makes as much information publically available as is practicable through the web site ([www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk](http://www.bcomm-wales.gov.uk)) and the consultation portal ([www.bcw2018.org.uk](http://www.bcw2018.org.uk)). Requests for information that is not available on the web site are responded to. The Commission has set a target of 15 days to respond to such requests. In 2017-18 we received 15 requests for information all of which were responded to within 15 days. This compares to 15 requests received in 2016-17.

## 4. Budget and Expenditure

### Expenditure April 2017 to March 2018

- 4.1 Table 1 compares the actual expenditure with the budget, during the financial year covered by this report.

**Table 1 – Budget and Expenditure**

<b>Budget Component</b>	<b>Budget (£)</b>	<b>Actual (£)</b>
Staff Salaries	147,238	147,238
Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners Fees	21,578	22,567
Office Accommodation	36,000	35,974
Travel and Subsistence	4,970	3,109
Hospitality	300	233
IT and Telecoms	19,800	18,709
Other Review Costs*	50,114	43,748
<b>Total</b>	<b>280,000</b>	<b>271,578</b>

\*includes media and advertising, training, postage, printing and translation.

- 4.2 Table 1 shows that for the 2017-18 financial year the Boundary Commission under-spent on its budget by £8,422. The main reasons for this under-spend were that budgets for report printing and Commission Members' expenses were over-estimated.

### Member's Fees and Expenses

- 4.3 During 2017-18 the following fees and expenses were claimed by Commission Members:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
Mr P Loveluck	£5,561	£499
Prof R McNabb	£5,309	£92

## **5. Work Programme for 2018/19**

**5.1** As required by legislation, the Boundary Commission for Wales is undertaking a review of Parliamentary constituencies. The Commission's specific objectives in 2018/19 will be:

- By the end of May 2018, to have considered the representations received in respect of the Revised Proposals report and to have drafted Final Proposals;
- By the end of June 2018, to have agreed a Final Proposals report;
- By the end of August 2018, to have made the necessary arrangements for the submission of the Final Proposals report;
- By the end of March 2019 to conduct a review of the 2018 Review.
- During the course of the year the Commission will aim to hold at least two formal meetings to assess progress with the Review and will also be represented at the Annual Meeting of UK Boundary Commissions.
- During the year a report on the operation of Welsh Language Standards during 2017-18 will be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner and published on the Commission's web site.

### **Budget**

**5.2** To enable the objectives listed at 5.1 above to be met, the Commission has been allocated a budget of £140,000 for the financial year 2018/19.

