

# Boundary Commission for Wales

## Annual Report 2018/19



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# **BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR WALES**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

**July 2019**

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# Foreword

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Boundary Commission for Wales for the financial year 2018-19.

The main activities during 2018-19 were centred around the submission of the Final Recommendations Report for the 2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Wales. The Report was submitted to the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to Section 3 of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended. The recommendations take careful account of all representations made to the Commission throughout the Review. The Commission has recommended constituencies that in its opinion, best gives effect to the Rules in Schedule 2 to the Act.

There are no geographical changes to the recommended constituencies from those proposed within the Revised Proposals Report. There are three changes to constituency names following representations received during the consultation on the Revised Proposals Report.

**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, Mrs Shereen Williams 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 Cabinet Office and Welsh Government. This working relationship is covered by a memorandum of understanding between the two Commissions and their respective sponsor bodies and the MOU will be reviewed in 2019/20.

### **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.
- 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 2018/19

- 2.2** The objectives for the Commission during the 2018-19 financial year were:

- 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.
- By the end of March 2019 to ensure the Commission's IT provisions had transitioned successfully.

### 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**

### **Final Recommendations Report**

**3.1** The Commission considered the representations that had been received throughout the review, the transcripts of the public hearings and the Assistant Commissioners' report before forming final proposals. The Final Recommendations Report was submitted to the Secretary of State on 5 September 2018. This Report, along with the other three Boundary Commission's Final Recommendations reports, were laid before Parliament on 10 September 2018.

### **Meetings**

**3.2** 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 2018 to discuss new developments and the implementation of operational improvements and an initial assessment of the conduct of the 2018 Review.

### **Welsh Language**

**3.3** 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**

**3.4** 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**

**3.5** In conjunction with the LDBCW and Qualifications Wales the ICT transformation programme was completed and in 18/19, the Commission's ICT services migrated to a new platform.

## **Training**

**3.6** 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**

**3.7** The Commission makes as much information publicly 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 2018-19 we received 8 requests for information all of which were responded to within 15 days. This compares to 15 requests received in 2017-18.

## 4. Budget and Expenditure

### Expenditure April 2018 to March 2019

- 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          | 31,900            | 31,900            |
| Commissioners Fees      | 8,000             | 4,599             |
| Office Accommodation    | 33,000            | 31,534            |
| Travel and Subsistence  | 1,600             | 1,477             |
| Hospitality             | 225               | 78                |
| IT and Telecoms         | 49,200            | 42,745            |
| Other Review Costs*     | 16,075            | 13,856            |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>140,000</b>    | <b>126,190</b>    |

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

- 4.2 Table 1 shows that for the 2018-19 financial year the Boundary Commission under-spent on its budget by £13,810. The main reasons for this under-spend were that budgets for IT and Commission Members' fees were over-estimated.

### Member's Fees and Expenses

- 4.3 During 2018-19 the following fees and expenses were claimed by Commission Members:

| <b>Member</b> | <b>Fees</b> | <b>Expenses</b> |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Mr P Loveluck | £1,917      | £175            |
| Prof R McNabb | £2,683      | £507            |

## **5. Work Programme for 2019/20**

**5.1** The Commission's specific objectives in 2018/19 will be:

- By the end of August 2019 to conduct a review of the 2018 Review.
- During the year a report on the operation of Welsh Language Standards during 2018-19 will be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner and published on the Commission's web site.
- Conduct any such activities and recommendations falling out of the review of the 2018 Review in preparation for the 2023 Review.

### **Budget**

**5.2** To enable the objectives listed at 5.1 above to be met, the Commission has been allocated a budget of £100,000 for the financial year 2019/20.

