



**Comisiwn Ffiniau**  
i Gymru

**Boundary Commission**  
for Wales

Boundary Commission for Wales

# Annual Report 2023/24

The Commission welcomes correspondence  
and telephone calls in Welsh or English.

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# Foreword



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Boundary Commission for Wales for the financial year 2023-24.

The main activities during 2023-24 were focused on publishing the Final Recommendations Report as well as publishing the representations received during the final consultation period.

Towards the end of the financial year, the Commission began its lessons learned exercise based on its experiences during the 2023 Review.

**The Hon Mrs Justice Jefford DBE**

**Deputy Chair**



# Introduction

## The Sponsor

1.1 The Boundary Commission for Wales is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored and wholly funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The Lord Chancellor appoints the Deputy Chair, the Secretary of State 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 Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC), 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

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 Mrs Justice Jefford. The Members are Mr Huw Vaughan Thomas CBE and Mr Sam Hartley (both appointed from 05 October 2020).

1.5 The Commissioners are part-time appointees who meet whenever the work programme demands. 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 Secretary for State also appoints a Secretary to the Commission. Under the joint Secretariat arrangements, the Secretary, Mrs Shereen Williams MBE OStJ DL is also the Chief Executive of the DBCC.

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 DBCC in Cardiff and liaison about staffing and accommodation takes place with DLUHC and 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 Constituencies Act 2020 made substantial changes to the legislation governing the distribution of Parliamentary seats.

1.12 The Act also designated the constituency of Ynys Môn as a 'protected constituency', introduced the rule of 'automaticity' on the implementation of the recommendations of the four Boundary Commissions and made changes to the consultation process.



# Objectives

## General Objective

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

## Specific Objective for 2023/24

2.2 The objectives for the Commission during the 2023/24 financial year were:

- To submit the Final Recommendations for the 2023 Review by end of June 2023.
- To publish all hard copy and electronic documentation for publication of the Final Recommendations ;
- To have prepared and published all written responses received in the third consultation period on the revised proposals;
- To carry out a 'Lessons Learned' exercise by the end of December 2023.
- To prepare a report on the operation of Welsh Language Standards during 2023-24 which will be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner and published on the Commission's web site.

## 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.

# Outcomes

## Meetings

3.1 There was 1 meeting of the Commission during the financial year. The focus of the meeting was to consider the lessons learned from the 2023 Review, and to consider the Annual Report and Welsh Language Annual Report. The Commission also attended and participated in the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in December 2023.

## Welsh Language

3.2 The Commission's annual report on the operation of the Welsh Language Standards was approved and published.

## Information

3.3 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)). Requests for information that is not available on the web site are responded to. The Commission has set a target of 20 days to respond to such requests. In 2023-24 the Commission received 11 requests for information all of which were responded to within 20 days. This compares to 6 requests received in 2022-23.

# Budget and Expenditure

## Expenditure April 2023 to March 2024

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

**Table 1 – Budget and Expenditure**

Budget Component	Budget (£)	Actual (£)
Staff Salaries	152,500	154,310
Commissioners Fees	5,408	2,275
Office Accommodation	39,000	38,344
Travel and Subsistence	1,500	1,372
Hospitality	0	220
IT and Telecoms	21,472	21,895
Other Review Costs*	35,120	36,342
<b>Total</b>	<b>255,000</b>	<b>254,758</b>

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

4.2 Table 1 shows that for 2023-24 the Boundary Commission underspent its budget by £242.

4.3 Staff Salaries were slightly more than estimated due to the recruitment of an additional staff member part way through the year. Commissioner Fees were underspent due to fewer meetings being required than estimated. Commission meetings being held remotely also meant that there was little requirement for Travel and Subsistence.

4.4 Review costs were higher than estimated due to the cost of translating representations being significantly more than estimated. In addition, costs for legal advice and purchasing new IT hardware were more than estimated.

## Members Fees and Expenses

4.5 During 2023-24 the following fees and expenses were claimed by Commission Members:

Member	Fees	Expenses
Mr H V Thomas	£506	£230
Mr S Hartley	£1,769	£1,053

# Work Programme for 2024/25

5.2 The Commission's specific objectives in 2024/25 will be:

- Conduct any such activities and recommendations falling out of the Lessons Learned exercise of the 2023 Review in preparation for the 2031 Review.
- To prepare a report on the operation of Welsh Language Standards during 2023-24 which will be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner and published on the Commission's website.
- To review the MOU between BCW – DBCC – WG - DHLUC
- To complete the office relocation exercise.

## Budget

5.3 To enable the objectives listed at 5.1 above to be met, the Commission has been allocated a budget of £230,000 for the financial year 2024/25.





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The Commission welcomes correspondence, e-mails and telephone calls either in English or Welsh.  
To contact the Commission, please write to:

Boundary Commission for Wales  
Ground Floor, Hastings House, Fitzalan Court  
Cardiff, CF24 0BL

Telephone: +44 (0)29 20464819  
Telephone: +44 (0)29 21055521  
E-mail: [bcw@boundaries.wales](mailto:bcw@boundaries.wales)