



Comisiwn Ffiniau
i Gymru

Boundary Commission
for Wales

Boundary Commission for Wales

Annual Report 2024/25

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

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Contents

Chapter 1	Foreword
Chapter 2	Introduction
Chapter 3	Objectives
Chapter 4	Outcomes
Chapter 5	Budget
Chapter 6	Work Programme for 2025/26

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Boundary Commission for Wales for the financial year 2024-25.

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 Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). 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 MHCLG 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 2024/25

2.2 The objectives for the Commission during the 2024/25 financial year were:

- 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 - MHCLGC
- To complete the office relocation exercise.

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 Annual Report and Welsh Language Annual Report. The Commission also attended and participated in the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in February 2025.

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 website (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 2024-25 the Commission received 9 requests for information all of which were responded to within 20 days. This compares to 11 requests received in 2023-24.

Budget

Expenditure April 2024 to March 2025

4.1 MHCLG agreed to provide the Commission with fixed funding to cover the cost of keeping a Secretariat based in Wales during years when no parliamentary review work is being undertaken. For 2024-25 the amount of fixed funding was set at £230,000. Table 1 shows the various categories to which the fixed funding was allocated.

Table 1 – Budget

Budget Component	Budget (£)
Staff Salaries	83,350
Commissioners Fees	2,528
Office Accommodation	79,000
Travel and Subsistence	793
Hospitality	0
IT and Telecoms	43,875
Other Review Costs*	20,454
Total	230,000

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

Members Fees and Expenses

4.2 During 2024-25 the following fees and expenses were claimed by Commission Members:

Member	Fees	Expenses
Mr H V Thomas	£1,264	£174
Mr S Hartley	£1,264	£173

Work Programme for 2025/26

5.2 The Commission's specific objectives in 2025/26 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 2024-25 which will be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner and published on the Commission's website.

Budget

5.3 To enable the objectives listed at 5.1 above to be met, the Commission has been allocated a budget of £185,000 for the financial year 2025/26.





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The Commission welcomes correspondence, e-mails and telephone calls either in English or Welsh.
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