Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland

Note of meeting held on 23 March 2021 at 2pm

Via video link

# Present

Sarah Havlin, Boundary Commissioner (SH)

Vilma Patterson, Boundary Commissioner (VP)

Angela McGrath, Commissioner of Valuation (AMcG)

Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer (VMcV)

Jim Lennon Chief Survey Officer (JL)

Heather McKinley, Secretary to the Boundary Commission (HMcK)

Andrea Richardson, Deputy Secretary to the Boundary Commission (AR)

# Apologies

Mr. Justice Humphreys, Deputy Chair to the Boundary Commission

Siobhan Carey, Registrar General of Births and Deaths in Northern Ireland

# Introductions

Attendees briefly introduced themselves.

# Work Plan for 2023 Boundary Review

The meeting was given an overview of the likely milestones for the proposed 2023 Review timetable, including the July 2023 deadline and various statutory periods of consultation. The meeting noted the importance of maintaining flexibility in order to adapt to any unforeseen circumstances. The meeting reflected on the 2018 Review and the considerations arising from it.

# Overview of Factors relating to Methodological Approach

SH provided an overview of the various factors that would contribute to the Commission’s approach, such as electorate size and existing boundaries. She also noted the importance of robust, detailed recording of the decision-making process and reasoning.

The meeting discussed the potential role of technology in public consultation, particularly in the context of the pandemic, and the need to ensure this satisfied the relevant legislation.

SH and VP set out the need for BCNI to have clear messaging around the Parliamentary Review and its public consultations due to the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner carrying out their review separately but in parallel to BCNI in 2021-2022.

# Practical Approach to Developing Proposals

The meeting was apprised of the practical, iterative approach to the Review and the approach which had been agreed by Commissioners.

# Discussion on the Role of the Assessors

While the legislation is not explicit regarding the detail of the practical role of the Assessors, precedent and practicality point towards them offering expert advice and feedback from their various roles, as well as certain practical support (eg. EONI’s electoral data, LPS’ mapping expertise). As key stakeholders, they would also be kept updated on the Commission’s work at regular meetings.

# AOB

There being no further business, the meeting concluded.

**BCNI Secretariat**