



## NOTE OF MEETING OF BCNI OF 18 September 2017 at 3pm

**Location:** Conference Room, The Bungalow, Stormont House

**In attendance:**

Madam Justice Denise McBride (Deputy Chair, BCNI)

Dr Bill Smith (Commissioner, BCNI)

Sarah Havlin (Commissioner, BCNI)

Eamonn McConville (Secretary, BCNI)

Michael Harris (Deputy Secretary, BCNI)

Tim Johnston (Office Manager, BCNI)

The Deputy Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### 1. Recording of Meetings – Process

- It was agreed that draft minutes of meetings would be issued to attendees shortly after each meeting for review and then signed off at the start of the subsequent Commission meeting, allowing matters arising to be dealt with appropriately.

**Action: Secretariat to note for next meeting.**

### 2. Staffing Matters

- The Deputy Chair noted that Adam McCalden had left the Secretariat on promotion and wished him well, thanking him for his contribution to the review to this point.

### 3. Launch of Secondary Consultation period

- The Secretary provided a brief update to the Commissioners confirming that the Secondary Consultation period had commenced on Tuesday 5 September 2017 and would run for 4 weeks until 2 October 2017. A small number of responses had been received thus far.

### 4. Future Work on Analysis of Responses / Revised Proposals

- There was a brief discussion around recent media speculation that the current review could be scrapped or re-started. It was agreed that unless directed by Parliament, BCNI will continue to work on the Review in line with the existing legislative requirements.
- Commissioners were also made aware of a Private Member's Bill (the Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill 2017-19) which has been brought forward by Afzal Khan MP. No details are available at this point but those should become known when the Bill has its second reading on 1 December.
- The Secretary confirmed that, during the delays incurred by the election purdah periods, the Secretariat had undertaken preparatory work on the analysis of Provisional Proposal responses. A

number of key themes had been identified which the Commissioners may wish to consider when working on Revised Proposals. This preparatory work would be revisited once the Secondary consultation concluded. A full set of papers will be issued to Commissioners by 10 October 2017.

**Action: Secretariat to provide Commissioners with analysis papers by 10 October 2017.**

- It was agreed that an intensive period of work would be required between October and December to complete preparatory work on the Revised Proposals. The first post-consultation meeting of the Commission to review consultation responses and consider any necessary revisions was confirmed for **19 October 2017 at 3.00pm**.

**Action: All to note date of next meeting as 19 October at 3.00pm in the Bungalow.**

**Action: Secretariat to issue formal invitations in due course.**

- It was agreed that the 8-week consultation period on the Revised Proposals should launch by the end of January 2018 at the very latest. This would ensure that the consultation completes before the Easter break. To align with the Printer's Christmas holidays it was agreed that the Commission would work towards having the final proof of the Revised Proposals report completed by 18 December 2017.

**Action: Commission to have final proof of Revised Proposals report completed by 18 December 2017.**

**Action: Secretariat to make preparations for launching the Revised Proposals consultation on 30 January 2018**

## **5. UK Commissions Meeting**

- The 2017 meeting will be hosted by Boundary Commission Wales in Cardiff on 16 & 17 November. The programme includes a tour of the Welsh Assembly and the guest speaker will be Prof Wyn Jones of Cardiff University.

**Action: Deputy Secretary to provide Commissioners with travel and accommodation options for Cardiff.**

## **6. Boston College visit**

- Very positive feedback was received from the students and staff of Boston College who visited BCNI on 19 June 2017 as part of a wider study tour to the British Isles. An invitation for a reciprocal visit is anticipated from Boston College with a focus on an exchange of redistricting best practice. It was agreed that Commissioners will consider how best to respond to any invite and, if suitable benefits to the Commission are identified from such a visit, prepare a business case for funding to be submitted to the NIO as sponsor department.

## **7. Surveys / Academic Requests**

- The meeting discussed recent interview and survey requests from academics and students and how these should be dealt with going forward. It was agreed that during an active Review only factual responses to questions should be provided, and where possible, refer enquirers to information currently in the public domain.

**Action: Secretariat to draft a policy on interview/survey requests for consideration and approval.**

There being no further business, the meeting concluded at 4.30pm

**BCNI Secretariat  
September 2017**