**Boundary Commission for Northern Ireland**

Note of Meeting held on 29 March 2022 at 3.30pm

Via video link

**In Attendance:**

Mr. Justice Michael Humphreys, Deputy Chair to the Boundary Commission (MH)

Sarah Havlin, Boundary Commissioner (SH)

Vilma Patterson, Boundary Commissioner (VP)

Angela McGrath, Commissioner of Valuation, LPS (AMcG)

Jim Lennon, Chief Survey Officer, LPS (JL)

Virginia McVea, Chief Electoral Officer (VMcV)

Heather McKinley, Secretary to the Boundary Commission (HMcK)

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

Lisa Hay, Office Manager to the Boundary Commission (LH)

Lyn McBride, Support Officer to the Boundary Commission (LMcB)

**Apologies:**

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

David Marshall, Director of Census and Population Statistics, NISRA (DM)

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

1. **Note of Previous Meeting**

Members agreed the note of the BCNI meeting held on 25th January 2022. This note had been circulated in February, together with a written update on the secondary consultation, in lieu of a full BCNI meeting.

1. **Update on Secondary Consultation**

Attendees were advised that all written representations received at the initial consultation had been published on BCNI’s website on 26th January, together with a Guide to the Secondary Consultation. It was noted that the secondary consultation began on 7th February 2022 and closed on 23rd March. An information poster to promote the secondary consultation was displayed in libraries and council buildings throughout NI. Press releases and social media were used to promote engagement with the secondary consultation, and stakeholders had been kept informed via email.

Three public hearings were held during March, in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry and Cookstown, in order to facilitate broad geographic coverage, and the hearings used a hybrid format to support public engagement in the Review process. There were 5 oral representations given at the hearings and the Commission also received 3 written representations as part of the secondary consultation. It was noted that the records of the hearings would be published by the Commission in line with its statutory duty, and that the written representations would also be published.

Attendees offered their thanks to the Secretariat and the professional services provided by Morrow Communications, AV support, transcription service and the Chair of each event. The Deputy Chair noted in particular his thanks for the successful delivery of this statutory duty in the context of the uncertainty of the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was some discussion around the relatively low level of public engagement, despite considerable efforts being made to publicise the consultation and hearings.

1. **2022/2023 Work Plan**

Attendees were apprised of the proposed scheduling for the third statutory consultation period, planned for autumn 2022. Having completed 2 periods of consultation, including public hearings, Commissioners must now consider all the representations made during those consultations, and whether and to what extent they might revise the initial proposals. Any revised proposals then go out to a third consultation stage. It was agreed that Commissioners would plan to meet next month to begin considerations around matters relating to any revision of their initial proposals. It was noted that, if the Commission decides to revise its initial proposals, the revised proposals would be published at the start of the third consultation which covers a period of 4 weeks, and allows for written representations to be made.

# Year-End Financial Summary

An update on BCNI’s financial position at the approach to year-end was provided. It was noted that BCNI’s work is statutory, rather than discretionary, and that it is demand-led. Costs may therefore be variable depending on the number of mapping iterations and associated meetings required to deliver the statutory duty. There was some discussion around matters of financial planning going forward. Attendees thanked the Secretariat for their work on end-year processes currently in train, and noted the Commission’s likely end-year financial position. It was agreed that the 2022/2023 budget would be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

# AOB

Members were apprised of recent correspondence from NIO regarding use of Erskine House, confirming the annual charge for BCNI’s occasional use of facilities there. There was some discussion around these arrangements, and it was agreed to proceed.

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for 24th May 2022, attendees were advised that they may join in person or virtually, as we will be using a meeting room in Erskine House for the meeting.