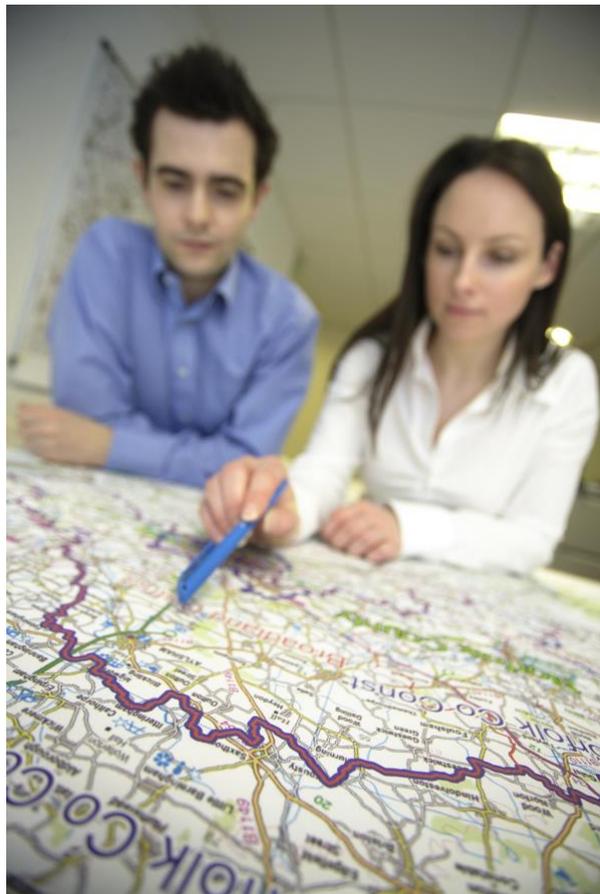


The  
Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
for England



## Corporate Plan 2018/19 to 2022/23

Presented to the House of Commons pursuant to Paragraph 12 of Schedule 1 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 25th April 2018.

HC 979



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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

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of Schedule 1 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development  
and Construction Act 2009

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed  
25/04/2018



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## Foreword

I am pleased to present the Commission's Corporate plan and five-year strategy which outlines our activities for the financial years 2018/19 to 2022/23.

The plan includes two significant additions to our programme. First, the Commission will conduct reviews of all London boroughs that have not been subject to an electoral review since 1999/2000. The Commission has agreed that, nearly twenty years since the last comprehensive series of electoral reviews in London, their addition to the programme would be consistent with our statutory duty to review all English local authorities 'from time to time'. Such reviews would also improve fairness for voters in local elections, and allow ward boundaries to reflect the changing shape of communities, as well as providing an opportunity for London's councils to align their governance arrangements with their strategic vision.

In our previous plan, we also anticipated potential change in the wider local government environment. In particular, we noted the potential for authorities to merge or undergo structural change. The Commission stood ready to assist the Government, and affected local authorities, in providing electoral arrangements for new authorities that emerged as part of the process. The Secretary of State has now indicated that he is minded to agree to three merger propositions and one case for structural change that would create two new local authorities. More may follow and the Commission views its role in assisting the establishment of electoral arrangements for any new authorities as a key part in its ambition to promote effective local government in England.

Despite these new workstreams, the Commission retains capacity to deliver its existing core functions. As such, we will continue to target authorities where voters do not enjoy good levels of electoral equality. We will also continue to accept requests for electoral reviews where local authorities believe that we can help them improve local governance and leadership.

Our ability to deliver a full and diverse programme is possible because of improvements that have been made to our processes and practices since our establishment as a stand-alone body. For example, introducing digital technology for both internal procedures and external consultation has enhanced our flexibility and efficiency. Likewise, close scrutiny of contracts with external partners has generated significant savings whilst enabling better services to the Commission. In total, our overall budget has reduced by 25% since 2010, whilst the average costs of individual electoral reviews have decreased by 62%. We will need to seek further efficiencies over the course of the plan to meet rising prices with a flat line budget.

This plan supports our core aims to make local elections fairer for voters in England. Furthermore, we believe that our work will also make a positive contribution to the wider landscape of English local government as we deliver electoral arrangements for new authorities that are fair, reflect community ties, and help councillors and staff promote effective local government for citizens.

**Professor Colin Mellors**  
**Chair, Local Government Boundary Commission for England**

## Introduction

This is the eighth Corporate Plan and five-year strategy of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. It highlights both our success in managing our business and output since we became independent in 2010 and sets out our plans for 2018/19 and beyond.

## Our purpose

Our mission, vision and values are set out below.

**Mission** *To sustain fair electoral arrangements and keep the map of English local government in good order*

**Vision** *We are an independent body that consults, and decides, on the most appropriate electoral arrangements for local government*

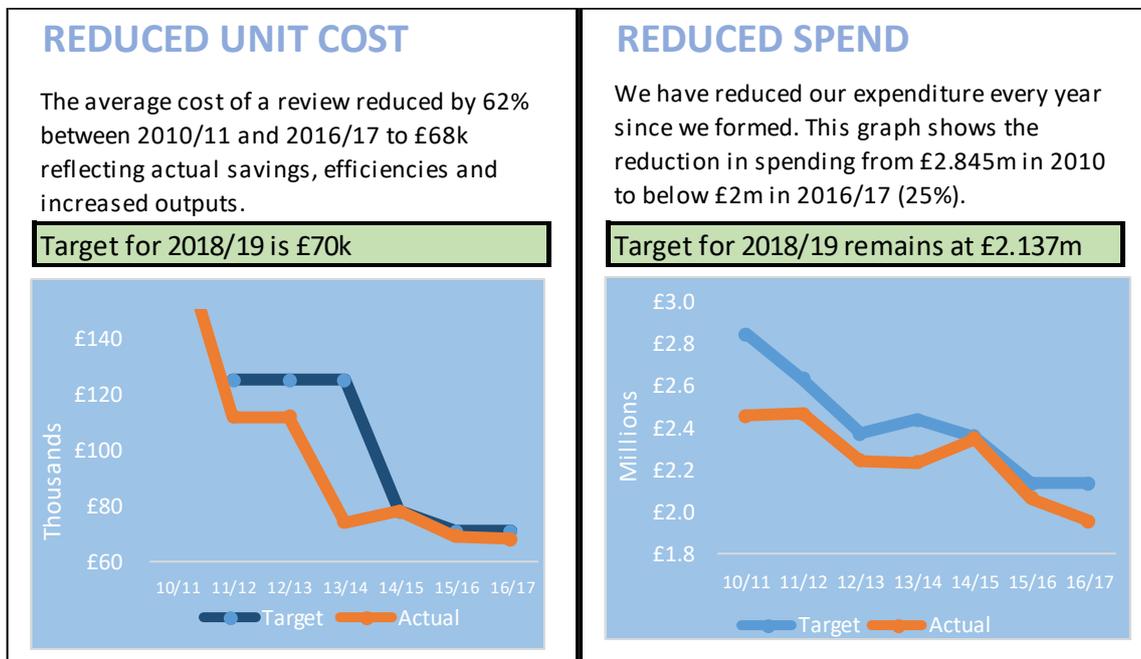
*We promote openness, integrity and rigour in all of our dealings*

*We use our resources responsibly and always strive to do things better*

**Values** *Openness, Rigour and Integrity*

## Capacity and resources 2018/19

Since our establishment as a stand-alone body in 2010, we have significantly reduced both our overall expenditure and the cost of individual reviews, whilst increasing the number of reviews delivered. This represents a 25% decrease in overall cost and an average 62% reduction in the unit cost of a review.



Our resource requirement for 2018/19 to 2022/23 remains unchanged at £2,137k throughout the life of the Corporate Plan. However, the number (and complexity in the case of new authorities) of reviews undertaken will be maintained reflecting our goals of:

- continuing to improve electoral equality
- accommodating requests for electoral reviews from local authorities
- reviewing all authorities in England from “time to time”
- accelerated reviews for newly-established authorities

We will continue to seek efficiencies and savings, although the Commission acknowledges that reducing costs by 62% since 2010 now means that there are fewer opportunities for significant efficiencies to be made. Two large projects we are implementing which will make our work more efficient are:

- *Sharepoint* - will deliver new ways of working both internally and in tracking, planning and setting up reviews
- *Website* – a new platform will reduce the cost of maintaining this asset

## Resources required (in £k)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
<b>Staff &amp; Commissioners</b>	1,318	<b>1,344</b>	1,362	1,375	1,388	1,402
<b>Mapping and printing</b>	124	<b>124</b>	124	124	124	124
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	123	<b>94</b>	85	80	80	80
<b>Business Costs &amp; Services</b>	362	<b>482</b>	473	465	452	438
<b>Legal &amp; Professional</b>	53	<b>53</b>	53	53	53	53
<b>Depreciation</b>	20	<b>40</b>	40	40	40	40
<b>Revenue Total</b>	<b>2,000<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>2,137</b>	<b>2,137</b>
<b>Capital</b>	174	<b>50</b>	50	50	50	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,174</b>	<b>2,187</b>	<b>2,187</b>	<b>2,187</b>	<b>2,187</b>	<b>2,187</b>

## Relocation

In 2015, the Commission moved (on a short lease) to Millbank Tower in London in accordance with Cabinet rules – the lease on Millbank Tower expires in December 2018 and the Commission has found new premises in Windsor House, Victoria as part of the creation of a Government Property Hub. We will move to the new premises during 2018/19.

<sup>1</sup> Revised budget showing Supplementary Estimate for Revenue/Capital exchange (Sharepoint and website projects) and small reduction in depreciation.

## Review programme

The programme of electoral reviews set out in this update will continue to reduce levels of electoral inequality affecting voters in England, whilst allowing us to respond positively to requests for reviews throughout the period.

In recognition of our formal responsibility to undertake reviews of all principal councils ‘from time to time’, the Commission has agreed to review those authorities that have not been reviewed for three electoral cycles (typically 12 years).

From 2018/19 until 2022/23, we will begin our programme of reviews of London boroughs and metropolitan districts. Many of these authorities will not have had their electoral arrangements considered for up to 20 years.

### LAs not reviewed for 12 years

The number of LAs not reviewed in 12 years or 3 election cycles will be impacted favourably by reviewing London authorities. 55% of LAs now is expected to fall to 37% by 2021/22

Target for 2018/19 is 50%



## ELECTORAL REVIEWS 2017/18 – 2022/23

		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
1	Electoral reviews in progress at start of financial year	27	28	16	20	20	20
2	Electoral reviews planned to start during financial year	26	25	26	25	25	25
3	Electoral reviews planned to be completed during financial year	25	37 <sup>2</sup>	22	25	25	25

<sup>2</sup> This includes 5 merged authorities which will start and finish within the financial year plus a high proportion of reviews which have been deferred from finishing in 2017/18. The reasons for reviews deferred include further draft recommendation consultations and poor initial information received from authorities.

## Electoral Imbalances

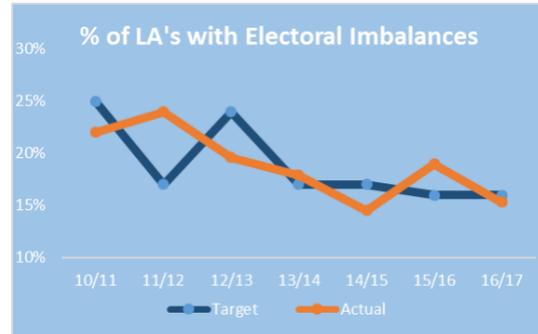
Since 2010, we have improved the levels of electoral equality across England for around 8 million voters.

In 2010, we calculated that around 25% of local authorities had electoral imbalances and as a direct result of our review programme this had reduced to 15% by 2016/17.

We plan to reduce electoral equality to 9% during the life of this plan.

### ELECTORAL IMBALANCES

The reduction in local authorities who have electoral imbalances as a result of our work since 2010 is shown below.



## Impact on electoral inequality 2017/18 – 2022/23

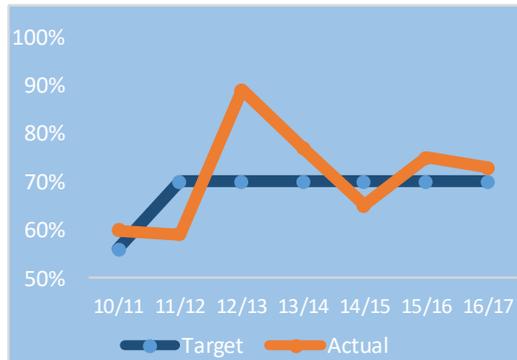
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
1	No. of local authorities	352	352	347	347	347	347
2	No. with electoral inequality at start of year	54	46	32	32	32	32
3	Authorities with electoral inequality at end of year	46	32	32	32	32	32
4	As a percentage	13%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%

## Customer satisfaction

Our levels of customer satisfaction – measured through questionnaires remains high. We have improved the engagement rate through introducing new surveys which are simpler and capture views on our processes and work separately from agreement about the outcomes.

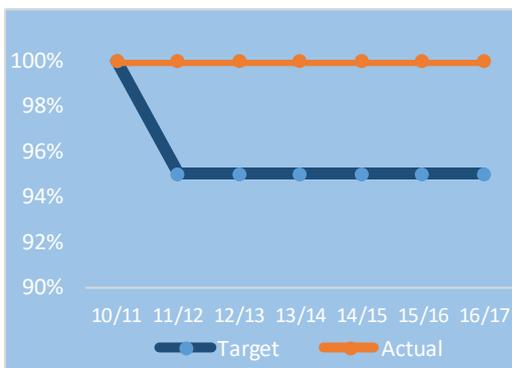
### CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

We have introduced a new questionnaire to differentiate between customer views on the outcome of a review and satisfaction with our processes and professionalism



### RESULTS AS PLANNED

The graph below shows our history of making Electoral Change Orders by the time planned to impact on Local Elections. We have consistently achieved this 100% of the time.



## Meeting election deadlines

We continue to ensure that the reviews that we undertake are completed in time for the scheduled election.

The scheduled election for Cornwall County Council (originally planned for 2017) has been rescheduled for 2021 at the request of the County.

## KPI TARGETS FOR 2018/19

From April 2018 we will report against new KPIs. We have refreshed our approach to measuring our performance by producing a range of more targeted, challenging and balanced KPIs.

From 2018/19 we will have just 3 KPIs ( relating to electoral equality, engagement with stakeholders and efficiency of resources) but the overall results will be developed from a large range of measures which will feed into each KPI.



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