1. Are you aware of any evidence as to how far, if at all, the co-terminosity (or otherwise) of electoral boundaries for local authorities, regional parliaments/assemblies and national parliaments has an effect on the public? For example, does it affect their understanding, their relationship with their representatives, or their engagement with politics?

a) The Electoral Commission has not commissioned any research on the effect that co-terminosity (or otherwise) of electoral boundaries has on the public.

In 2003/04, however, we did some work on the cycle of local government elections in England and the panel may wish to consider this report as part of its evidence gathering: :

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/\_\_data/assets/electoral\_commission\_pdf\_file/ 0015/16125/cycleoflocalelecfinal\_11595-9056\_\_E\_\_N\_\_S\_\_W\_\_.pdf

We found then that having an inconsistent and unclear pattern of elections between different local authorities, including between neighbouring authorities, led to confusion and misunderstanding by voters about the opportunities for them to participate in local elections. We recommended that England should move to a consistent pattern of whole council elections, as was already the case in Wales and Scotland.

There appears to be a low level of public understanding of the work done by different administrative bodies we have not aware of any evidence that links this to boundaries.

b) The Commission on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems - “The Arbuthnott report” was established in 2006 to look into the consequences of having four different voting systems in Scotland and different boundaries between Westminster and Holyrood for voter participation.

Having invited views on the consequences of having different boundaries between Westminster and Scottish Parliament Constituencies the Commission found that individuals interviewed in its focus groups showed little interest in the location of boundaries and indicated that this was not an issue that would dissuade them from voting.

As the Commission on Boundary Differences and Voting Systems no longer exists finding information about the report on-line is problematic. The Panel may wish to consider contacting the Scotland Office who may have historic records.

1. Are you aware of any research on the relative impact of aligning electoral boundaries for regional parliaments/assemblies with local government boundaries vis a vis national parliamentary boundaries?

The Electoral Commission is unaware of and has not itself commissioned research on the relative impact of aligning electoral boundaries.

1. Are you aware of any work that has been done on the impact of co-terminosity (or otherwise) on political parties, their members, and their elected representatives?

We are unaware of any specific work that has been undertaken.

1. 4. What, if any, effect did the decoupling of Scottish Parliament constituencies from Westminster Parliamentary constituencies have on:
   1. the conduct and administration of elections in Scotland?

We have not noticed any considerable changes to the conduct and administration of elections in Scotland. The de-coupling of boundaries in Scotland did, however, require an increase in cross-council working in the areas affected and the setting up of strong communication networks and systems to facilitate the planning process.

* 1. political parties contesting elections in Scotland?

In Scotland, the de-coupling of constituency boundaries required the political parties to adapt. Each party reconfigured its own internal governance arrangements and set up a structure to suit their own individual needs. For more information on how this worked in practice we suggest that the Panel speaks directly to the Scottish political parties. Contact details are below:

• Scottish National Party - Gordon Lamb House, 3 Jackson's Entry, Edinburgh EH8 8PJ. Officer - Colin Beattie

• Scottish Labour Party - Scottish Labour Party, 290 Bath Street Glasgow G2 4RE. Officer - Brian Roy

• Scottish Liberal Democrats - Scottish Liberal Democrats, 4 Clifton Terrace,

Edinburgh, EH12 5DR. Officer - Adam Stachura

• Scottish Green Party - National Headquarters, Scottish Green Party,

Bonnington Mill, 72 Newhaven Road, Edinburgh, EH6 5QG. Officer - Mary Johnston

• Scottish Conservative Party - Scottish Conservative Central Office, 67

Northumberland Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6JG. Officer - Matthew Edmonds

In its deliberations the panel may wish to consider a specific piece of research which was commissioned by “The Arbuthnott report” Commission on the likely effect of non-coterminous boundaries in Scotland - The Local Work of Scottish MPs and MSPs:Effects of Non-coterminous Boundaries and AMS

* 1. the people of Scotland?

As mentioned previously there is no evidence to suggest that boundary changes had an impact on turnout at subsequent Scottish elections.