

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council Areas

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to: -
 - Consider the consultation responses for East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas as set out in paragraphs 23 to 45 and decide whether to hold a local inquiry.
 - Consider whether it wishes to:
 - (a) adopt the published Revised Proposals as Final Recommendations subject to satisfactory design in other groupings being agreed or
 - b) amend its proposals for constituency boundaries or names and consult upon them again.
 - If a local inquiry or further consultation is not required, consider the draft Final Report as set out in paragraphs 3 to 22 and agree the proposed wording.

Rules

2. The rules for reviewing Scottish Parliament constituencies state:
 - **Rule 1**
 - So far as is practicable, regard must be had to the boundaries of the local government areas having effect from time to time under section 1 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
 - **Rule 2**
 - The electorate of a constituency must be as near the electoral quota as is practicable, having regard to Rule 1.
 - Boundaries Scotland may depart from the strict application of Rule 1 if it thinks that it is desirable to do so to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorate of a constituency and the electoral quota or between the electorate of a constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies.
 - **Rule 3**
 - Boundaries Scotland may depart from the strict application of Rules 1 and 2 if it thinks that special geographical considerations (including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency) render it desirable to do so.
 - **Rule 4**
 - Boundaries Scotland need not aim at giving full effect in all circumstances to Rules 1 to 3 but it must take account (so far as it reasonably can)—
 - (a) of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies other than alterations made for the purposes of Rule 1, and
 - (b) of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.

Constituencies at the start of this review

3. At the start of this review, North Ayrshire Council area was covered by two constituencies wholly within the council area. East Ayrshire Council area had one constituency wholly within the council area and partly in South Ayrshire Council area. South Ayrshire Council area had one constituency wholly within the council area. The constituencies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Constituencies at the start of this review

Constituency Name	Council areas	Designation	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Ayr	South Ayrshire	Burgh	62,566	4%
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire	County	59,218	-1%
Cunninghame North	North Ayrshire	County	56,604	-6%
Cunninghame South	North Ayrshire	County	51,298	-14%
Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	East Ayrshire	County	65,742	10%

Provisional Proposals

- We designed constituencies for this area within our overall approach to grouping council areas for constituency design. Our proposed grouping for this area included five constituencies exactly covering the extent of East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas. The combined area had an electorate of 295,428 and a theoretical entitlement to 4.9 constituencies.
- We discussed our Provisional Proposals for these council areas and our discussion and conclusions are recorded in the minute of our meeting of 9 February 2023. We agreed proposed constituency names and designations and our discussion and conclusions are recorded in the minute of our meeting of 5 April 2023.
- In deciding upon our Provisional Proposals for East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas we agreed a constituency design that aimed to address variation from the electorate quota in the existing Cunninghame South constituency while minimising change to the existing arrangements, retaining three of the existing constituencies.
- Our Provisional Proposals were as shown in Table 2. Details of the wards contained within each constituency in the Provisional Proposals were included in the maps of our Provisional Proposals which are available on our website.

Table 2 – Provisional Proposals

Constituency name	Council areas	Designation	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Ayr	South Ayrshire	Burgh	62,566	4.4%
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire	County	59,218	-1.1%
Cunninghame North	North Ayrshire	County	56,604	-5.5%
Cunninghame South	East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire	County	62,113	3.7%
Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	East Ayrshire	County	54,927	-8.3%

8. On 17 May 2023 we published our Provisional Proposals for these council areas for the specified consultation period of one month.

Responses to Provisional Proposals Public Consultation

9. We considered the representations received on our Provisional Proposals in these council areas and our discussion and conclusions are recorded in the minutes of our meeting of 29 August 2023.
10. We received ten representations in response to the consultation on our Provisional Proposals for East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas. All responses have been shared with the Commission. The representations included: opposition to the revised boundary between the proposed Cunninghame South and Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley constituencies; suggestions for alternative boundaries which address variation from the electorate quota in the proposed Cunninghame South constituency; and an objection from East Ayrshire Council.
11. Some representations contained suggestions that did not comply with the statutory rules governing this review. We did not consider those suggestions further.
12. We agreed a local inquiry should be held covering these council areas because North Ayrshire Council had objected to our Provisional Proposals.
13. On 15 November 2023 we published the representations we received during the consultation on our Provisional Proposals.

Local Inquiry

14. At our request, Scottish Ministers appointed Sheriff Principal Murphy as Assistant Commissioner to conduct the Local Inquiry into our proposals. We arranged for transcripts to be made of the Local Inquiry proceedings at the Park Hotel, Kilmarnock on 12 December 2023.
15. At the local inquiry the speakers included: East Ayrshire Council, local and national political parties and local councillors. They mainly replicated earlier comments and suggestions made during the first consultation stage, opposing the proposals that broke local ties between Kilmarnock, Kilmaurs and Stewarton.
16. The Assistant Commissioner made the following conclusions in his report on the Kilmarnock Local Inquiry. He acknowledged that the Commission's Provisional Proposals had addressed variation from the electorate quota in the existing Cunninghame South constituency by adding electors from the Annick ward to it. He noted the strong opposition to adding Kilmaurs, Dunlop and Stewarton to a Cunninghame South constituency, as these are seen to be communities with historical local ties with Kilmarnock. He observed that a number of comments referenced expected housing development but they acknowledged the Commission could not consider future development and only the electorate at 1 September 2022.
17. The Assistant Commissioner did not make any recommendations but noted the suggestion to amend the boundary by Fardalehill, near Crosshouse, west of Kilmarnock may not offer a clear boundary. However, he asked the Commission

to consider all of the alternative suggestions that were presented “to determine a practical solution in accordance with Rules 1-4.”

18. We considered the Assistant Commissioners Report and transcript from the local inquiry and reconsidered representations received concerning our Provisional Proposals. Our discussion and conclusions are recorded in the minutes of our meeting of 22 February 2024.
19. We agreed to amend our proposals and adopted the suggested boundary submitted by both North Ayrshire Council and East Ayrshire Council. Their suggestion addressed variation from the electorate quota, better reflected local ties as both Councils had suggested the same boundary, minimised change from the existing electoral arrangements and better reflected concerns raised during the public consultation and at the Local Inquiry in comparison to the other options or suggestions.
20. We agreed revised constituency names and designations and our discussion and conclusions are recorded in the minutes of our meeting of 22 February 2024.

Revised Proposals

21. On 16 April 2024 we published our Revised Proposals for these council areas for the specified consultation period of one month.
22. Our Revised Proposals are shown in Table 3. Details of the wards contained within each constituency in the Revised Proposals were included in the maps of our Revised Proposals which are available on our website.

Table 3 – Revised Proposals

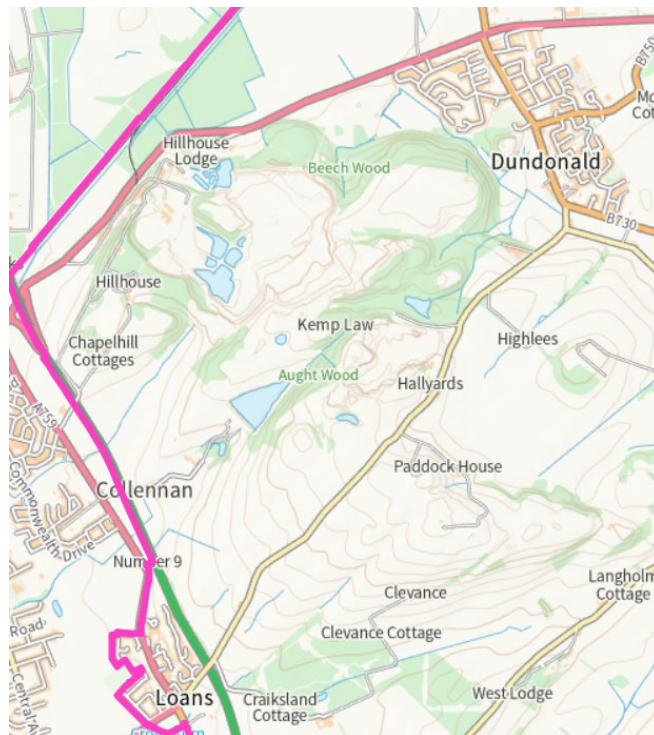
Constituency name	Council areas	Designation	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Ayr	South Ayrshire	Burgh	62,566	4.4%
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire	County	59,218	-1.1%
Cunninghame North	North Ayrshire	County	56,604	-5.5%
Cunninghame South	East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire	County	59,525	-0.6%
Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	East Ayrshire	County	57,515	-4.0%

Responses to Revised Proposals Public Consultation

23. Some representations contained suggestions that did not comply with the statutory rules governing this review. We did not consider those suggestions further.
24. A member of the public supported retaining the existing Ayr constituency boundary but suggested renaming it Ayr, Prestwick and Troon to reference the distinct entities within it.
25. Historically there has never been a constituency with Prestwick or Troon included in the name.

26. A member of the public stated the communities of Dundonald, Loans and Collenan should sit within the same constituency as Troon.
27. The proposed Ayr constituency boundary follows ward boundaries by Dundonald and Loans and partly the A78 road. The constituency boundary is unchanged since 2011. There are approximately 2,300 electors by Dundonald and 600 electors by Loans and Collenan. The table below shows the electorate of an Ayr constituency that includes Dundonald, Loans and Collenan. Dundonald, Loans and Collenan were in the same Scottish Parliament constituency as Troon from 1999-2011. Dundonald, Loans, Collenan and Troon have been in the same constituency since at least 1950. The map below shows the location of Dundonald, Loans and Collenan. The pink line on the map is the existing constituency boundary (rule 4).

Suggestion - Dundonald , Loans and Collenan	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Ayr	65,466	9.3%
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	56,318	-6.0%



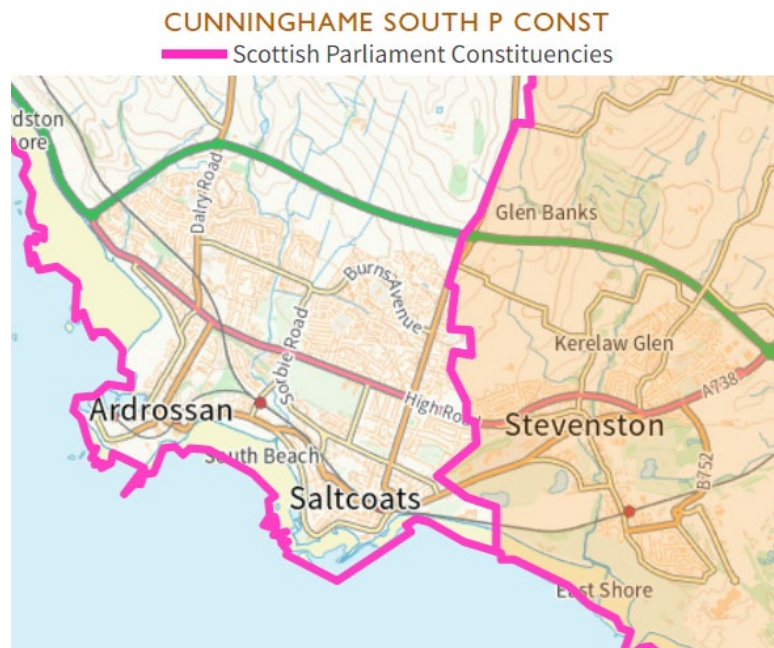
28. Two members of the public supported the proposed Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency.
29. A member of the public stated that Arran does not belong with North Ayrshire or within a Cunninghame North constituency.
30. They offered no alternative suggestion for which constituency Arran should belong to. Arran has 3,987 electors and is close to the proposed Argyll and Bute constituency so could be added to it. The table below shows an Argyll, Bute and Arran constituency (rule 2).

Suggestion	Electorate	Variation from the
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Argyll, Bute and Arran constituency		electorate quota
Argyll, Bute and Arran	53,522	-11%
Cunninghame North	52,617	-12%

- 31. A North Ayrshire Councillor opposed the proposed Cunninghame South constituency because there are no historical, cultural, community, societal or economic links between East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire. They wish no change to the existing Cunninghame South constituency. They suggested that if the constituency requires more electors, the 3 towns could be added to Cunninghame South.
- 32. The 3 Towns include Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenston. They are situated within North Ayrshire Council area. Stevenston currently sits within a Cunninghame South constituency, while Ardrossan and Saltcoats both sit within a Cunninghame North constituency. North Ayrshire Council has 107,902 electors and an entitlement to 1.8 constituencies. Two North Ayrshire constituencies would have an average electorate of 53,951 each and variation from the electorate quota of -9.9%.
- 33. The Commission could propose a Cunninghame South constituency which includes Saltcoats and Stevenston as shown in the table below. Adding Ardrossan would worsen variation from the electorate quota in a Cunninghame North constituency (rule 2). The map below shows the existing constituency boundary by the 3 Towns.

Suggestion for two North Ayrshire constituencies	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Cunninghame North	46,841	-21.8%
Cunninghame South	61,061	1.9%



- 34. A member of the public wished no change to the existing Cunninghame South constituency because the main transport links from Irvine to Stewarton are via Kilmarnock.

35. A member of the public supported the proposed Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley constituency because 'it is important that the valley towns are in the same constituency and it makes sense that they are in the same constituency as Kilmarnock.'
36. A member of the public opposed adding Stewarton and Dunlop to a Cunninghame South constituency because these communities have close community and transport links with Kilmarnock.
37. Stewarton and Dunlop have been in the same Scottish Parliament constituency as Kilmarnock since 1999. Stewarton and Dunlop have been in the same UK Parliament constituency as Kilmarnock since 1974 (rule 4).
38. A member of the public suggested the Commission adopt UK Parliament constituency names as 'nobody these days even refers to any areas formerly known as Cunninghame.'
39. The Commission aims to have different constituency names for the UK and Scottish Parliament.
40. A member of the public suggested a single Ayrshire local authority.
41. North Ayrshire Council accepted the proposed Cunninghame South constituency.
42. East Ayrshire Council did not formally object to the Revised Proposals but stated 'the Council was still unanimous in its disagreement and disappointment with the proposal which (a) did not take into account the historical and cultural ties which have existed for many years in the Annick Ward; and (b) did not take into account the population growth within areas of Cunninghame South, which Council was sure that in future reviews would require further changes as the population grows in that Constituency.'
43. Willie Coffey, MSP for Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley, objects to the Revised Proposals because they break ties, such as community, family, work, local authority, schooling, culture, sport, history and heritage. He stated Stewarton Dunlop and Lugton look towards of Kilmarnock (East Ayrshire) rather than Irvine (North Ayrshire). He believes the Revised Proposals are worse than the Provisional Proposals because they break close links between Kilmaurs and Stewarton and will confuse electors. He suggested amending the boundary between Cunninghame North and Cunninghame South to better balance their electorates, while acknowledging this would propose two constituencies with low electorates. He also explained his alternative suggestion, discussed at the Commission meetings of 29 August 2023 and 22 February 2024, which would add Dundonald to a Cunninghame South constituency because it is closer to Irvine (4 miles) than it is to Cumnock (15 miles). "Failing all of these arguments, I would make a final plea in the strongest possible terms that the town of Stewarton must remain within Kilmarnock & Irvine Valley, essentially to maintain that strong bond with Kilmaurs."
44. When considering the alternative suggestion from Willie Coffey MSP at its 29 August 2023 and 22 February 2024 meetings, the Commission noted one constituency would have variation from electoral parity over -10% (rule 2).

45. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party noted there has been little change to the electorate of Cunninghame South for decades while neighbouring constituencies have grown. They 'recognise there is no entirely satisfactory way to balance the two constituencies, but have no further comments to make on the Proposals for Ayrshire.'

Summary

46. The existing Cunninghame South constituency has 51,298 electors with variation from the electorate quota of -14%. The existing Cunninghame South constituency has 65,742 electors with variation from the electorate quota of 10%. All of the other constituencies had variation from the electorate quota within 10%.

47. The Provisional Proposals amended the boundary of the Cunninghame South and Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley constituencies by Stewarton to improve variation from the electorate quota. The other three constituencies were unchanged. All of the existing constituency names were unchanged.

48. North Ayrshire Council objected to the Provisional Proposals and the Commission agreed to hold a local inquiry.

49. At the local inquiry similar comments were made that had been submitted during the provisional consultation.

50. The Revised Proposals adopted the alternative suggestion submitted by both East Ayrshire Council and North Ayrshire Council. The Revised Proposals retained all of the existing constituency names.

51. No Councils objected to the Revised Proposals nor did a body of 100 electors.

Constituency Names

52. The Commission will have the opportunity to review all constituency names and designations prior to the publication of its Final Recommendations.

Revised Proposals - Ayrshire