

This paper was discussed with the Falkirk Local Inquiry Transcript and Report as well as Paper BS 103. See links below:

https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/SPReview2_further/falkirk_LI_Report.pdf
https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/SPReview2_further/falkirk_LI_Transcript.pdf
https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/BS_103_AB_LAN_DUN.pdf

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
Draft Revised Proposals for Constituencies - Argyll and Bute, East
Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West
Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas**

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to confirm its Further Proposals or Final Recommendations for constituencies in Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas in light of the report from Assistant Commissioner Wade on the local inquiry held in Falkirk.

Background

2. At the start of the review the Commission considered Paper BS 24 Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Constituency Design Approach at its meeting of 14 December 2022. The Commission considered two options in Paper BS 24. The minute of that meeting states “the Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituency design approach in Option 1 advised they were flexible with the proposed council area groupings from Option 1 and would amend the groupings, if it improved constituency design when developing its Provisional Proposals and later when it may develop Revised Proposals.”
3. The Provisional Proposals consulted on constituency groupings in these areas that included groupings of: Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas; Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas; Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Council areas; and East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas.
4. During the consultation on Provisional Proposals for constituencies (May to June 2023) there was opposition to:
 - the division of Clydebank between two constituencies, within the grouping of: Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas;
 - an Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow constituency, within the grouping of East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas; and
 - a Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency, within the grouping of Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas.
5. The Commission agreed to hold a local inquiry in Clydebank, Edinburgh and Peebles as well as in Newton Mearns, Johnstone and Kilmarnock.
6. At its meeting of 5 October 2023, the Commission discussed Paper BS 73 - Alternative constituency design groupings, and asked the Secretariat to develop alternative proposals for constituencies based on different council area groupings that might identify possible improvements to the Provisional Proposals and resolve concerns raised during the consultation and at the local inquiries. The Commission agreed to consult on revised constituency groupings which included a grouping of: Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk,

North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas; City of Edinburgh and East Lothian Council areas; and Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas.

7. The grouping of: Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas retained 12 of the existing 17 constituencies. All of the 12 existing constituencies were within 10% variation of the electorate quota, except Argyll and Bute, but the Commission agreed special geographical considerations applied.
8. A table of the Revised Proposals is shown in the table below and a map is shown in Appendix A.

Revised Proposals			
Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Airdrie	North Lanarkshire	54,205	-9.5%
Argyll and Bute	Argyll and Bute	49,535	-17.3%
Bathgate	West Lothian	65,494	9.3%
Clydebank and Milngavie	E Dunbartonshire W Dunbartonshire	55,112	-8.0%
Clydesdale	South Lanarkshire	61,011	1.9%
Coatbridge and Chryston	North Lanarkshire	56,877	-5.0%
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	Falkirk North Lanarkshire	64,767	8.1%
Dumbarton	Argyll and Bute W Dunbartonshire	56,129	-6.3%
East Kilbride	South Lanarkshire	60,763	1.4%
Falkirk North	Falkirk	62,222	3.9%
Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse	South Lanarkshire	59,596	-0.5%
Linlithgow and Falkirk South	Falkirk West Lothian	65,523	9.4%
Livingston and Breich Valley	West Lothian	65,050	8.6%
Motherwell and Wishaw	North Lanarkshire	57,740	-3.6%
Rutherglen	South Lanarkshire	62,885	5.0%
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	E Dunbartonshire	63,895	6.7%
Uddingston and Bellshill	North Lanarkshire South Lanarkshire	58,842	-1.8%

9. The Commission consulted on its Revised Proposals between 16 April and 15 May 2024.
10. After its 16 May 2024 meeting the Commission also considered Paper BS 97 Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, Revised Proposals – Local Inquiries, by email and agreed to conduct a local inquiry in respect of the proposed: Cumbernauld and Kilsyth; Falkirk North; and Linlithgow and Falkirk South constituencies because Falkirk Council had objected to the Revised Proposals.

11. The Commission was provided with the responses to the consultation for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas at its meeting of 19 June 2024 (Paper BS103) and that paper is attached as Appendix B. The decision for Further Proposals or Final Recommendations for this grouping was deferred until after the outcome of the Falkirk local inquiry. However the Commission agreed to adopt the suggestion from both North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Councils to amend the boundary by Blantyre to follow a ward boundary.
12. There were few comments regarding the Revised Proposals in South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas, but elsewhere the key issues raised during the revised consultation were:
- support for retaining an Argyll and Bute constituency;
 - suggestions to place Bearsden and Milngavie in the same constituency;
 - opposition to the proposals in Falkirk, including an objection from Falkirk Council;
 - opposition and suggestions to revise the proposed boundary by Banknock (Denny);
 - suggestion to amend the proposals by Blantyre, Torphichen (West Lothian) and Wester Breich (West Lothian); and
 - opposition to the proposed Airdrie constituency name.
13. The Commission also considered constituency names and designations at its meeting 19 June 2024 (Paper BS 117) but agreed to defer constituency names for these constituencies until after the Falkirk local inquiry.

Local Inquiry

14. Sheriff Principal Wade (Tayside, Central and Fife Sheriffdom) acted as Assistant Commissioner at the local inquiry, held at Falkirk Stadium on 22 August 2024.
15. The local inquiry was attended by Falkirk Council, an MSP, MP, local councillors and members of the public.
16. The key issues raised at the Falkirk local inquiry were similar to those received during the public consultation.
- Seven members of the public stated the consultation was poorly advertised and that the Revised Proposals broke local ties by Banknock. Banknock has close ties with Haggs and Longcroft and these villages look towards Falkirk rather than Cumbernauld.
 - Falkirk Council wished to retain the existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituency boundaries because they are both close to the electorate quota and the Commission proposed retaining the existing Falkirk constituencies as its Provisional Proposals.
 - Councillor Anne Hannah (Lower Braes ward) supported the submission from Falkirk Council.
 - Councillor Alf Kelly (Denny and Banknock ward) stated that the proposals break local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft and that these communities look towards Falkirk rather than Cumbernauld.
 - Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn (Falkirk North ward) supported the comments from Falkirk Council and stated that there was unanimous support within the Council opposing the Revised Proposals.

- Euan Stainbank, MP for Falkirk, supported the submission from Falkirk Council.
- Michael Matheson, MSP for Falkirk West, supported the submission from Falkirk Council and wished to retain the existing boundaries as they are consistent with local authority boundaries and also met the electoral quota requirement.

17. The Assistant Commissioner has submitted her report for the inquiry - Appendix C. A full transcript of the Falkirk local inquiry is available at Appendix D.

18. The Assistant Commissioner's Report highlighted six fundamental issues: -

- Deviation from the Provisional Proposals and the perception that the motivation behind the Revised Proposals was to accommodate objections elsewhere.
- Lack of adherence to Council Boundaries and the application of Rule 1.
- Effect on local ties.
- The proposed names of the new constituencies are not representative and cause confusion.
- Dilution of MSP representation as articulated by Michael Matheson MSP.
- Challenges of administering elections and electoral confusion.

19. The Assistant Commissioner did not make any recommendations in her report as she could see no clear solution apart from retaining the status quo. However, she did suggest that this was a situation where rule 4 could legitimately be invoked and the present arrangements maintained in the interests of the communities affected and the electorate in these three constituencies as a whole.

Options / alternative suggestions

20. None of the respondents who wished to retain the existing Falkirk constituency boundaries offered an alternative suggestion or solution. There was simply a desire to retain the existing Falkirk constituency boundaries.

21. The two existing Falkirk constituencies have electorates close to the electorate quota (Falkirk East 61,529 and Falkirk West 63,861), the electorates of the neighbouring constituencies have variation from the electorate quota in excess of +/- 10%, see table below.

Existing constituencies	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Almond Valley	West Lothian	70,119	17%
Linlithgow	West Lothian	76,337	27%
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	North Lanarkshire	51,210	-15%

22. The Secretariat have developed some alternative options which consider retaining the two existing Falkirk constituencies and/or maintaining local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft.

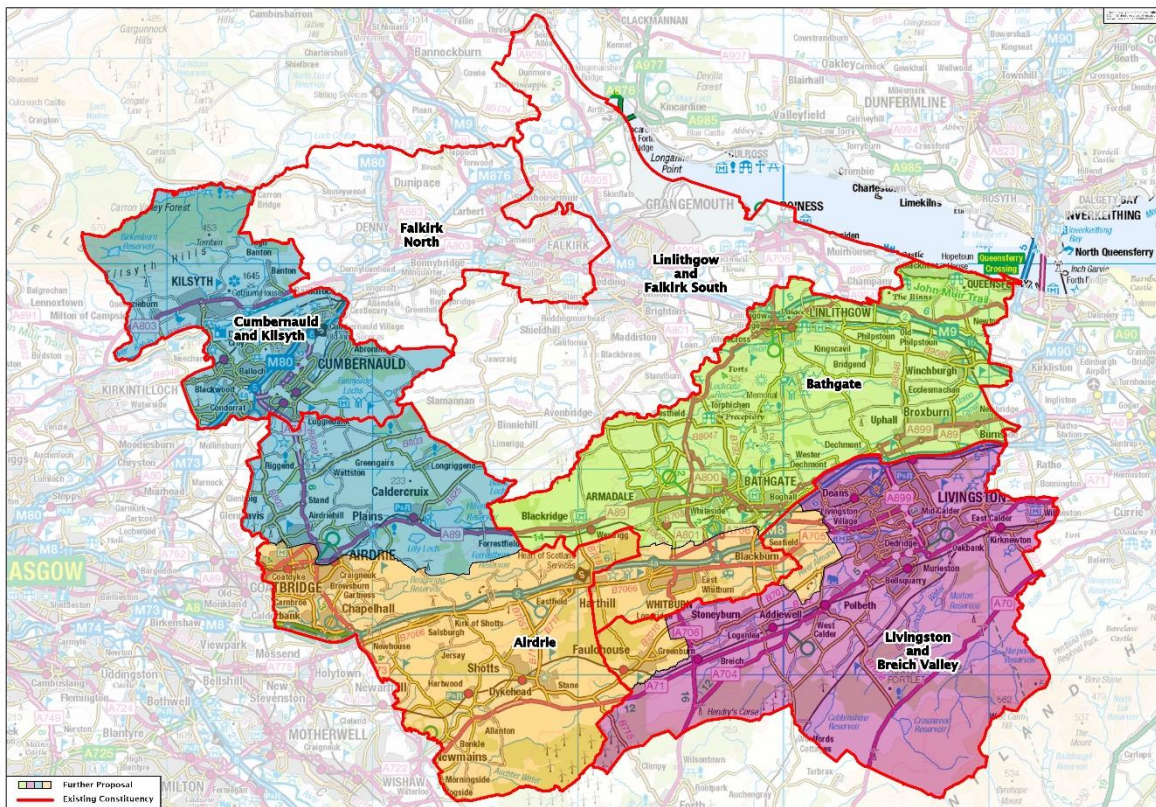
23. Alternative suggestions from Paper BS 103 are also reconsidered below.

Alternative Option – retain existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies

25. This option retains the existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies while minimising change to the Revised Proposals, it:

- extends the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency boundary southwards to include the North Lanarkshire Airdrie North ward, which includes Caldercruix, Plains and the north of Airdrie;
- retains the Livingston and Breich Valley constituency from the revised consultation;
- proposes a Bathgate constituency that mainly follows the M8 motorway as a boundary; and
- proposes an Airdrie constituency that includes Airdrie, Shotts, Blackburn, Whitburn and Fauldhouse.

26. The map below shows the alternative option in block colours. The existing constituency boundaries are shown in red.



Alternative Option – retain existing Falkirk constituencies

Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Airdrie	North Lanarkshire West Lothian	65,212	8.9%
Bathgate	West Lothian	60,559	1.1%
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	North Lanarkshire	66,270	10.6%

Livingston and Breich Valley	West Lothian	59,830	-0.1%
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27. The advantages of this option are it:

- considers the Falkirk Council area boundary and retains the two existing Falkirk constituency boundaries (rule 1); and
- retains the revised Livingston and Breich Valley constituency boundary where there was little opposition to the Revised Proposals (rule 4).

28. The disadvantages of this option are it:

- splits Airdrie between two constituencies and could result in strong local opposition. Local inquiries were held in Clydebank and Johnstone because the Provisional Proposals had split those towns between two constituencies; (rule 4);
- proposes an Airdrie constituency that includes Blackburn and Whitburn from West Lothian. The constituency also includes Harthill which acts as a natural boundary between communities in North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Council areas (rule 1);
- does not consider local ties in West Lothian between Bathgate and Blackburn (rule 4); and
- higher ground at Greengairs East Wind Farm acts as a natural boundary, between Airdrie and Cumbernauld.

Alternative Option – retain local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft and minimise change to the existing Falkirk constituencies

29. This option aims to minimise change to the existing Falkirk constituencies while addressing variation from the electorate quota in West Lothian and the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency.

30. During the consultation and at the Falkirk local inquiry there were a number of comments regarding the breaking of local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft. The Revised Proposals had followed the M80 motorway to create a recognisable boundary but it divided the Denny and Banknock ward between two constituencies and divided the communities of Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft.

31. The option below extends the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency boundary westwards to include Lennoxton and Milton of Campsie (villages linked by the A891 road). It transfers about 7,000 electors from the existing Strathkelvin and Bearsden constituency to the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency. The option mainly follows ward boundaries, except: the Bishopbriggs North and Campsie ward is split by following a community council area boundary; the Falkirk North ward is divided between constituencies by following the Forth and Clyde canal; and the Linlithgow ward is split by following a community council area boundary. Linlithgow is added to the south of Falkirk. Some comments at the local inquiry stated that there are some historical links between Bo'ness (Falkirk) and Linlithgow.

Alternative Option - Banknock, Haggs, Longcroft - minimal change Falkirk			
Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	North Lanarkshire East Dunbartonshire	58,055	-3.1%
Falkirk North	Falkirk	69,567	16.1%
Linlithgow and Falkirk South	Falkirk West Lothian	66,833	11.6%
Livingston and Breich Valley	West Lothian	68,871	15.0%
Bathgate	West Lothian	65,038	8.6%
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	East Dunbartonshire	57,050	-4.8%

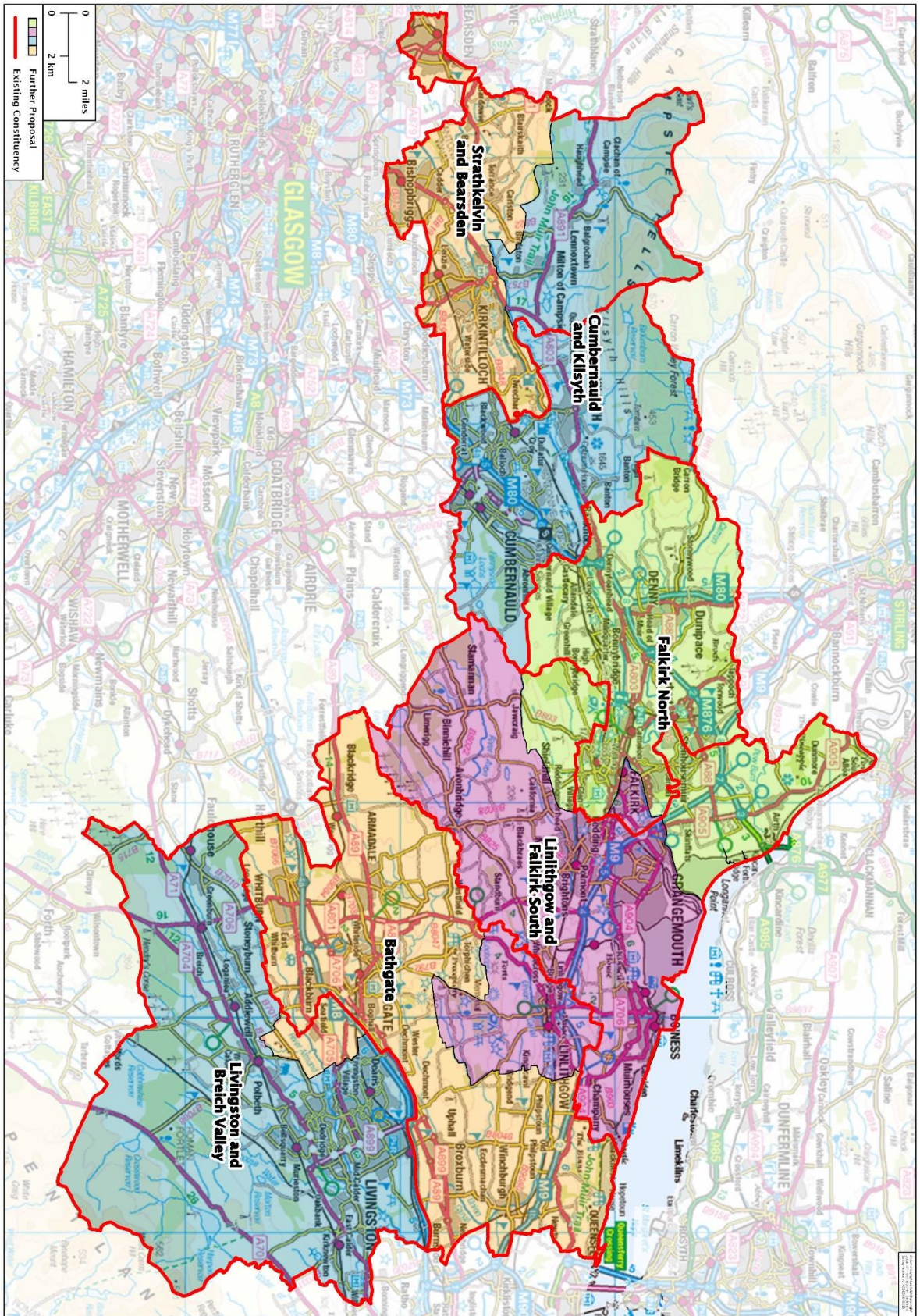
32. The advantages of this option are it:

- considers the council area boundary between Falkirk and North Lanarkshire Council areas (rule 1);
- proposes two mainly Falkirk constituencies (rule 4); and
- aims to improve variation from the electorate quota in the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency and two West Lothian constituencies (rule 2) but three constituencies have variation from the electorate quota of over 10%. The Venice Commission recommends electoral parity that “should seldom exceed 10% and never 15%”.

33. The disadvantages of this option are it:

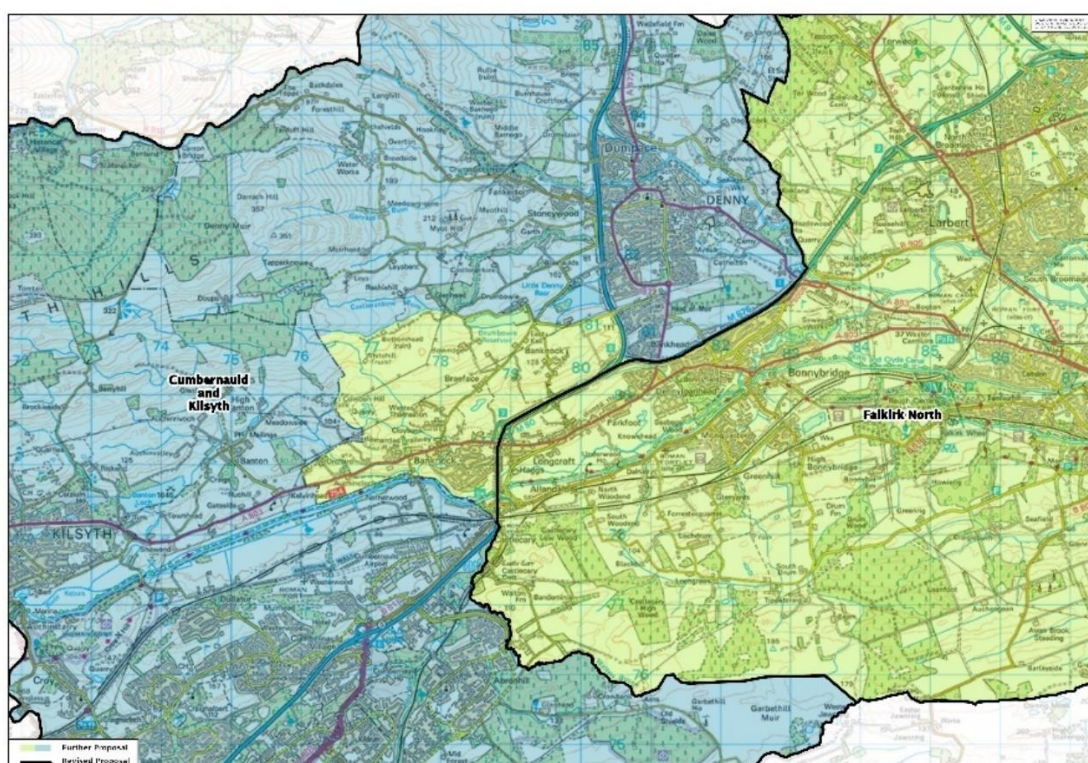
- proposes three constituencies with variation from the electorate quota of over 10%, although a slight improvement on existing levels of electoral parity (rule 2); and

- proposes changes in East Dunbartonshire Council area (Lennoxton and Milton of Campsie) where there was little opposition to the Revised Proposals (rule 4).



Alternative Option – retain local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft

34. This option places Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft in the same constituency to maintain local ties between the three villages. It also places the three villages in a constituency with Falkirk addressing concerns raised during the revised consultation and at the local inquiry.
35. The proposed boundary follows an historical ward boundary (1999-2007) which follows higher ground, Kilsyth Hills, between Denny and Kilsyth.
36. This option is shown in the map below. It shows the alternative option in block colours and Revised Proposals are shown as a black line.



Option – retain local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft			
Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	Falkirk North Lanarkshire	62,798	4.8%
Falkirk North	Falkirk	64,191	7.2%

37. The advantages of this option are it:
- maintains local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft (rule 4); and
 - places Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft in a constituency with Falkirk (rule 4).
38. The disadvantages of this option are it:
- does not consider the council area boundary between Falkirk and North Lanarkshire (rule 1); and
 - there is no road link within the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency between Denny and Cumbernauld/ Kilsyth as the Kilsyth Hills act as natural boundary between these areas (rule 4).

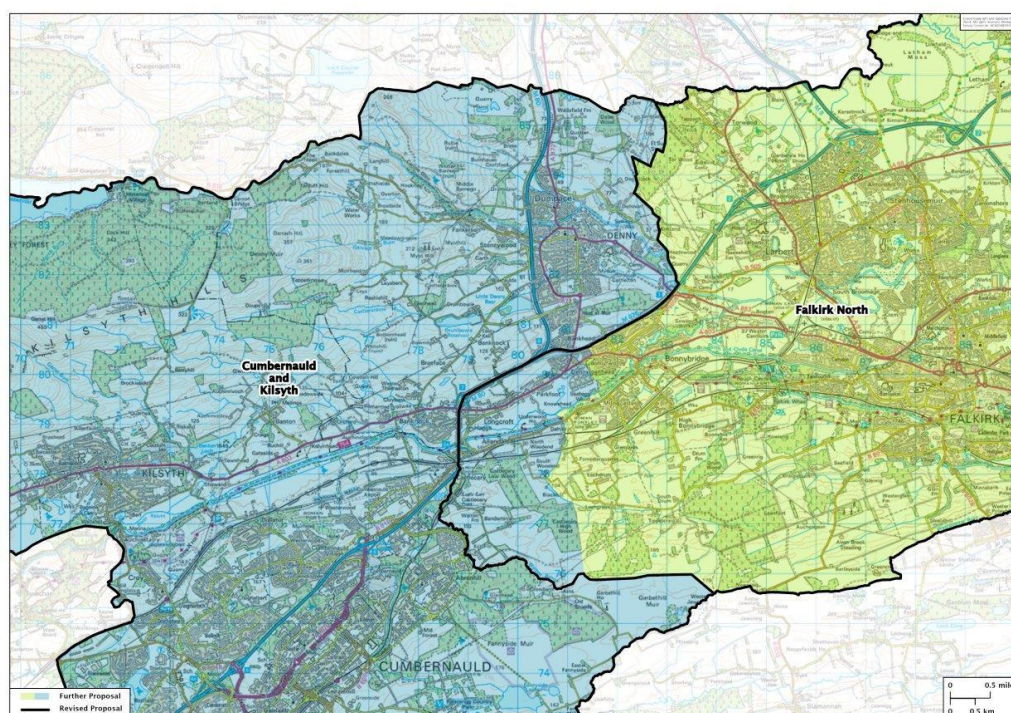
Paper BS 103 - Alternative suggestions

39. The following alternative suggestions were included in Paper BS 103 for the Commission meeting of 19 June 2024, but the Commission deferred agreeing its Further Proposals or final recommendations until after the Falkirk local inquiry. These are now discussed below.

Alternative suggestion - Jamie Hepburn MSP - Denny and Banknock

40. Jamie Hepburn, MSP for Cumbernauld and Kilsyth, suggested placing the whole of the Denny and Banknock ward in a Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency to maintain local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft. This is shown in the map below.

Jamie Hepburn suggestion - Denny and Banknock			
Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	Falkirk North Lanarkshire	66,667	11.3%
Falkirk North	Falkirk	60,322	0.7%



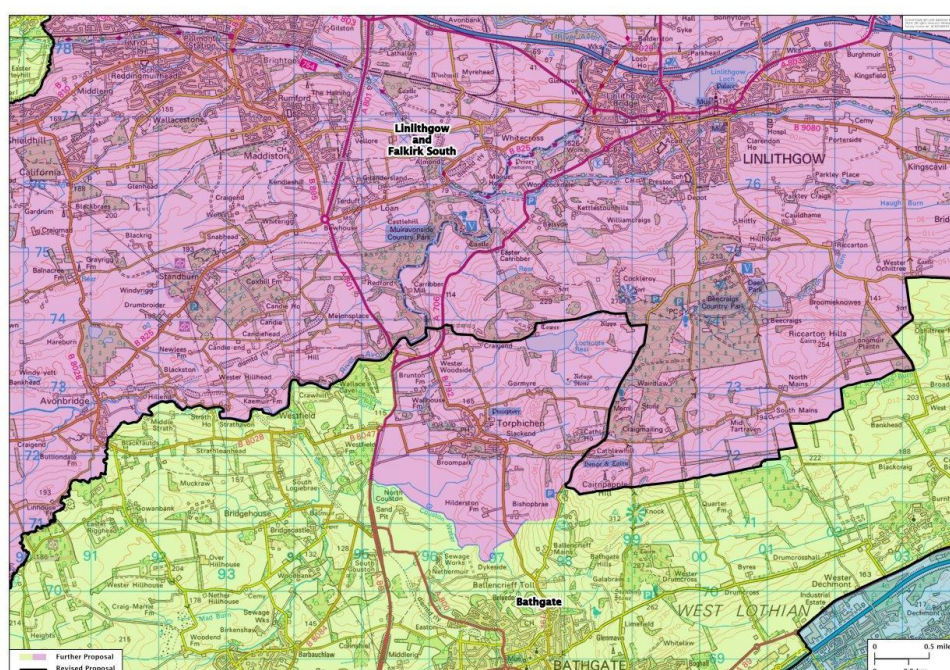
41. The advantages of the suggestion from Jamie Hepburn MSP are it:
- avoids breaking local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft (rule 4); and
 - follows a ward boundary, a recognised boundary.
42. The disadvantages of this option are:
- it increases variation from electoral parity in the proposed Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency from 8.1% (Revised Proposals) to 11.3% (rule 2); and
 - Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft look towards Falkirk rather than Cumbernauld (rule 4). However, the three villages also have links with Denny with the main bus route providing a direct link.

Alternative suggestion – Torphichen (West Lothian)

43. There were a number of responses which suggested Torphichen belongs to a Linlithgow constituency as they access local services there, rather than Bathgate.

44. Torphichen sits on the ridge between Bathgate and Linlithgow. Cairnpapple Hill acts as a natural boundary between the two towns. Torphichen sits within the Linlithgow Academy senior school catchment area.

45. The suggestion to place Torphichen in a constituency with Linlithgow is shown in the map and table below. The block colours are the suggested constituencies and Revised Proposals are shown as a black line. The boundary follows a community council area boundary.



Torphichen suggestion			
Constituency	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Bathgate	West Lothian	64,859	8.3%
Linlithgow and Falkirk South	Falkirk West Lothian	66,158	10.4%

46. The advantages of this suggestion are it:

- better reflects local ties between Torphichen and Linlithgow (rule 4); and
- uses natural features as a boundary between the two constituencies.

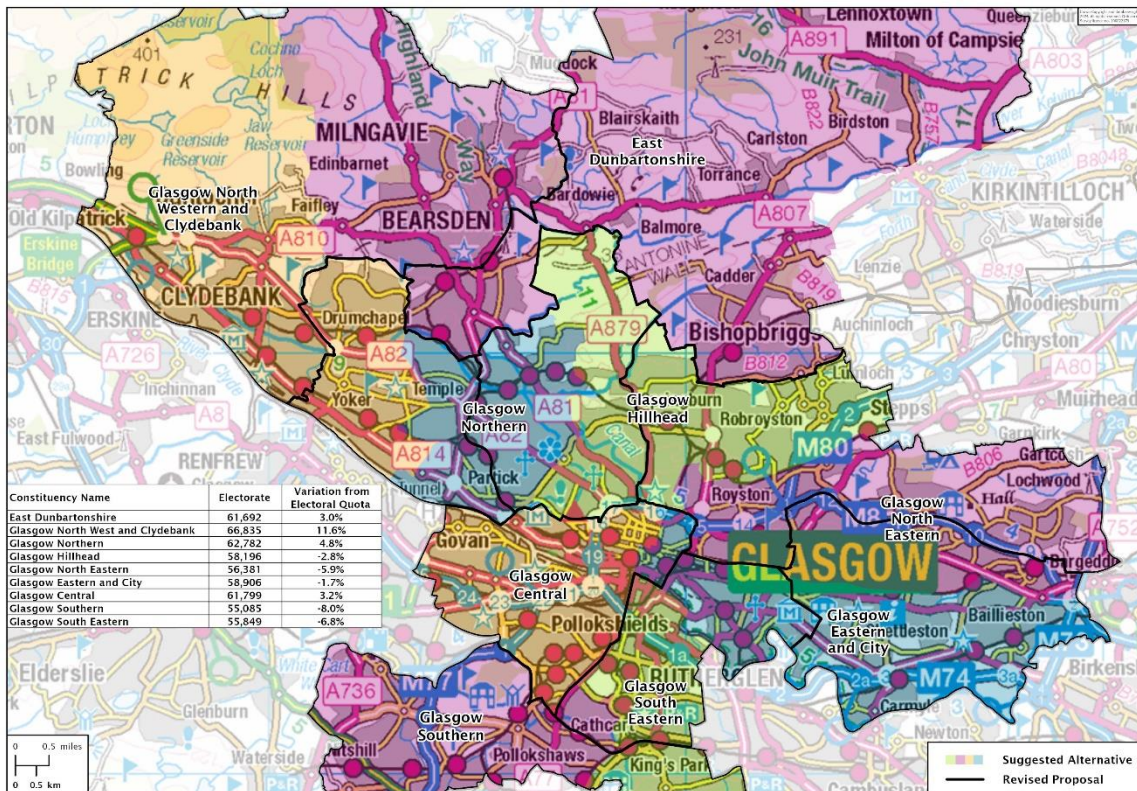
47. The disadvantages of this option are it increases variation from electoral parity in the proposed Linlithgow and Falkirk South constituency from 9.4% to 10.4% (rule 2).

Alternative suggestion – Bearsden, Scottish Liberal Democrats

48. The Scottish Liberal Democrats opposed the division of Bearsden between two constituencies and submitted an alternative suggestion that combines this constituency grouping with the grouping of Glasgow, Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire Council areas.

49. The Scottish Liberal Democrats suggestion is shown in the map and table below.

Scottish Liberal Democrats - Bearsden suggestion	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
East Dunbartonshire	61,692	3.0%
Glasgow North Western and Clydebank	63,957	6.8%
Glasgow Northern	65,262	8.9%
Glasgow Hillhead	58,196	-2.8%
Glasgow North Eastern	58,575	-2.2%
Glasgow Eastern and City	57,462	-4.1%
Glasgow Central	55,050	-8.1%
Glasgow Southern	54,773	-8.6%
Glasgow South Eastern	55,607	-7.2%
Kirkintilloch and Stepps	61,246	2.2%
Coatbridge and Airdrie	63,009	5.2%
Motherwell and Wishaw	64,549	7.8%
Uddingston and Bellshill	63,317	5.7%



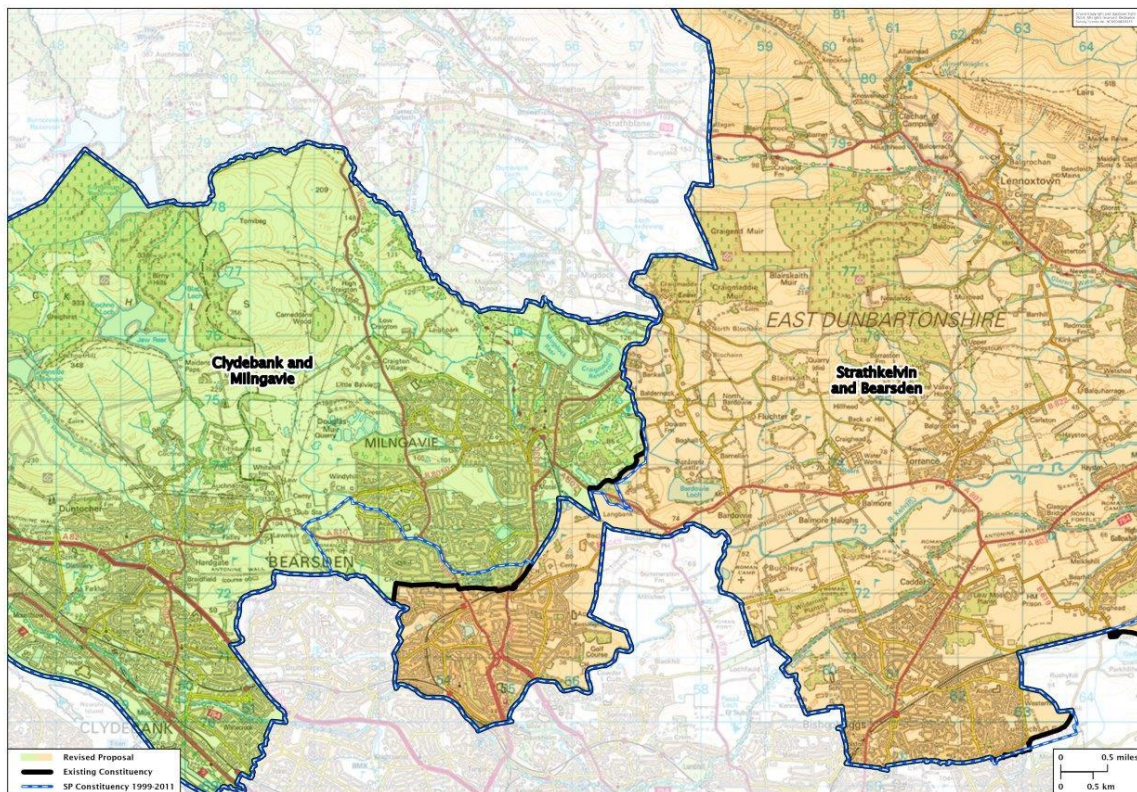
50. The advantages of the Scottish Liberal Democrats suggestion are:

- it places the whole of Bearsden in a single constituency (rule 4); and
- all constituencies are close to the electorate quota (rule 2).

51. The disadvantages of the Scottish Liberal Democrats suggestion are:

- it makes changes across a wide area (Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire Council areas), where there was some support or little opposition to the Revised Proposals (rule 4);
- there were no strong objections during the Revised Proposals consultation in Bearsden regarding the proposed boundary;
- since 1999 Bearsden has been divided between two different Scottish Parliament constituencies, see map below.

52. The map below shows the existing constituency boundary in block colours and black line by Bearsden. It also shows the Scottish Parliament constituency boundary in use from 1999-2011 with a blue and white dashed line. The Craighdu Burn acts as a natural boundary between Bearsden and Milngavie.

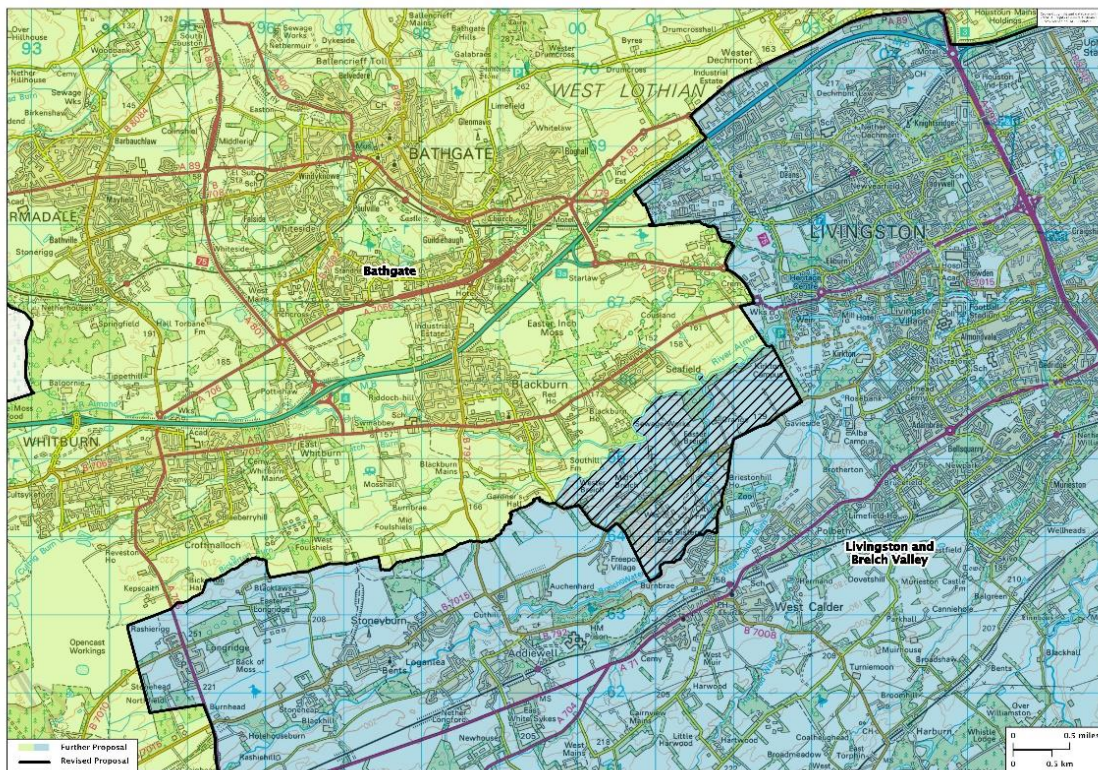


Alternative suggestion – Wester Breich

53. An individual suggested amending the proposed Livingston and Breich Valley constituency boundary to maintain community ties by Wester Breich.

54. The individual did not provide a detailed description of their suggested boundary but the map below follows natural features (River Almond) and a community council area boundary. It transfers about 50 electors between the Bathgate and Livingston and Breich Valley constituencies by Wester Breich (see hatched area on map below).

Wester Breich suggestion	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Bathgate	65,442	9.2%
Livingston and Breich Valley	65,102	8.7%



55. The Revised Proposals boundary by Wester Breich followed the existing ward boundary. This ward boundary is also used as a UK Parliament constituency boundary.

56. The advantages of the Wester Breich suggestion are it may better reflect local ties in the area (rule 4).

57. The disadvantages are the suggested boundary are it no longer follows other recognised electoral boundaries (existing ward and UK Parliament boundary) (rule 4).

Summary

58. Following the consultation on its Provisional Proposals for constituencies the Commission held six local inquiries.
59. After considering the responses to the Provisional Proposals consultation and the Assistant Commissioner reports from the six local inquiries, the Commission agreed to consult on some alternative constituency groupings.
60. The Commission's Revised Proposals retained 12 of the existing 17 constituencies within a new constituency grouping of Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas. The Revised Proposals made changes to the Provisional Proposals in Falkirk that had retained the existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies.
61. Falkirk Council objected to the Revised Proposals and the Commission agreed to hold a local inquiry there. There was some support for the Revised Proposals elsewhere within the constituency grouping.
62. Although Falkirk Council and others had objected to the Revised Proposals, no-one submitted an alternative suggestion that retained the two existing Falkirk constituencies and addressed electoral parity in West Lothian or the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency. The Commission agreed to hold a local inquiry on 22 August 2024.
63. The Commission considered responses to the revised consultation for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas at its meeting of 19 June 2024 but deferred agreeing its Further Proposals or Final Recommendations until after the outcome of the Falkirk local inquiry but provisionally agreed to adopt a revised boundary by Blantyre.
64. At the Falkirk local inquiry, further representations were made: opposing the Revised Proposals in Falkirk; opposing the breaking of local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft; and expressing a desire to retain the two existing Falkirk constituency boundaries. The Assistant Commissioner's report highlighted six crucial issues but did not make any recommendations as there was no clear solution apart from maintaining the status quo.
65. The Secretariat have developed some alternative options which consider retaining two Falkirk constituencies and maintaining local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft. These include an option to:
- retain the existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies;
 - retain local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft and minimise change to the existing Falkirk constituencies; and
 - retain local ties between Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft.
66. There were also alternative suggestions from Paper BS 103 which were deferred until after the Falkirk local inquiry, these included a suggestion to:
- follow the Denny and Banknock ward boundary;
 - place Torphichen (West Lothian) in a Linlithgow constituency;
 - avoid splitting Bearsden between two constituencies; and
 - consider local ties by Wester Breich.

67. Constituency names for this grouping are discussed in Paper BS 127.

Conclusion

68. The Commission is invited to agree its Final Recommendations, or Further Proposals for constituencies for public consultation, for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas.

Secretariat
September 2024

