

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
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: -
 - Consider the consultation responses, the transcript of the local inquiry and the Assistant Commissioner's report;
 - Consider whether it wishes to adopt the Further Proposals as Final Recommendations for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas; or
 - Amend its proposals for constituency boundaries and/or names and consult further.

Background

2. Paper BS 141, discussed at the 4 November 2024 Commission meeting and attached provides a background to the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries in this grouping.
3. The Commission consulted on its Further Proposals for constituencies between 26 September and 26 October 2024.
4. West Lothian Council objected to the proposed Airdrie constituency as well as the Central Scotland and Lothian regions.
5. The main issue raised during the consultation was opposition to the proposed Airdrie constituency boundary because there is little to connect Fauldhouse or Whitburn with Airdrie and the breaking of local ties to the north of Airdrie.
6. The Commission agreed to hold a local inquiry in Whitburn.
7. Although the local inquiry was to focus on mainly the West Lothian and Airdrie constituencies the Commission agreed to defer making a decision on all of these constituencies until after the outcome of the local inquiry.

Local Inquiry

8. Sheriff Principal Ross acted as Assistant Commissioner at the local inquiry, held at the Whitburn Partnership Centre on 3 December 2024.
9. The Whitburn Local Inquiry was attended by MSPs, councillors, local political parties, community groups and over 100 members of the public, many of which made submissions.
10. The key issues raised at the Whitburn local inquiry were similar to those raised during the public consultation on Further Proposals for constituencies, namely the lack of any links or local ties between Whitburn/ Fauldhouse in West Lothian and Airdrie in North Lanarkshire. Concerns were also raised about the breaking of local ties to the North of Airdrie.
11. Cameron Greig Morton Fraser MacRoberts representing West Lothian Council reiterated the Council's unanimous opposition to the Further Proposals on the grounds that they believe the proposals disregard rules 1 (Local Authority

Boundaries) and 4 (breaking local ties). Given the arrangements for West Lothian have changed in each iteration of the proposals they suggest that the status quo would be the ideal arrangement.

12. Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick (West Lothian Livingston South ward) and Leader of the Council opposed the Further Proposals and spoke of the historical links between Whitburn and Fauldhouse and West Lothian and also of the long history of opposition to placing parts of the local area in constituencies with North Lanarkshire.
13. A representative on behalf of Gregor Poynton, MP for Livingston, spoke in opposition to the Further Proposals on the grounds that they would create voter confusion, break local ties, and potentially impact delivery of NHS Lothians services. He went on to suggest that Fauldhouse be included in the Almond Valley constituency.
14. Alistair Tatton on behalf the SNP Linlithgow Constituency Association, opposed the Further Proposals and stated their preference for the Commission's Revised Proposals which proposed a Linlithgow and Falkirk South constituency an arrangement which placed Fauldhouse and Whitburn in a Bathgate constituency.
15. Councillor Jim Dickson (West Lothian Whitburn and Blackburn ward) opposed the proposals as they would break local ties between Whitburn, Fauldhouse and West Lothian.
16. Councillor Mary Dickson (West Lothian Whitburn and Blackburn ward) suggested that the number of people attending the local inquiry in opposition to the Further Proposals for constituencies was an indication of the strength of local feeling.
17. Councillor Pauline Clark (West Lothian Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley ward) suggested that the proposals would make it more challenging for an MSP to liaise with different health boards.
18. Fiona Hyslop, MSP for Linlithgow, highlighted that her constituency had the highest electorate in Scotland and that she had followed the Commission's earlier proposals having attended the local inquiry in Edinburgh regarding the Provisional Proposals. She suggested that the Revised Proposals had been the most appropriate for West Lothian but acknowledged Falkirk Councils opposition to those proposals. She opposed the Further Proposals because of a lack of ties between North Lanarkshire and West Lothian
19. Neil Gray, MSP for Airdrie and Shotts, opposed the breaking of local ties to the north of Airdrie (rule 4) and a constituency covering two council areas with no ties (Rule 1, 4). He suggested no change to the existing Airdrie and Shotts constituency. Neil Gray also referred to the strength of feeling among his constituents in Caldercruix and Plains including those signing the petition and felt a local inquiry should have been held there as well.
20. The Vice Chair of Greenrigg Community Council and the Secretary of Fauldhouse Community Council opposed the proposals because neither area has any links or ties with parts of North Lanarkshire.

21. Over 100 members of the public unanimously supported Fauldhouse and Whitburn remaining within a West Lothian constituency and Lothian region. In summary they look eastwards for local services (education, health), amenities and employment and have little in common with Airdrie or North Lanarkshire.
22. Three responses were received after the local inquiry (see Annex of local inquiry transcript). Kirsteen Sullivan MP for Bathgate and Linlithgow opposed the proposals to place Whitburn and Greenrigg in an Airdrie constituency. She stated that Whitburn and Greenrigg have strong historical, social, economic and cultural ties with other communities in West Lothian and no links with Airdrie. The other comments stated that Whitburn and Fauldhouse residents have no local ties with North Lanarkshire.
23. There was some confusion that the council area boundary was to be amended rather than the Scottish Parliament constituency or region boundary changing.
24. The Assistant Commissioners report of the inquiries and transcript of the local inquiry are attached.
25. The Assistant Commissioner's Report highlighted that both sessions were well attended and there was universal opposition to the allocation of Whitburn, Fauldhouse and Greenrigg to an Airdrie constituency. He mentioned all speakers had stated the strong, long-standing historical ties within West Lothian as well as good transport links within the area and a desire to have a West Lothian rather than North Lanarkshire MSP represent them.
26. The Assistant Commissioner made no recommendations because there is no clear solution and '*the consequential adjustment to other constituencies is beyond the scope of the present Inquiry.*' He stated 'it is for the Commission to identify whether any further revisions to proposals for constituencies and regions would be effective in meeting the concerns expressed at the Inquiry.'

Options

27. No alternative suggestions were presented at the local inquiries. The SNP Linlithgow Constituency Association and Fiona Hyslop MSP both stated they preferred the Revised Proposals. Fiona Hyslop also stated that she would prefer the status quo remained even if it meant representing a large number of constituents.
28. The Secretariat have developed two alternative options for consideration but they are similar to the Provisional Proposals in linking West Lothian with Edinburgh and to the Revised Proposals by linking West Lothian with Falkirk. They may simply raise similar issues to the earlier consultations and where two local inquiries were held.

Alternative Option 1

29. Option 1 is broadly similar to the Revised Proposals. It proposes a:
 - Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency, which follows ward boundaries in Falkirk. It includes the West Lothian Linlithgow ward as well as Torphichen, to maintain local ties between Linlithgow and Torphichen. Both of the proposed Falkirk constituencies retain an east-west Falkirk reference in their names. There was opposition during the revised consultation that the use of Falkirk

North and Falkirk South as constituency names was confusing because there were wards with the same name.

- Falkirk West constituency which follows ward boundaries in Falkirk. It is similar to the Falkirk North constituency in the Revised Proposals but keeps Higgs, Longcroft and Banknock in the same constituency (Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Denny).
- Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Denny constituency, similar to the Revised Proposals that includes the whole of the Falkirk Denny and Banknock ward within it. Variation from the electorate quota is +11.3% but the Commission could add only Denny to this constituency to address variation from the electorate quota and place Banknock, Higgs and Longcroft in a Falkirk West constituency to maintain local ties between those three communities. This also avoids breaking local ties to the north of Airdrie and addresses the low electorate in the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency. This alternative to Option 1 is shown in the table below:

Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Falkirk West	Falkirk	64,191	7.2%
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Denny	Falkirk North Lanarkshire	62,798	4.8%

- Bathgate constituency that includes: Bathgate; Fauldhouse; Whitburn; Armadale; Winchburgh; and Broxburn. Blackridge, in West Lothian, is added to an Airdrie constituency to consider variation from the electorate quota. If this constituency included Blackridge the electorate would have 68,224 electors with variation from the electorate quota at +13.9%. The proposed boundary follows a community council area boundary and partly a historical ward boundary.
- Airdrie constituency similar to the existing boundary but also includes Blackridge from West Lothian. It maintains local ties to the north of Airdrie.
- Almond Valley constituency, same as the Revised Proposals and broadly similar to the existing Almond Valley constituency boundary.

30. The map shows alternative option 1 in block colours. The Revised Proposals are shown as a black line, see Appendix B.

31. The table below shows the electorate of alternative Option 1.

Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Falkirk East and Linlithgow	Falkirk West Lothian	62,793	4.8%
Falkirk West	Falkirk	60,322	0.7%
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Denny	Falkirk North Lanarkshire	66,667	11.3%
Airdrie	North Lanarkshire West Lothian	56,008	-6.5%
Bathgate	West Lothian	66,421	10.9%
Almond Valley	West Lothian	65,050	8.6%

32. The advantages of option 1 are it:

- avoids including Fauldhouse and Whitburn in an Airdrie constituency (rule 1, 4).
- avoids splitting Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft between constituencies but potentially breaks local ties with Falkirk (rule 4).
- Retains the villages of Caldercruix, Plains etc in an Airdrie constituency (rule 4)

33. The disadvantages of option 1 are it:

- Does not consider rule 1 (local authority boundaries) by Linlithgow, Denny and Blackridge. Blackridge could remain in West Lothian but the proposed Bathgate constituency would have variation from the electorate quota at +14%.
- Falkirk Council would likely oppose the proposals as they wish to retain the two existing Falkirk constituencies and this option would split the Falkirk Council area across three constituencies. (rule 1, 4)
- proposes a Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Denny constituency with variation from the electorate quota over 10% although this could be addressed by placing Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft in a Falkirk West constituency.

Alternative Option 2

34. Option 2 is broadly similar to the Provisional Proposals in that it presents a constituency design that creates a grouping of West Lothian with the rest of the Lothians but attempts to address the concerns raised from that consultation. It also necessitates the joining of part of North Lanarkshire in a constituency with part of East Dunbartonshire to address the low electorate in the existing Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency. Furthermore, part of East Lothian by Pencaitland is placed in a constituency with Midlothian.

35. This alternative option proposes that:

- the two existing Falkirk constituency boundaries are retained along with the existing Airdrie and Shotts constituency;
- the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency boundary is amended to address its low electorate. It includes Lennoxton and Milton of Campsie from East Dunbartonshire with approximately 6,800 electors;
- a Bathgate and Almond Valley constituency splits a single ward to maintain local ties between Linlithgow and Torphichen;
- a Livingston constituency;
- Linlithgow and Broxburn are placed in a constituency with the majority of Edinburgh's Almond and Pentland Hills wards;
- The constituencies in Edinburgh mainly follow ward boundaries and follow similar geographical positions as the Further Proposals but following main thoroughfares where splitting wards is necessary to limit variation from the electoral quota;
- proposes an Edinburgh Eastern and Musselburgh similar to others presented for consultation;
- an East Lothian constituency that includes both Tranent and Prestonpans; and
- a Midlothian North constituency that includes Pencaitland and surrounding areas from East Lothian.

36. The maps shows the alternative option in block colours. The existing constituency boundaries are shown in red, see Appendix C.

37. The table below shows the electorate of alternative Option 2

Constituency name	Council areas	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Bathgate and Almond Valley	West Lothian	61,257	2.3%
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Campsies	North Lanarkshire East Dunbartonshire	58,020	-3.1%
East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs	East Lothian	62,532	4.4%
Edinburgh Central	City of Edinburgh	65,648	9.6%
Edinburgh Eastern and Musselburgh	City of Edinburgh East Lothian	65,340	9.1%
Edinburgh North and Leith	City of Edinburgh	63,312	5.7%
Edinburgh Northwestern	City of Edinburgh	63,935	6.7%
Edinburgh Southern	City of Edinburgh	65,921	10.0%
Edinburgh Southwestern	City of Edinburgh	65,515	9.4%
Linlithgow, Edinburgh West and Pentland	City of Edinburgh West Lothian	61,636	2.9%
Livingston	West Lothian	56,009	-6.5%
Midlothian North and Pencaitland	Midlothian East Lothian	58,987	-1.5%
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	East Dunbartonshire	57,085	-4.7%

38. The advantages of option 2 are it:

- avoids including Fauldhouse and Whitburn in an Airdrie constituency (rule 1, 4);
- retains two Falkirk constituencies (rule 1, 4);
- Tranent and Prestonpans are both accommodated in East Lothian constituency to maintain local ties (rule 4);

39. The disadvantages of option 2 are it:

- makes changes to a significant number of constituencies across the grouping where there has been some support or little opposition;
- may break local ties in the proposed Midlothian North and Pencaitland constituency (rule 1, 4);
- may break local ties in the proposed Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Campsies constituency (rule 1, 4)
- there is little to connect Linlithgow with Currie, Balerno reaching as far as Torphin Hill to the southwest of Edinburgh in a Linlithgow, Edinburgh West and Pentland constituency (Rule 1,4)

Summary

40. The First Review recommended two West Lothian constituencies with above quota electorates. The electorate quota for the First Review was 54,728 and the recommended West Lothian constituencies are shown in the table below.

Recommendations from First Review – West Lothian		
Constituency Name	Electorate	Variation from Electorate quota
Almond Valley	60,080	9.8%
Linlithgow	62,810	14.8%

41. During the First Review the Commission consulted on a: Livingston; Linlithgow and Bathgate; and a Lanark, Shotts and Whitburn constituency which included parts of West Lothian, South Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Council areas. West Lothian Council objected to the proposals and a local inquiry was held. The Assistant Commissioner recommended the Commission revisit its proposals for a Lanark, Shotts and Whitburn constituency. Due to the challenges of designing constituencies in the wider area the Commission agreed to make an ‘exceptional’ decision and retain two constituencies within West Lothian.
42. Since the First Review, the electorate for mainland Scotland has grown by about 8.5%. In Edinburgh and the Lothians the electorate has grown by over 20%.
43. At the start of the review the two existing West Lothian constituencies were above quota Almond Valley 70,119 electors (+17.1%) and Linlithgow 76,337 electors (+27.4%) and the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth was well below quota 51,210 electors (-15%). All other constituencies within this grouping were within quota – except Argyll and Bute, where the Commission has agreed special geographical circumstances.
44. The Commission’s Provisional Proposals consulted on a constituency grouping of 12 constituencies within East Lothian, Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas. There was strong opposition to an Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow constituency because there is little to connect more rural Linlithgow with more urban Pilton. Both Edinburgh Council and West Lothian Council made no comment on the Provisional Proposals but there was a Local Inquiry due to the large number of responses from the north west of Edinburgh.
45. Following consideration of the consultation responses across Scotland and the six local inquiries held, the Commission developed alternative constituency groupings. West Lothian was added to a grouping with Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas. The Revised Proposals combined the West Lothian constituencies with Falkirk. Due to Falkirk Council objecting a local inquiry was held in Falkirk.
46. The Further Proposals combined the West Lothian constituencies with North Lanarkshire. Due to West Lothian Council objecting a local inquiry was held in Whitburn. There was also strong opposition from members of the public in Whitburn and Fauldhouse and also in the villages to the North of Airdrie.

47. The Assistant Commissioners report from the Whitburn local inquiry made no recommendations but noted the strong opposition to the proposed Airdrie constituency and lack of ties between West Lothian and North Lanarkshire.
48. There has been opposition or objections to West Lothian being linked with other neighbouring council areas to address the high electorate there. Three local inquiries have been held in Edinburgh, Falkirk and Whitburn.
49. West Lothian Council also partly neighbours South Lanarkshire and Scottish Borders Council areas but the Pentland Hills act as a natural boundary between those areas and West Lothian.
50. There have been no alternative suggestions or solutions submitted which address variation from the electorate quota across Scotland. There was support for the status quo and also some support for the Revised Proposals which linked Linlithgow with Falkirk.
51. The Secretariat have developed two alternative options but these follow similar approaches to the earlier consultations, adding Linlithgow to a Falkirk constituency as in the Revised Proposals and adding Broxburn and Linlithgow to Edinburgh as in the Provisional Proposals and making numerous consequential changes there.
52. The Commission considered responses to the Revised Proposal consultation for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas at its meeting of 4 November 2024 but deferred agreeing its Further Proposals or Final Recommendations until after the outcome of the Whitburn local inquiry but provisionally agreed to adopt a revised boundary by.

Conclusion

53. The Commission is invited to:
- Consider whether it wishes to adopt the Further Proposals as Final Recommendations for these constituencies. OR
 - Amend its proposals for constituency boundaries or names and consult further.
54. The alternative constituency names suggested include:
- Airdrie and Shotts, instead of Airdrie;
 - Rutherglen, Cambuslang and Blantyre instead of Rutherglen and Cambuslang;
 - Bathgate, instead of Linlithgow
 - Bathgate and Linlithgow or West Lothian North, instead of Linlithgow
 - Airdrie and Whitburn or Airdrie North and Whitburn, instead of Airdrie.
55. The alternative constituency boundaries suggested include:
- a preference for the Revised Proposals, linking Linlithgow with Falkirk;
 - add Moodiesburn, Kirkintilloch or Gartcosh to a Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency rather than the north of Airdrie – better reflect local ties;
 - the Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency boundary to follow the River Clyde – better reflect local ties; and
 - to follow a ward boundary by Blantyre between the Rutherglen and Cambuslang; and Uddingston and Bellshill constituencies as suggested by

both South Lanarkshire and North Lanarkshire Councils. This was agreed at the September meeting.

**Secretariat
December 2024**











