

## Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Proposals for Regions

### Action required

1. The Commission is invited to:
  - Consider the consultation responses, the transcript of the local inquiry and the Assistant Commissioners' reports
  - Consider whether it wishes to adopt the Provisional Proposals as Final Recommendations for West Scotland, Glasgow, Central Scotland, Lothian and South Scotland OR
  - Amend its proposals for region boundaries or names (West Scotland, Glasgow, Central Scotland, Lothian and South Scotland) and consult further.

### Background

2. The Commission consulted on its Provisional Proposals for regions between 26 September and 26 October 2024, the same period as its Further Proposals for constituencies.
3. The Commission considered responses to the consultation for regions at its meeting of 4 November 2024 and Paper BS-144 is attached for reference.
4. The Commission had already agreed to hold two local inquiries in respect of Renfrewshire Council objecting to the proposed Glasgow and West Scotland regions and West Lothian Council objecting to the proposed Central Scotland and Lothian region boundaries.
5. At that meeting the Commission agreed to adopt its Provisional Proposals as its Final Recommendations, for the regions of: Highland and Islands; North East Scotland; and Mid Scotland and Fife region, subject to satisfactory constituencies and regions being designed in neighbouring areas. The Provisional Proposals had retained the existing Mid Scotland and Fife region and made a minor change to the Highland and Islands; and North East Scotland region boundaries.
6. A map and electorate table of the Provisional Proposals is at Appendix A.

### Local Inquiry - Paisley

7. Sheriff Principal Murphy acted as Assistant Commissioner at the Paisley local inquiry, held on 28 November 2024, relating to the proposed Glasgow and West Scotland regions.
8. The transcript of the local inquiry is at Appendix B. The Assistant Commissioner's report will follow by email.
9. The issues raised at the Paisley local inquiry were similar to those raised during the Provisional Proposals for regions consultation. The main concern raised was opposition to part of Renfrewshire Council area sitting within a Glasgow region. There were also a number of comments objecting to Renfrewshire Council's alternative suggestion to place Eastwood in a Glasgow region.
10. A representative on behalf of Natalie Don-Innes, MSP for Renfrewshire North and West, strongly opposed the inclusion of Renfrewshire in a Glasgow region because: there is little to connect Renfrew, Erskine or Bishopton with Glasgow; it

will lead to voter confusion with electoral wards split between two regions; and it breaks transport links between regions at Erskine. They suggested including the proposed Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency in a West Scotland region and if the Commission needed to balance the electorate of the regions, the Eastwood constituency could be added to a Glasgow region.

11. Renfrewshire Council objected to the inclusion of Renfrewshire in a Glasgow region. They suggested the Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency should sit within a West Scotland region. They raised similar issues to their written response, these included: Bishopton and Erskine have nothing in common with Glasgow; it breaks links, such as transport, between the north and south of the proposed West Scotland region; opposed the Commission's approach to combining council areas and linking Renfrewshire with Glasgow; the proposals splits wards unnecessarily between regions; and the Council will consider judicial review proceedings. Renfrewshire Council suggested the Glasgow region should include other neighbouring constituencies with Eastwood being strongly suggested but not Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald.
12. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party were generally content with the Provisional Proposals for regions but wished to object to any alternative suggestions that may include an Eastwood constituency in a Glasgow region.
13. Jackson Carlaw, MSP for Eastwood, submitted written representations prior to the local inquiry. He supports the retention of Eastwood within a West Scotland region and is opposed to any alternative suggestion that would add Eastwood to a Glasgow region. He stated Eastwood has sat within a West Scotland region since 1999 and local communities in Eastwood feel part of East Renfrewshire rather than Glasgow.
14. Neil Bibby, MSP for West Scotland region, opposed the inclusion of the proposed Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency in a Glasgow region because there is a recognised boundary between Glasgow and Renfrewshire and it would split the historical burgh of Renfrew between regions.
15. Councillor Kevin Montgomery (Renfrewshire Paisley Southwest ward), representing the Renfrewshire Council Labour group, stated the whole of Renfrewshire should sit within a West Scotland region and there is little to connect Bishopton or Erskine with Glasgow.
16. East Renfrewshire Council made no comment on the proposed region boundaries but objected to the alternative suggestion to include an Eastwood constituency in a Glasgow region. They referenced the earlier Provisional Proposals consultation on constituencies and strong opposition to a Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock constituency because it included parts of East Renfrewshire and Glasgow City Council areas.
17. A member of the public opposed the inclusion of an Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency in a Glasgow region because Renfrewshire and Glasgow have little in common.
18. Councillor Owen O'Donnell (East Renfrewshire Newton Mearns and Neilston ward and Council Leader) supported the comments made by East Renfrewshire

Council opposing any alternative suggestion to include an Eastwood constituency in a Glasgow region.

19. Paul O’Kane, MSP for West Scotland region, opposed the inclusion of an Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency in a Glasgow region and also the alternative suggestion to replace it with the Eastwood constituency.

#### **Local Inquiry - Whitburn**

20. Sheriff Principal Ross acted as Assistant Commissioner at the Whitburn local inquiry, held on 3 December 2024, relating to the proposed Central Scotland and Lothian regions.
21. The Assistant Commissioners report is at Appendix C1 and a transcript of the local inquiry is at Appendix C2.
22. In his report the Assistant Commissioner made no recommendations but noted the strong opposition to including West Lothian in a Central Scotland region because West Lothian has closer links to Edinburgh and the wider Lothian area rather than North Lanarkshire.
23. The issues raised at the Whitburn local inquiry were similar to those raised during the Provisional Proposals for regions consultation, opposition to including Fauldhouse, Whitburn and West Lothian in a Central Scotland region and a desire to remain within a Lothian region.
24. Cameron Greig, from Morton Fraser MacRoberts legal firm, representing West Lothian Council objected to West Lothian's constituencies within a Central Scotland region. They stated West Lothian has strong historical, community, transport, employment, healthcare and geographical links with the wider Lothian area.
25. Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Council Leader - West Lothian Livingston South ward) opposed West Lothian's constituencies in a Central Scotland region because there are no links between West Lothian and North Lanarkshire.
26. A representative on behalf of Gregor Poynton, MP for Livingston, stated Fauldhouse has no social, economic or cultural links with North Lanarkshire and the proposals are confusing for the local electorate.
27. Alistair Tatton (SNP Linlithgow Constituency Association) stated there are strong historical links between West Lothian and the rest of Lothian.
28. Councillor Pauline Clark (West Lothian Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley ward) raised concerns that an MSP for the proposed Central Scotland region would have to represent three health boards and therefore the electorates representation would not be as strong as it currently is.
29. Fiona Hyslop, MSP for Linlithgow, opposed the proposed Central Scotland region because West Lothian has no historical links with North Lanarkshire.
30. Over 120 members of the public attended the Whitburn local inquiry and there was unanimous support for Fauldhouse and Whitburn to remain within a West Lothian constituency and Lothian region. In summary they stated Fauldhouse

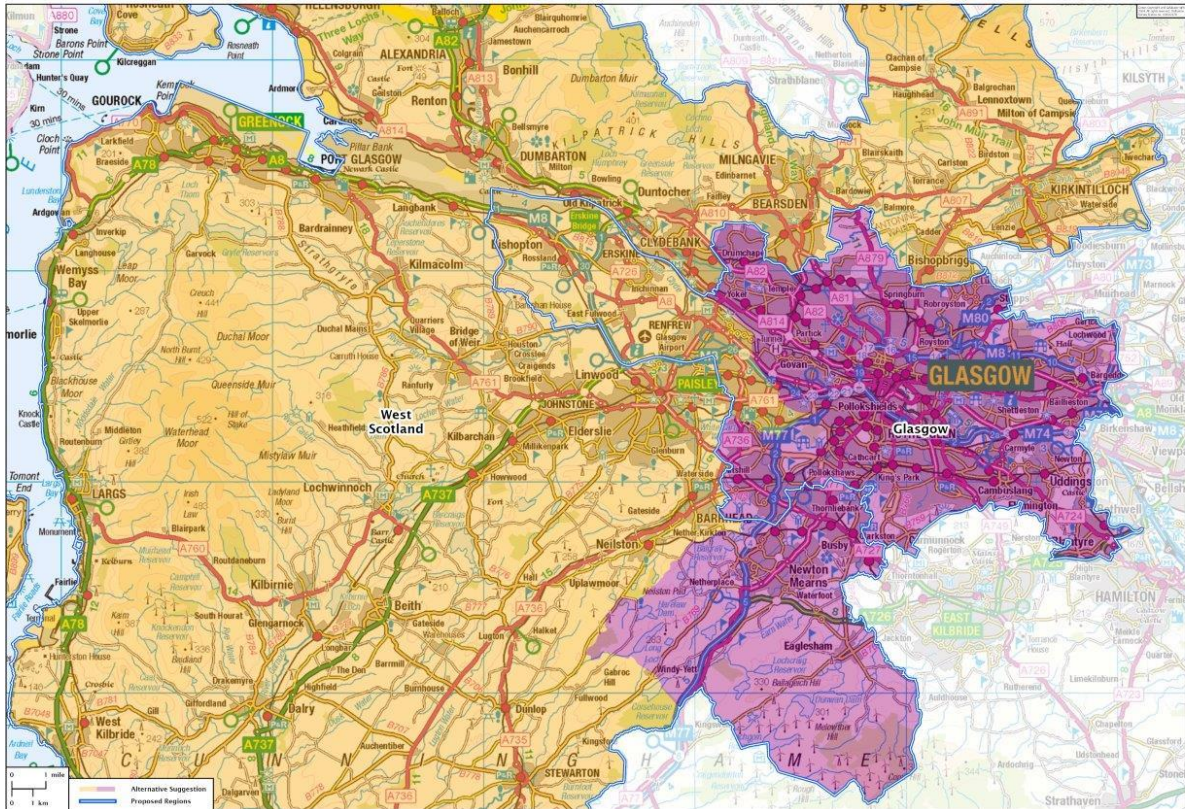
and Whitburn look eastwards for local services (education, health), amenities, recreation and employment and have little in common with Airdrie or North Lanarkshire. However there was some confusion that the council area boundary was to be amended rather than the Scottish Parliament boundaries and there could be an impact on access to local services. There were also concerns that the local inquiry was poorly publicised.

31. 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.

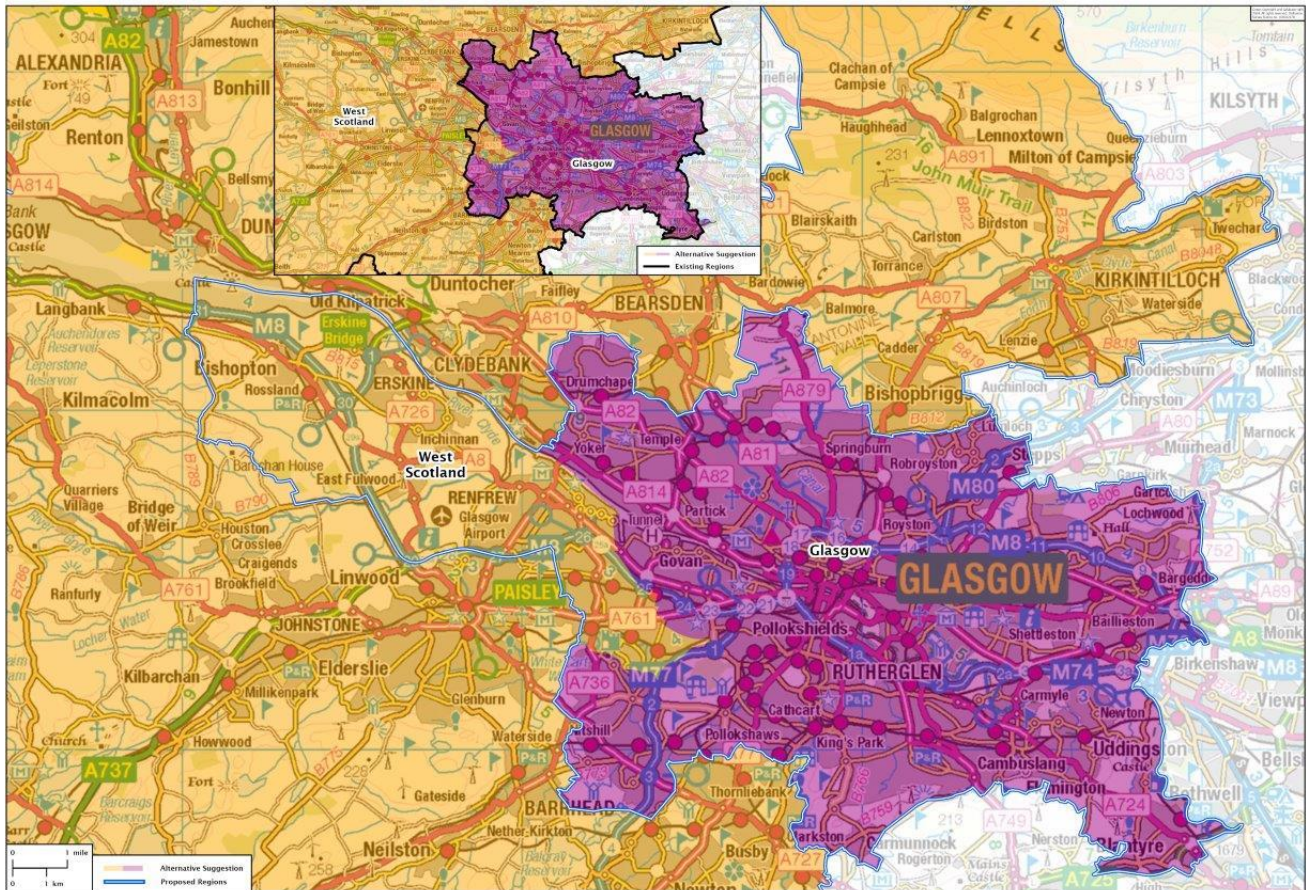
### Alternative suggestions - Local Inquiry

32. There was one alternative suggestion mentioned at the local inquiries. Renfrewshire Council suggested swapping the Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency and Eastwood constituency between the Glasgow and West Scotland regions. This is shown in the table and map below.
33. There was opposition to the Renfrewshire Council suggestion from representatives of East Renfrewshire Council, Councillor O'Donnell and Paul O'Kane MSP.

<b>Renfrewshire Council Alternative suggestion</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Electorate</b>	<b>Variation from region average</b>
Glasgow	556,714	4.8%
West Scotland	525,523	-1.1%



34. The advantages of the Renfrewshire Council alternative suggestion are:
- it addresses concerns raised during the consultation and keeps the whole of Renfrewshire within a West Scotland region.
  - the electorate of both West Scotland and Glasgow region are near to each other and other proposed regions (Rule 2).
35. The disadvantages of the Renfrewshire Council suggestion are:
- part of Glasgow (Cardonald) sits within a different region to the Glasgow region.
  - there was strong opposition at the local inquiry to this suggestion to add Eastwood to a Glasgow region.
36. To address concerns raised at the local inquiry that an Eastwood constituency should not sit within a Glasgow region, the Commission could simply transfer the proposed Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency to a West Scotland region and retain Eastwood in a West Scotland region. This is shown in the table and map below (the black line in the inset map shows the existing region boundaries).



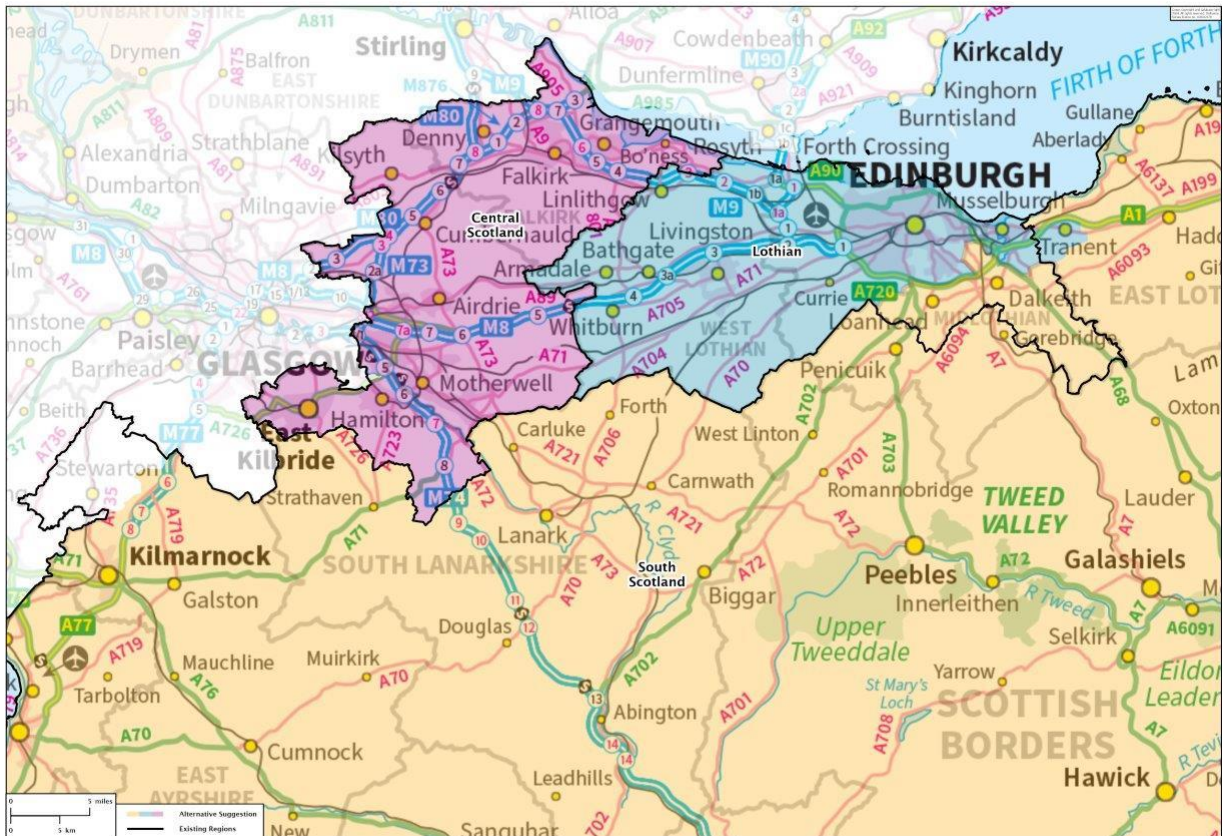
Alternative Option – Glasgow-West Scotland regions		
Region	Electorate	Variation from region average
Glasgow	500,456	-5.8%
West Scotland	581,781	9.5%

37. The advantages of this option are:
- it addresses concerns raised during the consultation and keeps Renfrewshire within a West Scotland region.
38. The disadvantages of this option are: part of Glasgow (Cardonald) sits within a different region to the Glasgow region AND the electorate of each region is not as near to each other or other proposed regions. If this option were adopted the Glasgow region would have the lowest electorate (if Highlands and Islands is excluded as special geographic circumstances applied) (Rule 2)
39. The Commission could consider adding other neighbouring constituencies to the Glasgow region. Based on the Provisional Proposals, adding East Kilbride or Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency to a Glasgow region would result in a South Scotland region with 534,162 or 535,329 electors respectively. Part of South Lanarkshire (Rutherglen and Cambuslang) is already included in the Glasgow region.
40. Based on the Provisional Proposals, adding Coatbridge and Chryston or Uddingston and Bellshill constituency to a Glasgow region would result in a

Central Scotland region with 493,840 or 491,878 electors. Adding the Strathkelvin and Bearsden constituency to a Glasgow region would result in a West Scotland region with 464,877 electors.

**Alternative options**

41. Other issues raised during the Provisional Proposals for regions consultation was opposition to including: West Lothian in a Central Scotland region; and East Kilbride constituency and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency within a South Scotland region. This was included in Paper BS-144 but is discussed below.



Alternative option	Electorate	Variation from region average
Lothian	562,762	5.9%
Central Scotland	539,808	1.6%
South Scotland	586,073	10.3%

42. The advantages of the alternative option are:

- the proposed boundaries closely resemble the existing region boundaries;
- it addresses concerns raised in West Lothian and potentially keeps some of West Lothian in a Lothian region (this depends on the Commission’s consideration of the West Lothian constituencies);
- it addresses concerns to place the more urban East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies in a more urban Central Scotland region rather than a more rural South Scotland region. East Kilbride and

Hamilton have sat within a Central Scotland region since 1999. East Lothian has been in a South Scotland region since 1999; and

- The Provisional Proposals for South Scotland resulted in an electorate of 594,925 and this proposal reduces this to 586,073.
43. The disadvantage of the alternative option is the Midlothian North constituency is added to South Scotland region, therefore the Lothian region only includes West Lothian (potentially part of), City of Edinburgh and a small area of East Lothian council area (Musselburgh and Tranent). The proposed inclusion of East Lothian in its entirety in the Lothian region was mainly favoured during the consultation (five comments supported East Lothian in a Lothian region while four opposed this).
44. The existing Lothian region includes the whole of West Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council areas and part of East Lothian (Musselburgh) and part of Midlothian (Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Loanhead). The original Lothians region, from 1999-2011 included the whole of Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian and part of East Lothian (Musselburgh).

### Summary

45. The Provisional Proposals for regions: retained all eight existing region names; recognised the special geographical considerations that apply in the Highland and Islands; retained one existing region (Mid Scotland and Fife); four regions had some changes to their boundaries when compared to the existing regions (Highland and Islands, North East Scotland, Glasgow, West Scotland); and three regions had more significant changes to their boundaries when compared to the existing regions (Lothian, Central Scotland and South Scotland).
46. Renfrewshire Council objected to the Provisional Proposals because they do not wish a Renfrewshire constituency to sit within a Glasgow region.
47. West Lothian Council objected to the Provisional Proposals because West Lothian has strong historical links with the rest of the Lothian, rather than North Lanarkshire and the Central region, and they wish to remain within a Lothian region.
48. Responses to the Provisional Proposals for regions consultation opposed the inclusion of: West Lothian in a Central Scotland region; Renfrewshire in a Glasgow region; and East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies in a South Scotland region.
49. There were few comments during the consultation regarding the proposed regions of: Highland and Islands; North East Scotland; and Mid Scotland and Fife. At its 4 November 2024 meeting the Commission agreed to adopt its Provisional Proposals for these regions as its Final Recommendations, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in neighbouring areas.
50. Local Inquiries were held in Paisley and Whitburn. Those attending the local inquiries made similar comments to those made during the public consultation: Renfrewshire has little in common with Glasgow; and West Lothian has closer links with Edinburgh and the Lothian area. However there was opposition to the alternative suggestion from Renfrewshire Council to place an Eastwood

constituency within a Glasgow region as a consequence of adding an Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency to a West Scotland region.

51. To address concerns raised during the consultation and local inquiries the Commission could add the proposed Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency to the West Scotland region.
52. To address concerns raised by West Lothian Council the Commission could add West Lothian constituencies to a Lothian region. To ensure that all regions have similar electorate numbers the constituencies of East Lothian and Lammermuirs and Midlothian North would need to be added to a South Scotland region and East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies to a Central Scotland region.

### **Conclusion**

53. The Commission is invited to:

- Consider whether it wishes to adopt the Provisional Proposals as Final Recommendations for West Scotland, Glasgow, Central Scotland, Lothian and South Scotland OR
- Amend its proposals for region boundaries or names (West Scotland, Glasgow, Central Scotland, Lothian and South Scotland).

54. The alternative region names suggested include:

- Edinburgh and Lothian, instead of Lothian;
- West Strathclyde, instead of West Scotland; or
- to use Gaelic names.

**Secretariat**  
**December 2024**

