

**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 for its proposed: Almond Valley; Bathgate; Falkirk East and Linlithgow; and Falkirk West constituencies
 - Consider whether it wishes to
 - (a) adopt the published Additional Proposals and names/designations as Final Recommendations or
 - (b) amend its proposals for constituency boundaries or names and consult upon them again.
2. The Commission has been provided with all the consultation responses relating these constituencies (Paper BS164 – Local Inquiries). Paper BS164 also asked the Commission to decide whether a local inquiry should be held.

Background

3. Within this constituency grouping the Commission agreed its Final Recommendations for the constituencies of:
 - Argyll and Bute; Clydebank and Milngavie; Clydesdale; Coatbridge and Chryston; Dumbarton; East Kilbride; Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse; Motherwell and Wishaw; Strathkelvin and Bearsden at its meeting of 12 September 2024.
 - Rutherglen and Cambuslang; and Uddingston and Bellshill at its meeting of 13 January 2025.
4. At its meeting of 12 September 2024 the Commission agreed Further Proposals which retained the existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituency names and boundaries but agreed it was not necessary to consult on these again.
5. At its meeting of 13 January 2025 the Commission agreed Additional Proposals for Airdrie, and Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituencies, but agreed not to consult on them as they have reverted to the existing boundaries. The constituency name of Airdrie was consulted on at the Further Proposal stage.
6. At its meeting of 13 January 2025 the Commission agreed to consult on Additional Proposals for a:
 - Almond Valley constituency – amended the boundary at Polbeth.
 - Bathgate constituency - amended the boundary by Linlithgow and Polbeth and renamed it Bathgate. It no longer contains North Lanarkshire electors. Previously named Linlithgow.
 - Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency - amended the boundary at Callendar Park, Linlithgow and Stenhousemuir. Renamed Falkirk East and Linlithgow.
 - Falkirk West constituency - amended the boundary at Callendar Park and Stenhousemuir.
7. The Additional Proposals are shown in the table below with a map at Appendix A.

Additional Proposals Constituency Name	Total Electorate	Variation from electorate quota
Almond Valley	67,010	11.9%
Bathgate	68,664	14.6%
Falkirk East and Linlithgow	67,341	12.4%
Falkirk West	68,831	14.9%

8. On 24 January 2025 the Commission published its Additional Proposals for the specified consultation period of one month.

Local Inquiry

9. Paper BS164 asks the Commission to consider whether a local inquiry should be held in relation to the Falkirk West, Falkirk East and Linlithgow and/or Bathgate constituencies.

Responses - West Lothian Council area

Almond Valley

10. Two members of the public opposed the proposed Almond Valley constituency boundary. They stated Polbeth has strong historical ties with Livingston and West Calder, communities linked by the A71 road who share access to local services.
11. A member of the public suggested that Polbeth should remain part of the Almond Valley constituency and sit within the same constituency as West Calder because they share the same schools.
12. Two members of the public seek no change to the existing constituency boundaries in West Lothian.
13. Polbeth Community Council reported there have been too many changes to a range of boundaries recently. They wish no change to the existing boundaries.
14. Polbeth Community Hub objected to the Additional Proposals because they: break community and geographical ties; weaken electoral representation; do not consider strong historical, social, and economic ties with West Calder, Addiewell or Fauldhouse; access to local services will be divided between constituencies; and they look towards Almond Valley rather than Bathgate or Linlithgow. They wish to remain within an Almond Valley constituency.
15. Councillor Pauline Clark (Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley ward) opposed the inclusion of Polbeth in a Bathgate constituency because: there are strong historical ties between Polbeth and West Calder; Polbeth and West Calder children share the same schools; all public transport links are east-west and there are no transport links towards Bathgate; Polbeth and West Calder share local amenities; new housing developments are merging Polbeth and West Calder together; and a Bathgate constituency MSP would be unaware of issues or concerns within a small village on the outskirts of the constituency.
16. Angela Constance, MSP for Almond Valley, opposed the Additional Proposals because they break historical community ties between West Calder and Polbeth. She stated West Calder and Polbeth share transport services, access to shopping and other amenities.

17. The SNP Almond Valley Scottish Parliament Constituency Association objected to the inclusion of Polbeth in a Bathgate constituency and made similar remarks as Angela Constance, MSP.
18. Gregor Poynton MP for Livingston welcomed the inclusion of Fauldhouse in an Almond Valley constituency but wished to retain Polbeth within it. He suggested including the whole of the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley ward within the Almond Valley constituency because it will: maintain community links in the Breich Valley; avoid confusion to the local electorate; and a single constituency MSP will represent its interests.
19. West Lothian Council also suggested including Polbeth in an Almond Valley constituency and it is described elsewhere in this paper.

Bathgate

20. The SNP Linlithgow Constituency Association suggested an alternative name for the proposed Bathgate constituency. They suggested West Lothian Central because: the constituency sits within the centre of West Lothian; a single town name does not promote a sense of community or connection within the wider constituency area; and there is an electoral ward named Bathgate which may cause voter confusion.
21. At its meetings of 19 December 2024 and 13 January 2025 the Commission considered several options which addressed concerns raised during its consultations and local inquiries. The Commission agreed its Additional Proposals because they considered local ties in Falkirk and variation from electorate quota in both Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas.
22. At its meeting of 13 January 2025 the Commission agreed to consult on a constituency named Bathgate because it is the largest settlement in the proposed constituency.
23. Kirsteen Sullivan, MP for Bathgate and Linlithgow, opposed the Additional Proposals because: West Lothian Council is split between three constituencies, disregarding Rule 1; they break local ties and access to services as Linlithgow looks to other communities in West Lothian rather than towards Falkirk (Rule 4); and it splits the Linlithgow ward between constituencies and will lead to voter confusion. She suggested retaining two Scottish Parliamentary constituencies within West Lothian. West Lothian Council also suggested two constituencies wholly within their council area and it is described elsewhere in this paper.
24. Polbeth, West Calder and Livingston have been in the same Scottish Parliament constituency since 1999, named either Livingston or Almond Valley. Since at least 1950 they have also been in the same UK Parliament constituency.
25. West Lothian Council objected to the proposed Bathgate and Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituencies. They stated the proposed Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency does not consider Rules 1 or 4 because it breaks historical, employment, educational, leisure, health, geographical, transport and community ties. They believe the proposals are a result of objections from neighbouring areas and wish to retain two constituencies within West Lothian Council area.

26. West Lothian Council submitted an alternative suggestion which applies special geographical conditions, due to the above average constituency electorate, and retains two West Lothian constituencies. This suggestion differs from the existing constituency boundaries as it follows ward boundaries. A map of the West Lothian Council suggestion is at Appendix B1 and an electorate table is below.

West Lothian Council suggestion for two West Lothian constituencies	Total Electorate	Variation from electorate quota
Almond Valley	72,652	21.3%
Linlithgow and Bathgate	73,804	23.2%

27. West Lothian Council also suggested that if the Commission is unable to adopt the above suggestion it should amend the boundary between its proposed Almond Valley and Bathgate constituencies by Polbeth. They stated that this would better reflect local ties by Polbeth and have minimal impact on variation from the electorate quota. A map of the West Lothian Council suggestion is at Appendix B2 and an electorate table is below.

West Lothian Council suggestion - Polbeth Constituency Name	Total Electorate	Variation from electorate quota
Almond Valley	68,871	15.0%
Bathgate	66,803	11.5%

28. The Commission considered an option similar to the West Lothian Council suggestion, with two constituencies wholly within West Lothian, at its meeting of 13 January 2025 but *“agreed the option did not meet rule 2 as both proposed constituencies would have electorates with variation from the electoral quota over 20%.”*
29. West Lothian Council’s submissions ask the Commission to apply Rule 3 and consider special geographical circumstances in West Lothian. During this Review special geographical considerations have only been applied to one constituency that is above the electoral quota, Skye, Badenoch and Strathspey, to maintain local ties. The Skye, Badenoch and Strathspey constituency recommended variation from the electorate quota of 12%, within the 15% limit referred to in the Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice.
30. The West Lothian Council suggestion at Polbeth only just keeps both constituencies within the 15% variation from the electorate quota referred to in the Venice Commission’s Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters. The suggested alternative for maintaining two constituencies within West Lothian Council boundaries would result in constituencies 21.3% and 23.2% above electoral quota.

Responses - Falkirk Council area

Falkirk East and Linlithgow

31. A member of the public opposed the proposed Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency because there is little to connect Linlithgow with other communities in Falkirk such as Grangemouth and Hallglen. They highlighted a lack of

transport links within the proposed constituency. They stated there was a promise at the Falkirk Local Inquiry not to change the boundaries and were disappointed with the Commission's proposals.

32. Councillor Anne Hannah (Falkirk Lower Braes ward), who responded after the consultation had closed, opposed the proposed Falkirk West and Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituencies. She suggested retaining the existing Falkirk constituencies because they meet the review rules (Rule 1 and 2). Following the Falkirk Local Inquiry she had assumed the Commission would retain the existing constituencies.
33. Falkirk Council objected to the proposed Falkirk West and Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituencies and wish to retain the existing constituencies. They stated:
 - the existing constituencies consider Rules 1 and 2 while the Additional Proposals do not.
 - the Additional Proposals propose constituencies with above average electorates in an area where significant housebuilding is planned.
 - it will be challenging to administer elections with constituencies crossing council areas, wards and polling districts within them.
 - the proposals are a result of the above average electorate in West Lothian.
 - West Lothian Council have suggested retaining two constituencies within their area which would also resolve their concerns.
 - they requested a local inquiry.
34. Falkirk and Linlithgow are connected by rail and the M9 motorway, although there may be poorer transport links between the smaller villages surrounding Falkirk and Linlithgow. A full transcript of the Falkirk local inquiry is available on the Commission's website. There is no mention of the Assistant Commissioner promising to retain the existing constituency boundaries, see link https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/SPReview2_further/falkirk_LI_Transcript.pdf
35. Falkirk East Constituency Labour Party opposed the Additional Proposals because they: overlap the boundaries of council areas, health boards, and emergency services; propose the largest constituency electorates in Scotland; and are a consequence of issues elsewhere. They wish to retain the existing Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies because they better reflect the review rules.
36. No Scottish Parliament has included parts of Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas. The UK Parliament constituencies have included parts of Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas for 20 years and include: Linlithgow and East Falkirk (2005-2024); and Bathgate and Linlithgow (from 2024 onwards).

Responses – outwith consultation

37. Neil Gray, MSP for Airdrie and Shotts, objected to the proposed Airdrie constituency name and wishes to retain the existing constituency name – Airdrie and Shotts. He argued: the proposed constituency comprises two distinct areas and towns and the constituency name should reflect this; Airdrie and Shotts has been the Scottish Parliamentary constituency name since 1999 and the UK Parliamentary name since 1997; and is unaware why the Commission would change the existing constituency name.

38. The Commission's Additional Proposals did not consult on an Airdrie constituency as the boundaries reverted to existing constituency boundaries..
39. The proposed Airdrie constituency name was adopted at the Commission's 22 February 2024 meeting to differentiate it from the UK Parliament constituency name of Airdrie and Shotts.
40. During the revised and further consultation stages of this review the Commission consulted on a constituency named Airdrie. The Commission received 11 comments during the revised consultation suggesting the existing Airdrie and Shotts constituency name should be retained. There was a further suggestion to rename it Airdrie and Auchter Water. There were three comments submitted during the further consultation stage suggesting the existing Airdrie and Shotts constituency name should be retained. There was one suggestion to rename it Shotts and Airdrie. All of these suggested have been considered previously and the Commission, at its December meeting, confirmed its earlier decision to name this constituency Airdrie.
41. An MSP welcomed the proposed Rutherglen and Cambuslang constituency name but suggested that Blantyre should be included in the constituency name as well. They stated that the proposed name may upset local residents because "Blantyre is a historic part of the constituency with a very strong community and sense of self." They suggested the constituency should revert to the existing Rutherglen name or include reference to Blantyre.
42. The Commission's Additional Proposals did not consult on a Rutherglen and Cambuslang constituency. The Commission agreed to consult on Further Proposals for a Rutherglen and Cambuslang constituency at its meeting of 12 September 2024. This was to differentiate it from the UK Parliament constituency named Rutherglen. Rutherglen and Cambuslang had been suggested as a constituency name in responses to the consultation on its Revised Proposals.

Summary

43. The Additional Proposals consulted on the constituencies of: Almond Valley, Bathgate, Falkirk East and Linlithgow, and Falkirk West.
44. The constituency boundaries were amended by Linlithgow and Polbeth in West Lothian and Callendar Park and Stenhousemuir in Falkirk. Bathgate and Falkirk East and Linlithgow were adopted as new constituency names.
45. 10 responses opposed the proposed boundary between the Almond Valley and Bathgate constituencies at Polbeth because it broke local ties.
46. Both Falkirk and West Lothian Council objected to the Additional Proposals. They objected to a Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency that crosses the council area boundary and broke local ties. This view was also shared by an MP, Councillor and local political party.
47. West Lothian Council offered two solutions. They suggested retaining two constituencies within West Lothian Council area and applying special geographical circumstances there because both constituencies would have variation from the electorate quota over 20%. They also suggested that if the

Commission does not retain two constituencies within West Lothian then the boundary should be amended by Polbeth to maintain local ties there.

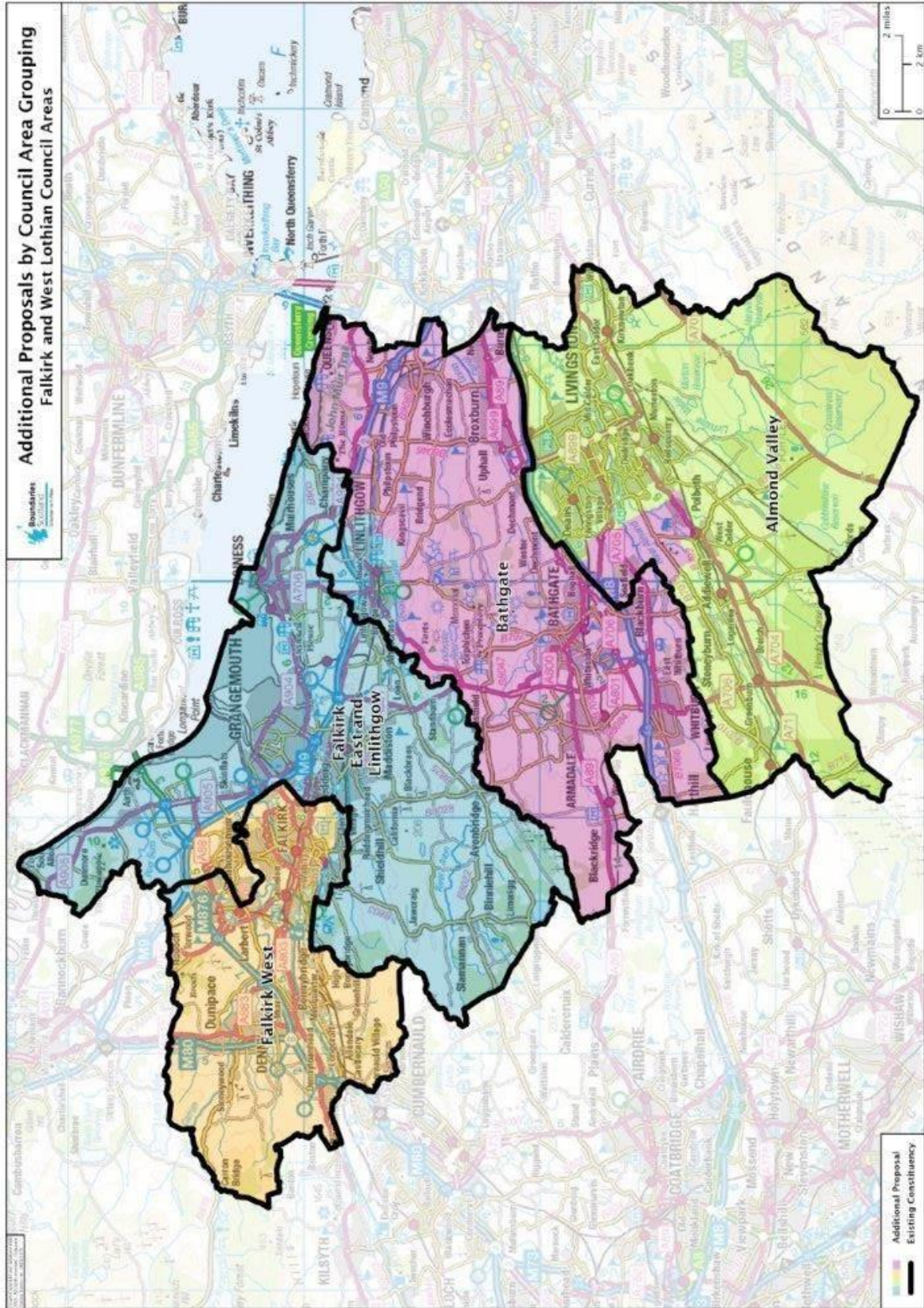
48. Falkirk Council suggested retaining their two existing constituencies, Falkirk East with 61,529 electors and Falkirk West with 63,861 electors.
49. The Commission has applied special geographical circumstances to one constituency which had variation from the electorate quota of 12%.
50. The Commission has published proposals combining West Lothian with Edinburgh, Falkirk and North Lanarkshire Council areas. All have resulted in local inquiries.
51. There were three suggestions for alternative constituency names. Firstly, West Lothian Central instead of Bathgate. The other two names were for constituencies outwith this consultation: to retain Airdrie and Shotts; and Rutherglen or Rutherglen, Cambuslang and Blantyre.

Conclusion

52. After considering the consultation responses the Commission is asked to confirm whether: -
 - a local inquiry should be held for these constituencies.
 - it wishes to adopt the Additional Proposals as its Final Recommendations for these constituencies.
 - If any changes should be made to any of the constituency boundaries or names and consulted on further.
53. When making the above decision, the Commission is asked to note the 1 May 2025 deadline for submitting the Final Recommendations and the statutory requirement for a one-month consultation period.

Secretariat
March 2025

Additional Proposals – Falkirk and West Lothian Council Areas



West Lothian Council alternative suggestion - Polbeth

