

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Revised Proposals for Regions

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to:
 - Consider the consultation responses for the remaining regions of: Central Scotland and Lothians West; Glasgow; Edinburgh and Lothians East; South Scotland; and West Scotland.
 - Consider whether it wishes to
 - (a) adopt the published Revised Proposals and names as Final Recommendations or
 - (b) amend its proposals for region boundaries or names and consult upon them again.
2. The Commission has been provided with all of the consultation responses relating to these regions (Paper BS164 – Local Inquiries). Paper BS164 also asked the Commission to decide whether a local inquiry should be held in relation to any of the regions.

Background

3. The Commission published its Provisional Proposals for regions for consultation from 26 September to 26 October 2024.
4. The main issues raised during that consultation was:
 - the inclusion of West Lothian constituencies in a Central Scotland region because West Lothian looks towards Edinburgh and the Lothian area;
 - an Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency in a Glasgow region because it breaks local ties in Renfrewshire;
 - the inclusion of East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies in a South Scotland region because they are more urban constituencies and South Scotland is a more rural region;
 - support for the inclusion of East Lothian in a Lothian region because they have closer links with Edinburgh than the south of Scotland; and
 - general support or a lack of opposition for the proposed: Highlands and Islands; Mid Scotland and Fife; and North East Scotland regions, although some respondents stated the proposed Highlands and Islands region was too large.
5. Renfrewshire Council and West Lothian Council objected to the Provisional Proposals for regions and the Commission agreed to hold local inquiries in Paisley and Whitburn.
6. At its meetings of 4 November 2024 and 19 December 2024 the Commission agreed to consult on Revised Proposals that comprised a:
 - Glasgow region – that included an East Kilbride constituency instead of the Renfrewshire North and Cardonald constituency.
 - Edinburgh and Lothians East region -the boundary was unchanged from the Provisional Proposals but the name was changed to recognise it contains parts of more than one of the Lothian council areas.
 - Central and Lothians West region – that included a Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency and the name changed to recognise it contains part of the Lothians area.

- West Scotland – that included the proposed Renfrewshire North and Cardonald constituency which had previously been in a Glasgow region.
 - South Scotland – that no longer included an East Kilbride or Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency. Special geographical circumstances were applied for South Scotland.
7. The Commission agreed its Final Recommendations for Highland and Islands, North East Scotland and Mid Scotland and Fife at its meeting of 4 November 2024, subject to satisfactory regions being agreed elsewhere.
8. The Revised Proposals for Regions are shown in the table below and map in Appendix A.

Revised Proposals - Regions	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Central Scotland and Lothians West	610,313	14.9%
Glasgow	561,219	5.6%
Edinburgh and Lothians East	543,001	2.2%
South Scotland	474,566	-10.7%
West Scotland	591,614	11.4%

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

Local Inquiry

10. Paper BS164 asks the Commission to consider whether a local inquiry should be held in relation to the Glasgow region as South Lanarkshire Council objected to the Revised Proposals. The Commission was also asked to consider if it wishes to exercise its discretion to hold a local inquiry in relation to the other regions.

Responses - all areas

11. A member of the public opposed the Revised Proposals because variation from the electoral average is too wide between the regions, even considering special geographic circumstances. They argued that Eastwood has closer links with a Glasgow region than East Kilbride. They submitted the following alternative suggestion which:
- adds Eastwood to a Glasgow region, rather than East Kilbride.
 - includes Edinburgh and West Lothian Council areas in the same region with part of East Lothian.
 - adds Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley to a West Scotland region.
 - adds East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs and Midlothian North to a South Scotland region.
 - adds East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse to a Central region.
12. This alternative suggestion is shown in the table below with maps at Appendix B.

Alternative suggestion – all regions	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Central Scotland	535,402	0.8%
Glasgow	556,714	4.8%
Edinburgh and Lothians West	567,168	6.7%

South Scotland	528,558	-0.5%
West Scotland	592,871	11.6%

13. The advantages of the alternative suggestion are:

- it improves variation from the average electorate in comparison to the Revised Proposals. The widest variation in the Revised Proposals was the proposed Central Scotland and Lothians West region with 610,313 electors and 14.87% variation from average electorate. The widest variation in the alternative suggestion is a West Scotland region with 592,871 electors and 11.6% variation from average electorate.
- it more closely resembles the existing region boundaries.

14. The disadvantages of the alternative suggestion are:

- East Renfrewshire Council would object to the inclusion of an Eastwood constituency in a Glasgow region as they had stated this at the Paisley local inquiry.
- it adds East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs to a South Scotland region. There was some support for including this constituency in an East Lothian and Edinburgh region.

Glasgow Region

15. A member of the public supported the inclusion of East Kilbride within a Glasgow region. They also suggested that Eastwood has closer ties with a Glasgow region than West Scotland because Eastwood is seen as a suburb of Glasgow.

16. A member of the public opposed including East Kilbride within a Glasgow region.

17. Springburn Community Council opposed the inclusion of an East Kilbride constituency within a Glasgow region.

18. East Kilbride Constituency Labour Party opposed the inclusion of an East Kilbride constituency within a Glasgow Region. They considered East Kilbride should sit within a region with other Lanarkshire constituencies. They highlighted that East Kilbride is separated from Glasgow by an area of green belt while East Renfrewshire is seen as part of Glasgow. They also noted that East Renfrewshire has closer links to Glasgow such as health and policing.

19. South Lanarkshire Council objected to the inclusion of East Kilbride in a Glasgow region because it would: break historical local ties; divide health service and electoral administration areas between constituencies; and confuse electors. They also stated there is a clear demarcation between Glasgow and East Kilbride. They suggested Eastwood could be a more suitable alternative for a Glasgow region. They believe East Kilbride could sit within either a Central Scotland and Lothians West region or South Scotland region instead. However they would prefer that both the East Kilbride, and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies remain in the same region together. They were supportive of the proposals elsewhere in South Lanarkshire.

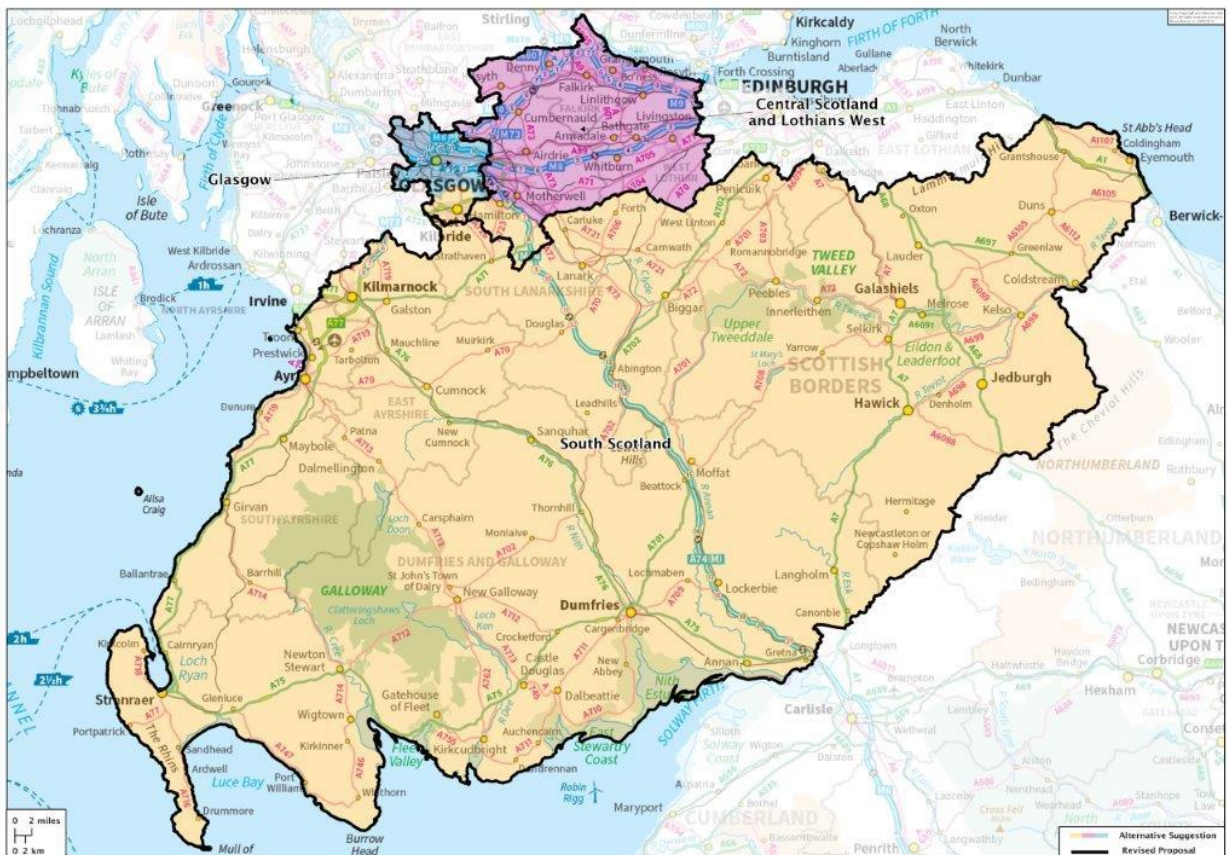
20. South Lanarkshire Council suggested that the constituencies of East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse should remain within the same region. They suggested those constituencies could sit within either a Central Scotland and Lothians West region or South Scotland region.

21. The proposed Central Scotland and Lothians West region, which includes Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse, has an electorate of 610,313. Adding East Kilbride to it would create a Central Scotland region with 671,076 electors and variation from the average electorate of 26.3%, this is shown in the table below.

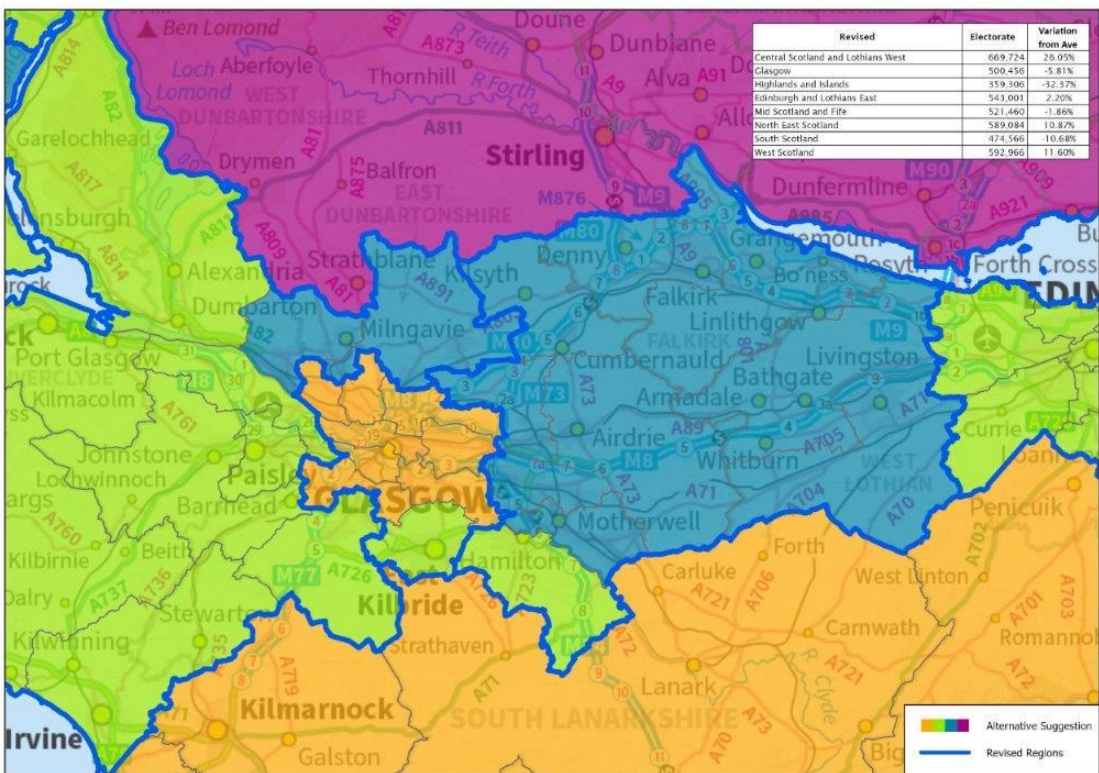
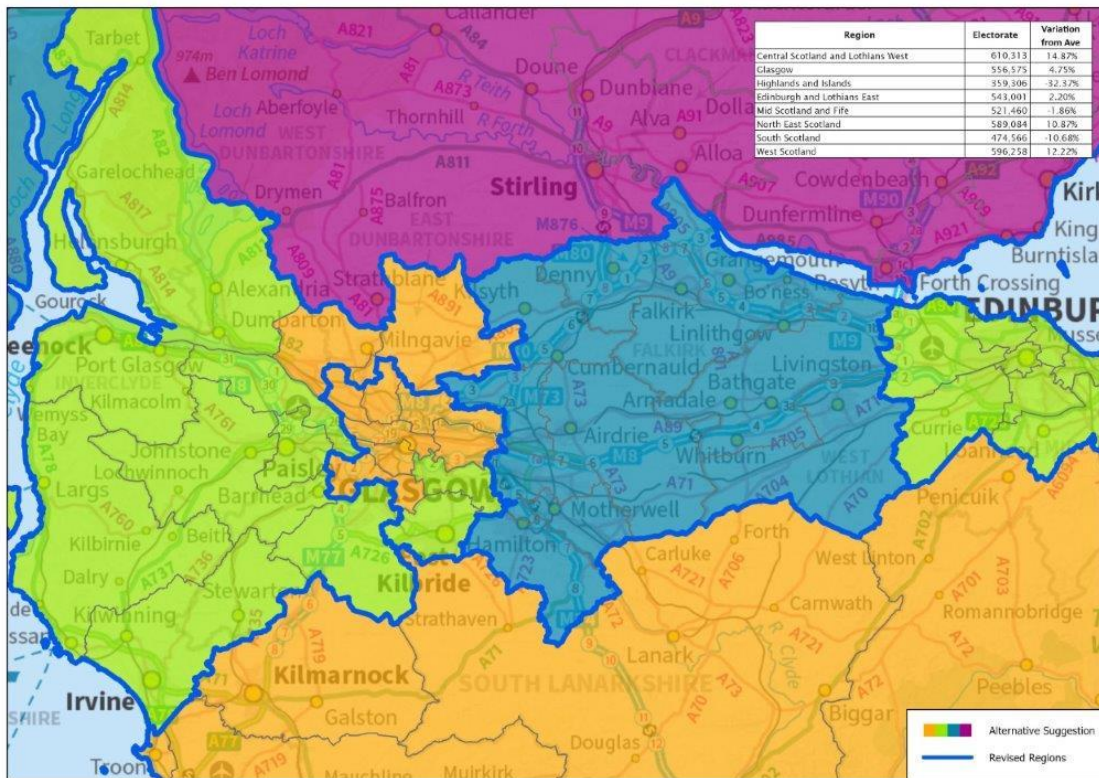
Alternative suggestion South Lanarkshire Council	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Central Scotland	671,076	26.3%
Glasgow	500,456	-5.8%

22. Alternatively the Commission could include both the East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies in a South Scotland region. The Commission consulted on this during the Provisional Proposals consultation stage. Seven comments suggested East Kilbride should be placed within a more urban region than South Scotland during that consultation. There were also six responses stating the region was too large. Three responses supported the proposed South Scotland region. This is shown in the table and map below.

Alternative suggestion South Lanarkshire Council	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Central Scotland	550,717	3.7%
Glasgow	500,456	-5.8%
South Scotland	594,925	12.0%



23. Paul Sweeney, MSP for Glasgow region, opposed the inclusion of East Kilbride in a Glasgow region because East Kilbride has close cultural and historical ties and access to local services with Lanarkshire rather than Glasgow. He described East Kilbride as geographically separate from Glasgow by a two mile wide strip of greenbelt. He noted that East Kilbride is established as part of Central Scotland, with Hamilton and Larkhall, who they share similar characteristics. As an alternative solution, he suggested Eastwood has closer links with Glasgow than East Kilbride because it is seen as part of Glasgow's suburbs.
24. Pam Duncan-Glancy, MSP for Glasgow region, opposed the inclusion of East Kilbride in a Glasgow region because East Kilbride has closer ties with Lanarkshire or Central Scotland than with Glasgow. They also highlighted the area of green belt which separates East Kilbride and Glasgow and access to local services in Lanarkshire rather than Glasgow. As an alternative they suggested including Eastwood in a Glasgow region because: it is an extension of Glasgow's urban area; has good transport links with Glasgow; and shares service provision with Glasgow.
25. Councillor Alexander Belic (Glasgow Southside Central ward) opposed the inclusion of East Kilbride in a Glasgow region. He submitted two alternative suggestions, shown in the maps below, they:
- include Strathkelvin and Bearsden, and Clydebank and Milngavie in a Glasgow and Strathkelvin region; and add Rutherglen and East Kilbride to a West Scotland region; or
 - include Strathkelvin and Bearsden in a Central Scotland region and Uddingston and Bellshill or Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse in a West Scotland region with East Kilbride.
26. The advantages of these suggestions are:
- they both avoid an East Kilbride constituency in a Glasgow region; and
 - there is no green belt between Glasgow and Bearsden or Clydebank.
27. The disadvantages of these suggestions are:
- it proposes a Central Scotland and Lothians West region with variation from average at 26% in one of the suggestions; and
 - it may simply transfer similar concerns elsewhere.



28. The existing East Kilbride constituency sits within a Central Scotland region. The Provisional Proposals placed East Kilbride in a South Scotland region.

29. The Commission could add East Kilbride to a South Scotland region. The Commission consulted on a South Scotland region that included East Kilbride, as well as Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse, during its Provisional Proposals

consultation. East Kilbride in a South Scotland region is shown in the table below.

Option – East Kilbride in a South Scotland region	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Glasgow	500,456	-5.8%
South Scotland	535,329	0.8%

30. Alternatively East Kilbride could be added to a West Scotland region but the total electorate would be 652,377 (22.8%) or the Central Scotland and Lothians West region with 671,076 electors (26.3%). However further changes may be required elsewhere to address variation from the average electorate.

Edinburgh and Lothians East

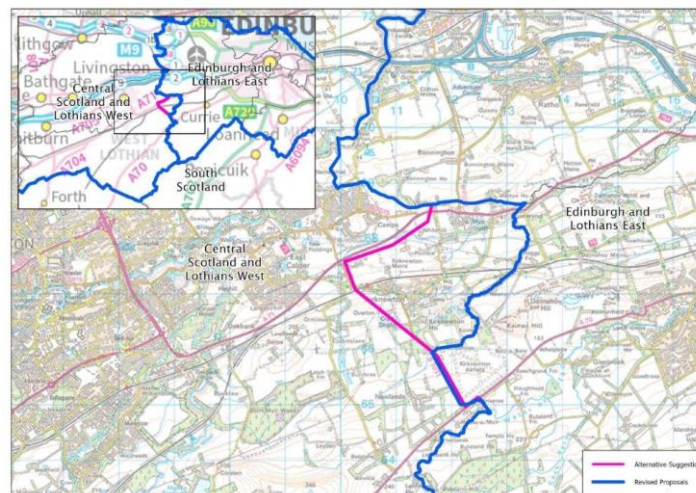
31. A member of the public preferred the Revised Proposals to the existing regions. They stated East Lothian is currently “shoehorned” into the South of Scotland region. They also believed the revised region names were an improvement on the existing names.

Central Scotland and Lothians West

32. A member of the public stated Kirknewton, in West Lothian, has closer links to Edinburgh than Central Scotland.

33. The map below shows the location of Kirknewton. The Additional Proposals for constituencies placed Kirknewton in an Almond Valley constituency. The table below includes Almond Valley in an Edinburgh and Lothian East region but it would divide West Lothian between regions and proposes high variation from electorate average.

Alternative suggestion Kirknewton – Almond Valley	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Central Scotland and Lothians West	543,303	2.3%
Edinburgh and Lothians East	610,011	14.8%



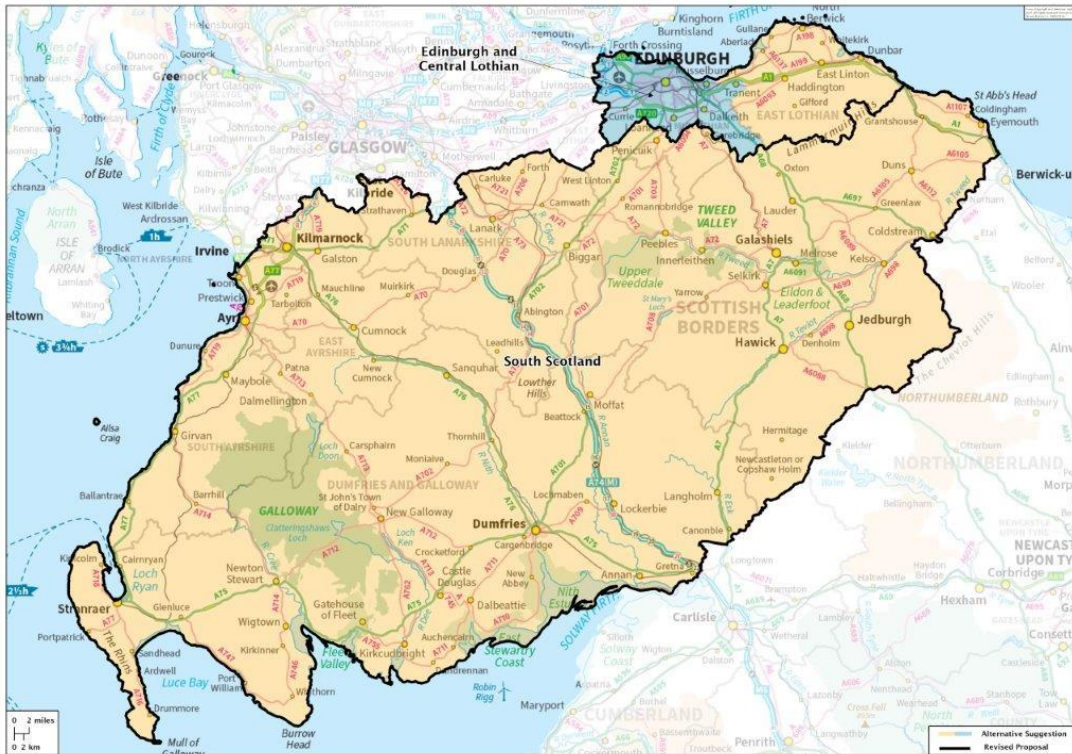
34. Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse Constituency Labour Party supported the Revised Proposals that placed the Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse

constituency in a Central Scotland and Lothians West region, rather than a South Scotland region.

35. West Lothian Council stated their position is unchanged from the Provisional Proposals consultation. In that response they stated "*West Lothian Council objects to the proposal to place West Lothian's constituencies in Central Scotland Region rather than Lothian Region. West Lothian has strong links with the wider Lothian area, much more so than the communities to the West. West Lothian has strong historic, community, transport, employment and geographical links with the wider Lothian region. It sits within the same Health Board area and police division as other parts of the Lothians.*"
36. Falkirk Council raised concerns about the proposed Central Scotland and Lothians West region because its electorate is well above the average. They noted that the Central Scotland and Lothians West region contains ten constituencies and four of those constituencies are in the top five largest constituencies by electorate.

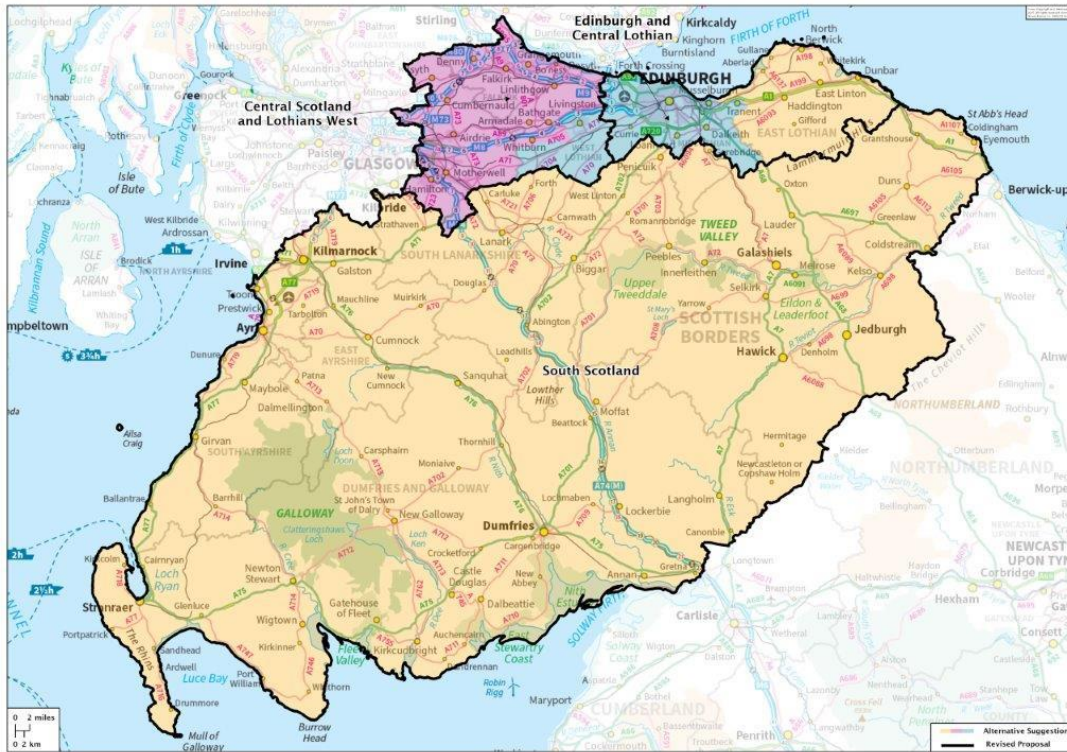
South Scotland

37. Dumfries and Galloway Council noted that the proposed changes are minor and would have no impact upon the Council or its electorate.
38. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party opposed the application of special geographical circumstances in South Scotland because it is quite different to the Highlands and Islands region where special geographical circumstances have also been applied. The Highlands and Islands region includes nearly all of Scotland's inhabited islands, is 2.5 times larger than the South Scotland, has poorer transport links than the South Scotland including most ferry services.
39. They suggested including the East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs constituency in a South Scotland region. They believe their suggestion more closely resembles the existing region boundaries which have remained relatively unchanged since 1999, improves variation from average electorate and considers local ties. They also mentioned that the original region boundaries were based on European Parliament constituencies which have been relatively unchanged since 1979, therefore the South Scotland region has had a similar electoral boundary for nearly 50 years. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggestion is shown in the table and map below.



Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggestion 1	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Edinburgh and Central Lothian	485,490	-8.6%
South Scotland	532,077	0.1%

40. To improve variation from the electorate quota the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party also suggested adding the Almond Valley constituency to the Edinburgh and Central Lothian region. This is shown in the table and map below.



Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggestion 2	Electorate	Variation from Average Electorate
Edinburgh and Central Lothian	552,500	4.0%
South Scotland	532,077	0.1%
Central Scotland and Lothians West	543,303	2.3%

41. The advantages of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggestions are they:

- more closely resemble the existing boundaries to maintain local ties.
- improve variation from the average electorate in comparison to the Revised Proposals.

42. The disadvantages of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggestions are:

- one suggestion splits West Lothian Council area between two regions.
- there has been general support for East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs being in the same region as Edinburgh.

43. Craig Hoy, MSP for South Scotland, submitted a late response and stated special geographical circumstances are not required for the South Scotland region because: he can cover the region effectively from his office in East Lothian; and East Lothian is an accessible constituency for all South of Scotland MSPs. He suggested retaining an East Lothian constituency (East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs) in a South Scotland region. He also offered to meet with the Commission to explain how effective the current South Scotland region is.

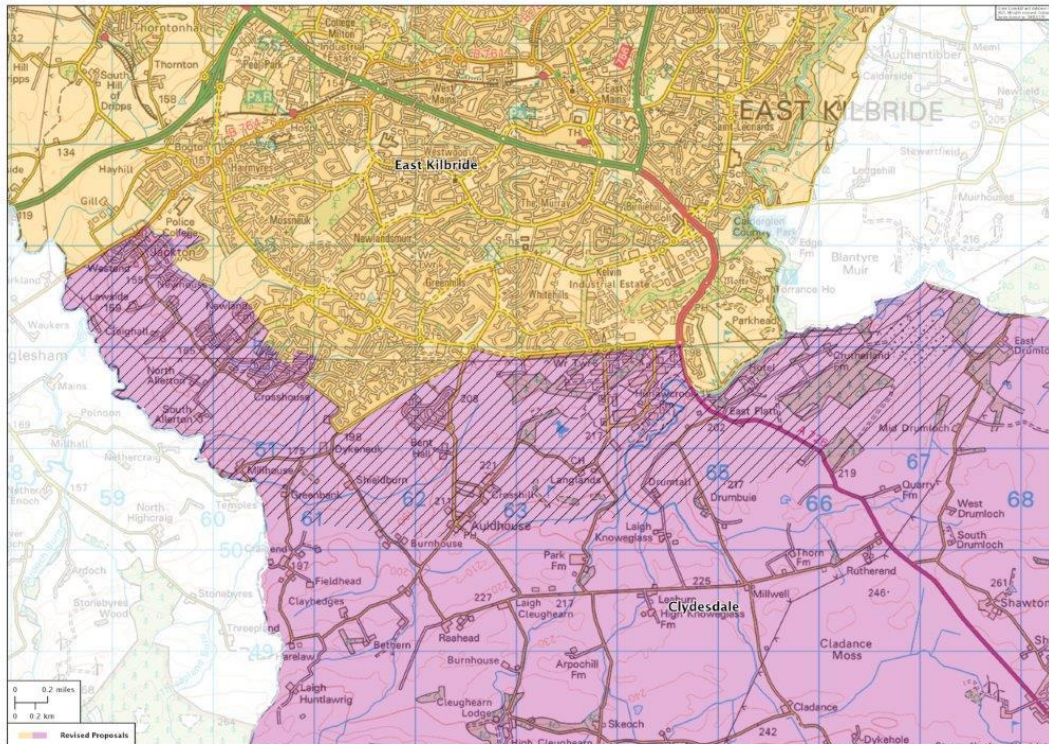
West Scotland

44. Jackson Carlaw, MSP for Eastwood, supported retaining the existing Eastwood constituency boundary and retaining Eastwood within a West Scotland region.

45. Neil Bibby, MSP for West Scotland region, supported the Revised Proposals which place the proposed Renfrewshire North and Cardonald constituency in a West Scotland region because it keeps Renfrewshire Council area within one region, West Scotland.
46. Renfrewshire Council supported the proposed West Scotland Region because a Renfrewshire constituency is no longer included within a Glasgow region.
47. East Ayrshire Council supported the proposals.

Responses – outwith consultation

48. A member of the public opposed the proposed East Kilbride constituency boundary because: it will split new housing developments, to the south of East Kilbride, between constituencies; cause confusion for the electorate; and be challenging to administer elections. They suggested extending the existing East Kilbride constituency boundary southwards to include Jackton, Lindsayfield and Benthall Farm.
49. Although the Commission did not consult on an East Kilbride constituency boundary this suggestion is discussed and shown on the map (shaded area) below.
50. During the revised consultation on constituencies, the Commission retained the existing East Kilbride constituency boundary and there was a single suggestion to include Benthall Farm in an East Kilbride constituency. There was a further suggestion during the further proposals consultation although the Commission was not consulting on an East Kilbride constituency at that time either. During the provisional consultation on constituencies, the proposed East Kilbride constituency included Jackton with approximately 1,000 electors and there were no comments submitted regarding that constituency.



51. The suggestion would transfer approximately 1,500 electors between the proposed East Kilbride (60,763) and Clydesdale (61,011) constituencies and have little impact on variation from the electorate quota.

Summary

52. The Commission consulted on Revised Proposals for five regions: Central Scotland and Lothians West; Glasgow; Edinburgh and Lothians East; South Scotland; and West Scotland.

53. Out of the 22 responses submitted to the consultation, eight submissions opposed the inclusion of East Kilbride in a Glasgow region. Some responses offered the alternative of placing Eastwood within a Glasgow region. During the provisional consultation stage there were similar suggestions but following the Paisley Local Inquiry the Commission “*noted that strong opposition to this suggestion had already been expressed by several elected representatives and East Renfrewshire Council.*”

54. East Kilbride currently sits within a Central Scotland region. The Commission consulted on East Kilbride within a South Scotland region during its provisional consultation on regions but there were seven comments or suggestions stating that the East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituencies were more urban and should be in a more urban region than South Scotland.

55. The Commission could simply add East Kilbride to a South Scotland region, both regions would remain within 6% variation from the electorate average. Another option would be to revert to the Provisional Proposals for South Scotland which included both East Kilbride and Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse in this region with variation from the average electorate at 12.0%.

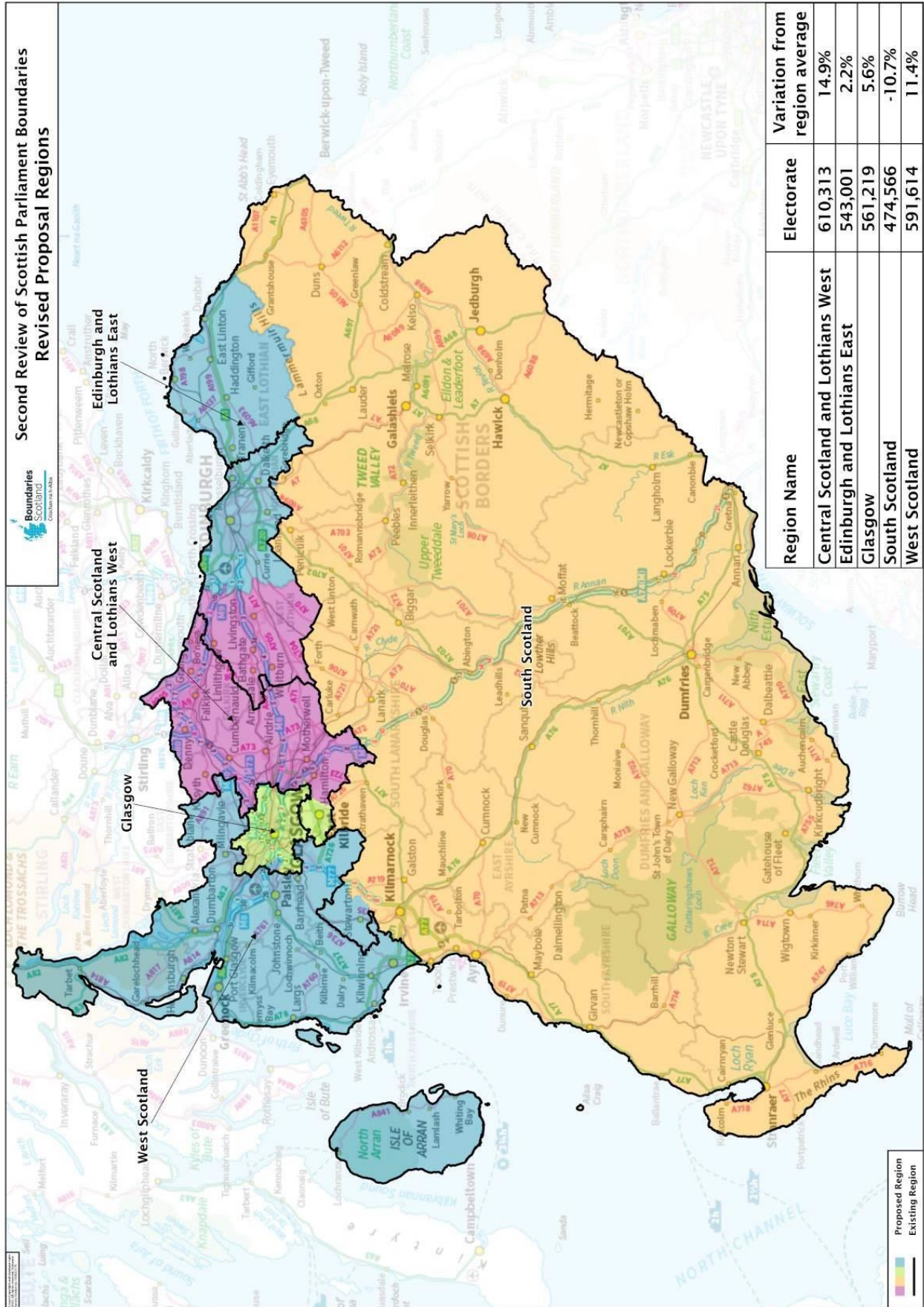
56. There were suggestions to include an East Lothian Coast and Lammermuirs constituency in a South Scotland region to maintain local ties, improve variation from the electorate average and consider the existing boundary.
57. There was both support and opposition to the proposed Central Scotland and Lothians West region. West Lothian Council opposed it because they wish to remain in a region with Edinburgh and the Lothian area. One response supported the inclusion of a Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse constituency within it.
58. There was support for the proposed West Scotland and Edinburgh and Lothians East regions.
59. There was an alternative suggestion covering all five regions which aimed to improve variation from the electorate average and consider the existing boundaries (Appendix B).

Conclusion

60. After considering the consultation responses for Revised Proposals for regions the Commission is asked to confirm whether: -
- It wishes to hold a local inquiry for any of the regions.
 - It wishes to adopt the Revised Proposals as its Final Recommendations for the five regions.
 - If any changes should be made to any of the region boundaries or names and consulted on further.
61. 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**

Appendix A - Revised Proposals for Regions



Appendix B – Alternative suggestion - all regions with existing (red line) and revised (blue line) boundaries

