

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Intended approach to constituency design

Introduction

1. The Commission is invited to consider its approach to constituency design for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries.

Rules for conducting reviews of Scottish Parliament Boundaries

2. Schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998 makes provision for boundary reviews. Its rules for conducting reviews of Scottish Parliament Boundaries are:
 - Rule 1 – So far as is practicable, regard must be had to the boundaries of local government areas.
 - Rule 2
 - (1) The electorate of a constituency must be as near the electoral quota as is practicable, having regard to Rule 1.
 - (2) Boundaries Scotland may depart from the strict application of Rule 1 if it thinks that it is desirable to do so to avoid an excessive disparity between the electorate of a constituency and the electoral quota or between the electorate of a constituency and that of neighbouring constituencies.
 - Rule 3 – Boundaries Scotland may depart from the strict application of Rules 1 and 2 if it thinks that special geographical considerations (including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency) render it desirable to do so.
 - Rule 4 – Boundaries Scotland need not aim at giving full effect in all circumstances to Rules 1 to 3 but must take account (so far as reasonably can)—
 - (a) of the inconveniences attendant on alterations of constituencies other than alterations made for the purposes of Rule 1, and
 - (b) of any local ties which would be broken by such alterations.
3. The Commission must complete the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries by 1 May 2025.

Constituency design approach

4. During the First Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, the Commission's approach to designing constituencies was to firstly to look at the theoretical entitlement of constituencies for each council area (calculated by dividing the electorate of each council area by the electoral quota).
5. If that entitlement was close to an integer, the Commission allocated a specific number of constituencies that were wholly contained within that council area. In other cases, the Commission combined small groups of council areas, so that their combined theoretical entitlement was close to an integer. Appendix A provides the theoretical entitlement of constituencies for each council area for the Second Review.
6. The benefits of this approach are:
 - the task of constituency design is broken down from 70 constituencies across mainland Scotland into more manageable groups of constituencies in a localised area;
 - the electorate recognise council area boundaries;
 - reduced variability in constituency design arising from the sequence in which constituencies are designed;

- reduced risk of insoluble conditions arising in the final stages of constituency design;
 - the approach was adopted during First Review and Boundary Commission for Scotland follow a similar approach when conducting reviews of UK Parliament constituency boundaries thus recognised by stakeholders; and
 - considers rule 1 “regard must be had to the boundaries of local government areas.”
7. Further to this, minimising the number of council areas in any particular group has the advantages of enabling adoption of council area boundaries as constituency boundaries and assisting in minimising the number of council areas in any single constituency and vice versa.
8. The First Review recommended 12 Scottish Parliament constituencies which do not align with council area boundaries, they are:
- Aberdeen South and North Kincardine constituency (Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire);
 - Angus North and Mearns constituency (Angus and Aberdeenshire);
 - Banffshire and Buchan constituency (Moray and Aberdeenshire);
 - Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency (East and South Ayrshire);
 - Clackmannanshire and Dunblane constituency (Clackmannanshire and Stirling);
 - Clydebank and Milngavie constituency (East and West Dunbartonshire);
 - Dunbarton constituency (Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire);
 - Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency (Midlothian and East Lothian);
 - Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency (Midlothian and Scottish Borders);
 - Renfrewshire North and West constituency (Renfrewshire and Inverclyde);
 - Renfrewshire South constituency (Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire); and
 - Uddingston and Bellshill constituency (North and South Lanarkshire).
9. The Commission’s theoretical entitlement of constituencies for each council area for the First Review is shown in the table below.

First Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Council Area Groupings	Constituency theoretical entitlement
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray	9
Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire	4
City of Edinburgh	6
Clackmannanshire, Stirling	2
Dumfries and Galloway	2
Dundee City	2
East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	3
North Ayrshire	2
East Lothian, Midlothian, Scottish Borders	4
East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire	5
Falkirk	2

Fife	5
Glasgow City	8
Highland	3
North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire	9
Perth and Kinross	2
West Lothian	2
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	1
Orkney Islands	1
Shetland Islands	1
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10. The benefits of constituency boundaries which fit with council area boundaries include:
- the electorate are generally aware of which council area they live in, and would therefore find it easier to understand which constituency they were in;
 - MSPs and local authorities liaise in the course of their work;
 - election administration is conducted by council officials; and
 - locally, political parties are usually organised within council areas.
11. As there are 70 mainland constituencies and only 29 mainland council areas, not all constituency boundaries can follow council area boundaries. The Commission will wish to consider other recognised boundaries such as electoral wards, UK Parliament constituencies, community council areas, natural features (rivers, well-defined ridges) and man-made features (railway lines, main roads or canals).
12. The benefits of constituency boundaries which fit with wards include:
- MSPs and councillors liaise in the course of their work;
 - election administration depends on polling districts which are mostly wholly contained within wards; and
 - locally, political parties may be organised within wards.
13. During constituency design the Commission will also wish to consider UK Parliament constituency boundaries because:
- MPs and MSPs liaise in the course of their work; and
 - the electorate do not always distinguish between the areas of responsibility of each Parliament.
14. The Commission will be aware that the Boundary Commission for Scotland (BCS) are currently conducting a review of UK Parliament constituency boundaries. BCS will submit their recommendations by July 2023 for 55 mainland UK Parliament constituencies therefore fewer UK and Scottish Parliament constituencies will align.
15. If consultation responses oppose the Commission's proposals in one area then revised boundaries could be developed linking two or more groupings together.

Electorate Quota

16. The rules state the Commission must use the Scottish Parliament electorate on the enumeration date or start date of the Review, 1 September 2022.

17. Based on the 1 September 2022 data, the electorate quota for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries is 59,902 electors per constituency under review.
18. The electorate quota is calculated by subtracting the electorate of the three preserved constituencies (Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands) from the total electorate of Scotland and then dividing that figure by 70.

Total Scottish Parliament electorate	4,250,565
Less the three preserved constituencies (Orkney Islands, Shetland islands, Na h-Eileanan an Iar)	57,430
Total Scottish Parliament electorate – mainland only	4,193,135
Divided by 70 mainland constituencies under review	59,902 (electorate quota)

19. The electorate for each existing Scottish Parliament constituency and its variation from the electorate quota (59,902) is shown at Appendix B.
20. The Venice Commission's 'Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters' recommended electoral areas should "not be more than 10%, and should certainly not exceed 15% except in special circumstances." The First Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries recommended all constituencies within 15%, except Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency where the Commission considered special geographical considerations. Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency is now preserved and out-with the remit of the Second Review.
21. If the Commission aimed for 10% of the electorate quota (59,902) when designing constituencies, constituencies would broadly have between 54,000 and 66,000 electors.
22. There are currently:
- 57 mainland constituencies within 10% of the electorate quota;
 - 63 mainland constituencies within 15% of the electorate quota; and
 - 7 mainland constituencies between 16% and 27% of the electorate quota.
23. Six existing constituencies within the Lothians are over 10% of the electorate quota. Of these, four constituencies sit next to each other (East Lothian, Edinburgh Eastern, Edinburgh Northern and Leith and Midlothian North and Musselburgh) and the other two are within West Lothian (Almond Valley and Linlithgow). As a consequence there will likely be significant changes to the existing boundaries in Lothian.
24. The other seven existing constituencies over 10% are more evenly spread across the country. They include: Argyll and Bute; Cumbernauld and Kilsyth; Cunninghame South; Clackmannanshire and Dunblane; Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn, Inverness and Nairn; and Renfrewshire South.
25. The Commission could simply look to address variation from electoral parity for these 13 constituencies over 10% of the electorate quota but this approach would not consider Rule 1, having regard to the boundaries of local government areas.

26. The Commission did not set a target of 5%, 10% or 15% for variation from electoral quota when designing constituencies during the First Review. The First Review Report states “We recognised the importance of this rule in ensuring that the weight of an elector’s vote in one constituency is the same as that of an elector in another constituency. When designing constituencies, we considered parity in every case.”

Council area grouping designs

27. The Secretariat has designed two council area groupings for initial consideration and discussion at this stage.

28. Both options are broadly similar except in the north of Scotland and by Argyll and Bute, Dunbartonshire, Falkirk and North Lanarkshire.

29. Option 1 proposes:

Option 1 Council areas	Electorate	Theoretical entitlement of Constituencies	Average electorate per constituency
Dumfries and Galloway	118,942	2.0	59,471
Dundee City	112,735	1.9	56,368
Falkirk	125,390	2.1	62,695
Fife	290,387	4.8	58,077
Highland	189,218	3.2	63,073
Inverclyde	60,794	1.0	60,794
Perth and Kinross	120,039	2.0	60,020
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray	539,472	9.0	59,941
Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire	489,423	8.2	61,178
Clackmannanshire, Stirling	111,034	1.9	55,517
East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	295,428	4.9	59,086
City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian	711,594	11.9	59,300
East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Renfrewshire	677,123	11.3	61,557
Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire	351,556	5.9	58,593
		70	

30. Option 1:

- offers some continuity from the existing council area groupings, it retains a grouping of: Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee City; Falkirk; Fife; Highland; Perth and Kinross; Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray; Clackmannanshire and Stirling; and East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire.
- retains a number of existing council area groupings as described above which may minimise change to over 30 constituency boundaries.
- may offer some flexibility with constituency design. For example the Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, and Moray council area grouping could be sub-divided into an Aberdeen City group (2.8), Moray group

(1.2) and Aberdeenshire/ Angus group (4.9). Also, Inverclyde (1.0) could also be added to the Ayrshire grouping or East Renfrewshire/ Glasgow City/ Renfrewshire grouping.

- retains an Ayrshire grouping. The three Ayrshire Councils are linked within the same health board (Ayrshire and Arran) and work closely together on various projects such as investing in the local economy.

31. Option 2 proposes:

Option 2 Council areas	Electorate	Theoretical entitlement of Constituencies	Average electorate per constituency
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray	797,942	13.3	61,380
East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire	545,561	9.1	60,618
*Dumfries and Galloway	118,942	2.0	59,471
*Dundee City	112,735	1.9	56,368
*Fife	290,387	4.8	58,077
*Inverclyde	60,794	1.0	60,794
*Perth and Kinross	120,039	2.0	60,020
*Clackmannanshire, Stirling	111,034	1.9	55,517
*East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire	295,428	4.9	59,086
*City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian	711,592	11.9	59,299
*East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Renfrewshire	677,123	11.3	61,557
*Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire	351,556	5.9	58,593
* same as Option 1		70	

32. Option 2:

- offers some continuity from the existing council area groupings, it retains a grouping of: Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee City; Fife; Perth and Kinross; Clackmannanshire and Stirling; and East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire.
- may offer some flexibility with constituency design. For example Aberdeen City could be sub-divided as discussed in Option 1. Falkirk in the East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire grouping could also be sub-divided.
- may divide Oban between two constituencies.
- retains an Ayrshire grouping. The three Ayrshire Councils are linked within the same health board (Ayrshire and Arran) and work closely together on various projects such as investing in the local economy.

Other options

33. The Commission is not restricted by the two options presented in this paper, it could develop its own option(s) using the theoretical entitlement of constituencies for each council area in Appendix A.

34. The Commission could also consider larger council area groupings. For example linking Dumfries and Galloway council area with the Ayrshire grouping and or the Scottish Borders/ South Lanarkshire grouping. Also Fife could be considered with Perth and Kinross/ Dundee/ Clackmannanshire/ Stirling. However these options may have less regard towards the boundaries of local government areas.

Conclusion and recommendations

35. The Commission is invited to consider its approach to constituency design for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and the two options presented.

Secretariat
November 2022

Theoretical entitlement – constituencies for each council area

Council Area	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Constituency theoretical entitlement
Aberdeen City	167,469	2.8
Aberdeenshire	205,427	3.4
Angus	91,768	1.5
Argyll and Bute	69,252	1.2
City of Edinburgh	400,466	6.7
Clackmannanshire	40,031	0.7
Dumfries and Galloway	118,942	2.0
Dundee City	112,735	1.9
East Ayrshire	96,401	1.6
East Dunbartonshire	86,592	1.4
East Lothian	88,539	1.5
East Renfrewshire	75,017	1.3
Na h–Eileanan an Iar	21,769	1.0
Falkirk	125,390	2.1
Fife	290,387	4.8
Glasgow City	460,012	7.7
Highland	189,218	3.2
Inverclyde	60,794	1.0
Midlothian	76,131	1.3
Moray	74,808	1.2
North Ayrshire	107,902	1.8
North Lanarkshire	264,752	4.4
Orkney Islands	17,696	1.0
Perth and Kinross	120,039	2.0
Renfrewshire	142,094	2.4
Scottish Borders	93,179	1.6
Shetland Islands	17,965	1.0
South Ayrshire	91,125	1.5
South Lanarkshire	258,377	4.3
Stirling	71,003	1.2
West Dunbartonshire	68,827	1.1
West Lothian	146,456	2.4
Total	4,250,563	73

Appendix B1

Table of Existing Scottish Parliament constituency electorate and variation from electorate quota

Existing Scottish Parliament constituency	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Existing Scottish Parliament constituency	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)
Aberdeen Central	55,994	-7%	Falkirk East	61,529	3%
Aberdeen Donside	62,531	4%	Falkirk West	63,861	7%
Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	61,544	3%	Galloway and West Dumfries	57,094	-5%
Aberdeenshire East	64,217	7%	Glasgow Anniesland	55,540	-7%
Aberdeenshire West	59,983	0%	Glasgow Cathcart	59,981	0%
Airdrie and Shotts	54,205	-10%	Glasgow Kelvin	62,061	4%
Almond Valley	70,119	17%	Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn	52,341	-13%
Angus North and Mearns	55,006	-8%	Glasgow Pollok	61,428	3%
Angus South	58,622	-2%	Glasgow Provan	56,025	-6%
Argyll and Bute	49,535	-17%	Glasgow Shettleston	59,014	-1%
Ayr	62,566	4%	Glasgow Southside	53,622	-10%
Banffshire and Buchan Coast	58,442	-2%	Greenock and Inverclyde	56,629	-5%
Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	56,532	-6%	Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse	59,596	-1%
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	59,218	-1%	Inverness and Nairn	70,493	18%
Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	52,150	-13%	Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	65,742	10%
Clydebank and Milngavie	55,121	-8%	Kirkcaldy	60,642	1%
Clydesdale	61,011	2%	Linlithgow	76,337	27%
Coatbridge and Chryston	56,877	-5%	Mid Fife and Glenrothes	54,098	-10%
Cowdenbeath	56,363	-6%	Midlothian North and Musselburgh	70,498	18%
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	51,210	-15%	Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	64,697	8%
Cunninghame North	56,604	-6%	Moray	63,133	5%
Cunninghame South	51,298	-14%	Motherwell and Wishaw	57,740	-4%
Dumbarton	56,120	-6%	Na h-Eileanan an Iar	21,769	-64%
Dumfriesshire	61,847	3%	North East Fife	56,669	-5%
Dundee City East	56,030	-6%	Orkney Islands	17,696	-70%
Dundee City West	56,705	-5%	Paisley	55,806	-7%
Dunfermline	62,615	5%	Perthshire North	57,021	-5%
East Kilbride	60,763	1%	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	63,018	5%
East Lothian	67,523	13%	Renfrewshire North and West	56,326	-6%
Eastwood	56,258	-6%	Renfrewshire South	52,886	-12%
Edinburgh Central	65,240	9%	Rutherglen	62,885	5%
Edinburgh Eastern	72,512	21%	Shetland Islands	17,965	-70%
Edinburgh Northern and Leith	74,827	25%	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	62,193	4%
Edinburgh Pentlands	59,274	-1%	Stirling	58,884	-2%
Edinburgh Southern	62,786	5%	Strathkelvin and Bearsden	63,895	7%
Edinburgh Western	65,827	10%	Uddingston and Bellshill	58,842	-2%
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	55,131	-8%			



