

## Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Draft Provisional Proposals for Dumfries and Galloway Council area

### Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider its Provisional Proposals for Dumfries and Galloway Council area for its Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries.

### Background

2. The Commission considered provisional groupings of council areas as part of its approach to constituency design for the Second Review, which included a group of two constituencies contained within Dumfries and Galloway Council area, see Paper BS 24. This paper offers options for constituencies within this grouping.
3. The electorate quota for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries is 59,902 electors per constituency.
4. The rules for reviewing Scottish Parliament constituencies state:
  - **Rule 1**
    - So far as is practicable, regard must be had to the boundaries of the local government areas having effect from time to time under section 1 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994.
  - **Rule 2**
    - The electorate of a constituency must be as near the electoral quota as is practicable, having regard to Rule 1.
    - 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 it must take account (so far as it 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.
5. The constituency entitlement for Dumfries and Galloway Council area is as shown in the table below:

Council area	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Constituency entitlement
Dumfries and Galloway	118,942	2.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,942</b>	<b>2.0</b>

6. The electorates of the two existing Scottish Parliament constituencies within Dumfries and Galloway Council area are shown in the table below:

Existing constituency	Electorate	Variation from the electoral quota
Dumfriesshire	61,848	+3.2%
Galloway and West Dumfries	57,094	-4.7%

7. The existing Scottish Parliament boundaries have been in use since 2011.
8. Both of the existing constituencies are within 10% of the electoral quota and it is open to the Commission to leave them unchanged for the Second Review.
9. The constituency names in this paper are provisional. The Commission will have the opportunity to review all constituency names and designations prior to the publication of its Provisional Proposals.
10. A map of the existing constituencies in this grouping can be found at Appendix A.

### Options

11. Two options are presented for consideration.

#### Option 1

12. Option 1 proposes to retain the two existing constituencies within Dumfries and Galloway Council area with a very minor amendment.
13. Dumfries and Galloway Council area is split between two constituencies. The boundary follows from the Solway Firth, the River Nith which splits Dumfries between constituencies, then a river (Cairn Water) north of Dumfries and then hill-tops northwards.
14. The existing constituency boundaries were designed to follow the ward boundaries in place at the time of the First Review but the ward boundaries were altered following the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in 2017. In Dumfries, from 2007, the ward boundaries followed the River Nith riverbank. Since 2017 the ward boundaries have followed the centre of the River Nith and as such ward 7 is split between constituencies. Option 1 proposes to align the constituency boundary to the ward boundaries and the centre of the River Nith and makes no other changes. Following the centre of the River Nith would make no difference to the number of electors in each constituency.

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from the electoral quota	Wards
Dumfriesshire	61,848	+3.2%	1,2,3,4,5,6,7(part)
Galloway and West Dumfries	57,094	-4.7%	7(part),8,9,10,11,12

15. A map of Option 1 can be found at Appendix A.
16. The advantages of Option 1 are it:
  - retains the existing constituencies, which have been in place since 2011 and may avoid confusion for the local electorate;
  - two constituencies sit wholly within Dumfries and Galloway Council area boundary and follow ward boundaries;
  - both constituencies are within 5% variation from the electoral quota.

17. The disadvantages of Option 1 are:

- the main town of Dumfries is split between two constituencies.

**Option 2**

18. Option 2 retains two constituencies within Dumfries and Galloway Council area.

19. Option 2 follows ward boundaries and avoids splitting Dumfries between two constituencies.

20. Option 2 proposes a Galloway and East Dumfries–shire constituency which extends from east of the council area to the west. It includes Stranraer, Newton Stewart and Kirkcudbright from the west and Moffat, Lockerbie and Langholm from the east of the council area.

21. Option 2 proposes a Dumfries constituency which includes Dumfries, Castle Douglas and Annan.

22. Option 2 proposes a cohesive design around the main town in the council area Dumfries, however it would also create a more rural constituency that places towns as geographically diverse as Langholm and Stranraer in the same constituency.

23. A map of Option 2 can be found at Appendix B.

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from the electoral quota	Wards
Dumfries	59,622	0.5%	4,5,6,8,9,10
Galloway and East Dumfries–shire	59,320	1.0%	1,2,3,7,11,12

24. The advantages of Option 2 are it:

- follows existing ward boundaries within the council area;
- places the whole of the town of Dumfries within a single constituency; and
- all constituencies are within 1% variation from the electoral quota.

25. The disadvantages of Option 2 are it:

- makes changes to the long standing existing arrangements that currently offer recognised boundaries; and
- creates a constituency that stretches from Langholm to Stranraer with no direct transport links across the constituency.

**Summary**

26. Option 1 retains the existing constituencies, offering continuity with the existing boundaries.

27. Option 1 offers recognised boundaries and does not split any wards, although the boundaries would be amended slightly to follow the centre of the River Nith rather than the riverbank.

28. Option 1 splits Dumfries between constituencies however this has been the case since the last review in 2011.

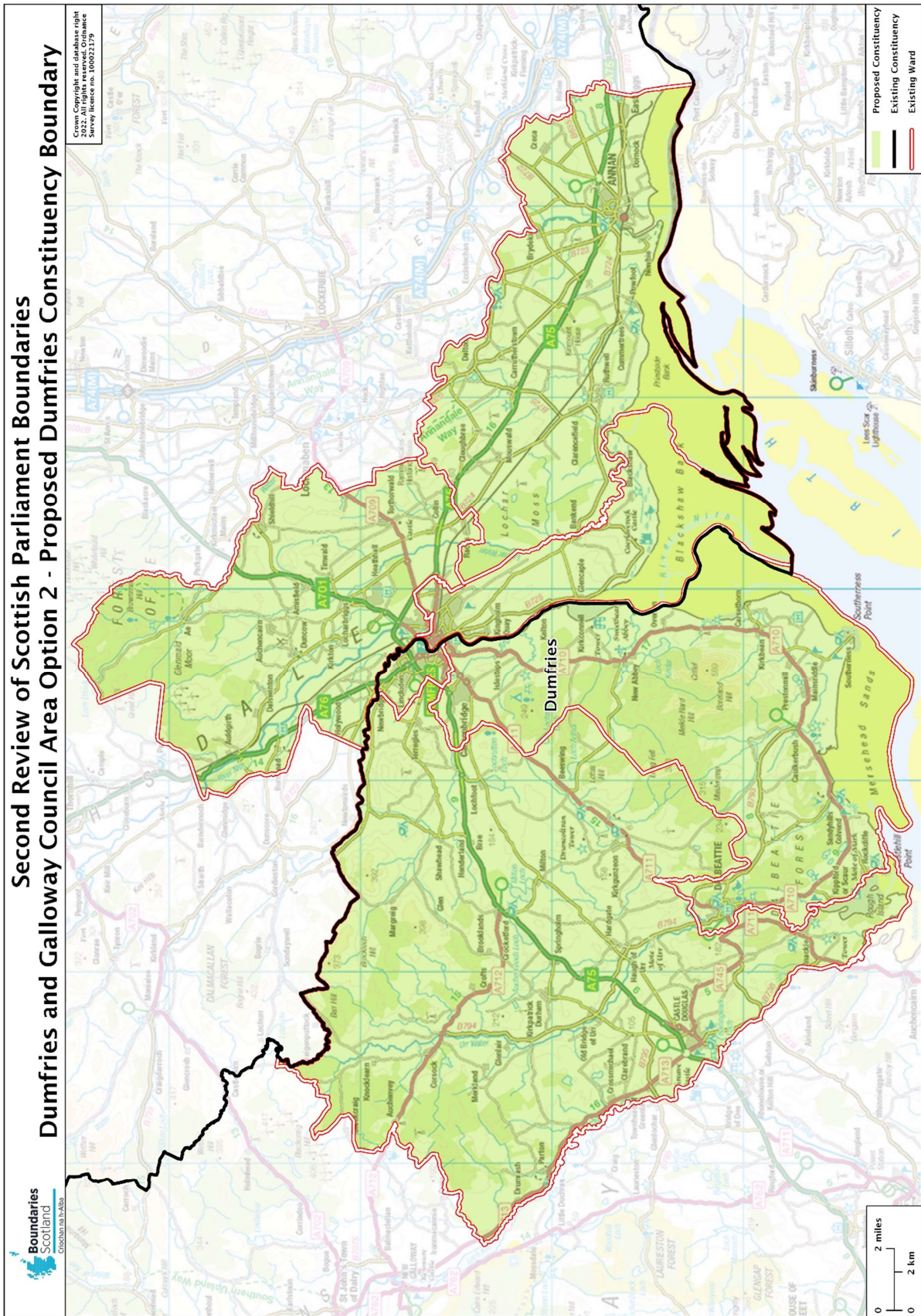
29. Option 2 creates a single constituency for the town of Dumfries and its surrounding suburbs whilst the remaining Dumfries and Galloway wards form a more rural constituency.
30. Option 2 extends to the entire width of the council area. The design could be improved north of Dumfries by splitting ward 8 to avoid a bottle neck shape there.
31. UK Parliament boundaries have avoided splitting the centre of Dumfries and the town was not split between constituencies until the first review of Scottish Parliament constituency boundaries in 2011.

**Conclusion**

32. The Commission is invited to agree its Provisional Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.

**Secretariat  
December 2022**





Appendix C  
Option 2 (Galloway and East Dumfries-shire)

