

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Draft Provisional Proposals for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider its Provisional Proposals for Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray council areas 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 wholly within Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas (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 Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray council areas is as shown in the table below:

Council area	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Constituency entitlement
Moray	74,808	1.2
Aberdeenshire	205,427	3.4
Aberdeen City	167,469	2.8
Angus	91,768	1.5
Total	539,472	8.9

6. The electorates of the nine existing Scottish Parliament constituencies within Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council area are shown in the table below:

Existing constituency	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota
Aberdeen Central	55,994	-6.5%
Aberdeen Donside	62,531	4.4%
Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	61,544	2.7%
Aberdeenshire East	64,217	7.2%
Aberdeenshire West	59,983	0.1%
Angus North and Mearns	55,006	-8.2%
Angus South	58,622	-2.1%
Banffshire and Buchan Coast	58,442	-2.4%
Moray	63,133	5.4%

7. The existing Scottish Parliament boundaries have been in use since 2011.
8. All nine 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 nine existing constituencies within Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas.
13. The existing constituency boundaries follow ward boundaries in place at the time of the First Review but the ward boundaries were altered following the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in 2017.

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota	Wards
Aberdeen Central	55,994	-6.5%	Aberdeen City 5(part), 6-8, 10(part), 11(part), 12(part)
Aberdeen Donside	62,531	4.4%	Aberdeen City 1-4, 5(part)
Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	61,544	2.7%	Aberdeen City 9, 10(part), 11(part), 12(part), 13 Aberdeenshire 17
Aberdeenshire East	64,217	7.2%	Aberdeenshire 4, 6(part), 7-9, 11, 12(part)
Aberdeenshire West	59,983	0.1%	Aberdeenshire 10, 12(part), 13-16, 18(part)
Angus North and Mearns	55,006	-8.2%	Aberdeenshire 18 (part), 19 Angus 2,3,8
Angus South	58,622	-2.1%	Angus 1, 4-7
Banffshire and Buchan Coast	58,442	-2.4%	Aberdeenshire 1-3, 5, 6(part) Moray 2(part), 3
Moray	63,133	5.4%	Moray 1, 2(part), 4-8

14. A map of Option 1 can be found at Appendix A.
15. 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; and
 - all constituencies have a variation from the electoral quota within 10%.
16. The disadvantages of Option 1 are:
- three constituencies cross council area boundaries;
 - it splits eight wards; and
 - there is little to link Buckie (Moray) and Peterhead (Aberdeenshire) in the same Banffshire and Buchan Coast constituency.

Option 2

17. Option 2 presents an arrangement based on local authority boundaries. It proposes: three constituencies within Aberdeen City Council area; one Moray constituency; three constituencies within Aberdeenshire Council area; an Angus - Aberdeenshire constituency and one constituency wholly within Angus Council area.
18. Option 2 retains two constituencies - Angus South and Angus North and Mearns.

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

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota	Wards
Aberdeen City Central	56,905	-5.0%	Aberdeen City 5-8, 12 (part)
Aberdeen City North	55,385	-7.5%	Aberdeen City 1-4
Aberdeen City South	55,179	-7.9%	Aberdeen City 9-11, 12(part), 13
Angus North and Mearns	55,006	-8.2%	Aberdeenshire 17, 18(part),19 Angus 2,3,8
Angus South	58,622	-2.1%	Angus 1, 4-7
Banff and Buchan	60,796	1.5%	Aberdeenshire 1-6
East Aberdeenshire	56,692	-5.4%	Aberdeenshire 7-9,11,12
Moray	74,808	24.9%	Moray 1-8
West Aberdeenshire	66,079	10.3%	Aberdeenshire 10, 13-16, 18(part)

20. The advantages of Option 2 are it:

- respects council area boundaries that will better reflect local ties in Aberdeen and Moray. Only one constituency overlaps a council area boundary – Angus North and Mearns;
- aims to consider existing constituency boundaries and minimise change. Two existing constituencies remain unchanged – Angus South and Angus North and Mearns;
- respects ward boundaries, only two wards are split between constituencies. In Aberdeen, the Torry/ Ferryhill ward is split by following the Great Southern Road and approx. 2,000 electors are added to the proposed Aberdeen City South constituency so it is within 10% variation from the electoral quota (Aberdeen City South constituency would have variation from the electoral quota of -11% without these additional electors). In Aberdeenshire, the Stonehaven and Lower Deeside ward is split by following the existing constituency boundary; and
- avoids Buckie and Peterhead in the same constituency.

21. The disadvantages of Option 2 are it proposes one constituency with variation from the electoral quota over 10%. The proposed Moray constituency, which follows the Moray Council area boundary, has variation from the electoral quota at 25%.

Summary

22. Option 1 retains all nine of the existing constituencies, offering continuity with the existing boundaries. Option 2 retains two of the existing constituencies – Angus North and Mearns, and Angus South.

23. Option 1 proposes three constituencies which overlap a council area boundary. Option 2 proposes one constituency which overlaps a council area boundary – Angus North and Mearns.

24. Option 1 splits eight wards between constituencies. Option 2 splits two wards.

25. Option 1 proposes no constituencies out-with 10% variation from the electoral quota. Option 2 proposes one constituency over 10% variation from the electoral quota, Moray with +25%. The Moray constituency would need to lose approximately 9,000 electors to sit within 10% variation from the electoral quota. The neighbouring Banff and Buchan constituency and West Aberdeenshire constituency have variation from the electoral quota of 1% and 10% respectively. Linking Moray with Highland in a new grouping of council areas would be challenging because Highland has 189,218 electors with an entitlement to 3.2 constituencies.
26. Option 2 may better reflect local ties in Aberdeen and Moray council areas as all of their constituencies sit within their council area boundary.

Conclusion

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

**Secretariat
February 2023**

