

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
Consideration of responses to consultation on provisional proposals for constituency boundaries – Fife Council area

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider responses to the consultation on its provisional proposals and whether it wishes to make changes to its proposals for constituencies in Fife Council area or hold a local inquiry.

Background

2. The electorates of the five existing Scottish Parliament constituencies within Fife Council area are shown in the table below:

Existing constituencies	Electorate	Variation from the electoral quota	Wards
Cowdenbeath	56,363	-5.9%	2(part),5(part),6-8
Dunfermline	62,615	4.5%	1,2(part),3,4,5(part)
Kirkcaldy	60,642	1.2%	9-12,22
Mid Fife and Glenrothes	54,098	-9.7%	13-15,21
North East Fife	56,669	-5.4%	16-20

3. The provisional proposals retained the existing North East Fife constituency boundary but renamed it Fife North East. The provisional proposals also amended the existing constituency boundaries by Burntisland following community council boundaries and made changes by Dundonald and Cardenden with those areas becoming part of the proposed Mid Fife and Glenrothes constituency rather than Cowdenbeath. The Cowdenbeath constituency was also expanded west to include the whole of the Rosyth ward. The changes were made with the aim of improving overall variation from the electoral quota.
4. The provisional proposals aimed to adhere to the principles of the review. The provisional proposals: considered the Fife Council area boundary and retained five constituencies within it; improved variation from the electorate quota from the existing arrangements; and aimed to minimise change to the existing boundaries while considering local ties, with one constituency boundary unchanged.
5. Fife Council has an electorate of 290,387 and an entitlement to 4.8 constituencies. There are no advantages in combining Fife with one of its neighbouring council areas. Perth and Kinross Council area has an electorate of

120,039 and an entitlement to 2.0 constituencies, while Clackmannanshire Council area has 40,031 electors and an entitlement to 0.7 constituencies.

6. Fife Council did not object to the provisional proposals or request a local inquiry and neither did a body of 100 electors resident in any of the proposed constituencies.
7. The electorates of the five proposed Scottish Parliament constituencies within Fife Council area are shown in the table below:

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from the electoral quota	Wards
Cowdenbeath	59,195	-1.2%	5-7,8(part), 9(part)
Dunfermline	60,987	1.8%	1-4
Fife North East	56,669	-5.4%	16-20
Kirkcaldy	55,100	-8.0%	9(part),10-12,22
Mid Fife and Glenrothes	58,436	-2.4%	8(part),13-15,21

8. A map of the provisional proposals and the existing constituency boundaries is at Appendix A.

Representations received

9. Ten responses were received for these constituencies during the one-month consultation period. All responses have been shared with the Commission. Responses to the consultation will be published on the Commission's consultation site www.consult.boundaries.scot at a later date, if a respondent gave permission to do so.

Summary of responses

10. Suggestions and comments received during the initial consultation for this area included:
 - opposition to the proposed boundary by Burntisland;
 - opposition to the proposal to change the name of the existing North East Fife constituency to Fife North East; and
 - a suggestion to make other constituencies names more representative of the communities that are included within them.

11. Unless otherwise stated, the maps in this paper show alternative suggestions in block colours, existing ward boundaries are red and provisional proposal boundaries are a black line.

Fife Consultation Responses and Analysis

12. Two members of the public opposed the boundary between the proposed Cowdenbeath and Kirkcaldy constituencies and in particular the decision to place Burntisland in a separate constituency to Kirkcaldy. Their reasons for opposing the provisional proposals were:

- local ties will be broken as Kirkcaldy and Burntisland share a number of longstanding administrative connections as well as Burntisland residents accessing local services in Kirkcaldy;
- it is impossible to travel by public transport directly from Burntisland to Cowdenbeath; and
- locally elected councillors are part of the Kirkcaldy area committee and not the Cowdenbeath area committee.

13. Neither response suggested an alternative boundary other than the status quo. Since 1999 Burntisland has been in the same Scottish Parliament constituency as Kirkcaldy but has never been in a constituency with Cowdenbeath. Since 1974 Burntisland and Kirkcaldy have been in the same UK Parliament constituency.

14. A member of the public suggested Burntisland should not be included in the proposed Cowdenbeath constituency. They offered no alternative boundary.

15. A member of the public suggested alternative names for the proposed 'Cowdenbeath' constituency. They suggested that the constituency names should include Rosyth, Inverkeithing or some reference to the fact that the new boundaries include large parts of coastal and south Fife, they suggested 'Cowdenbeath and Rosyth' or 'Cowdenbeath and South Fife'. They stated that this is in part due to the cultural and geographical disconnect between Cowdenbeath and Rosyth/ coastal villages, but it is also important to recognise that Rosyth has an almost identical population to Cowdenbeath.

16. A Councillor for Burntisland, Kinghorn and Western Kirkcaldy opposed the proposed boundary between Burntisland and Kirkcaldy. The councillor cited Burntisland's rail and bus connections are with Kirkcaldy to the east, Inverkeithing and Dunfermline to the west and not to Cowdenbeath to the north and most children from the local primary school going to Kirkcaldy for their secondary schooling as reasons to oppose the proposals. They also suggested that as the local councillor it would not be feasible to be part of two separate area

committees. The councillor explained that Fife Council is split into seven areas for administration and governance of which Kirkcaldy Area is separate from Cowdenbeath Area. The councillor offered no alternative boundary.

17. Royal Burntisland Community Council opposed the proposals for Burntisland. They cited longstanding links to Kirkcaldy in terms of education, health and other local services such as leisure and retail. The community council also cited a lack of direct transport links to Cowdenbeath.
18. Three councillors from the Cupar ward, one of which was John Caffrey, opposed the name of the proposed Fife North East constituency and favoured the retention of the existing constituency name – North East Fife.
19. North East Fife is the name of the similar, but not coterminous, UK Parliament constituency.
20. Jenny Gilruth MSP, for the Mid-Fife and Glenrothes constituency, suggested an alternative constituency name. Ms Gilruth suggested Central Fife would be a more appropriate name for the constituency as it better reflects the distinct communities within the constituency. Ms Gilruth believes that Mid-Fife and Glenrothes constituency names does not recognise the towns and communities in the eastern side of the seat.

All Scotland Consultation Responses

21. Over 60 responses made general comments opposing the review or made comments out-with the legislation.
22. Six responses made general comments supporting the review.
23. A further 18 responses commented on more than one area. The Scottish Liberal Democrats whilst in broad agreement with the proposals for Fife suggested that the name North East Fife should be retained. They stated amending the name but not the boundary would lead to voter confusion. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party responded but had no comment to make on the proposed boundaries other than to note the proposed changes are justifiable to achieve electorates closer to parity and to note the proposed name changes.

Summary

24. The existing constituencies are all within 10% variation from the electorate quota.

25. The provisional proposals amended the boundary of four constituencies and renamed the other constituency. The proposed changes to the existing arrangements were with a view to improving electoral parity although all of the existing constituencies are within 10% variation from electoral parity. Therefore the Commission could retain the existing constituency boundaries.
26. Fife Council did not respond to the consultation and fewer than 100 members of the public responded to the consultation.
27. The majority of the consultation responses opposed the proposed changes to the existing Kirkcaldy constituency boundary by Burntisland, citing long standing local links and services and the council-run representative arrangements. Historically there are strong links between Burntisland and Kirkcaldy. No alternative boundary suggestions were submitted regarding Burntisland but reverting to the existing arrangements would resolve the issues raised.
28. The other responses focussed on the proposed constituency names. The Commission had amended the existing North East Fife constituency name to Fife North East to differentiate it from the UK Parliament constituency name. The Boundary Commission for Scotland have recently concluded their 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies and retained North East Fife as a constituency name. The names of UK Parliament and Scottish Parliament constituencies generally differ, although there are some exceptions such as Argyll and Bute, East Lothian and Stirling. One response suggested naming the proposed Mid Fife and Glenrothes constituency as Central Fife to better reflect the communities within it.

Recommendations

29. Taking into account all of the evidence arising from the public consultations on the provisional proposals, the Secretariat invites the Commission to decide whether to:
- adopt the published provisional proposals as its final recommendations subject to satisfactory design in other groupings being agreed;
 - amend its proposals for constituency boundaries or names and consult upon them again; and
 - hold a local inquiry.

Secretariat
August 2023

Provisional Proposals – for Fife Council area

