

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
Consideration of responses to consultation on provisional proposals for
constituency boundaries – Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas

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 Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas or hold a local inquiry.

Background

2. The electorates of the eight existing Scottish Parliament constituencies within Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas are shown in the table below. The existing Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency also includes part of East Lothian Council area.

Existing constituencies	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota	Wards
Clydesdale	61,011	1.9%	South Lanarkshire 1–4, 5(part), 6(part)
East Kilbride	60,763	1.4%	South Lanarkshire 6(part), 7–10
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	55,131	-8.0%	Scottish Borders 4,6–11
Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse	59,596	-0.5%	South Lanarkshire 5(part),17(part), 18–20
Midlothian North and Musselburgh	70,498	17.7%	East Lothian Midlothian
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	64,697	8.0%	Midlothian 1,4(part),6 Scottish Borders 1–3, 5
Rutherglen	62,885	5.0%	South Lanarkshire 11–14, 15(part), 17(part)
Uddingston and Bellshill	58,842	-1.8%	North Lanarkshire 14–16, 18(part) South Lanarkshire 15 (part), 16, 17(part)

3. The provisional proposals made changes to all of the existing constituency boundaries, except Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire.

4. The provisional proposals aimed to adhere to the principles of the review. The provisional proposals: improved variation from the electorate quota from the existing arrangements; and aimed to minimise change to the existing boundaries while considering local ties. The provisional proposals retained the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency and made minimal change to the East Kilbride constituency and Rutherglen constituency boundaries.
5. The existing constituencies included parts of North Lanarkshire and East Lothian Council areas.
6. The electorate of Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas and their theoretical entitlement to constituencies is shown in the table below.

Council Area	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Constituency theoretical entitlement
Scottish Borders	93,179	1.6
South Lanarkshire	258,377	4.3

7. The electorate of the neighbouring council areas and their theoretical entitlement to constituencies is shown in the table below.

Council Area	Electorate (1 Sept 22)	Constituency theoretical entitlement
City of Edinburgh	400,466	6.7
Dumfries and Galloway	118,942	2.0
East Ayrshire	96,401	1.6
East Lothian	88,539	1.5
East Renfrewshire	75,017	1.3
Glasgow City	460,012	7.7
Midlothian	76,131	1.3
North Lanarkshire	264,752	4.4
West Lothian	146,456	2.4

8. The electorates of the six proposed Scottish Parliament constituencies within Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas are shown in the table below:

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota	Wards
Clyde Valley and Tweeddale	60,443	0.9%	Scottish Borders 1–3,5 South Lanarkshire 2,3
East Kilbride	61,700	3.0%	South Lanarkshire 6–10
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	55,131	–8.0%	Scottish Borders 4,6–11
Hamilton and Uddingston	54,496	–9.0%	South Lanarkshire 16–19
Larkhall and Clydesdale	57,386	–4.2%	South Lanarkshire 1, 4, 5, 20
Rutherglen	62,400	4.2%	South Lanarkshire 11–15

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

Rules

10. 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.

Local Inquiry

11. In their response to the consultation Scottish Borders Council stated “Scottish Borders Council objects to the provisional proposals for the Clyde Valley & Tweeddale County Constituency.” Scottish Labour, a Scottish Borders Councillor, sixteen members of the public and Stow Community Trust also requested a local inquiry and 90 responses opposed the Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. South Lanarkshire Council did not respond to the consultation.

Representations received

12. Approximately 140 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 available on the Commission’s consultation site www.consult.boundaries.scot if the respondent gave permission to do so.

Summary of responses

13. Suggestions and comments received during the initial consultation focussed on the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. Residents from both the Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas stated they have little in common. Some responses also opposed the proposals because they split Carluke and Lanark between two constituencies.

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

Scottish Borders Consultation Responses and Analysis

15. There were 46 responses from members of the public regarding the provisional proposals for Scottish Borders Council area.

16. Two members of the public opposed the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because it would create a large constituency that would be challenging for one MSP to represent.

17. The proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency covers an area of 2,518 km². There are no constituency area limit rules for the Scottish Parliament. The existing Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency covers an area of 1,760 km² and the existing Clydesdale constituency covers an area of 1,573 km².

A member of the public stated the proposals split residential areas, transport links and access to local amenities. No detailed descriptions or examples were provided with this response.

18. A member of the public opposed a Scottish Borders – South Lanarkshire constituency because it will confuse electors, likely increase costs, result in poor communication between the two areas and affect transport links.

19. No Scottish Parliament constituency has included parts of both Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas. Since 2005, there has been a Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale UK Parliament constituency which includes parts of Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway Council areas.

20. A member of the public opposed a Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because the Borders looks towards Edinburgh and the Lothians rather than South Lanarkshire. They stated there are good transport links, such as a railway line, between Edinburgh and the Borders but only B roads link the Borders with South Lanarkshire. They supported the comments from Cllr Sinclair, see below.

21. The Tweedbank–Edinburgh railway line links the Borders with Midlothian and Edinburgh. The A68, A7 and A702 roads also link these areas.

22. A member of the public suggested the Commission use Secondary School Catchment areas as the building blocks of constituencies rather than electoral wards.

23. The Commission could group secondary school catchment areas together to create constituencies. The respondent did not provide any examples or suggested boundaries. The rules for Scottish Parliament boundary reviews state the Commission must take account of local authority boundaries.

24. A member of the public supported the proposals because there are links, such as farming, tourism and retail, between rural Lanarkshire (Biggar) and the Borders. They suggested more detailed information be made available to all electors

regarding access to healthcare, education, local services and any cost implications of the proposals.

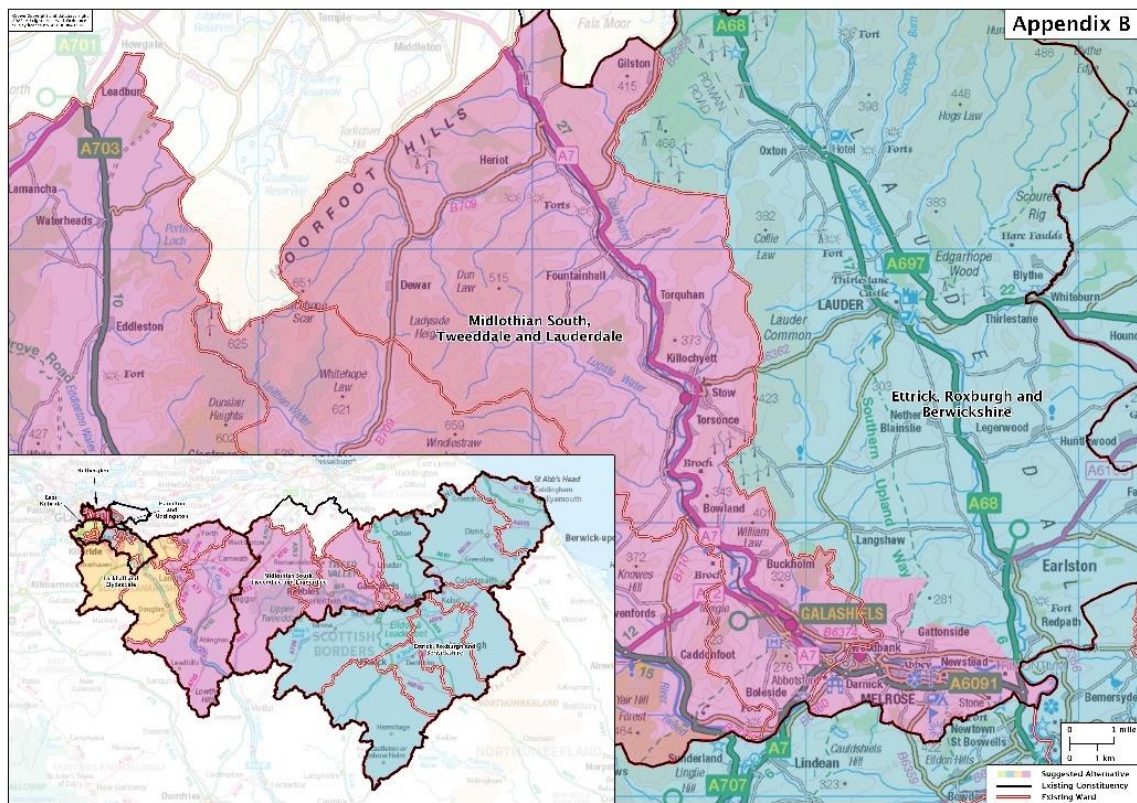
25. Councillor Sinclair (Galashiels and District ward) opposed the proposals because there are no transport, historic, geographical, and social links between the Borders and the Clyde Valley. They stated:

- the current Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency has good transport links by road (A7, A68 and A72) and rail between the Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh;
- there are no public transport links between the Borders and Clydesdale, making it challenging to visit the constituency MSP's office;
- the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency covers a large geographical area increasing travel time within the constituency. In dealing with two Councils they specified the distance between Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council offices is 70 miles while the distance between Scottish Borders and Midlothian Council offices is 30 miles;
- the proposals would create a constituency covering two NHS Health Boards (Borders – Lothian and Lanarkshire); and
- the proposals do not consider local plans such as The City Deal (includes Scottish Borders, Edinburgh) while South Lanarkshire is part of the Glasgow City Deal or SEStran and The South East Improvement Collaborative.

26. Cllr Sinclair suggested adding part of ward 5 (polling districts 05A, 05B, 05C, and 05D) into the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh & Berwickshire constituency, bringing the total electorate closer to the quota at 59,676 and the existing Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency at 60,488 electors. They believe this would maintain the strong links between the Scottish Borders and Midlothian with constituencies with a more equal number of electors. They also opposed the short consultation period and suggested the Commission hold a local inquiry to hear local views.

27. A map of the area included in Cllr Sinclair's suggestion is shown in the table and map below. Polling districts 5A–5D follow the A68 road southwards from Soutra Hill to the River Tweed and include the towns of Lauder and Earlston. This suggestion is based on the existing constituency boundaries. It would transfer approximately 4,500 electors between constituencies and splits the Leaderdale and Melrose ward.

Constituency	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Etrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	59,531	-0.6%
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	60,297	0.7%



28. The advantage of the Cllr Sinclair suggestion is that it improves variation from the electorate quota in the proposed Etrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency, (rule 2).

29. The disadvantage of this suggestion is it splits the Lauderdale and Melrose ward (rule 4).

30. Cllr Douglas (Scottish Borders Tweeddale East ward) stated “I do not believe that the proposals adequately reflect the communities that they are intended to represent either in terms of historic links or transport and economic ties. The attempt to just juggle numbers in the central belt has unwanted consequences elsewhere particularly in the Scottish Borders.”

31. Scottish Borders Council objected to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. They requested the following points be considered:

- “that delicate balance is struck between the necessary boundary adjustments and the preservation of the already well established community and transport links between regions; and
- an alternative name to better reflect the strong sense of local identity, historical significance, and cultural connection within the constituency, such as Lanark, Tweeddale, Galashiels, and Lauderdale.

South Lanarkshire Consultation Responses and Analysis

32. There were about 90 responses from members of the public regarding the provisional proposals for South Lanarkshire Council area. Most comments opposed the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. There were few comments regarding the other constituencies proposed within South Lanarkshire: East Kilbride; Rutherglen; and Hamilton and Uddingston.

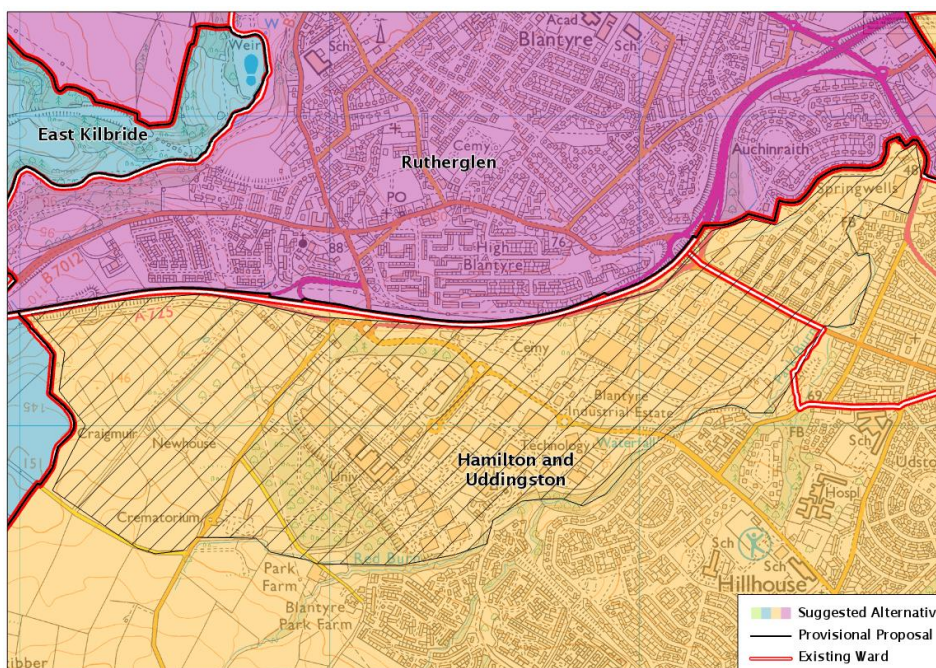
33. About 60 members of the public opposed the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. They raised the following concerns and issues:

- the proposals do not consider rule 1 of the review – to consider local authority boundaries;
- there are no historical, transport, business or cultural ties between the Borders and Clydesdale;
- the proposals split the historical Clydesdale area;
- the proposals will disrupt third sector partnerships;
- will increase costs including travel costs;
- poor communication between two localities and council areas;
- cause confusion with constituents;
- break strong ties between Carluke and Lanark (Carluke looks towards Lanark or Newmains);
- more challenging for electors to access or meet their MSP;
- the constituency covers too large an area;
- South Lanarkshire has good transport links but none with Scottish Borders;
- breaks links between Lanark and Lesmahagow; and
- the constituency covers two health boards.

34. As mentioned earlier, since 2005 there has been a Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale UK Parliament constituency which includes parts of Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway Council areas. No Scottish Parliament constituency previously has included parts of both Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas.

35. Since at least 1950 Carlisle and Lanark have been situated in the same UK Parliament constituency and both towns have always been in the same Scottish Parliament constituency.
36. Mairi McAllan MSP for Clydesdale opposed the proposals because:
- they break strong historical ties within the existing Clydesdale constituency;
 - there is nothing to connect Clydesdale (Biggar and Lanark) with the Borders, such as transport links and few cultural or historical ties;
 - people in Biggar, Lanark, Carlisle, Lesmahagow, Forth, Carnwath, Abington, Douglas, Coalburn etc are closely linked, especially the two biggest towns Lanark and Carlisle;
 - the health, transport, retail and leisure services used by people in Clydesdale are interwoven;
 - splitting a constituency between two local authorities will be less efficient, more costly, worsen communication and service to local residents;
 - the current Clydesdale constituency has a good transport infrastructure: bus, road and train. The proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency has no links between Lanark and the main borders towns making it challenging for constituents to meet their MSP and result in two constituency offices with additional costs; and
 - they suggested Strathaven is probably more connected with Avondale than Clydesdale
37. Skirling Community Council opposed the proposals and supported the comments of MSP Mairi McAllan and Scottish Borders Cllr Fay Sinclair because there is little to connect the Borders with South Lanarkshire.
38. A member of the public supported MSP Mairi McAllan's comments.
39. A member of the public wished to retain the existing Clydesdale constituency because it meets rule 1 (local authority boundaries), rule 2 (electoral parity with 61,011 electors), rule 3 (local geography) and Rule 4 (local ties).
40. A member of the public from Biggar supported the proposals but offered no reasons.
41. A member of the public raised no concerns with the proposed boundaries but opposed the Larkhall and Clydesdale constituency name because Larkhall is not the largest town and suggested the old county town of Lanark would be more appropriate or to retain the existing constituency name.

42. A member of the public wished to keep Blantyre within a Hamilton constituency.
43. Blantyre currently sits within a Rutherglen constituency. The respondent could be confused with UK Parliament constituency boundaries as Blantyre currently sits within a Rutherglen and Hamilton West constituency but the Boundary Commission for Scotland have recommended Blantyre lies within a Rutherglen constituency.
44. Cllr Johnston–Dempsey (Bothwell and Uddingston ward) noted some boundaries follow the centre of a river or road while others follows the roadside or riverbank. They suggested the boundaries follow the centre line of rivers or roads or follow physical features.
45. Cllr Barker (Clydesdale East ward) stated the review “is interested only in numbers. It ignores requirements to consider stability, social, economic and transport links. It is a totally unsuitable proposal for the former Clydesdale Area and will democratic worsen representation.”
46. A member of the public opposed the proposed Rutherglen constituency name and boundary. They suggested Rutherglen, Cambuslang and Blantyre instead as it would improve engagement and understanding within the local community. They also suggested that the southern boundary of the proposed Rutherglen constituency be extended southwards to follow the course of the Red Burn and Park Burn rivers rather than the A725 road.
47. The Commission’s proposals partly cross the A725 road by Auchinraith as the boundary follows a ward boundary in that area. There are approximately 600 electors between the river and A725. The Commission could add these electors to a Rutherglen constituency, see shaded area in map below and table.



Constituency	Electorate	Variation from the electorate quota
Hamilton and Uddingston	55,096	-8.0%
Rutherglen	61,800	3.2%

48. A member of the public opposed the proposals and suggested replacing Strathaven with Peebles in the current Clydesdale constituency as it would propose a less drastic change and prevent needless division across Clydesdale. They advised the vast majority of the smaller villages in Clydesdale, such as Lesmahagow and Douglas share transport links with Lanark and should remain within the same constituency.

49. Strathaven and Peebles have similar electorates (between 8,800–8,900) so these towns could be swapped and the existing Clydesdale constituency would retain a similar number of electors. However the suggestion does not consider the impact of the existing Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency losing nearly 9,000 electors.

50. A member of the public opposed a constituency including parts of North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council areas.

51. The proposals do not propose a North–South Lanarkshire constituency.

52. A member of the public generally supported the proposals.

53. A member of the public stated “the Scottish Parliamentary constituencies are a legacy from the Third Westminster Review. Even today, it is possible to trace the 'lineage' of seats back to those established in time for the 1983 General Election. There is room for improvement in the arrangements proposed, particularly around the Central Belt.”
54. There were approximately 10 general responses to the consultation opposing the Second Review or making comments out-with the legislation for the review.

All Scotland Consultation Responses from National Political Parties that apply to this grouping and analysis

55. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party accepted a constituency grouping of Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire and generally accepted the provisional proposals but suggested renaming the proposed Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency as Lanark, Leaderdale and Galashiels to better reflect the communities in the constituency. If that name was unacceptable they suggested Lanark, Leaderdale and Tweed Valley.
56. The Scottish Labour Party stated they are continuing to consult on this grouping but stated they believe there are few ties between the town of Lanark and the Scottish Borders. They suggested the Commission hold a local inquiry to enable this and any other concerns that may arise about the proposals in this area to be discussed.
57. Scottish Liberal Democrats submitted a response which commented on a number of council areas but did not comment on the proposals for this particular grouping.

All Scotland Consultation Responses that apply to this grouping and analysis

58. There were six responses that commented on more than a single grouping of council areas or all of Scotland out-with those submitted by political parties. None of these referred to this grouping.
59. There were approximately 10 general responses to the consultation opposing the Second Review or making comments out-with the legislation for the review.

Names

60. The following alternative constituency names were suggested.

Proposed constituency names	Alternative suggestions
Clyde Valley and Tweeddale	Lanark, Leaderdale and Galashiels Lanark, Leaderdale and Tweed Valley Lanark, Tweeddale, Galashiels, and Lauderdale
East Kilbride	None
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	None
Hamilton and Uddingston	None
Larkhall and Clydesdale	None provided but comment that Larkhall is not the largest town in the proposed constituency
Rutherglen	Rutherglen, Cambuslang and Blantyre

Summary

61. The existing constituencies linked the Scottish Borders with Midlothian and partly East Lothian and also North Lanarkshire with South Lanarkshire.
62. Scottish Borders Council objected to the proposals, requiring the Commission to hold a local inquiry there in relation to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency.
63. There was strong opposition to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because it was argued there is little to connect communities from the Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire. There were few comments on the proposals elsewhere in South Lanarkshire or the Borders.
64. Since 1999 no Scottish Parliament constituency has included parts of Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas. Since 2005 a Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale UK Parliament constituency has included parts of Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire and Dumfries and Galloway Council areas.
65. Scottish Borders has 93,179 electors. One or two Scottish Borders constituencies would offer wide variations from the electorate quota. South Lanarkshire, with 255,924 electors and entitlement to 4.3 constituencies would result in constituencies with higher variations from the electorate quota.
66. A number of responses highlighted a lack of transport links between Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas. The A702 road flows through both areas but does not connect many towns. The A72 road connects Peebles and

Biggar. The A721 road connects Peebles with Carnwath. There are no rail links or motorways between these areas.

67. Some responses highlighted the breaking of local ties between Carluke and Lanark. Historically Carluke and Lanark have always been in the same Scottish Parliament or UK Parliament constituency.
68. The Commission could retain Carluke in the same constituency as Lanark. No alternative boundaries were submitted regarding this area but the Secretariat have developed an alternative design, see map in Appendix B and table below.

Constituency	Electorate (approx.)	Variation from the electorate quota
Clyde Valley and Tweeddale	63,700	6%
Larkhall and Clydesdale	54,200	-9%

69. This alternative constituency design maintains local ties between Lanark and Carluke (Rule 4). However it still proposes a Scottish Borders – South Lanarkshire constituency (Rule 1); and may break local ties by Lanark. Towns such as Carnwath, Carstairs, Forth and Douglas who look towards Lanark will be situated in a different constituency (Rule 4).
70. Few alternative suggestions were submitted for this grouping which had regard to the review rules. One suggested extending the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency to improve variation from electoral parity. The other suggested extending the proposed Rutherglen constituency boundary to follow a stream rather than the A725 road.
71. The Commission could consider an alternative grouping of council areas and constituencies. The existing constituencies combine Midlothian with the Scottish Borders, although the Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency includes part of East Lothian as well. Scottish Borders has an entitlement to 1.6 constituencies and Midlothian to 1.3 constituencies, which would propose 2.9 or 3 constituencies. South Lanarkshire would be placed in a grouping with Falkirk, North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Council areas This is considered in Paper 73 – Alternative constituency design groupings.
72. As stated above 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 revised proposals.

Recommendations

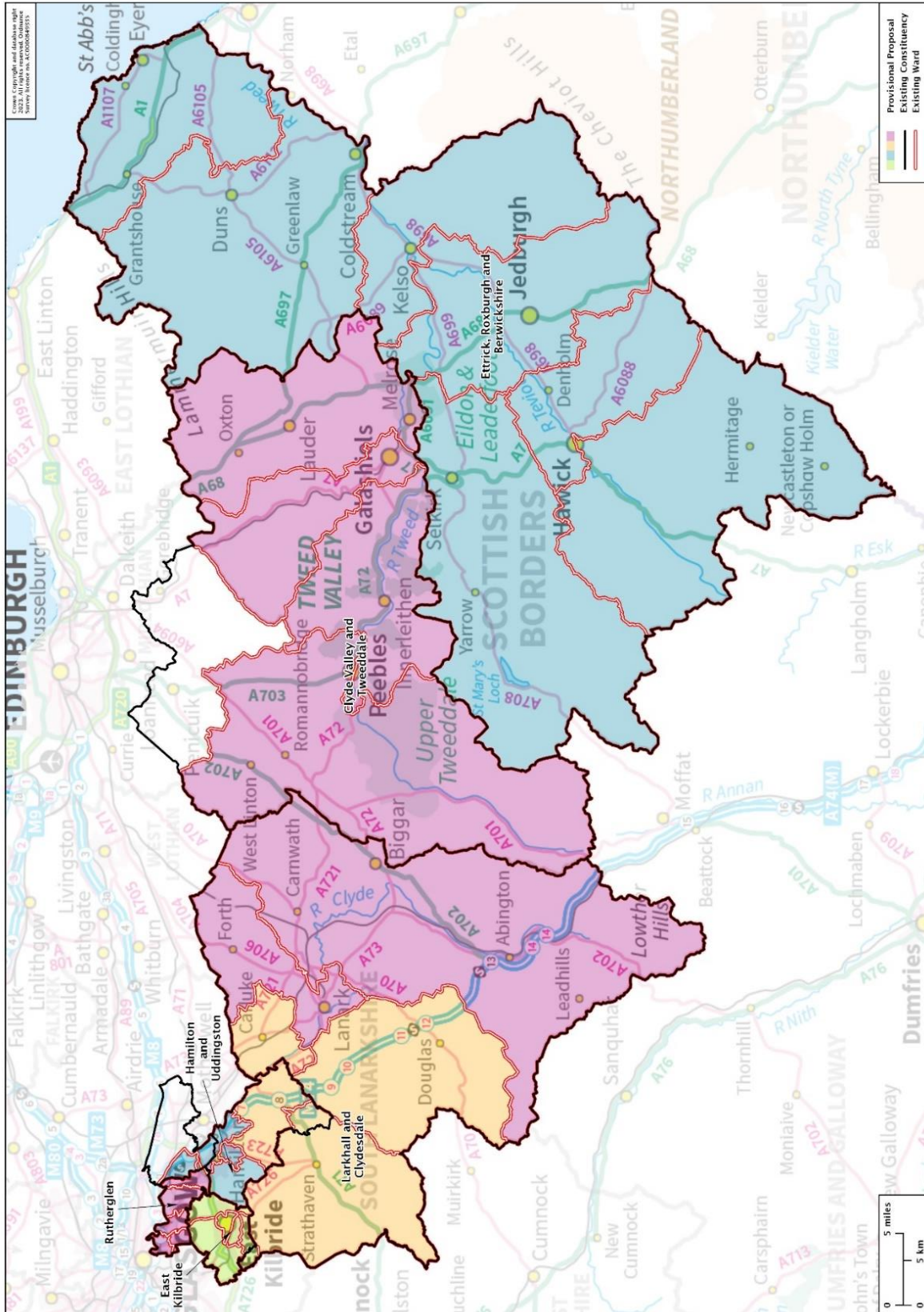
73. Taking into account all of the evidence arising from the public consultation on the provisional proposals, the Commission must hold a local inquiry in respect of the Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire and Kilmarnock and Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituencies because Scottish Borders Council objected to the proposals.

74. The Commission is invited to offer any initial thoughts on the issues in this paper. As a local inquiry is required no decision on possible Revised Proposals can be made at this time. Paper 74 considers handling of local inquiries for this review.

Secretariat

September 2023

Provisional Proposals – for Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas



Alternative design Lanark and Carluke in same constituency – for Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas

