

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
Draft Revised Proposals for Constituencies - Scottish Borders and South
Lanarkshire Council areas**

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to agree its Revised Proposals for constituencies in Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas, in light of the report from Assistant Commissioner Ross on the local inquiry held in that area.

Background

2. The Commission agreed its provisional proposals after consideration of Papers BS40 and BS47 at its meetings of 9 March 2023 and 5 April 2023, respectively. The Commission agreed to consult on six constituencies within Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas. The provisional proposals retained the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency and made minor changes to the existing East Kilbride constituency and Rutherglen constituency.
3. A table of the provisional proposals is shown in the table below and a map is shown in Appendix A.

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

4. The Commission consulted on its provisional proposals between 16 May and 17 June 2023.
5. The Commission considered responses to the consultation for Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas at its meeting of 5 October 2023 (Paper BS 70) and that paper is attached as an Annex. The Commission agreed to conduct a local inquiry in respect of the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because Scottish Borders Council had objected to it. There were further comments from both Tweeddale and Clydesdale opposing the Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency.

Local Inquiry

6. Sheriff Principal Ross (Lothian and Borders Sheriffdom) acted as Assistant Commissioner at the local inquiry which was held at Peebles Hydro on 11 January 2024.

7. The local inquiry was attended by local councillors from both Scottish Borders Council and South Lanarkshire Council, political parties, an MP, MSP, members of the public and a national political party.
8. The Assistant Commissioner has submitted his report for the inquiry to the Commission which appears at Appendix B and a full transcript of the local inquiry is available at Appendix C.
9. At the local inquiry there was both support and opposition to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. During the earlier public consultation most of the comments had opposed that constituency stating there were a lack of any ties within it. In summary:
 - Cllr Fay Sinclair (Galashiels and District ward) stated the Borders have strong links with Midlothian, including transport links (railway line and A68, A7 or A72 roads) and no such links with South Lanarkshire. She explained the alternative suggestion by Galashiels she had submitted during the earlier consultation stage (see Paper BS 70);
 - Cllr Euan Jardine (Galashiels and District ward) supported the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because it creates a rural constituency;
 - Cllr Marshall Douglas (Tweeddale East ward) stated there are no historical or cultural links between Lauder or Galashiels with Biggar or Lanark;
 - Cllr Ian McAllan (Clydesdale East ward) stated there are no historical or cultural links between Galashiels and Lanark;
 - Craig Hoy, MSP for South Scotland, supported the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency and explained an alternative suggestion which included Midlothian, Edinburgh, East Lothian and West Lothian;
 - Cllr Julie Pirone (Tweeddale East ward) supported the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because there are strong cultural links between Clydesdale and Tweeddale;
 - Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party supported the proposals;
 - Cllr Alex Allison (Clydesdale East ward) supported the proposals because there are strong rural and cultural links within the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency;
 - two members of the public supported the proposals because there are strong rural and cultural links within the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency;
 - David Mundell, MP for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, supported the proposals because there are social and cultural ties between Clydesdale and Tweeddale; and

- Cllr Richard Lockhart (Clydesdale North ward) supported the proposals because it proposes a rural constituency with common ties.
10. The Assistant Commissioner noted there were conflicting comments made at the local inquiry regarding the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency.
11. Those supporting the proposed constituency had stated that towns within the proposed constituency had a similar character and common needs. They have similar interests, historic, cultural and industrial links in a large rural constituency. Some had mentioned large capital projects that had required Scottish Borders Council to work closely with neighbouring Councils, proving that the wider area could collaborate.
12. Those opposing the proposed constituency stated the Borders had closer links with Midlothian such as health services, community councils and school links, rather than with South Lanarkshire. Some had noted the poor transport links within the constituency making it challenging for constituents to meet their MSP while others stated this was not an issue as they could use video conferencing. Some stated the Borders had better transport links with the Lothians.
13. The Assistant Commissioner did not make any recommendations because there were conflicting opinions regarding the existence and strength of community ties within the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. Nevertheless, he believed that communities within the constituency had a similar economic and social nature. He also suggested that the Commission may wish to reconsider the constituency name once it had agreed its boundaries.

Options

14. The Commission is invited to consider alternative options and suggestions for constituencies.
15. The maps in this paper show alternative suggestions in block colours and existing ward boundaries in red. The black line denotes provisional proposal boundaries or existing boundaries.
16. There were alternative suggestions discussed in Paper BS 70 for this constituency grouping. The suggestions were from:
- Councillor Sinclair, by Lauderdale. She also discussed this at the local inquiry; and
 - a member of the public suggested an alternative boundary by Blantyre.
17. At the Peebles local inquiry, the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party discussed an alternative suggestion that focussed on Edinburgh and the Lothians. Their suggestion fits within the Commission's proposed council area groupings and is discussed in Paper BS 86 (Edinburgh and Lothians).

Alternative Option - South Lanarkshire and Scottish Borders Council areas

18. The Secretariat have developed an alternative constituency design within the provisional proposals council area grouping of South Lanarkshire and Scottish Borders Council areas.
19. It retains four constituencies from the provisional proposals, including one existing constituency - Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire. There was little or no

opposition to the four unchanged constituencies during the consultation and at the local inquiry. This revised design aims to place more of the rural communities from South Lanarkshire, such as Biggar, in a Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. It places Lanark in a constituency with neighbouring parts of South Lanarkshire to the north and west of the town and marks the town's importance to the area in naming it, Lanark.

20. During the public consultation and local inquiry there was opposition to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because there were no ties between the Borders and Clydesdale. However, at the local inquiry there was some support for this constituency as rural communities had common interests. Those supporting the proposed constituency focussed on Biggar (South Lanarkshire) and Peebles (Scottish Borders) having many local ties.
21. Although a number of respondents stated there are no local ties between Tweeddale and Clydesdale, the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale UK Parliament constituency also includes Clydesdale and Tweeddale and has been in place since 2005.
22. This option avoids breaking local ties between Carluke and Lanark as both of these more urban areas are included in a Lanark constituency.
23. Two wards are divided between constituencies. The Clydesdale North ward is divided by following the railway line, to the north of Lanark. The Clydesdale West ward is divided by following an historical ward boundary (1995-1999).
24. A table of the alternative design is shown in the table below and a map is shown in Appendix D.

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota	Wards
Clyde Valley and Tweeddale	55,105	-8.0%	Scottish Borders 1-3, 5 South Lanarkshire 2(part), 3, 4(part)
Lanark	62,724	4.7%	South Lanarkshire 1, 2(part), 4(part), 5, 20

25. The advantages of this proposal are it:
- retains four of the proposed constituencies where there was little opposition during the consultation and at the local inquiry (Rule 4);
 - places Carluke and Lanark in the same constituency (Rule 4);
 - may better reflect local ties within a more rural constituency (Rule 4); and
 - considers the proposed constituency council area groupings (Rule 4).
26. The disadvantages of this proposal are that it:
- it proposes a constituency that covers a vast area, from Douglas to Lauder. The area to the west of the M74, which includes Douglas and Glespin, has been included to improve variation from the electoral quota. There are approx. 3,500 electors in this area, without these electors there would be 51,648 electors with variation from the electoral quota at -13.8% in the Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency (Rule 4); and
 - may break local ties between Forth, Carstairs and Lanark (Rule 4).

27. At its meeting of 5 October 2023, the Commission also discussed Paper BS 73 - Alternative constituency design groupings - and asked the Secretariat to develop alternative proposals for constituencies based on different council area groupings that might identify improvements to the provisional proposals. Three alternative options are discussed within a new grouping of Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas. However, these are dependent on the Commission agreeing new constituency designs within a grouping of: City of Edinburgh and East Lothian Council areas; and Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas.

New grouping - Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas

28. Three new constituency designs are presented below for a new grouping of Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas. These areas have an electorate of 169,310 and an entitlement to 2.8 constituencies.

29. These new constituency designs resemble the existing constituency boundaries because they were designed within a grouping of Midlothian, Scottish Borders and partly East Lothian Council areas.

30. All three options retain the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency and avoid a Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency covering parts of three council areas.

New grouping - Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas - Option 1

31. Option 1 proposes a Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency similar to the existing constituency.

32. Option 1 splits a single ward, Midlothian South. The proposed boundary follows a community council area boundary and partly: the River Esk; polling district boundary; primary school catchment area boundary; and historical ward boundary (1995-99).

33. A table of Option 1 is shown in the table below and a map is shown in Appendix E.

Option 1 - new grouping - Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas			
Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Variation from electoral quota	Wards
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	55,131	-8.0%	Scottish Borders 4, 6-11
Midlothian North	56,918	-5.0%	Midlothian 2-5, 6(part)
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	57,261	-4.4%	Midlothian 1, 6(part) Scottish Borders 1-3, 5

34. The advantages of Option 1 are that it:

- retains the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency. There was no opposition to retaining this constituency during the provisional proposals consultation (Rule 4);

- avoids a Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency where there was strong opposition during the public consultation alongside some support at the Peebles local inquiry (Rule 4); and
- avoids a Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency which included parts of three different council areas (Rule 4).

35. The disadvantages of Option 1 are that it:

- may break local ties between Auchendinny and Penicuik (Rule 4); and
- is interdependent on the Commission agreeing other new groupings.

New Grouping -Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas - Option 2

36. Option 2 is similar to Option 1, but it follows the existing constituency boundary by Auchendinny, retaining Auchendinny and Penicuik in the same Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency.

37. Option 2 splits two wards: Midlothian South, as described in Option 1; and Midlothian West. The Midlothian West ward is split by following the existing Scottish Parliament constituency boundary by Auchendinny, this boundary also partly follows Glencorse Burn, the A701 road, a minor road and a stream. It also follows a historical ward boundaries (1995-99 and partly 1999-2007) and a polling district boundary.

38. A table of Option 2 is shown in the table below and a map is shown in Appendix F.

Option 2 – new grouping - Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas			
Constituency Name	Electorate	Variation from Electoral Quota	Wards
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	55,131	-8.0%	Scottish Borders 4,6-11
Midlothian North	54,005	-9.8%	Midlothian 2-3, 4(part), 5, 6(Part)
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	60,174	0.5%	Scottish Borders 1-3, 5 Midlothian 1, 4(part), 6(part)

39. The advantages of Option 2 are the same as Option 1 but Option 2 may better reflect local ties between Auchendinny and Penicuik (Rule 4).

40. There are no obvious disadvantages to Option 2 but it is interdependent on the Commission agreeing other new groupings.

New grouping - Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas - Option 3

41. Option 3 proposes a Midlothian North constituency that includes Dalkeith, Lasswade and Penicuik and a Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency that includes Gorebridge, Newtongrange, Lauderdale and Tweed Valley.

42. Option 3 splits a single ward, Midlothian East between Dalkeith/Newbattle and Mayfield. The proposed boundary follows the River Esk and partly a historical

ward boundary (1995-99). A golf course and farmland also function as a boundary.

43. A table of Option 3 is shown in the table below and a map is shown in Appendix G.

Option 3 – new grouping - Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas			
Constituency Name	Electorate	Variation from Electoral Quota	Wards
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	55,131	-8.0%	Scottish Borders 4,6-11
Midlothian North	54,645	-8.8%	Midlothian 1-4, 5(part)
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	59,534	-0.6%	Scottish Borders 1-3, 5 Midlothian 5(part), 6

44. The advantages of Option 3 are the same as Option 1.

45. The disadvantages of Option 3 are it fails to recognise the existing constituency boundaries in comparison to Options 1 or 2 (Rule 4).

Summary

46. The existing constituencies were created within a grouping of: North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Council areas; and Midlothian, Scottish Borders and partly East Lothian Council areas.

47. The provisional proposals were designed within new constituency groupings of: Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas; City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas; and Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas.

48. The provisional proposals retained the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency, minimised change to two other constituencies (East Kilbride and Rutherglen) and split a single ward across six constituencies.

49. During the consultation on provisional proposals for constituencies, Scottish Borders Council objected to the proposals, triggering a local inquiry and there was strong opposition to a Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency because there was little to connect communities in Clydesdale and the Borders. The Commission considered responses to the consultation for these areas in Paper BS 70, attached.

50. At the local inquiry similar concerns were raised from the earlier consultation but there was also some support for the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency.

51. The Assistant Commissioner's report from the local inquiry made no recommendations because there was both some support and opposition to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency.

52. The proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency extends from Lanark to Lauder. Those opposing the constituency stated that are poor transport links within the proposed constituency as most of the road and rail links follow a north-south direction rather than east-west, such as the Borders railway line and A68 or A7 roads. Of those supporting the constituency many focussed on links between Peebles and Biggar, rather than any links between Lauder or Galashiels with Lanark for example.
53. This paper discusses an alternative option that places the more rural Clydesdale communities in a constituency with the Borders, while placing the more urban Lanark in a constituency with Carlisle, Larkhall and Strathaven.
54. The existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale UK Parliament constituency partly covers a similar area to the proposed Clyde Valley and Tweeddale constituency. It does not include Lauder, Galashiels or Lanark but extends southwards to Annan.
55. There was little opposition to the provisional proposals retaining the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency. It includes Hawick and Eyemouth, towns with little to connect one another. There was little opposition to the proposed East Kilbride or Rutherglen constituencies.
56. At the local inquiry Councillor Sinclair restated her suggestion to improve variation from the electoral quota but the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency and Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency are both within 10% variation from the electorate quota. Paper BS 70 also discussed the suggestion to extend the proposed Rutherglen constituency boundary to follow a stream rather than the A725 road.
57. The Commission asked the Secretariat to develop alternative proposals for constituencies based on different council area groupings if they could make improvements upon the provisional proposals. Three alternative options are discussed in this paper based on a grouping of Scottish Borders and Midlothian Council areas. They all retain the existing Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire constituency. However, this is interdependent on the Commission agreeing revised proposals in new groupings elsewhere (Edinburgh and East Lothian (BS Paper 86); and Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas (Paper BS 85)).

Conclusion

58. The Commission is invited to agree its Revised Proposals constituencies for public consultation in Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.

**Secretariat
February 2024**

Appendices B and C on website









