

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
Revised Proposals for Constituencies Consultation
Summary of Responses – Requests for Local Inquiries**

For decision

1. The Commission is invited to consider an overview of responses received during the consultation on its revised proposals for Constituencies for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and decide if any local inquiries should be held.
2. The consultation for revised proposals ran for the statutory one-month period, from 16 April to 15 May 2024.
3. The Scotland Act 1998 states the Commission must hold a local inquiry during a consultation on constituency boundaries if “*relevant representations objecting to a proposed recommendation*” are received either from (i) a council for an area which is wholly or partly comprised in the constituency, or (2) a body of not less than 100 electors for the affected constituency. The Commission can also choose to hold one in a particular area if it would find it helpful.
4. If a local inquiry has already been held in an area during the review the Commission, after considering (a) the matters discussed at the inquiry, (b) the nature of the relevant representations received and (c) any other relevant circumstances, has a discretion to decide if a further local authority is not justified. An extract of paragraph 9, Schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998 is at Appendix A.
5. The inquiry is conducted by an Assistant Commissioner, this is a Sheriff Principal, appointed by Scottish Ministers.
6. During the consultation on its provisional proposals the Commission agreed to hold six local inquiries in:
 - Musselburgh because East Lothian Council objected to the proposals in relation to the constituencies of East Lothian and Midlothian North and Musselburgh;
 - Kilmarnock because East Ayrshire Council objected to the proposals in relation to the constituencies of Cunninghame South and Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley;
 - Clydebank due to the large number of responses in the area in relation to the constituencies of Bearsden, Milngavie and Clydebank North; and Dumbarton and Helensburgh;
 - Newton Mearns and Johnstone because both East Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Council objected to the proposals and due to the large number of responses in the area in relation to the constituencies of: Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock; Paisley and Renfrew; Renfrewshire South; and Renfrewshire West;
 - Edinburgh due to a large number responses in the area in relation to the constituency of Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow; and
 - Peebles because Scottish Borders Council objected to the proposals in relation to the constituency of Clyde Valley and Tweeddale.

7. Full analysis of all responses will be discussed in later meeting papers. The Commission is asked to decide, as this stage, whether any local inquiries should be held so that arrangements can be made. The Commission will still be able to agree to a local inquiry when the full consultation summary is provided at the June meeting.

Council Responses

8. Falkirk Council have objected to the revised proposals and have requested a local inquiry. The issues they raised were:
 - Falkirk Council area being split between three constituencies. The existing constituencies and the provisional proposals included two constituencies wholly within Falkirk Council area.
 - the breaking of local ties by Denny because it is included in a Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency.
 - the proposed constituency names are confusing; and
 - concerns with electoral administration.
9. Aberdeenshire Council; East Ayrshire; Moray Council; North Ayrshire Council; and West Dunbartonshire Council were all content with the revised proposals.
10. East Lothian Council objected to the revised proposals because they break close ties between Tranent and the rest of East Lothian. They also objected to the proposed Lothian Eastern constituency name. They submitted an alternative suggestion for an East Lothian constituency, similar to the existing constituency.
11. Midlothian Council wish one or two constituencies wholly within Midlothian Council area. They do not wish a constituency to be formed with part of a neighbouring council area.
12. East Renfrewshire Council supported the revised proposals for an Eastwood constituency.
13. Highland Council suggested a revised boundary between the proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch and Inverness and Nairn constituencies that follows polling district boundaries.
14. Glasgow City Council opposed the inclusion of part of the Govan ward in an Erskine and Cardonald constituency. They suggested the whole of the Govan ward should remain in a Glasgow Central constituency.
15. Renfrewshire Council were generally supportive of the revised proposals but suggested part of the Glasgow Govan ward remain in a Glasgow constituency rather than an Erskine and Cardonald constituency. They suggested naming the proposed Erskine and Cardonald constituency as Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald.

Individual Responses

16. There were over 100 responses received objecting to the following two proposed constituencies: Edinburgh North Eastern; and Edinburgh Eastern, Tranent and Musselburgh constituencies. All of the other constituencies received less than 100 responses.

17. Those opposing the proposed Edinburgh North Eastern constituency mostly commented on the absence of Leith from a constituency name. This included Deidre Brock MP for Edinburgh North and Leith who submitted a petition with over 750 signatures. The petition focussed on the absence of Leith from a constituency name.
18. Comments regarding the proposed Edinburgh Eastern, Tranent and Musselburgh constituency opposed the splitting of Tranent from neighbouring areas of East Lothian to its east. Due to the electorate (67,523) of the existing East Lothian constituency, the revised proposals had transferred Tranent to a neighbouring constituency. The Provisional Proposals had transferred Prestonpans to a neighbouring constituency.

Organisation Responses

19. The following organisations made an objection to the revised proposals. It is assumed that these organisations form a body of 100 electors.
20. The Trustees of Neilston War Memorial Association and Neilston Community Council both objected to the inclusion of Neilston within the proposed Eastwood constituency. They stated Neilston has close links with Barrhead and Uplawmoor namely the Levern Valley. They suggested retaining the existing Eastwood constituency boundary.
21. Fa'side Area Partnership, a local community planning partnerships in East Lothian objected to the removal of Tranent and Elphinstone from the existing East Lothian constituency.
22. Falkirk East Constituency Labour Party objected to the revised proposals because they do not consider: council boundaries, health board areas or Police Scotland organisational boundaries; the "political" geography of the Falkirk and surrounding areas will be confusing; all three constituencies have a higher than average electorate; and they make no sense in terms of the geography, ties and sense of community.

Summary

23. Falkirk Council objected to the revised proposals and requested a local inquiry.
24. East Lothian Council is the only Council that lodged an objection to the revised proposals and where a local inquiry has previously been held. Midlothian, East Renfrewshire and Glasgow did not object but provided suggestions.
25. Only two constituencies received over 100 responses: Edinburgh North Eastern; and Edinburgh Eastern, Tranent and Musselburgh.
26. Four bodies with over 100 electors objected to the revised proposals. In East Renfrewshire Council area: The Trustees of Neilston War Memorial Association; and Neilston Community Council. In East Lothian Council area, Fa'side Area Partnership. In Falkirk Council area, Falkirk East Constituency Labour Party.
27. The Commission has the discretion to decide not to hold a local inquiry if there has already been one. Before reaching a view the Commission should consider (a) the matters discussed at the inquiry (b) the nature of the relevant

representations received and (c) any other relevant circumstances. After considering these factors, the Commission is required to decide whether or not a local inquiry is justified.

Decision

28. The Secretariat invites the Commission to consider whether it wishes to hold a local inquiry within Falkirk Council area because Falkirk Council objected to the revised proposals and they requested a local inquiry and also objections were received from Falkirk East Constituency Labour Party; If the Commission agrees to a local inquiry, the Secretariat intends to contact the Sheriff Principal for Tayside, Central and Fife, Sheriff Principal Gillian Wade KC for her availability to act as Assistant Commissioner at the local inquiry. The Commission may wish to suggest a suitable location for a local inquiry in Falkirk.
29. The Commission is invited to consider whether it wishes to hold a further local inquiry within East Lothian Council area, with respect to the proposed Edinburgh Eastern, Tranent and Musselburgh constituency. This would be on the basis of East Lothian Council's objection, 100+ objections having been received for Edinburgh East and Fa'side Area Partnership's objection to Edinburgh East, Tranent and Musselburgh, Paragraph 27 above sets out the factors the Commission should reach before reaching a view.
30. The Commission is invited to consider whether it wishes to hold a local inquiry within City of Edinburgh Council area with respect to the proposed Edinburgh North Eastern constituency. (100+ electors objected). It is open to the Commission to (i) agree to a local inquiry at this stage or (2) defer the decision to the June meeting where the Commission will have the chance to consider the relevant representations in full and reach a view on the name of the constituency.
31. The Commission is invited to consider whether it wishes to hold a local inquiry within East Renfrewshire Council area with respect to the proposed Eastwood constituency (The Trustees of Neilston War Memorial Association; and Neilston Community Council). A local inquiry has already been held in Newton Mearns and Johnstone so the Commission has a discretion to not hold a further local inquiry.
32. The Secretariat will fully analyse all responses received during the public consultation and present analysis to the Commission at a later meeting. The Commission may agree to hold further local inquiries once it has conducted further analysis of all responses.

Secretariat
May 2024

Appendix A**Extract from the Scotland Act 1998 (as amended)***Local inquiries*

- 9 (1) Boundaries Scotland may if it thinks fit cause a local inquiry to be held in respect of any constituency or constituencies.
- (2) If Boundaries Scotland receive any relevant representations objecting to a proposed recommendation for the alteration of a constituency it must not make the recommendation unless since the publication of the notice under paragraph 7(2) a local inquiry has been held in respect of the constituency.
- (3) If a local inquiry was held in respect of the constituency before the publication of the notice under paragraph 7(2), sub-paragraph (2) above does not apply if Boundaries Scotland after considering—
- (a) the matters discussed at the inquiry,
 - (b) the nature of the relevant representations received, and
 - (c) any other relevant circumstances,
- think that a further local inquiry is not justified.
- (4) A relevant representation is a representation made in accordance with paragraph 7(2)(b)—
- (a) by the council for an area which is wholly or partly comprised in the constituency;
 - (b) by a body of not less than 100 persons entitled to vote as electors at an election for membership of the Parliament held in the constituency.