

ISLAND COMMUNITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Policy, Strategy or Service	Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries
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STEP ONE – DEVELOP A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR OBJECTIVES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the objectives of the policy, strategy or service? • What are the intended impacts/outcomes and how do these potentially differ across the islands? 	<p>Schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998 requires Boundaries Scotland to conduct reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries for constituencies and regions at intervals of every 8 to 12 years. Each review is required to comply with rules set out in the Scotland Act 1998.</p> <p>The purpose of the current review is to make recommendations for the boundaries and names for constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament. This review is undertaken following rules set out in legislation.</p>
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STEP TWO – GATHER YOUR DATA AND IDENTIFY YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data is available about the current situation in the islands? • Who are your key Stakeholders? • How does any existing data differ between islands? • Are there any existing design features or mitigations in place? 	<p>There are 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies, three of which are protected by legislation (Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands) and therefore are not subject to review. There are 8 Scottish Parliament regions, all of which are subject to review. Two of the current regions contain inhabited islands (Highlands and Islands; and West Scotland).</p> <p>The constituencies under review which include inhabited islands are Argyll and Bute (Final Recommendations: unchanged), Cunninghame North (Final Recommendations: unchanged) and Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch (minimal boundary changes with no islands affected by changes in Final Recommendations).</p> <p>Boundaries Scotland undertakes the Scottish Parliament boundary review following the rules set out in legislation. The review of the 70 constituencies must meet a set of requirements which must, so far as practicable, be consistent throughout Scotland.</p>
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Boundaries Scotland's review of regions is also governed by rules set out in legislation.

One of the rules Boundaries Scotland must follow is to create constituencies and regions that have broadly the same number of electors (Rule 2). The electorate for the review consists of the persons on the register of local government electors in force at the start of the review. The review commenced on 1 September 2022 and electoral data from that day was used and is published on Boundaries Scotland's website. This is the only electoral data that Boundaries Scotland can consider when making recommendations.

As well as trying to balance the number of electors in each constituency/region, Boundaries Scotland is also required to consider local government boundaries (Rule 1), special geographic considerations (Rule 3) and local ties and inconveniences caused by the alteration of existing boundaries (Rule 4). Rule 3 allows Boundaries Scotland to recognise special geographical considerations and deviate from the electoral quota in areas with, for example, low population density or poor transport links across the constituency. These would typically apply in the protected constituencies.

Apart from the three protected island constituencies, the legislative framework does not make any distinction between island communities and other parts of Scotland.

We have no formal stakeholders as such, but details of how we liaise with the public and with local authorities are outlined below.

STEP THREE - CONSULTATION

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there any information already gathered through previous engagements?• How will you carry out your consultation and in what timescales? Public meetings/Local Authorities/key Stakeholders• What questions will you ask when considering how to address island realities?• Separate consultation events for Island communities/Local Authorities?	<p>As set out in the Scotland Act 1998, Boundaries Scotland is required to consult at various stages of the review and in some circumstances hold local inquiries. The start dates of consultation periods are advertised in print, on our website, via press releases, press conferences and the distribution of physical copies of review materials to public sites in council areas. All material is also published online and consultation responses can be submitted via an online consultation portal.</p> <p>Boundaries Scotland carried out five rounds of consultation regarding proposed constituencies and three rounds of consultation regarding proposed regions. Members of island communities have the same opportunities to provide their views on each proposal stage as members of the public in other areas of Scotland.</p>
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STEP FOUR - ASSESSMENT

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does your assessment identify any unique impacts on island communities? (Further detail in the Guidance):<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Demographic– Economic– Gaelic– Social• Does your assessment identify any potential barriers or wider impacts?• Are there mitigations already in place for these impacts raised?	<p>The Commission is bound by legislation governing the review when setting constituency boundaries but there is some discretion to consider special geographical considerations (Rule 3) and local ties (Rule 4). When considering what recommendations to make for the three constituencies containing island communities, Boundaries Scotland recognised the unique challenges facing many of the island communities including poor transport links, slow postal deliveries and other factors affecting accessibility. These factors were considered in relation to the Skye, Badenoch and Strathspey; Argyll and Bute; and Cunninghame North constituencies, all of which include island communities.</p> <p>For regions, the legislation provides a discretion to the Commission to have regard to special geographical considerations (Rule 2). When developing the Provisional Proposals for regions, Boundaries Scotland recognised the special geographical considerations that exist in the Highland and Islands region where the electorate is substantially lower than other regions but the geographical area is vast. The Final Recommendation for the Highland and Islands creates a region 32% below the average electorate for other regions.</p>
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Is a full Island Communities Impact Assessment required?

You should now determine whether, in your opinion, your policy, strategy or service is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities). To form your opinion, the following questions should be considered:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there mitigations in place for the impacts identified and noted above from stakeholders and community consultations? (If further ICIA action is not required, complete the section below and publish).• Does the evidence show different circumstances or different expectations or needs, or different experiences or outcomes (such as levels of satisfaction, or different rates of participation)?• Are these different effects likely?• Are these effects significantly different?• Could the effect amount to a disadvantage for an island community compared to the mainland or between island groups?• If your answer is 'no' to the above questions, please complete the box below.• If the answer is 'yes', an ICIA must be prepared and you should proceed to Step 5.	<p>When deciding whether a full ICIA is required Boundaries Scotland considered whether the review is likely to have an effect on an island community which is significantly different from its effect on other communities (including other island communities).</p> <p>The distinct nature of the three constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands is recognised and protected in legislation. The legislative framework does not make any distinction between the remaining islands and other parts of Scotland.</p> <p>The Commission recognises that island communities outside the three constituencies protected by legislation have distinctive features in particular, low population levels and limited access to transport links being some of the relevant factors in island communities.</p> <p>The legislation requires the Commission to consider local government boundaries (Rule 1), the electoral quota (Rule 2) special geographical considerations (Rule 3) and local ties (Rule 4) when setting constituencies. For regions, the legislation allows the Commission to consider special geographic considerations when setting boundaries (Rule 2). Working within the rules set out in the legislation, the Commission recognised that boundary setting may impact island communities in a way which is significantly different to the mainland (and potentially other island communities), and it was agreed that a full ICIA is required.</p>
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STEP FIVE – PREPARING YOUR ICIA

In Step Five, you should describe in the box below, the likely significantly different effect of the policy, strategy or service.

<p>Assess the extent to which you consider that the policy, strategy or service can be developed or delivered in such a manner as to improve or mitigate, for island communities, the outcomes resulting from it.</p> <p>Consider alternative delivery mechanisms and whether further consultation is required.</p> <p>Describe how these alternative delivery mechanisms will improve or mitigate outcomes for island communities.</p> <p>Identify resources required to improve or mitigate outcomes for island Communities</p>	<p>Any constituency or region boundary recommendations are likely to have a different impact on island communities due to the size, remoteness and poor transport links. These points were raised in the public consultations on the proposals for constituencies and regions.</p> <p>Boundaries Scotland is bound by the legislation and cannot consider an alternative delivery mechanism. Boundaries Scotland did consider the consultation responses specific to the challenges in the Islands and used its discretion to apply special geographic considerations (Rule 3 of the constituency rules and Rule 2 of the region rules) in some constituencies (Argyll and Bute; Skye Lochaber and Badenoch) and for the Highlands and Islands region.</p> <p>The rules for consultation are set out in legislation and Island communities were consulted on the Provisional, Revised and Further Proposals for constituencies and the Provisional and Revised Proposals for regions.</p>
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STEP SIX – MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO YOUR WORK

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should delivery mechanisms/mitigations vary in different island communities?• Do you need to return to the consultation participants in respect of mechanisms or mitigations?• Have island circumstances been factored into the evaluation process?• Have any island-specific indicators/targets been identified that require monitoring?• How will outcomes be measured on the islands?• How has the policy, strategy or service affected island communities?• How will lessons learned in this ICIA inform future policy making and service delivery?	<p>As referred to above, the legislation that governs Boundaries Scotland's review does provide some discretion. For constituencies, Rule 3 gives the Commission the discretion to take account of special geographical considerations (including in particular the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency or region) and rule 4, local ties and other inconveniences caused by changes to constituencies</p> <p>Consultation responses relating to the Provisional, Revised and Final Proposals for the constituencies in the Highland Council area made the point that it is a large geographical area with poor transport links making access to MSPs challenging. Another suggestion was for the Highland area to have four MSPs due to the geographical challenges of such large constituencies.</p> <p>One response in relation to the Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency suggested a Skye constituency and another suggested one constituency for Skye and all the Small isles (Canna, Eigg, Muck and Rum).</p> <p>Consultation responses relating to both the Provisional and Revised Proposals for the Argyll and Bute constituency referred to challenges with geography and the practicalities of limited access to MSPs. One member of the public suggested an islands constituency and others recommended smaller constituencies for rural communities.</p> <p>Consultation responses relating to the Cunninghame North constituency, suggested that Arran did not belong with Ayrshire or a Cunninghame North constituency but did not offer an alternative.</p> <p>When consulting on the Provisional and Revised Proposals for regions, some consultation responses raised concerns about the vast areas that</p>
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both the proposed Highlands and Islands; and West Scotland regions covered.

All consultation responses on the proposals for constituencies and regions were considered by the Commission before the Final Recommendations were agreed. Boundaries Scotland is required to balance the requirements of the rules governing the review and some submissions relating to island communities could not be adopted because they did not meet the legislative requirements.


Special geographical considerations were applied in the Argyll and Bute constituency (Final Recommendations: unchanged with -17.2% electoral quota) and Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency (electoral quota +12% accepted because of importance of maintaining local ties). Boundaries Scotland also recognised that the Cunninghame North constituency includes the inhabited islands of Arran, Cumbrae and Holy Island but there were no proposed changes to this constituency.

When developing the Provisional Proposals for regions, Boundaries Scotland applied its discretion to take into account special geographical considerations in the Highlands and Islands region. The Final Recommendations for Highlands and Islands propose a region 32% below the average electorate in recognition of the vast area and distinct challenges faced by island communities.

Boundaries Scotland has considered the special nature of island communities at each stage of the review process. Once the Final Recommendations have been made, the special nature of island communities will be discussed further when lessons learned from the review process are considered.

STEP SEVEN – PUBLISHING YOUR ICIA

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your ICIA need to be presented in Gaelic or any other language? • Where will you publish your ICIA and will relevant stakeholders be able to easily access it? • Confirm appropriate level of sign off? 	<p>The ICIA will be published at the end of the review as it will be referred to throughout the review as a 'living document' and completed when the final recommendations are made. There is no requirement for it to be published in Gaelic or any other language but the Commission agreed that it should be published in Gaelic.</p> <p>This document should be signed off by both the Secretary and the Chair.</p>
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ICIA completed by (name)	Kirsty Mavor
Position	Secretary to Boundaries Scotland
Signature and date	 <p style="text-align: right;">09/04/2025</p>
ICIA authorised by (we recommend DD level)	Professor Ailsa Henderson
Position	Chair, Boundaries Scotland
Signature and date	 <p style="text-align: right;">09/04/2025</p>