

**Minutes of Meeting held remotely via Teams  
11:15am on Monday 13 January 2025**

**Present**

Prof. A Henderson, Chair  
Mr S Jones, Deputy Chair  
Ms A McNab  
Mr G Macmillan  
Mr M Smith  
Mr A Stewart

Ms K Mavor, Secretary  
Mr C Wilson  
Mr D Campbell  
Mr P Allan  
Ms Y Croll

**Apologies**

None.

**Declaration of Interest or Connection**

1. The Commission noted previous declarations about the constituency each Commissioner resides in.

**Minutes of previous meeting**

2. The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting of 19 December 2024 with minor amendments.

**Matters arising**

3. The Commission noted that a Bluesky social media account has been set up to help reach a wider audience when advertising the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and to also share the Commission's work more generally.
4. The Chair informed the Commission that she is planning to meet with Luke Mcbratney from the Elections Team next month.

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Project Plan (BS 159)**

5. The Commission noted the updated project plan for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and suggested some amendments.
6. The Commission discussed the progress of the Second Review final report and agreed to submit any further comments on the draft introductory section and the appendices for constituencies where Final Recommendations have been agreed.

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas (BS 160)**

7. At its 19 December 2024 meeting the Commission had considered Paper BS 154 and preferred Option 1 but deferred agreeing its Additional Proposals in this constituency grouping until it had considered alternative boundaries in Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas. At that meeting, the Commission also requested an option which extended the Clydesdale constituency into West Lothian and

another option that proposed two West Lothian constituencies with more even electorate numbers.

8. The Commission considered adding West Calder to a Clydesdale constituency but agreed it did not meet rule 1 as the proposed Clydesdale constituency included electors from South Lanarkshire and West Lothian Council areas. The Commission also agreed it did not meet rule 4 as there are limited local ties between West Calder and Clydesdale and rule 2 as the proposed two West Lothian constituencies have electorates with large variations (Bathgate 15.3% and Livingston 21.1%) from the electoral quota.
9. The Commission then discussed an alternative option that retained two constituencies wholly within West Lothian Council area. The Commission agreed the option did not meet rule 2 as both proposed constituencies would have electorates with variation from the electoral quota over 20%.
10. The Commission then considered the alternative Options 1A and 1B as well as two further options based on Option 1B which had been shared with the Commission before the meeting.
11. The Commission agreed Option 1A was an improvement on Option 1 because it: proposed acceptable variation from the electorate quota; placed Blackridge within a Bathgate, rather than an Airdrie constituency; and Denny in a Falkirk West, rather than a Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency (Rule 1). However the Commission agreed that Option 1A may break local ties between Denny and Dennyloanhead and had concerns that Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft were included within a Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency (Rule 4). The Commission referred to the views expressed at the Falkirk Local Inquiry about Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft having local ties with Falkirk and concerns raised about Falkirk Council area being split across three constituencies.
12. The Commission then considered Option 1B version 1. It retained local ties between Denny and Dennyloanhead and kept the villages of Banknock, Haggs and Longcroft in a Falkirk West constituency (Rules 1 and 4). The Commission noted that this option split Falkirk Council area across two rather than three constituencies which was preferable to Option 1A (Rules 1 and 4). However, Option 1B proposed two constituencies with wide variation from the electorate quota (Falkirk East 14.9% and Falkirk East and Linlithgow 16.4%).
13. The Commission finally considered two further variations (Option 1B version 2 and Option 1B version 3), both of which are based on Option 1B version 1. Both of these options, like Option 1B version 1, retained the existing Airdrie and Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituency boundaries (Rules 1 and 4) but aimed to address variation from the electorate quota in Falkirk and West Lothian. Option 1B versions 2 and 3 proposed the same boundary in Falkirk which considered local ties by Glen Village to the south of Falkirk (Rule 4); and proposed a recognisable boundary by Stenhousemuir, the M9 motorway. Option 1B version 3 proposed an alternative boundary by Polbeth to improve variation from the electorate quota by following a railway line and polling district boundary.
14. The Commission preferred Option 1B version 3 because it: proposed slightly improved variation from the electorate quota in comparison to Option 1B version 2 (Rule 2); addressed some of the concerns raised at the Whitburn and Falkirk

local inquiries (Rule 4); and minimised change to existing constituency boundaries across the constituency grouping. The Commission acknowledged the relatively high variation from the electorate quota in these proposed constituencies but noted the variation was within the 15% referred to in the Venice Commission's Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters (Rule 2). It was agreed that the variation from the electoral quota in these constituencies was acceptable to address the concerns about breaking of local ties and cross council constituencies which were expressed during the consultations and local inquiries held in this area (Rules 1, 2 and 4).

15. The Commission referred to submissions made at the Revised Proposal stage that Torphichen should be in the same constituency as Linlithgow. The Commission considered placing Torphichen in the proposed Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency but noted other neighbouring villages would also wish to be placed in the same constituency. The 2,000 electors in Torphichen and neighbouring villages would result in variation from the electorate quota over 15% in a Falkirk East and Linlithgow constituency. The Commission agreed that this approach would not meet Rule 2 and Torphichen should therefore be included in the proposed Bathgate constituency.
16. The Commission had already agreed to adopt its Revised Proposals as Final Recommendations for the boundaries in Argyll and Bute; Clydesdale; Clydebank and Milngavie; Coatbridge and Chryston; Dumbarton; East Kilbride; Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse; Motherwell and Wishaw; and Strathkelvin and Bearsden; subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in neighbouring areas. For Rutherglen and Cambuslang; and Uddingston and Bellshill constituencies, the Commission agreed to adopt its Further Proposals as its Final Recommendations, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in neighbouring areas. For Airdrie and Cumbernauld and Kilsyth constituencies, there will be no further consultation on these constituencies as they have reverted to the existing boundaries. The constituency name of Airdrie was consulted on at the Further Proposal stage.
17. The Commission will therefore consult on Additional Proposals relating to boundaries for Almond Valley; Bathgate; Falkirk East and Linlithgow; and Falkirk West constituencies as shown in Option 1B version 3. As these Additional Proposals include Linlithgow in a constituency with Falkirk East, it was agreed that the West Lothian constituency should be named Bathgate, given it is the largest settlement in the proposed constituency.
18. After agreeing its Additional Proposals for constituencies, the Commission confirmed the designations of its constituencies. All burgh constituencies should have an area less than 112 km<sup>2</sup> and all county constituencies should have an area more than 128 km<sup>2</sup>.
19. The Commission also confirmed the approach agreed at its 19 December 2024 meeting to consult on Revised Proposals for the following regions: Glasgow (boundary only), West Scotland (boundary only), Central Scotland and Lothians West (boundary and name), Edinburgh and Lothians East (name only) and South Scotland (boundary only).

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: List of constituencies agreed and updated regions map/table (BS 161)**

20. The Commission noted its Final Recommendations for constituencies and regions where no further consultation was required, Additional Proposals for constituencies and Revised Proposals for regions.

**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Consultation – Additional Proposals for constituencies/Revised Proposals for regions (BS 162)**

21. The Commission discussed its planned approach for the consultation on Additional Proposals for constituencies and Revised Proposals for regions and provided feedback and comments.

22. For the Final Report, the Commission made some suggestions about how changes after each consultation stage should be recorded.

**Decision recording - previous minutes (BS 163)**

23. The Commission discussed Paper BS 163 and asked to see a draft document highlighting what text is being changed.

**Future meetings**

24. The Secretariat was asked to canvas for a date in the weeks beginning 3 and 10 March 2025.

**Any other business**

25. The Secretary confirmed that the 2025 UK Boundary Commissions' meeting will take place in London on 27 – 28 February 2025 and will be hosted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Commissioners who wished to attend the meeting but had not contacted the Secretariat yet were asked to do so.

26. Correspondence from Kate Forbes MSP's office was shared with the Commissioners prior to the Christmas break. The Secretary will draft a response which will be provided to the Chair and Deputy Chair prior to sending.

27. The Secretary will be meeting with the Sponsor Team on 21 January 2025 where further detail about the independent review of automaticity and the boundary approval process will be provided.