

**Minutes of Meeting held at
Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh
10 am on Thursday 22 February 2024**

Present

Prof. A Henderson, Chair

Ms A McNab

Mr G Macmillan

Mr A Stewart

Mr M Smith

Mr C Wilson (Interim Secretary)

Mr P Allan

Mrs Y Croll

Ms K Mavor (observing)

The Chair formally welcomed Ms McNab to her first meeting as a Commissioner and welcomed Ms Mavor who will be joining the Secretariat as Secretary.

Apologies

1. Mr Simon Jones, Deputy Chair.

Declaration of Interests/Connections

2. The Chair and Ms McNab declared a connection in Paper BS 86 as they both reside within the constituency grouping of City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas. Mr Smith and Mr Stewart declared a connection in Paper BS 85 as they both reside within the constituency grouping of Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas.

Minutes of previous meeting

3. The Commission agreed the minutes of the meeting of 18 December 2023 without amendment.

Matters arising

4. The Secretariat reported that a date is still being sought for the Chair to meet with the Convenor of the SPPA (Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments).
5. The Secretariat advised that the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill has now been published and a link to it will be shared with the Commission.
6. The Secretariat reported they had responded to Ethical Standards with comments on their Draft Strategic Plan 2024-28.
7. The Secretariat stated they have applied for Simon Jones and Alison McNab to attend a Scottish Government Board Member Induction training event. The event is scheduled to take place at Victoria Quay, Edinburgh on 21 May 2024.
8. The Secretariat advised they are still working on a list of actions from the UK Commissions Meeting held in December 2023.

9. The Commission were informed that the Chair and Mr Wilson had met with the Minister for Parliamentary Business on 8 February 2024. The Chair provided an update on the meeting.

Business update

10. The Commission were given a brief update on the local inquiries that took place in January 2024. The Commission asked for this feedback to be included in a later lessons learned meeting paper on the basis that it might help with further local inquiries in this review or future reviews. The Commission agreed that the reports and transcripts from the local inquiries were very helpful, and agreed that they would be published alongside the wider publication of meeting papers when the next consultation stage commenced. The Commission asked the Secretariat to write to the Sheriff Principals to thank them for acting as Assistant Commissioners at the local inquiries and to solicit advice for possible improvements to the process.
11. The Commission were informed that Highland Council had enquired about when their next Review of Electoral Arrangements would take place. The Secretariat were asked to draft a response.
12. The Commission were notified that the recruitment process had started for a new Commissioner for Boundary Commission for Scotland.

Electoral Reform (oral)

13. The Commission were informed that the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill was published in January 2024. Comments on the Bill are open until 6 March 2024. The Commission agreed that their response should include reference to a preference for automaticity to be included within the legislation.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft revised proposals for East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas (Paper BS 83)

14. The Commission discussed Paper BS 83 as well as the Assistant Commissioner's report and the transcript from the Kilmarnock local inquiry. The Commission also reconsidered Paper BS 62 which had summarised responses to the public consultation on provisional proposals for constituency boundaries.
15. The Commission noted that Paper BS 83 included no new alternative options or suggestions and asked that the paper clarified that the absence of new modelling was because it felt that the solution to issues raised in the local inquiry could be found in Paper BS 62. The earlier paper had proposed a range of alternative boundaries for the three council areas.
16. The Commission agreed that the suggestions from both East Ayrshire Council and North Ayrshire Council, Appendix B, addressed variation from the electorate quota, and better reflected local ties as both Councils had suggested the same boundary, minimised change from the existing electoral arrangements and better reflected concerns raised during the public consultation and at the local inquiry in comparison to the other options or suggestions (rule 2, 4).
17. The Commission noted that the suggestion from Willie Coffey MSP, Appendix C, by Dundonald proposed one constituency with variation from electoral parity over -10% (rule 2).

18. The Commission noted that the Assistant Commissioner's report had highlighted concerns that the East Ayrshire Conservative and Unionist Association suggestion raised at the local inquiry did not offer a clear boundary. The Association had suggested an alternative boundary by Crosshouse, to the west of Kilmarnock, as shown in Appendix D (rule 4). Further to this, Appendix E had aimed to improve the boundary suggested by the East Ayrshire Conservative and Unionist Association but new housing development by Crosshouse meant that no strong bounding features may be established for some time. Appendix E also proposed one constituency with variation from electoral parity at -10% (rule 2 and 4).
19. The Commission agreed that the alternative suggestion presented in Appendix F made changes to all five of the existing constituency boundaries and could break established local ties in comparison to the other options and suggestions. The provisional proposals had retained three of the existing constituency boundaries (rule 4).
20. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Appendix B (East Ayrshire Council and North Ayrshire Council suggestion) as its Revised Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.
21. The Commission agreed to consider all constituency names later.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft revised proposals for Scottish Borders and South Lanarkshire Council areas (Paper BS 84)

22. The Commission discussed Paper BS 84 as well as the Assistant Commissioner's report and the transcript from the Peebles local inquiry. The Commission also reconsidered Paper BS 70 which had summarised the responses to the public consultation on provisional proposals for constituency boundaries.
23. The Commission noted there had been both support and opposition to the proposed Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency but few alternative suggestions had been presented within the Scottish Borders – South Lanarkshire constituency grouping.
24. The Commission considered an alternative grouping of Scottish Borders – Midlothian Council areas, which was similar to the existing constituency grouping. The Commission believed there could be some support for this as it minimised change to the existing arrangements.
25. The Commission noted Option 1, Appendix E, may break local ties between Auchendinny and Penicuik (rule 4).
26. The Commission preferred Option 2, Appendix F, because it considered existing constituency boundaries and maintained local ties between Auchendinny and Penicuik (rule 4) and that it resolved issues raised in the consultation and local inquiry.
27. The Commission thought that Option 3, Appendix G, did not recognise the existing constituency boundaries in comparison to the other options (rule 4).

28. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 2, Appendix F, as its Revised Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.

29. The Commission agreed to consider constituency names later.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft revised proposals for Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire Council areas (Paper BS 85)

30. The Commission discussed Paper BS 85 as well as the Assistant Commissioner's report and the transcript from the Clydebank local inquiry. The Commission also reconsidered Paper BS 72 which had summarised the responses to the public consultation on provisional proposals for constituency boundaries.

31. The Commission noted that there had been strong opposition to the division of Clydebank between two constituencies and that the proposed boundary in Lomond North would break local ties. These issues arose as a result of trying to address significant variation from the electoral quota in the existing Argyll and Bute constituency, which has an electorate of 49,535 and variation from the electorate quota of -17%.

32. The Commission considered the alternative suggestion from West Dunbartonshire Council to align the constituency boundary with a newly established ward boundary which may assist electoral administration and affected few electors. The Commission agreed there was some merit in this suggestion and agreed to adopt it (rule 4).

33. The Commission also considered the suggestion from the Scottish Labour Party to create a Bearsden, Clydebank and Milngavie constituency. Their suggestion avoided the division of Clydebank and placed Bearsden and Milngavie in the same constituency. The Commission noted the Scottish Labour Party suggestion addressed concerns raised during the public consultation but noted that their option created considerable change to existing constituency boundaries (rule 4).

34. The Commission considered the two alternative options within a new constituency grouping of Argyll and Bute, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian Council areas. Both options sought to address points raised in the consultation and at the local inquiry.

35. Both options would retain the existing Argyll and Bute constituency. The Commission believed special geographic circumstances were applicable for Argyll and Bute because it contained many inhabited islands as well as many other remote areas with poor transport links.

36. Option 1 considered the existing constituency boundaries, retaining 12 of the existing 17 constituency boundaries. The Commission believed there could be some support for Option 1 as it minimised change to the existing arrangements while also addressing variation from the electorate quota in West Lothian and by Cumbernauld. Four of the five new constituencies followed existing UK Parliament constituency boundaries. The Commission noted Option 1 no longer retained the existing Falkirk constituencies and may not reflect local ties

between Denny and Falkirk, however Option 1 better reflected the review rules (rules 2, 3, 4).

37. The Commission considered Option 2 but it would propose three constituencies with variation from the electorate quota over 10%. Option 2 made changes to the existing constituency boundaries and therefore may not reflect local ties (rule 2, 4).
38. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 1, as its Revised Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.
39. The Commission agreed to consider constituency names later.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft revised proposals for East Lothian, City of Edinburgh, Midlothian and West Lothian Council areas (Paper BS 86)

40. The Commission discussed Paper BS 86 as well as the Assistant Commissioner's report and the transcripts from the local inquiries which took place in Musselburgh and Edinburgh. The Commission also reconsidered Paper BS 71 which had summarised the responses to the public consultation on the provisional proposals for constituency boundaries.
41. The Commission noted there was little support for some aspects of the provisional proposals across this constituency grouping. The consultation responses had opposed: an Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow constituency with little to connect West Lothian with communities in Edinburgh; provisional proposals that were perceived to break local ties in the south of Edinburgh; and a Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency that included Prestonpans, Dalkeith and Portobello, areas from three different council areas.
42. The Commission considered the alternative suggestions from the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Linlithgow SNP Branch Association which had received some support at the Edinburgh local inquiry. The Commission noted these suggestions addressed some of the concerns raised in the west of Edinburgh but they did not consider issues raised elsewhere in this grouping. The Commission also considered the alternative suggestions from the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party but both retained a constituency similar to the proposed Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow constituency, which had not received considerable support (rule 4).
43. The Commission considered the suggestion from East Lothian Council and from others at the Musselburgh local inquiry to retain the existing East Lothian constituency. The Commission wished to explore if there were other boundaries which avoided a constituency with wide variation from the electorate quota (rule 2).
44. The Commission then considered the three options presented in Paper BS 86. Option 1 retained five existing constituencies but proposed an East Lothian constituency with variation from the electorate quota at 12.7% (rule 2). Option 2 addressed concerns by Pennywell Road, and Prestonpans and split fewer wards than the existing arrangements (rule 4). Option 3 aimed to use ward boundaries

but it retained Pennywell Road as a constituency boundary and created oddly shaped constituencies.

45. The Commission preferred Option 2 because: it would avoid an Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow constituency; retained Prestonpans in an East Lothian constituency; avoided a constituency containing parts of three council areas; all of the proposed constituencies are within 10% variation from the electoral quota; avoided using Pennywell Road as a constituency boundary; and would better reflect local ties in the south of Edinburgh (rule 2, 4).
46. The Commission provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 2, as its Revised Proposals for public consultation, subject to satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings. The Commission also agreed to align the proposed constituency boundary along the A1 road between Tranent and Prestonpans to create an easily identifiable boundary.
47. The Commission agreed to consider constituency names later.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft revised proposals for East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire Council areas (Paper BS 87)

48. The Commission discussed Paper BS 87 as well as the Assistant Commissioner's report and transcript from the local inquiry which took place in Johnstone and Newton Mearns. The Commission also reconsidered Paper BS 77 which had summarised the responses to the public consultation on the provisional proposals for constituency boundaries.
49. The Commission noted that most of the opposition to the provisional proposals had focused on the proposals in East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire Council areas and specifically splitting Johnstone between two constituencies, a perceived lack of local ties in a Renfrewshire South constituency and a Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock constituency which was perceived to have little to connect local communities within it. The provisional proposals had made changes to all of the existing constituencies.
50. The Commission noted that Paper BS 77 had presented a large number of alternative suggestions that considered alternative boundaries in local areas but few of these addressed all of the issues raised during the consultation.
51. Further alternative suggestions were presented at the local inquiry from the Scottish Labour Party and Neil Bibby MSP as well as Renfrewshire Councillor Steel. However they also focused on solving isolated issues in local areas and did not consider the effect of such suggestions on neighbouring areas (rule 4).
52. The Commission then considered the three options presented in Paper BS 87. These options were designed to address concerns raised in the consultation and at the local inquiry. Options 1 and 2 both avoided Johnstone being split between two constituencies and a Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock constituency (rule 4).
53. The Commission considered Option 1, which addressed concerns at Johnstone and Eastwood. It also maintained local ties by avoiding splitting Paisley between

two constituencies and relied on existing constituency boundaries (Glasgow Southern, Glasgow Western, Paisley, Renfrewshire West) (rule 4).

54. The Commission considered an option which proposed 17 constituencies within a wider grouping of East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas, shown in Appendix I1 and Appendix I2. The Commission noted that this option: relied on a number of existing constituency boundaries; addressed concerns raised during the consultation such as the proposed boundary at Johnstone and Giffnock; and retained the River Clyde as a strong boundary in Glasgow. However the Commission also acknowledged that this option: proposed a constituency covering three council areas; a constituency with variation from the electorate quota at 11.7%; it may break local ties between Arran and Ardrossan; and proposed an Ayrshire – Renfrewshire constituency that would likely be opposed as the three Ayrshire council areas operated shared local service provision (rule 1, 2, 4).
55. The Commission preferred Option 1 because it better met the review rules, and provisionally agreed to adopt the constituencies in Option 1 as its Revised Proposals for public consultation, with an additional modification that the Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald constituency boundary follows the M8 motorway by Glasgow Airport. This would create a more identifiable boundary and would affect very few electors. It provisionally agreed Option 1 also subject to further consideration of a revised boundary by Cardonald, to see if it was possible to retain Cardonald in a Glasgow constituency, and satisfactory constituencies being designed in other groupings.
56. The Commission agreed to consider constituency names later.
57. After the meeting the Commission considered an Appendix to Paper BS 87 - Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Draft revised proposals for East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire Council areas. The Commission's decisions were considered, discussed and agreed by email.
58. The Commission reconsidered Option 1 from Paper BS 87 and three further options.
59. The Commission considered an option which amended the boundary of the proposed: Erskine, Renfrew and Cardonald; and Glasgow Central constituencies from Option 1, Paper 87. The Commission dismissed this option as it created a constituency of two separate parts or two islands and created a constituency with wide variation from electoral parity (rule 2).
60. The Commission considered two further options which proposed four new constituencies in the south of Glasgow. The Commission discarded these because they created a constituency with wide variation from electoral parity and were oddly-shaped.
61. The Commission agreed to retain its decision to consult on Option 1 as its revised proposals for consultation.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Consultation on Revised Proposals for Constituencies (Paper BS 88)

62. The Commission discussed Paper BS 88 and its approach to preparing for its consultation on Revised Proposals for constituency boundaries.
63. The Commission decided to consider constituency names and designations for its Revised Proposals by email.
64. The Commission agreed to consult on revised proposals across the whole of Scotland and made a number of suggestions on how and when to conduct the consultation. In particular it wished to maximize public engagement by avoiding the April holidays and Parliamentary recess.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Local Inquiry Attendee Survey (Paper BS 89)

65. The Commission noted the responses to the local inquiry attendee survey. The paper showed that respondents were pleased with the process and felt that they had been listened to. The Commission agreed to forward this feedback to the Assistant Commissioners with thanks for chairing the local inquiries and agreed to adopt the feedback into a lessons learned paper for future local inquiries and reviews.

Finance update (Paper BS 90)

66. The Commission noted the finance update.

Paper BS 91 Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, Revised Proposals - Constituency Names and designations

67. The Commission discussed Paper BS91 and agreed constituency names and designations for its revised proposals by correspondence after the meeting by email.
68. The Commission agreed that all burgh constituencies covered an area of 105 km² or less and all county constituencies an area of 105 km² or more.
69. In the groupings of: Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee City; and Perth and Kinross Council areas, having received no other suggestions or objections to the proposed constituency names in the Provisional Proposals, the Commission agreed to retain the proposed and existing constituency names in those areas.
70. In the grouping of Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Moray Council areas the Commission agreed to amend one constituency name from its provisional proposals and revert to the existing Banffshire and Buchan Coast constituency name following feedback from the consultation. The provisional proposals had consulted on a constituency named Banff and Buchan Coast.
71. In Fife Council area, as the Commission had agreed to revert to the existing constituency boundaries, it agreed to adopt the existing constituency names except to retain a constituency named Fife North East. This was to differentiate it from the UK Parliament constituency name of North East Fife.

72. In the groupings of: Highland; East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and North Ayrshire; and Clackmannanshire and Stirling Council areas the Commission had agreed to make minor changes to the proposed boundaries. Therefore the Commission agreed to retain the proposed and existing constituency names as there was no strong support for any alternative names in these areas.
73. In the grouping of East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Council areas the Commission agreed to retain the constituency names of: Inverclyde; and Renfrewshire West from its provisional proposals and revert to the existing: Eastwood; and Paisley constituency names. In Glasgow the Commission agreed to the use of cardinal points for constituency names rather than using neighbourhoods.
74. Within a grouping of East Lothian and City of Edinburgh Council areas the Commission agreed to the use of cardinal points for constituencies in Edinburgh. In East Lothian the Commission agreed a constituency name of Lothian Eastern. This was to differentiate it from the new UK Parliament constituency name of Lothian East.
75. Within a grouping of Midlothian and Scottish Borders Council areas, the Commission agreed to retain the existing: Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire; and Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency names and a new constituency name, Midlothian North.
76. Within a grouping of Argyll and Bute, East-West Dunbartonshire, North-South Lanarkshire, Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas the Commission agreed to a constituency design similar to the existing boundaries, except in Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas. Therefore the Commission agreed to retain the existing constituency names where they mirrored or resembled the existing constituency boundaries in those areas. The Commission made one exception, a constituency was named Airdrie to differentiate it from the UK Parliament constituency name of Airdrie and Shotts. In Falkirk and West Lothian Council areas the Commission agreed the following constituency names: Bathgate; Falkirk North; Linlithgow and Falkirk South; and Livingston and Breich Valley.
77. A full list of agreed constituency names is show in the table below.

Revised Proposals - Constituency Name	Area (sq. km)	Designation
Aberdeen Central	26	Burgh
Aberdeen Donside	92	Burgh
Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	197	County
Aberdeenshire East	1,293	County
Aberdeenshire West	3,531	County
Airdrie	213	County
Angus North and Mearns	1,427	County
Angus South	1,318	County
Argyll and Bute	6,711	County
Ayr	49	Burgh
Banffshire and Buchan Coast	1,060	County
Bathgate	155	County
Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	12,792	County
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	2,082	County

Revised Proposals - Constituency Name	Area (sq. km)	Designation
Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	260	County
Clydebank and Milngavie	68	Burgh
Clydesdale	1,573	County
Coatbridge and Chryston	63	Burgh
Cowdenbeath	134	County
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	149	County
Cunninghame North	777	County
Cunninghame South	217	County
Dumbarton	599	County
Dumfriesshire	2,878	County
Dundee City East	27	Burgh
Dundee City West	34	Burgh
Dunfermline	213	County
East Kilbride	50	Burgh
Eastwood	135	County
Edinburgh Central	10	Burgh
Edinburgh Eastern, Musselburgh and Tranent	51	Burgh
Edinburgh North Eastern	16	Burgh
Edinburgh North Western	96	Burgh
Edinburgh Northern	18	Burgh
Edinburgh South Western	8	Burgh
Edinburgh Southern	31	Burgh
Erskine and Cardonald	40	Burgh
Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	3,193	County
Falkirk North	1,24	County
Fife North East	774	County
Galloway and West Dumfries	3,796	County
Glasgow Central	18	Burgh
Glasgow Eastern	26	Burgh
Glasgow North Eastern	34	Burgh
Glasgow Northern	21	Burgh
Glasgow South Eastern	15	Burgh
Glasgow Southern	32	Burgh
Glasgow Western	17	Burgh
Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse	104	Burgh
Inverclyde	173	County
Inverness and Nairn	936	County
Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	282	County
Kirkcaldy	99	Burgh
Linlithgow and Falkirk South	218	County
Livingston and Breich Valley	203	County
Lothian Eastern	658	County
Mid Fife and Glenrothes	150	County
Midlothian North	355	County
Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale	1,549	County
Moray	2,056	County
Motherwell and Wishaw	50	Burgh
Na h-Eileanan an Iar	3,270	County
Orkney Islands	1086	County

Revised Proposals - Constituency Name	Area (sq. km)	Designation
Paisley	37	Burgh
Perthshire North	3,978	County
Perthshire South and Kinross-shire	1,442	County
Renfrewshire West	238	County
Rutherglen	33	Burgh
Shetland Islands	1,657	County
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	12,745	County
Stirling	2,158	County
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	143	County
Uddingston and Bellshill	52	Burgh

Future meetings

78. The Secretariat was asked to canvass for a meeting date in mid-May 2024.

Any other business

79. The Commission asked for an updated Risk Register to be presented at the next Commission meeting.

80. The Secretariat highlighted an area by Kingseat, north of Dunfermline, where the existing constituency and ward boundary were no longer aligned. The Commission agreed there was some merit in aligning the constituency and ward boundaries. The ward boundary followed the M90 road and would create an easily identifiable boundary. The Commission asked the Secretariat to highlight any other similar anomalies for consideration.

81. The Commission discussed the draft terms of reference for an independent review of the process for determining electoral boundaries in Scotland. The Commission made a number of suggestions for further clarity and the Chair agreed to feed these back to colleagues in Scottish Government.