

Naming policy - Scottish Parliament boundaries

For discussion/approval

1. This paper invites the Commission to consider and formally approve a naming policy for Scottish Parliament boundary reviews.

Background

2. The Scotland Act 1998 requires the Commission to make recommendations in relation to names of constituencies and regions and the designations of constituencies. The Commission's Guidance Booklet for the Second Review did not include any guidance on naming or designations.
3. During the review, it was agreed that the Commission would consider and where appropriate, follow, the broad principles set out in the Boundary Commission for Scotland's approach to naming constituencies. The extract from BCS's guidance booklet can be found at Appendix A.
4. For electoral reviews, the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 is silent in relation to the approach to be taken to naming wards. The Islands Reviews took the following approach as referred to in the Final Report:

“When considering ward names we may use an existing ward name where there is a successor ward that is recognisably similar and aim to propose ward names that are reasonably short rather than attempt to describe an area exhaustively. We also welcome local views when proposing ward names”.

5. For the Fifth Reviews, the guidance booklet refers to “Once ward boundaries have been determined, the Commission usually accepts names for wards that are suggested by councils”.

Discussion

6. As part of the lessons learned from the Second Review (see BS 193), it was agreed that the Commission should have a formal naming policy. A draft naming policy for Scottish Parliament reviews is at Appendix B. This draft policy includes a paragraph on the use of Gaelic names.

Recommendation

7. The Commission is invited to consider the draft naming policy for Scottish Parliament reviews and offer any suggestions before formally approving it. Once agreed, this naming policy will be published and shared with the Boundary Commission for Scotland.
8. For electoral reviews, the Commission will be asked to consider and approve a naming policy closer to the start of these reviews.

Secretariat
September 2025