

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Stakeholder Feedback Survey

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider responses to a stakeholder survey about their experiences of participating in the Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries.

Survey

2. The Secretariat designed a short 12 question survey which was sent to members of the public (if consent provided), council election teams, MPs, MSPs, councillors and small organisations who had previously participated. Approximately 800 emails were sent with a link to the consultation and 207 responses were received.
3. The survey asked questions about the clarity of the information provided, understanding of the rules governing the review, opinions on engagement and accessibility, if respondents had any suggestions for future reviews or additional comments about the review.
4. A full list of responses to the survey is provided at Appendix A.
5. The survey questions and responses are summarised below:
6. How would you rate your overall experience of participating in the Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries?

Option	Total	Percent
very positive	13	6.3%
positive	53	25.6%
neutral	107	51.7%
negative	24	11.6%
very negative	9	4.4%
Not Answered	1	0.5%

7. Overall more stakeholders had a positive experience of participating in the review.
8. How clear was the information provided about the review process and our proposals?

Option	Total	Percent
very clear	14	6.8%
clear	96	46.4%
neutral	52	25.1%
unclear	36	17.4%
very unclear	8	3.9%
Not Answered	1	0.5%

9. The majority of respondents found the information provided to be clear but more than 20% still answered negatively.

10. How confident were you that you understood the different rules Boundaries Scotland has to apply when creating constituency and region boundaries?

Option	Total	Percent
very confident	23	11.1%
confident	86	41.6%
neutral	48	23.2%
not confident	50	24.2%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

11. The majority of stakeholders were confident in their understanding of the review rules however close to 25% of respondents were not.

12. How satisfied were you with the opportunities to engage and provide input during the review process?

Option	Total	Percent
very satisfied	11	5.3%
satisfied	72	34.8%
neutral	70	33.8%
dissatisfied	36	17.4%
very dissatisfied	17	8.2%
Not Answered	1	0.5%

13. Over 70% of stakeholders were satisfied or neutral in their view of the opportunities to engage during the review but again close to a quarter were dissatisfied to some degree.

14. How confident were you that the information gathered during consultations and local inquiries was taken into account by Boundaries Scotland?

Option	Total	Percent
very confident	9	4.4%
confident	36	17.4%
neutral	63	30.4%
not confident	99	47.8%
Not Answered	0	0.00%

15. Close to half of all respondents had doubts that the information gathered was taken into account by the Commission, some suggested the consultation was a tick-box exercise and that decisions were already made.

16. Was the review process accessible to you (e.g. online materials, submission methods, local inquiries)?

Option	Total	Percent
yes, completely accessible	57	27.5%
mostly accessible	65	31.4%
neutral	47	22.7%
somewhat inaccessible	25	12.1%
not accessible at all	13	6.3%
Not Answered	0	0.0%

17. Close to 60% of respondents were happy with the accessibility of the review process.

18. There were just over 100 responses to the question - "Do you have any suggestions for how future reviews could be improved?" The main themes can be summarised as follows:

Communication and Transparency

- Many respondents felt poorly informed about the review process and proposed changes.
- Suggestions included:
 - Earlier and wider publicity (social media, newspapers, radio, TV, leaflets).
 - Clearer maps and simple language to explain changes.
 - Regular updates on decisions and outcomes.
 - Acknowledging contributions and showing how feedback influenced decisions.

Accessibility and Engagement

- Calls for:
 - Physical meetings at convenient times and locations.
 - Postal options and hard copies in libraries/community centres.
 - Video presentations and community displays.
 - BSL support and consideration for those with low literacy or digital access.

Consultation Quality

- Strong perception that decisions were already made ("tick-box exercise").
- Requests for:
 - Listening to public views and acting on them.
 - Less biased questions and more open-ended formats.
 - Clear process steps and timelines.

Boundary Decisions

- Major concern: community ties ignored in favour of equal population numbers.
- Suggestions:
 - More focus on local connections, geography, transport links, historic ties.
 - Avoid splitting towns/villages or removing names from constituencies.
 - Consider rural challenges and large geographic areas.

Practical Improvements

- Better maps and visual aids.

- More time for consultation.
- Direct outreach (letters, emails, SMS).
- Feedback reports summarising responses and next steps.

Tone of Feedback

- Many expressed frustration and distrust in the process.
- Some felt disillusioned with politics and questioned whether input matters.

19. There were 68 responses to the question - "Any other comments you would like to share?" The main these can be summarised as follows:-

Distrust in the Process

- Many respondents believe the consultation was a tick-box exercise and that decisions were already made.
- Strong feelings that the process undermines democracy and is politically motivated (mentions of gerrymandering and political party advantage).

Opposition to Boundary Changes

- Widespread sentiment that changes are unnecessary, illogical, or harmful.
- Concerns about:
 - Loss of local identity (e.g. removal of town names like Shotts).
 - Communities split across counties or grouped with areas that have no cultural or transport links.
 - Disruption to services and representation.

Communication & Transparency Issues

- Many people did not know about the changes or hear about consultations.
- Requests for:
 - Clearer explanations of why changes are needed.
 - Better publicity (letters to homes, not just social media).
 - Transparency on decision-making and rationale.

Practical Concerns

- Comments highlight:
 - Transport links ignored in boundary design.
 - Workload concerns for MSPs in large, socially diverse constituencies.
 - Financial cost of reviews questioned during economic hardship.

Emotional Tone

- Strong frustration and disillusionment with politics.
- Some comments express anger and loss of trust in government processes.
- A few positive notes thanking for engagement, but these were rare.

Response types

20. A list of individual respondent types is shown in the table below

Respondent type	Total	Percent
Member of the public	185	89.37%
MSP	3	1.45%
MP	0	0.00%
Councillor	7	3.38%
Other	5	2.42%

Not Answered	7	3.38%
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21. There were also responses from organisations and these are shown below.

Respondent type	Total
Community Councils	2
Local Political Parties	2
Councils	3

Summary

22. The survey responses indicated that stakeholders had a generally positive experience of participating in the Second Review.
23. The strongest negative feedback related to whether there was confidence in the Commission taking into account information gathered during consultations and local inquiries. Also, stakeholders tended to favour prioritising local ties and maintaining the status quo with little importance placed on achieving electoral parity.
24. The Commission has developed a Lessons Learned document since the conclusion of the Second Review. In response to the survey, further lessons about improving the Commission's approach to communication and engagement could be added. In particular, there is scope for ensuring that key documents at the start of the review are available in an easy read format and that different methods are used to share this information. Also, at key stages of the review, the Commission could consider publishing a 'you said/we listened' update which summarises consultation responses and how they were taken into account during the process.
25. It is likely that recommendations from the Independent Review of the process for determining electoral boundaries in Scotland will have a significant impact on the approach taken to engagement and consultations. Once the outcome of the Independent Review is known, the Commission is likely to develop its approach to improving engagement and communications further.

Conclusion

26. Commissioners are invited to consider responses to the survey and how it may inform the Commission's approach to publicity and engagement for future reviews. Also, Commissioners may wish to consider whether anything further should be added to the lessons learned document.

Secretariat
December 2025