

## Independent Review of the Process for Determining Electoral Boundaries

### Purpose

1. This paper provides a summary of the Chair's Report on the Independent Review of the Process for Determining Electoral Boundaries in Scotland.
2. Commissioners are asked to consider this summary and agree the approach to formally responding to the Report.

### Background

3. The final Report on the Independent Review has now been published and the link was shared with Commissioners on 10 December 2025 ([Electoral boundaries - determination process: independent review report - gov.scot](#))
4. Prior to publication, the Commission formally responded to the consultation and provided detailed comments on the draft Report. As recognised by the Commission at the time of providing comments on the draft Report, some of the detail is better suited for the later stages of the process.

### Discussion

5. The 11 recommendations in the Report were grouped under three headings:
  - (1) changes to the approvals process
  - (2) impact on consultation requirements and
  - (3) structure and scrutiny of Boundaries Scotland.
6. The Chair recommended a move to an automatic process for the implementation of boundary changes. If implemented, Boundaries Scotland would become a decision making rather than advisory body.
7. Proposed changes to the consultation process were also recommended with the main ones being (i) Scottish Parliament and local authorities recognised as statutory consultees with a recommended consultation period of 8 weeks) (ii) two rounds of public consultation of 12 weeks and a final stage of at least 4 weeks (iii) public hearings to replace local inquiries with a set number to be held over a geographical spread and in a range of formats (in person/digital/hybrid). The Report also includes recommendations about simplifying language and improving communication materials to assist with improving stakeholder understanding/engagement.
8. Regarding the structure and scrutiny of Boundaries Scotland, after considering various options, the Chair did not make a recommendation in relation to Boundaries Scotland's membership. The Chair recommended that the Electoral Commission has a statutory scrutiny role. This is referred to as being a "lessons learned" style of engagement after the review is completed with a more informal arrangement throughout the review about process.
9. Another key recommendation is that the legislative rules should be clarified with a recommended 15% limit on variation from parity. This limit would not apply to regions or constituencies/wards containing island communities. For wards, the Report specifically states that the calculation for variation from parity would

continue to take place within each review of local government electoral arrangements rather than across Scotland.

10. After discussing the Report, Commissioners are asked to agree its approach to formally responding to the published recommendations.

11. Commissioners are also asked to consider what steps should be taken to engage with stakeholders to ensure that the recommendations from the Independent Review are implemented.

**Next steps**

12. After the meeting, a formal response to the published Report will be drafted and shared by email for approval. Steps will also be taken to publish the Commission's response to the final Report.

**Secretariat  
January 2026**