

Second Review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries

Report by Dr Grace Vickers, Chief Executive

Report for Decision

1 Recommendation

The Council are invited to

- (a) note the revised proposed boundary reviews for the Midlothian Scottish Parliamentary constituencies; and
- (b) determine whether to submit a formal comment/objection to Boundaries Scotland.

2 Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

This report advises members of the terms of the second consultation during the Second Review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries and invites members to decide if the Council should make formal comment or objection to the proposals for the new Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale and Midlothian North constituencies.

Date: 23 April 2024

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3 Background

- 3.1 There is a statutory requirement under Schedule 1 of Scotland Act 1998 to review Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries on a regular basis. Boundaries Scotland is an independent, non-political body which has been set up and charged with carrying out reviews of Scottish Parliamentary boundaries.
- 3.2 The first such review took place 2010/11 and established the constituency boundaries used at the Scottish Parliamentary Elections in 2011, 2016 and 2021. This consultation is part of the second review which will report to the Scottish Ministers on 01 May 2025 and will set the boundaries of constituencies and regions for the 2026 Scottish Parliamentary Elections onwards.
- 3.3 Members will recall that as part of the first consultation process Boundaries Scotland proposed that Ward 3 Dalkeith will remain as part of Midlothian North and Musselburgh along with wards from East Lothian and Edinburgh whilst the other five wards would form a new Midlothian South Constituency.

Following the close of the first consultation process, Boundaries Scotland held 6 public inquiries, including one in Musselburgh to consider the proposed Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency. Following the inquiry, it is no longer proposed to proceed with the Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituency but rather to form a Midlothian North constituency and a Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency. Details of the new proposed constituencies are set out in Section 4 below.

Boundaries Scotland have now opened a second consultation process which will run from 16 April 2024 until 15 May 2024. Following the end of the second consultation period, Boundaries Scotland will consider all representations received and either confirm the proposed constituencies or, if they consider further changes are required, undertake a further one month consultation. It is not intended to hold any further public inquiries.

- 3.4 There are 73 Scottish Parliamentary constituencies and 8 regions and these numbers are fixed in the Scotland Act, the review will not therefore affect the number of MSPs (129).

Equally, the size of the three island constituencies are also fixed in statute, the review looks only at the size of the 70 mainland constituencies and seeks to reflect changing populations across Scotland.

In reviewing constituencies, Boundaries Scotland are required to:

1. Take account of Council area boundaries
2. Create constituencies that have broadly the same number of electors
3. Take account of special geographical considerations
4. Take account of local ties and other inconveniences caused by changes to constituencies

Boundaries Scotland have calculated the Electoral Quota for this review (the population of the constituencies under review divided by 70) as 59,902 and the electorate of each constituency must be as near as the electoral quota as is practical having regard to rule 1 (taking account of Council area boundaries).

- 3.5 The proposals under this second consultation will have the following effect across Scotland:

- 22 Constituencies completely unchanged;
- 3 constituencies renamed but boundaries unchanged;
- 18 constituencies where boundaries have been changed but name unchanged – including Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale;
- 30 constituencies where boundaries and names have both been changed – including Midlothian North.

4 Midlothian Constituencies

- 4.1 In terms of the current Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries, Midlothian is split into two cross boundary constituencies – Midlothian North and Musselburgh and Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale. Currently Ward 2 Bonnyrigg, Ward 3 Dalkeith, part of Ward 4 Midlothian West and Ward 5 Midlothian East are in Midlothian North and Musselburgh along with two East Lothian wards whilst Ward 1 Penicuik, the remaining part of Ward 4 Midlothian West and Ward 6 Midlothian South are in Midlothian South Tweeddale and Lauderdale along with some Scottish Borders wards.

The current electorate figures for the current boundaries are as follows:

Midlothian North and Musselburgh – 69,302

Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale – 65,410

- 4.2 In terms of the amended consultation proposals, Ward 2 Bonnyrigg, Ward 3 Dalkeith, Ward 5 Midlothian East and parts of Ward 4 Midlothian West and Ward 6 Midlothian South will form a new Midlothian North constituency whilst the remaining parts of Ward 4 Midlothian West and Ward 6 Midlothian South together with Ward 1 Penicuik will be joined with parts of Scottish Borders to form Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency.

The boundaries of the new Midlothian North and Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituencies are shown in Appendices B and C respectively.

The electorate figures for the proposed boundaries are as follows:

Midlothian North – 53,996

Midlothian South – 60,183

It must be noted that these figures are within the proposed parameters of other constituencies.

5. Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

5.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

5.2 Digital

There are no digital implications related to this report.

5.3 Risk

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

5.4 Ensuring Equalities

An equalities impact assessment has not been required in connection with this report.

5.5 Additional Report Implications

See Appendix A

Appendix A - Additional Report Implications

A.1 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Not applicable

A.2 Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

- Holistic Working
- Hub and Spoke
- Modern
- Sustainable
- Transformational
- Preventative
- Asset-based
- Continuous Improvement
- One size fits one
- None of the above

A.3 Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

- One Council Working with you, for you
- Preventative and Sustainable
- Efficient and Modern
- Innovative and Ambitious
- None of the above

A.4 Delivering Best Value

There are no direct implications related to this report.

A.5 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The report does not directly relate to involving communities.

A.6 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Not applicable

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable

A.8 Supporting a Sustainable Development

Not applicable