

Second Review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries

Report by Kevin Anderson, Executive Director, Place

Report for Decision

1 Recommendation

The Council are invited to

- (a) note the 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 Review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries and invites members to decide if the Council should make formal comment or objection to the proposals for the Midlothian South and Midlothian North and Musselburgh constituencies; noting that should the Council make formal objection a Local Inquiry will require to be held.

Date: 15 June 2023

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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 The timetable for the second review is as follows:

- 01 September 2022 – Intention to hold review published in Edinburgh Gazette
- Dec 2022 – April 2023 – Electoral Quota calculated and proposals prepared
- 17.05.2023 – Consultation opens
- 17.06.2023 – Consultation closes *
- Autumn 2023 Local Inquiries held dependent on result of consultations
- Late 2023/2024 one month consultation on revised recommendations
- 2024 – one month consultation on further revised recommendations, if required
- 2024 – one month consultation on region recommendations
- 2024 – one month further consultation on region revised recommendations
- 01.05.2025 – report to Scottish Ministers. If approved, new boundaries will come into effect at 2026 Scottish Parliamentary elections

***Members should note that Boundaries Scotland have granted an extension to the Council until 30 June 2023 to respond to the Consultation.**

A Local Inquiry must be held if either an affected Local Authority or 100 electors object to a proposal. The Inquiry will be heard by an Assistant Commissioner appointed by Scottish Ministers and the purpose is to:

- Hear local opinions
- Hear criticism or support
- Receive counter proposals
- Enable everyone who wishes to comment to do so

Following the Inquiry, Assistant Commissioner reports to Boundaries Scotland who will publish the report and take the findings into account in preparing revised recommendations.

- 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 consultation will have the following effect across Scotland:

- 18 Constituencies completely unchanged;
- 1 constituency renamed but boundaries unchanged;
- 26 constituencies where boundaries have been changed but name unchanged – including Midlothian North and Musselburgh;
- 25 constituencies where boundaries and names have both been changed – including Midlothian South.

Current constituency sizes across Scotland range from Argyll and Bute with 49,535 electors to Linlithgow with 76,337 electors. Under the new proposals, the smallest electorate is Glasgow Cardonald and Pollock with 54,058 electors and the largest is Inverness and Nairn with 69,113 electors.

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 consultation proposals, Ward 3 Dalkeith will remain as part of Midlothian North and Musselburgh along with wards from East Lothian and Edinburgh; this is the only constituency in Scotland which crosses more than two Council boundaries. In addition, Ward 3 will be the only Midlothian ward within this constituency.

The electorate figures for the proposed boundaries are as follows:

Midlothian North and Musselburgh – 55,122

Midlothian South – 64,424

It must be noted that these figures are within the proposed parameters of other constituencies. Should Ward 3 Dalkeith be added into Midlothian South, with no other changes, this would leave an electorate of 76,144 whilst Midlothian North and Musselburgh would be reduced to 43,402; both these electorates would be outwith the proposed parameters.

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