



News Release

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Local Inquiries into proposed constituencies for the Scottish Parliament 15 November 2023

Boundaries Scotland has announced arrangements for Local Inquiries into its provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament constituency boundaries.

Following its consideration of the representations received during the initial consultation on constituency boundaries conducted in May–June 2023, Local Inquiries will be held in respect of the following proposed constituencies:

- East Lothian; and Midlothian North and Musselburgh;
- Cunninghame South; and Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley
- Bearsden, Milngavie and Clydebank North; and Dumbarton and Helensburgh
- Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock; Paisley and Renfrew; Renfrewshire South; and Renfrewshire West
- Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow
- Clyde Valley and Tweeddale

Chair of Boundaries Scotland, Professor Ailsa Henderson said

“Our consultations are strengthened by local people and organisations contributing their views. Whether you support or oppose our provisional proposals for the constituencies in your area we very much want to hear from you. Responses are particularly helpful when they include specific suggestions for improvements and if they comply with the legislative rules within which we work.

Local Inquiries are held by us in areas where a local authority has objected to our proposals, where there has been a strong local response or where we feel we want additional information. They are an important part of the review process. If we subsequently change our proposals in any area we will consult again in 2024.”

Anyone wishing to speak at an inquiry is invited to contact the Commission 0131 244 2001 or email boundaries.scot@scottishboundaries.gov.uk to book a slot.

If the Commission makes changes to its Initial Proposals, regardless of whether a Local Inquiry has been held, it will consult for a further period of one month in 2024.

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

The venue and timetable for each inquiry is set out below. Each Local Inquiry will include two sessions. These sessions will run from 2pm – 4pm and 6pm – 8pm

depending on demand. The public are asked to email boundaries.scot@scottishboundaries.gov.uk to book a speaking slot.

Local Inquiries are conducted by a Sheriff Principal appointed as an Assistant Commissioner for the purpose. After the Local Inquiry, the Assistant Commissioner submits a report to the Commission. The Commission then considers whether to modify its provisional proposals in the light of the report and all the representations received. For the purposes of these Local Inquiries Sheriff Principal Murphy will conduct those held in Kilmarnock, Clydebank, Newton Mearns and Johnstone and Sheriff Principal Ross those in Edinburgh, Musselburgh and Peebles.

Further information concerning each Local Inquiry will be publicised two weeks before the Inquiry on our website www.boundaries.scot/reviews/second-review-scottish-parliament-boundaries. Responses to our initial consultation can be viewed on our consultation site www.consult.boundaries.scot

The Commission expects to consult on revised proposals for constituencies and provisional proposals for regions in Spring 2024.

Boundaries Scotland is an independent advisory non-departmental public body sponsored and wholly funded by the Scottish Government. The role of Boundaries Scotland is to review and make recommendations for: constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament; the number of councillors on each council in a local government area; the number of wards for local government elections and their boundaries; and the extent of council areas.

The Boundary Commission for Scotland conducted the First Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries. Those boundaries have been in use since 2011. Responsibility for Reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries transferred to Boundaries Scotland following the Scotland Act 2016.

The Rules for reviewing constituencies and regions are set out in the Scotland Act 1998.

FAQs

Why are you changing things? Is this necessary?

If constituency boundaries never changed then over time they would become of very different sizes. This would undermine the fairness of elections as in one area an MSP might need many fewer votes to get elected than in another area. That MSP might also represent many fewer people. In order to ensure your vote is of equal weight with others we conduct reviews around every 10 years.

Is this just a numbers game?

Numbers of electors are important as we want constituencies to contain roughly the same number of electors. But they aren't the only factor and we look at council area boundaries, local ties, and geography as well. We must work within the legislative rules that govern our reviews and have to balance all the factors in a fair way.

Does the proposed change to my electoral constituency affect local services, council tax or the council area I live in?

No. This review only affects the electoral constituency that you will vote in at the next Scottish Parliament election and the MSP that represents you. It has no impact on any of the services you currently access nor does it affect the council area you live in.

My proposed constituency crosses a council area boundary – isn't that against the rules?

No. Rule 1 indicates we must have regard to local boundaries, but the electoral system for Scottish Parliament elections requires 73 constituencies and there are only 32 council areas. While we have regard to council areas it is not always possible to nest all constituencies within a single council area. For example, a council area might contain too many electors for one constituency, but too few for two constituencies. In those instances constituency boundaries will cross local authority boundaries, but will have regard to the other rules, including local ties and geographic circumstances.

My proposed constituency contains a community I have nothing in common with and can't even reach on public transport – why?

When boundaries change you sometimes will find a constituency contains a town or village that wasn't included before. But this does not mean any local ties are broken. And because constituency boundaries don't affect local services, school catchments, NHS provision and so on, there is no need for you to change your current way of doing things. The only thing that changes is the constituency you vote in for a Scottish Parliament election.

My community has close links with another and we will now be in separate constituencies – will that affect how we work together?

Not necessarily. While you would elect different MSPs as you'd be in different constituencies this shouldn't change your current activity. If your local MSP is involved in what you do then you might have two MSPs involved.

My existing constituency is close to the electorate quota, why are you changing it?

We have to consider the electorate of all constituencies across Scotland. Even if one particular constituency is close to the electorate quota we may need to amend the boundary due to a higher or lower electorate of neighbouring constituencies. The constituencies need to work for Scotland as a whole, not just one area.

Why are so many wards split? Is this not breaking Rule 1 of the Review?

Rule 1 of the review states "so far as practical, regard must be had to the boundaries of local government areas" but this refers to the council area or local authority boundary rather than the boundaries within it such as wards. In addition, the introduction of larger multi-member wards means it is unlikely for us to avoid dividing some ward boundaries between constituencies.

Will this review favour one political party over another?

As an independent and politically impartial body, we do not take into account patterns of voting, the results of past elections or possible effects on future elections when reviewing constituency boundaries. Nor do the political parties' views on where boundaries should be have any more weight than those of members of the public.

Contact:

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**Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries
Local Inquiries – Provisional Proposals for constituencies**

Summary

Proposed constituencies	Assistant Commissioner	Dates	Venue
East Lothian; and Midlothian North and Musselburgh	Sheriff Principal Ross	7 December 2023	Musselburgh Racecourse, Linkfield Road, Musselburgh, EH21 7RG
Cunninghame South; Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	Sheriff Principal Murphy	12 December 2023	The Park Hotel, 2 Dundonald Place, Kilmarnock, KA1 1UR
Bearsden, Milngavie and Clydebank North; and Dumbarton and Helensburgh	Sheriff Principal Murphy	13 December 2023	Clydebank Leisure Centre, Queens Quay, Aurora Ave, Clydebank G81 1BF
Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock; Paisley and Renfrew; Renfrewshire South; Renfrewshire West	Sheriff Principal Murphy	14 December 2023	Afternoon session – Lynnhurst Hotel, Park Road, Johnstone, PA5 8LS Evening session – Parklands Hotel & Country Club, Crookfur Park, Ayr Road, Newton Mearns, G77 6DT
Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow	Sheriff Principal Ross	9 January 2024	Village Hotel Club, 140 Crewe Road South, Edinburgh, EH4 2NY
Clyde Valley and Tweeddale	Sheriff Principal Ross	11 January 2024	Peebles Hydro, Innerleithen Road, Peebles, EH45 8LX