

The City of Edinburgh Council

10.00 am Thursday, 25 November, 2021

Boundary Commission for Scotland – 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies

Executive/routine	
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To note the Boundary Commission for Scotland consultation on the proposed new UK Parliamentary Constituencies.
- 1.2 To approve the response to the Boundary Commission for Scotland as detailed in appendix 1 to this report

Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive and Returning Officer

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Boundary Commission for Scotland – 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland has published initial proposals for a new map of UK Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland. Scotland has been allocated 57 constituencies for the 2023 Review, two fewer than at present, the UK Parliament retaining 650 constituencies in total. The overall aim is to make the electorate of each constituency more equal. Under the proposals Edinburgh retains 5 constituencies, with the current names, with minor changes to the boundaries between constituencies. However, it is proposed that the Edinburgh East constituency should include the western half of Musselburgh. A consultation on the proposals is open until 8 December 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 The 2023 Review of UK Parliamentary constituencies is required by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. It is being conducted simultaneously by the four Boundary Commissions in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales in their respective countries. Reviews are required to take account of changes in population size and distribution.
- 3.2 The four UK Boundary Commissions began reviews in 2011 and 2016 that would have reduced the total number of constituencies by 50 to 600. Neither of these Reviews resulted in any change to constituencies, as the first was cancelled by changes to legislation and the second not implemented by Parliament. This current review commenced in January 2021.
- 3.3 The existing constituencies have remained unchanged since 2005 and were used in the 2005, 2010, 2015, 2017 and 2019 UK Parliamentary General Elections.

4. Main report

- 4.1 For the purposes of the 2023 Review, the UK Parliament has retained 650 constituencies with an overall aim to make the electorate of each constituency more

equal. An electoral quota was calculated by dividing the total UK electorate by the number of constituencies with protected island constituencies excluded.

- 4.2 The electorate for the review was taken from the electoral register on 2 March 2020 and each constituency apart from Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles) and Orkney & Shetland must be within 5% of the UK electoral quota of 73,392, therefore within the range 69,724 and 77,062.
- 4.3 In determining boundaries of constituencies to reach this quota the Boundary Commission for Scotland will take into account a range of factors including:
- special geographical considerations, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
 - boundaries of council areas and electoral wards;
 - existing Westminster constituency boundaries; and
 - any local ties which would be broken by changes in constituencies.
- 4.4 The Commission developed its initial proposals in council area groupings, with the City of Edinburgh included in the seven constituencies wholly within the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian council areas.
- 4.5 For Edinburgh, the existing Edinburgh South West constituency and the existing constituency names are unchanged. However, there are minor changes proposed to the boundary between the Edinburgh West and the Edinburgh North and Leith constituencies at Craigmyle and the Dean Village. The boundary between the Edinburgh East and Edinburgh South constituencies has been amended at Prestonfield. The Edinburgh East constituency now includes the western half of Musselburgh.
- 4.6 Maps showing the proposed boundaries have been produced by the Boundary Commission along with a range of background information. The maps and consultation material have been shared separately with political groups on the Council.
- 4.7 These documents have been made available for public consultation at the City Chambers, held in the Election Office, and at a number of libraries throughout the Council area. They are also available to download from the Commission's website: <https://www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk/?q=reviews/2023-review-uk-parliament-constituencies> . The consultation is also signposted from the Council's website and has been promoted by the Council via its social media activity.
- 4.8 The Commission requires any comments or representations on its proposals by 8 December 2021. Comments on the proposals should state whether they approve of, or object to, the proposals and to give reasons for approval or objection. Objectors should state what they propose in place of the Commission's recommendations.
- 4.9 Comments can be made via the consultation site: www.bcs2023review.com , in writing to: Boundary Commission for Scotland, Thistle House, 91 Haymarket

Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HD or by email to comments@scottishboundaries.gov.uk

- 4.10 In early 2022 there will be a secondary six-week consultation period, including up to 5 Public Hearings, which will include publication of all comments received up to the 8 December. Following consideration of any evidence received, any revised proposals would be offered for public consultation in late 2022 with final recommendations submitted to the Speaker by 1 July 2023.
- 4.11 The next UK Parliamentary General Election is scheduled to be held on Thursday 2 May 2024, in line with the Fixed-term Parliaments Act. The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill, laid before Parliament in May 2021, would repeal the 2011 Act. Once enacted, the Prime Minister will again be able to exercise the prerogative power of the monarch to dissolve Parliament and call an early election with just 25 working days' notice.
- 4.12 In terms of the administration of elections by the Council's Election Team on behalf of the Returning Officer, these are minor changes administratively and can easily be accommodated in the work programme. The addition of the proposed portion of Musselburgh would include only two further polling places which would be a small addition to the existing 150 polling places staffed and managed currently.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Details of the proposals have been placed in libraries and in the Election Office at the City Chambers. This has been highlighted on the Council website and on social media feeds.
- 5.2 A proposed response to the consultation from the Council is provided at Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Political groups may wish to respond individually if there are particular political issues of concern to them

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Not applicable

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Boundary Commission for Scotland portal to view current and proposed boundaries and to make comments <https://www.bcs2023review.com/>

- 8.2 Boundary Commission for Scotland Initial Proposals - 2023 Review web pages
<https://www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk/?q=reviews/2023-review-uk-parliament-constituencies>

9. Appendices

- 1 – Proposed consultation response

Isabel Drummond-Murray
Secretary Boundary Commission for
Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

Date

Our Ref

Your Ref

Dear Isabel,

2023 REVIEW OF UK PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES PUBLIC CONSULTATION INITIAL PROPOSALS: CONSULTATION RESPONSE

I refer to your letter of 13 October 2021 regarding the current consultation on the Commission's initial proposals as a result of the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies.

Your letter and enclosures provided the background to the review, its timeline, the basis on which the electoral quota had been identified and proposals for the boundaries of the new 57 UK constituencies in Scotland. I should be grateful if you could treat this letter as the City of Edinburgh Council's response to the Commission's initial proposals.

I note that for the UK constituencies with the City of Edinburgh Council area the proposals represent minor change. The existing Edinburgh South West constituency and the existing constituency names are unchanged. However, there are minor changes proposed to the boundary between the Edinburgh West and the Edinburgh North and Leith constituencies at Craighleith and the Dean Village. The boundary between the Edinburgh East and Edinburgh South constituencies has been amended at Prestonfield.

A more significant change is that the Edinburgh East constituency now includes the western half of Musselburgh, adding a small area outwith the City of Edinburgh Council area to what was previously a constituency wholly within the City of Edinburgh.

Given the applicable legislation, the policies and procedures adopted by the Commission in the conduct of this review, the City of Edinburgh Council is content that the proposals for the five UK constituencies in the council's area represent an acceptable set of boundaries that recognise existing UK constituencies, the Scottish Parliament constituencies and council wards. The proposed adjustments to boundaries Edinburgh West and the Edinburgh North and Leith and the Edinburgh East and Edinburgh South constituencies, take account of natural local features and boundaries and are supported. The addition of a portion of East Lothian through the inclusion of west Musselburgh in Edinburgh East is unfortunate. It would be the preference for constituencies to be wholly within the Council area allowing a more accurate route to data analysis, a simpler alignment of political representation and avoids any cross-boundary issues in electoral administration.

However given the population changes and the electoral quota the boundaries presented for Edinburgh East are understandable in terms of polling the addition of this small element of East Lothian can easily be accommodated by the council's Election Team.

This Council looks forward to any revised proposals that may result from the this consultation and will again consider those when they are published.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive