
BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND – REVIEW OF UK PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES 2023

Report by Director of Finance & Corporate Governance

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

28 October 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives details of the Boundary Commission for Scotland’s initial proposals of its 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies in Scotland which impact on a number of constituents in the Council’s Tweeddale East Ward.**
- 1.2 The current UK Parliament constituencies have remained unchanged since 2005. The initial proposals for the 2023 Review by the Boundary Commission for Scotland retain the current constituencies covering the Scottish Borders, namely Berwickshire, Roxburgh & Selkirk, and Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale & Tweeddale. However, the average electorate per constituency across the UK for the Review is 73,393, and the electorate in any constituency must be within +/- 5% of this. The electorate is taken from the 2 March 2020 Electoral Register and based on this, the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale & Tweeddale constituency has 68,874 electors, which is out-with the 5% tolerance.
- 1.3 The initial proposals of the Commission make changes to both constituencies which will result in the electorate in Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk reducing to 73,779 and that in Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale increasing to 73,593. To achieve this change, the Commission is proposing to move Polling District 2F (908 electors) in the Council’s Tweeddale East Ward from the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency to the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency. This will mean that the whole of the Tweeddale East Ward will come within that latter constituency.
- 1.4 There will be a number of consultation periods over the course of the Review. The first consultation period for the Initial Proposals finishes on 8 December 2021. In early 2022, the Commission will conduct a second consultation for 6 weeks, when it publishes responses to the first consultation. The Commission will also hold between two and five Public Hearings around Scotland. In late 2022, the Commission will conduct a four week public consultation on its revised proposals. Once the Review is completed, the Commission’s recommendations will be submitted in a report to the Speaker before 1 July 2023.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the initial proposals for the Review of UK Parliament Constituencies 2023 which will mean, should these be accepted, that all of the electorate in the Council's Tweeddale East Ward would be within the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale Constituency for UK Parliament elections.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The 2023 Review of UK Parliamentary constituencies is a requirement of the Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). It is being conducted simultaneously and independently by the four Boundary Commissions in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales. Across the UK, the number of constituencies is being retained at 650, with Scottish constituencies decreasing from 59 to 57, Wales reducing from 40 to 32 and England increasing by 10 to 543. No change is being proposed to the number of constituencies in Northern Ireland which remains at 18.
- 3.2 The current constituencies have remained unchanged since 2005 and Reviews are required to take account of changes in population size and distribution. Each constituency that the Commission recommends must contain no fewer than 69,724 Parliamentary electors, and no more than 77,062 (except the two protected constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar and Orkney & Shetland), as the average electorate per constituency across the UK is 73,393, and the electorate in any constituency must be within +/- 5% of this. The electorate for this Review is taken from the Electoral Register published on 2 March 2020. Subject to these conditions, the Commission may take into account, as they see fit, other factors, namely:
- 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 INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUENCY CHANGES

- 4.1 With regard to the constituency design approach, the Commission developed its initial proposals in Council area groupings. For these groupings, there are 12 constituencies wholly within Dumfries & Galloway, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire and Scottish Borders Council areas. There are 2 constituencies which currently cover the Scottish Borders area –
- Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (74,687 electorate)
 - Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale (68,874 electorate)
- 4.2 The initial proposals of the Commission make changes to both constituencies which will result in the electorate in Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk reducing to 73,779 and that in Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale increasing to 73,593. To achieve this change, the Commission is proposing to move Polling District 2F (908 electors) in the Council's Tweeddale East Ward from the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency to the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency. This will mean that the whole of the Tweeddale East Ward will come within that latter constituency. The other changes adding to the electorate in that constituency come from changes to the boundary around Lanark.

5 TIMETABLE AND PROCEDURES

- 5.1 The Secretary of the Boundary Commission wrote to the Chief Executive on 13 October 2021 advising that initial proposals for the 2023 Review of UK

Parliamentary Constituencies would be published on 14 October 2021 for an eight week consultation period. All comments on these revised proposals need to be sent to the Commission by 8 December 2021, which is the end of the first consultation period. The link to the Review is on the Council's website and social media.

- 5.2 A second consultation period of six weeks will then be held when the representations made to the first consultation will be published. During this secondary consultation period, further written representations may be submitted to comment on the representations made in the first consultation. During this time, between two and five Public Hearings will be held around Scotland where the Commission will explain its proposals and give an opportunity for others to make representations on these proposals. Government guidance on Covid-19 will be followed for these Hearings.
- 5.3 After the end of the second consultation period, all the written representations received during that time will be published along with transcripts of the public hearings. This will be followed by a third consultation of four weeks, during which individuals and organisations can submit written comments with report to the representations made at the Public Hearings. The Commission will consider all representations and make any amendments to the Initial Proposals at that time. Should there be changes made, then Revised Proposals will be published for public consultation during the four week period of the third consultation. No Public Hearings will be held in connection with any Revised Proposals and the Commission will publish all written representations received during this consultation period at the same time as it publishes its final recommendations.
- 5.4 Once the Review is completed, the Commission's recommendations will be submitted in a report to the Speaker before 1 July 2023. The Speaker is responsible for laying the report before the UK Parliament. A copy of the Commission's report is submitted to the Secretary of State for Scotland at the same time. The report will be published once it has been laid before Parliament. The Secretary of State for Scotland is then responsible for submitting a draft Order in Council to the UK Parliament within a 4-month period of the report being submitted. The draft Order in Council can modify the recommendations made by the Commission during the 4-month period, but these are likely to be incidental modifications to correct any error of fact in the Commission's report. Once the draft Order in Council completes its legislative process, it comes into operation from the next general election to the UK Parliament.
- 5.5 Subsequent Reviews must result in reports being submitted every 8 years after 1 July 2023. The next Review after the 2023 Review will therefore report before 1 October 2031.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

6.2 Risk and Mitigations

The only potential risk to the Council not responding to the consultation is that constituents within the Polling District 2F may wish the Council to take a viewpoint. However, based on the criteria for the new constituencies, officers suggest that this is acceptable as this will mean the whole of Tweeddale East Ward will be within the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale UK Parliament constituency. Political parties, individual Councillors, community groups and members of the public can all submit their own comments directly to the Commission.

6.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

No equality impact assessment (EIA) has been carried out as nothing in the recommendations in the report is considered to discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity or religion and belief.

6.4 Sustainable Development Goals

Changes to the UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries will have no impact on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 Climate Change

Changes to the UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries will have no impact on Climate Change.

5.6 Rural Proofing

There is no impact on rural areas contained in the recommendations in this report.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No changes are required in either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Electoral Registration Officer and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

David Robertson

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Background Papers: Boundary Commission for Scotland letter to Chief Executive, 13 October 2021

Previous Minute Reference: Scottish Borders Council, 2 November 2017

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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