
2023 REVIEW OF UK PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES

Report by Interim Chief Corporate Governance Officer

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

24 November 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report gives details of the Boundary Commission for Scotland’s revised proposals for new UK Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland as part of its 2023 Review.**
- 1.2 At its meeting held on 28 October 2021, Scottish Borders Council considered and noted the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for Scotland for new UK Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland. On Tuesday 8 November 2022, the Boundary Commission published its revised proposals. These proposals are currently open to public consultation until Monday 5 December 2022.
- 1.3 In the revised proposals, there are no changes to the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk County Constituency from those in the initial proposals i.e. the whole of the Scottish Borders Council Tweeddale East Ward will now be in the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale County Constituency. Previously Polling District 2F (with 908 electors) was part of the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk County Constituency. There are changes to the boundary of the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale County Constituency but these are near to Dumfries and have no impact on either the Tweeddale West or Tweeddale East Wards.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council notes the revised 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 each Commission recommends must contain no fewer than 69,724 Parliamentary electors, and no more than 77,062 (except the two protected constituencies of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar 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.
- 3.3 The Review carried out by each Commission is concerned solely with UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries, and, whilst consideration is given to existing local boundaries in developing proposals, the Review has no impact on Council area boundaries, Scottish Parliament constituency boundaries, polling districts or school catchment areas.
- 3.4 At its meeting on 28 October 2021, Scottish Borders Council considered the initial proposals from the Boundary Commission for Scotland affecting the two constituencies which include the Scottish Borders Council area:
- Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (74,687 electorate)
 - Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale (68,874 electorate)
- 3.5 These initial proposals of the Commission made changes to both constituencies which would 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 was 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 would mean that the whole of the Tweeddale East Ward would come within that latter constituency. The other changes adding to the electorate in that constituency would come from changes to the boundary around Lanark. Scottish Borders Council noted these initial proposals and made no further comment to the Commission.

4 BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVISED PROPOSALS

- 4.1 After consultation and publication of its initial proposals, the Commission conducted a six-week 'secondary consultation' when it published consultation responses from the initial consultation for public scrutiny. The Commission also held five public hearings across Scotland. On 8 November 2022, the Acting Chief Executive received details of the revised proposals from the Commission and a third public consultation period opened on that date, due to close on Monday 5 December 2022.
- 4.2 In the revised proposals, there are no changes to the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk County Constituency from those in the initial proposals i.e. the whole of the Scottish Borders Council Tweeddale East Ward will now be in the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale County Constituency. Previously Polling District 2F (with 908 electors) was part of the Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk County Constituency. There are changes to the boundary of the Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale County Constituency but these are near to Dumfries and have no impact on either the Tweeddale West or Tweeddale East Wards.
- 4.3 The revised proposals will give the two constituencies:
- Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk County Constituency (73,779 electorate), comprising the SBC Wards 3 – 11.
 - Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale County Constituency (71,646 electorate) which includes the SBC Wards 1 and 2.

5 TIMETABLE AND PROCEDURES

- 5.1 Once the current four week public consultation period is completed, the Commission will consider any further representations. 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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.

6.5 **Climate Change**

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

6.6 **Rural Proofing**

There is no impact on rural areas contained in the recommendations in this report. It is not anticipated there will be any change to the polling station used for the electorate in Polling District 2F when they move to the new Constituency.

6.7 **Data Protection Impact Statement**

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

6.8 **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.

7 **CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 *The Chief Financial Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any substantive comments received will be reported at the meeting.*

Approved by

**Nuala McKinlay
Officer**

Interim Chief Corporate Governance

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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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