

**SECOND REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BOUNDARIES
BOUNDARIES SCOTLAND PROPOSALS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides information on Boundaries Scotland's consultation on its proposals relating to the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries.
- 1.2 Under the proposals the Argyll and Bute constituency boundary extends north and east to incorporate all of Council Electoral Ward 9, Lomond North. Wards 10 and 11 would remain in the existing West Dunbartonshire constituency. There is no suggestion that there would be any change to the constituency name.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council now consider the report and, if so minded, agree the proposals.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The second review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries is required under Schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998, which requires Boundaries Scotland to conduct reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries for constituencies and regions at intervals of every 8 to 12 years. A report must be submitted to Scottish Ministers by 1 May 2025. There are three constituencies which will not be under review as they are protected under the legislation. They are Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands and Na-h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles). If subsequently approved, the new boundaries will be effective at the next Scottish Parliament election, expected in May 2026.
- 3.2 The aim of the review is to recommend constituencies, and regions, of similar electorate size while also taking account of local authority areas, special geographical circumstances, maintenance of local ties and any inconveniences caused by the alteration of the existing boundaries. The closing date for response is officially 17 June 2023. On receipt of notification of the consultation officers contacted Boundaries Scotland and agreed that the Council would provide an initial response in the form of this report no later than 17 June with the Council's formal response being provided immediately following this meeting.

- 3.3 The population, and therefore the electorate is constantly changing, which results in some MSPs representing considerably more or fewer electors than others. This is one of the reasons for reviews to be carried out, in order to ensure electoral fairness. The electorate for the review consists of the persons on the register of local government electors in force at the start of the review, which for this second review was 1st September 2022. The electoral quota is defined as the average local government electorate of the 70 constituencies that are the subject of this review. The electoral quota for this review is 59,902, and the electorate of a constituency must be as near the electoral quota as practicable, having regard to Rule 1 (there are 73 constituencies for the purpose of the Act).
- 3.4 Boundaries Scotland have determined and are now consulting on these provisional proposals. If representations objecting to the provisional proposals are received either from a local authority or part or all of the area of the affected constituency, or from a body of 100 or more parliamentary electors for the affected constituency, a local inquiry is required to be held. In cases where there has been no local inquiry, Boundaries Scotland will take into account any representations made, and make any amendments to their provisional proposals that are judged appropriate. In cases where a local inquiry has been held, Boundaries Scotland will consider the Assistant Commissioner's report and the matters discussed at the inquiry, together with any relevant information, and make any amendments to their provisional proposals considered necessary.

If they decide to alter the provisional proposals, the resulting revised proposals are published in the same way as the provisional proposals; representations about these revised proposals may then be made within a one-month period.

Boundaries Scotland will then make provisional proposals for the regions, taking into account their deliberations on constituency boundaries. These provisional proposals for the regions, along with the revised recommendations for constituencies, will be published and representations invited in the same way as for constituencies. Boundaries Scotland will take into account any representations received regarding revised recommendations in the same way as they will for the constituency proposals, and if they decide to modify the revised recommendations before finally submitting them to Scottish Ministers these modified recommendations will be published and representations again invited within a one-month period.

Once they have completed all of their considerations under the 1998 Act, Boundaries Scotland will submit their recommendations for constituencies and regions in a report to Scottish Ministers. Scottish Ministers must lay the report and draft of an Order in Council for giving effect to the recommendations contained in the report before the Scottish Parliament where it is subject to affirmative procedure. If the Parliament approves the Order then the new constituencies will come

into force at the next election (expected in May 2026).

- 3.5 With regards to the detail for Argyll and Bute in these provisional proposals, a change is suggested in respect of the constituency boundary. Currently, Wards 1- 8 are contained entirely within the existing Argyll and Bute Scottish Parliament constituency, with Wards 9, 10 and 11 contained within the existing Dumbarton constituency. The provisional proposal is that Ward 9 would transfer entirely to the Argyll and Bute constituency, with Wards 10 and 11 remaining within the Dumbarton constituency.
- 3.6 Elections to the Scottish Parliament for those parts of Argyll and Bute which are within the Dumbarton constituency are administered by West Dunbartonshire Council's Returning Officer and election team. There is a relatively minor administrative concern relating to two polling stations should these proposals be agreed. The current polling scheme has two polling stations operating out of Luss Village Hall, these being for polling district 104 (Luss, Ward 9) and polling District 124 (Arden, Ward 11). In the event that these proposals are agreed, PD 104 (Luss, Ward 9) would revert to the Argyll and Bute constituency with responsibility for the running of the election sitting with the Argyll and Bute election team. PD 124, Arden (Ward 11), would remain within the Dumbarton constituency and that election would be run by the West Dunbartonshire team. This would mean that 2 separate elections, with different candidates and separate ballot papers, would be taking place in one venue, which could potentially result in voter confusion. Close working between the 2 election teams, and careful management of the polling station on the day, should minimise the potential for errors occurring.
- 3.7 If these proposals are agreed the geographic area of responsibility for the Helensburgh Lomond Area Committee will continue to be split across 2 separate Scottish Parliamentary constituencies. Currently, whilst the Council in totality routinely works to and with 2 constituency MSPs, the Area Committee does not have to, and issues pertinent to the Helensburgh and Lomond area are able to be raised with 1 MSP (Dumbarton constituency). If these proposals are agreed there will be 2 MSPs representing the Helensburgh Lomond area, an Argyll and Bute MSP covering Ward 9, and a Dumbarton MSP representing Wards 10 and 11. Whilst this may require a greater amount of communication and partnership working, it will also give the area 2 voices in the Scottish Parliament.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 These provisional proposals would see the Argyll and Bute constituency boundary extend north and east to incorporate all of Council Electoral Ward 9, Lomond North. Wards 10 and 11 would remain in the existing West Dunbartonshire constituency. There are electoral administrative issues which would arise from this proposal, though these can be managed by good partnership working between the Returning Officers of Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire.

The Helensburgh Lomond Area Committee would, as necessary, need to work to two MSPs, but this would give 2 voices for the area at Scottish Parliament level.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - none
- 5.2 Financial – the costs of running an election will be slightly increased but these are met by the Government
- 5.3 Legal - none
- 5.4 HR – there will be an increased burden on council staff in supporting elections covering the slightly enlarged area
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty - none
- 5.5.1 Equalities – protected characteristics - none
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty - none
- 5.5.3 Islands - none
- 5.6 Climate Change- none
- 5.7 Risk - none
- 5.8 Customer Service - none

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Appendix 1 - map of the existing geographic area – Argyll and Bute constituency

Appendix 2 – map of the proposed geographic area – Argyll and Bute constituency