

**2023 REVIEW OF UK PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES – BOUNDARY
COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND PROPOSALS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides information on the Boundary Commission for Scotland consultation on its proposals relating to the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies.
- 1.2 These proposals align with the decision of the Council on 25 November 2021 in regard to:

The geographic extend of the boundary; and
That they take into account the comment from the Council in regard to the name of the Boundary.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Council is invited to consider the Boundary Commission proposals and determine whether any further response is required with regard to the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies in light of the Council decision on 25 November 2021.

3.0 DETAILBackground to the Review

- 3.1 The 2023 review of UK Parliament constituencies is required by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended). The Review is being conducted simultaneously and independently by the four UK Parliamentary Boundary Commissions. It will result in a UK Parliament elected from 650 constituencies. Scotland has been allocated 57 constituencies for the 2023 Review, two fewer than at present. England has been allocated 543 (+10), Northern Ireland 18 (no change) and Wales 32 (-8).
- 3.2 The electoral quota for the Review, which is the average electorate per constituency across the UK, is 73,393, with the electorate of each constituency having to be within five per cent of that. That means that the smallest permitted electorate for a constituency is 69,724 and the largest permitted electorate is 77,062. The maximum permitted area is 13,000 square kilometres. In Scotland, exceptions to these limits apply for Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency (Western Isles), and Orkney and Shetland constituency, each of which are defined in the legislation.

3.5 Due to the reduction in the number of constituencies, and the requirements for each constituency to have a number of electors within set limits, changes to constituencies are required.

3.6 Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber Constituency

The consultation was previously reported to Council on 25 November 2021.

The decision of the Council at that time was:

Argyll and Bute Council agrees that its formal response to the Boundary Commission for Scotland 2023 Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies should comprise the following:

- a) Agreement with the proposals to extend the existing Argyll and Bute Constituency boundary to the north, to incorporate part of the current Highland Council Ward 21, as set out in the report and detailed in the map at Appendix 1;
- b) Rejection of the Boundary Commission for Scotland's proposal to rename the new constituency 'Argyll' and requests that the existing Argyll and Bute name is retained.

The Boundary Commission have published their revised proposals for a four week Consultation period ending 5 December 2022.

These proposals align with the decision of the Council on 25 November 2021 in regard to:

The geographic extend of the boundary; and

That they take into account the comment from the Council in regard to the name of the Boundary and can be seen at the following links.

www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk.

www.bcs2023review.com.

The Boundary Commission have maintained the constituency area on which the Council previously intimated its agreement, namely;

The current Argyll and Bute Constituency boundary will be spread north to incorporate part of ward 21 (Fort William and Ardnamurden) within Highland Council including areas such as Ballachullish, Kinlochleven, Morvern, Ardamurchan, Moidart and Ardgour. A map of the proposed geographic area is attached at Appendix 1.

The new constituency will be called Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber and will have 71,707 electors and cover an approximate area of 9,294 square kilometres. Geographically this is the second largest constituency in Scotland. These proposals are not dissimilar to those mooted in the 2018 or 2021 reviews while the name of the Constituency is now proposed to be Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber.

3.8 Election Responsibilities

With regards to the Returning Officer responsibilities for election

administration the inclusion of the additional areas will involve cross boundary cooperation with Highland Council in regard to polling stations staff, polling stations and other resources as well as creating a short term challenge for staff in familiarising themselves with the area of Lochaber and Ardnamurchan.

It will also be necessary to address that additional time for collection of ballot boxes and delivery to a count centre in Lochgilphead could mitigate against any night time counting of votes as the travel time from some of the outer areas such as Lochaline to Lochgilphead is up to 4 hours and that would be after the arrival of all boxes from outlying areas.

3.9 Further stages

The Boundary Commission have published revised proposals for a final 4-week consultation stage from 8 November to 5 December 2022. Responses to the earlier consultations, revised and existing constituency boundaries can be viewed at www.bcs2023review.com.

Final recommendations will be submitted to the Speaker before 1 July 2023.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The proposals are compliant with the legislative requirements placed on the Commission but represent a substantial increase in the geographical area of the constituency which will create the second largest in Scotland.

4.2 These proposals align with the decision of the Council on 25 November 2021 in regard to:

The geographic extend of the boundary; and
That they take into account the comment from the Council in regard to the name of the Boundary.

That being the case, the Council is invited to determine whether any further response is required with regard to the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy - none

5.2 Financial – the costs of running an election will be 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 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 Risk - none

5.7 Customer Service - none

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Appendix 1 - map of the proposed geographic area - Argyll, Bute and South
Lochaber