

2023 Periodic Review of UK Parliament Constituencies Intended approach to constituency design

Introduction

1. The Commission is invited to consider its approach to constituency design for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies.

Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended)

2. The Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 (as amended) makes provision for boundary reviews.
3. The legislation requires all four of the UK Commissions to carry out a review of UK Parliament constituencies. The Act requires 650 constituencies across the UK, of which 57 will be in Scotland, two less than at present. Two Scottish constituencies are defined in the legislation and not subject to review: Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency and Orkney and Shetland constituency.
4. The Commission must complete its review by July 2023. The review is subject to the following constraints:
 - no constituency to be larger than 13,000 sq km; and
 - all constituency electorates to be within 5% of the UK electoral quota, except if a constituency is greater than 12,000 sq km and it is not reasonably possible for the constituency to comply with the 5% electoral quota rule.
5. The UK electoral quota is the average electorate per constituency, excluding the preserved constituencies, and for this review is 73,393. Therefore constituency electorates must be no less than 69,724 and no more than 77,062 (the "electoral quota range").

Principles for constituency design

6. The draft Policies and Procedures Booklet (BCS Paper 2021/02) sets out principles for constituency design under which we aim to:
 - design as many constituencies as practicable that do not cross a council area boundary;
 - recognise existing community ties;
 - take into consideration local geography (for example transport links, other electoral boundaries, administrative boundaries and natural features); and
 - consider special geographical considerations where appropriate.

Existing boundaries

7. An important aspect of any review is how the Commission takes into account other administrative and electoral boundaries. Many consultation responses may request that the Commission should propose new UK Parliament constituencies that align with the existing boundaries of council areas, wards, Scottish Parliament boundaries and existing UK Parliament constituencies.
8. The strict electoral parity requirement introduced by the Act is an important constraint. It makes it harder for the Commission to make proposals that align

the new constituencies with any existing boundaries. The Commission will wish to consider how to take a consistent approach during its review.

9. The benefits of constituency boundaries which fit with council area boundaries include:
 - the electorate are generally aware of which council area they live in, and would therefore find it easier to understand which constituency they were in;
 - MPs and local authorities liaise in the course of their work;
 - election administration is conducted by council officials; and
 - locally, political parties are usually organised within council areas.
10. The benefits of constituency boundaries which fit with wards include:
 - MPs and councillors liaise in the course of their work;
 - election administration depends on polling districts which are wholly contained within wards; and
 - locally, political parties may be organised within wards.
11. In some cases, there may be a conflict between using council area boundaries and wards. For example, it might only be possible to design a constituency made up of whole wards by including wards from more than one council area.
12. The benefits of UK Parliament constituency boundaries which fit with Scottish Parliament constituencies include:
 - MPs and MSPs liaise in the course of their work; and
 - the electorate do not always distinguish between the areas of responsibility of each Parliament.

Council areas

13. During the 2018 Review of UK Parliament Boundaries, the Commission's approach was to look at the theoretical entitlement to seats of each council area (calculated by dividing the electorate of each council area by the electoral quota).
14. If that entitlement was close to an integer, the Commission allocated a specific number of constituencies that were wholly contained within that council area. In other cases, the Commission combined small groups of council areas, so that their combined theoretical entitlement was close to an integer (see Appendix A).
15. There are a number of benefits of this approach:
 - the task of constituency design is broken down from 55 constituencies across mainland Scotland into more manageable groups of constituencies in a localised area;
 - the electorate understand and accept the value of council areas as part of the administrative landscape;
 - reduced variability in constituency design arising from the sequence in which constituencies are designed; and
 - reduced risk of insoluble conditions arising in the final stages of constituency design.
16. Minimising the number of council areas in any particular group has the advantages of enabling adoption of council area boundaries as constituency boundaries and assisting in minimising the number of council areas in any single constituency and vice versa.

Electorate for 2023 Review

17. On 5 January 2021 National Records of Scotland (NRS) published the total electorate to be used for the 2023 Review, those who are eligible to vote in a UK Parliament election at 2 March 2020.
18. NRS published the UK Parliament electorate for each existing UK Parliament constituency but not for each council area or ward. Therefore the electorate data used for the council area entitlement calculations has still to be verified. The Secretariat are in the process of collating and confirming these datasets.

Considerations – Highland Council area

19. Highland Council area will require particularly careful consideration. The rules state that no constituency shall be larger than 13,000 sq km. Any constituency whose area is greater than 12,000 sq km can have an electorate which is below the lower limit of 5% less than the electoral quota, provided that the Commission "is satisfied that it is *not reasonably possible* for the constituency to comply with that rule."
20. The distribution of electorate in the UK and the size of individual council areas are such that these exceptions to the normal rules are only likely to apply to constituencies in Highland Council area. Highland is the largest council area in Scotland, covering an area of 26,500 square kilometres. The second largest council area in Scotland is Argyll and Bute (7,200 square kilometres).

Considerations - Existing UK Parliament Constituencies

21. 18 existing UK Parliament constituencies are within the electoral quota range for the 2023 Review. Where practicable the Commission may wish to consider retaining some of the existing constituencies.
22. The advantages of retaining existing constituencies are that electors and stakeholders recognise the constituency boundary.
23. However it may not be possible to retain existing constituency boundaries within the Commission's constituency design structure.
24. Four council areas (Stirling, Moray, Midlothian and East Renfrewshire) whose boundary is coterminous with the existing constituency boundary are within the electoral quota range.

Existing UK Parliament Constituency within electoral quota	Electorate (March 2020)
Central Ayrshire	69,779
Glasgow South	69,956
Stirling	70,085
Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock	70,965
Midlothian	71,210
Moray	71,537
Paisley and Renfrewshire North	72,576
East Renfrewshire	72,959
Edinburgh West	73,102

Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath	73,288
Edinburgh South West	73,315
Perth and North Perthshire	73,523
North Ayrshire and Arran	73,588
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	73,634
Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill	73,996
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk	74,687
Dumfries and Galloway	75,332
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	75,893

Considerations - Constituency design

25. Identifying possible council area groupings is only one stage in the review process. Once working with a group of council areas, the Commission will need to do the more detailed task of considering and agreeing constituency designs. At that stage difficulties in designing acceptable constituencies may become apparent which had not been identified when suggesting groups of council areas.

Council area grouping designs

26. The Secretariat has designed four council area groupings for initial consideration and discussion at this stage:

Option 1 (Appendix B)

Option 1 Council areas	Electorate (tbc)	Number of Constituencies	Average electorate per constituency
Aberdeen City	153,596	2	76,798.0
Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City, Perth and Kinross	509,233	7	72,747.6
Moray	71,537	1	71,537.0
Highland, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire	384,948	5	76,989.6
Glasgow City	447,292	6	74,548.7
Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, West Lothian	297,570	4	74,392.5
Fife	280,047	4	70,011.8
City of Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian	515,990	7	73,712.9
East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire	596,129	8	74,516.1
Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders	210,137	3	70,045.7
Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Ayrshires (North, South, East)	564,766	8	70,595.8
		55	

27. Option 1 offers some flexibility with constituency design in the north-east of Scotland because Aberdeen City and Moray council areas could be added to the grouping of Aberdeenshire, Angus, Dundee City and Perth and Kinross council areas. Similarly Glasgow City council area could be linked with other neighbouring groupings.

28. The groupings of Fife (average electorate 70,011.8) and Highland, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire council areas (average electorate 76,989.6) are near to the minimum and maximum of the electorate quota. This would offer little flexibility in designing constituencies within the electorate quota for Option 1.

Option 2 (Appendix C)

Option 2 Council areas	Electorate (tbc)	Number of Constituencies	Average electorate per constituency
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray	669,215	9	74,357.2
Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, Perth and Kinross, Stirling, West Lothian	959,921	13	73,840.1
City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian	515,990	7	73,712.9
Ayrshires (North, South, East)	293,251	4	73,312.8
East Renfrewshire	72,959	1	72,959.0
Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire	645,848	9	71,760.9
Dumfries and Galloway, East and West Dunbartonshire, North and South Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders	874,061	12	72,838.4
		55	

29. Option 2 offers some flexibility with constituency design with nearly all groupings close to the electorate quota of 73,393, providing flexibility with constituency design.

30. East Renfrewshire council area could be merged with neighbouring groupings.

Option 3 (Appendix D)

Option 3 Council areas	Electorate (tbc)	Number of Constituencies	Average electorate per constituency
Ayrshires (North, South, East),	293,251	4	73,312.8
City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian	651,234	9	72,359.3
Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders	210,137	3	70,045.7
East Dunbartonshire, North and South Lanarkshire	596,129	8	74,516.1
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus	440,520	6	73,420.0
Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Fife	442,373	6	73,728.8
Dundee City, Perth and Kinross	222,309	3	74,103.0
Moray	71,537	1	71,537.0
Highland, Argyll and Bute, Stirling, West Dunbartonshire	384,948	5	76,989.6
Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire	645,848	9	71,760.9
East Renfrewshire	72,959	1	72,959.0
		55	

31. Option 3 offers some flexibility with constituency design with most groupings close to the electorate quota of 73,393.
32. The grouping of Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders council areas (average electorate 70,045.7) is close to minimum of the electorate quota (69,724) but there are only three constituencies within this grouping.
33. The grouping of Highland, Argyll and Bute, Stirling and West Dunbartonshire council areas (average electorate 76,989.6) are near to the maximum of the electorate quota (77,062) offering little flexibility with constituency design in these largely rural areas.
34. East Renfrewshire council area and Moray council area could be merged with neighbouring groupings to aid constituency design.

Option 4 (Appendix E)

Option 4 Council areas	Electorate (tbc)	Number of Constituencies	Average electorate per constituency
Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, Ayrshires (North, South, East), Dumfries and Galloway	683,135	9	75,903.9
City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian	515,990	7	73,712.9
Glasgow City	447,292	6	74,548.7
East and West Dunbartonshire	152,791	2	76,395.5
Scottish Borders, North and South Lanarkshire	602,901	8	75,362.6
Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, West Lothian	297,570	4	74,392.5
Fife	280,047	4	70,011.8
Stirling	70,085	1	70,085.0
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee, Highland, Moray, Perth and Kinross	981,434	14	70,102.4
		55	

35. Option 4 proposes two groupings of council areas (Fife and Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee, Highland, Moray, Perth and Kinross), with a total of 18 constituencies, close to the minimum of the electorate quota (69,724) offering little flexibility with constituency design.
36. Glasgow City council area and Stirling council area could be merged with neighbouring groupings to aid constituency design.

Conclusion and recommendations

37. The Secretariat recommends that the Commission considers and agrees its approach to constituency design subject to:
- confirmation of the electorate data for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies; and
 - if the area constituency limit rule applies in Highland council area.

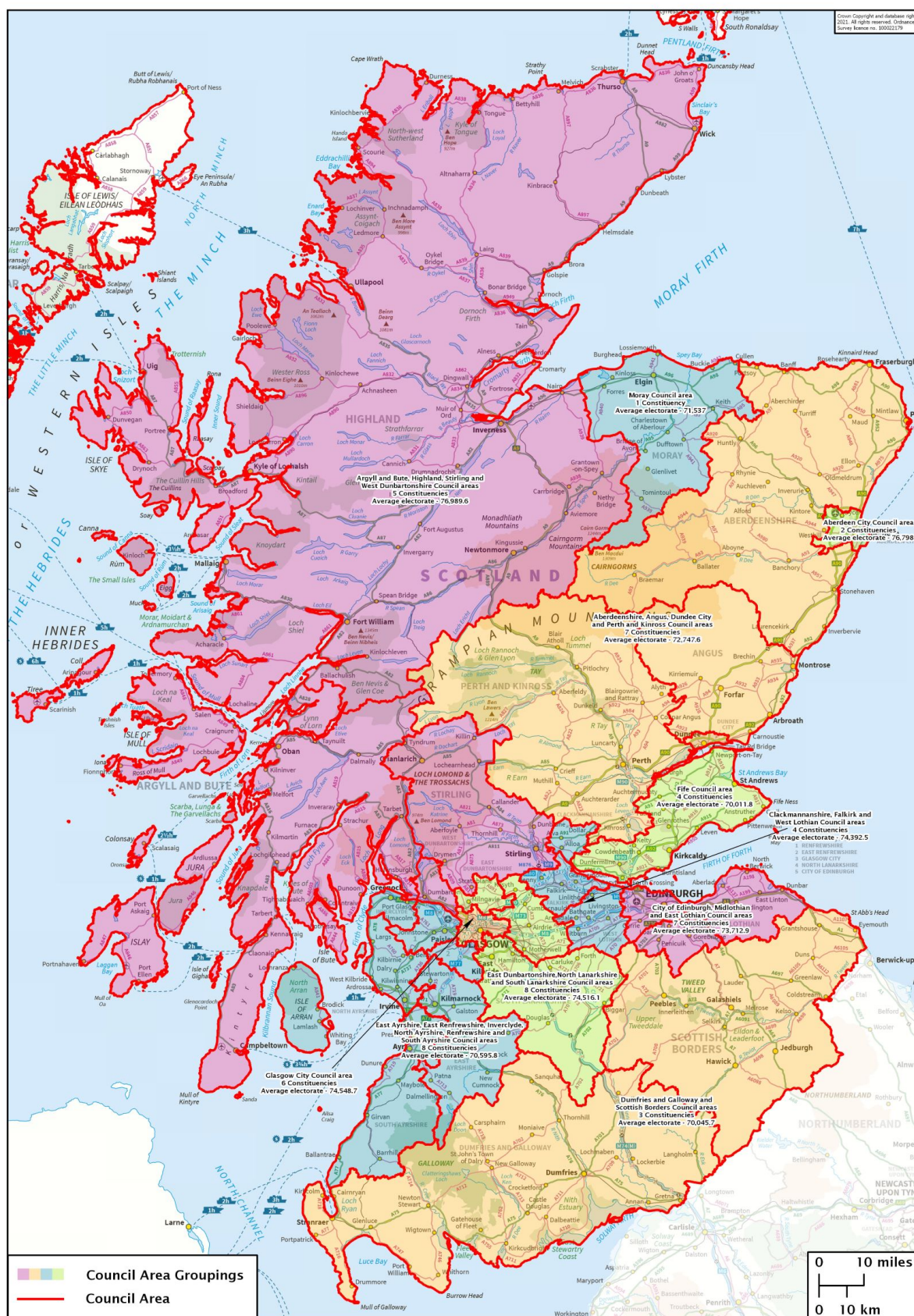
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Appendix A

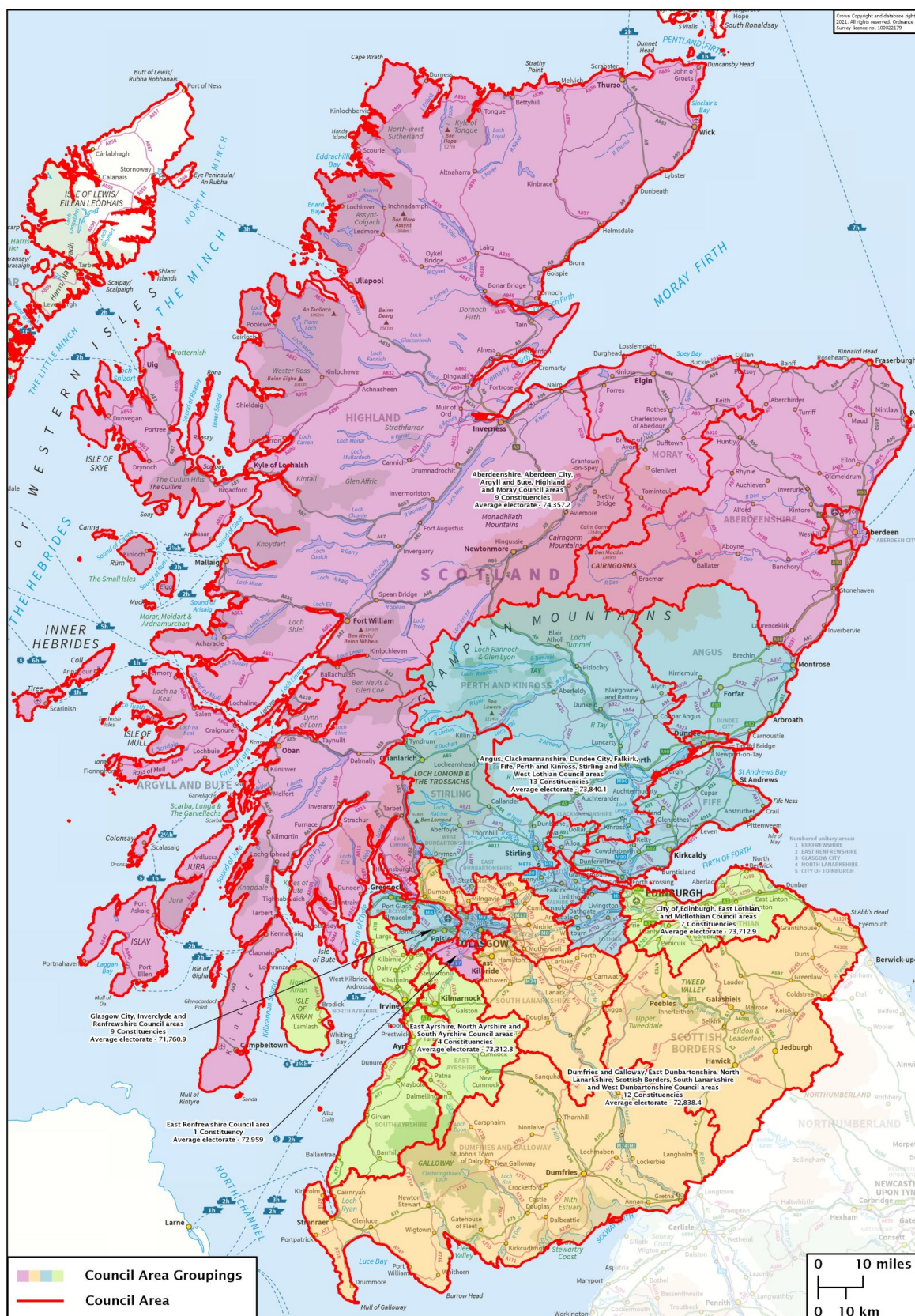
Theoretical entitlement – constituencies for each council area

Council Area	Electors*	Entitlement
Aberdeen City*	153,596	2.1
Aberdeenshire*	197,014	2.7
Angus*	89,910	1.2
Argyll and Bute	67,565	0.9
City of Edinburgh	362,301	4.9
Clackmannanshire*	39,427	0.5
Dumfries and Galloway*	118,369	1.6
Dundee City*	107,737	1.5
East Ayrshire*	95,274	1.3
East Dunbartonshire*	84,996	1.2
East Lothian	82,479	1.1
East Renfrewshire	72,959	1.0
Falkirk	122,899	1.7
Fife	280,047	3.8
Glasgow City	447,292	6.1
Highland	179,503	2.4
Inverclyde	61,096	0.8
Midlothian	71,210	1.0
Moray	71,537	1.0
North Ayrshire*	107,371	1.5
North Lanarkshire*	258,271	3.5
Perth and Kinross*	114,572	1.6
Renfrewshire	137,460	1.9
Scottish Borders*	91,768	1.3
South Ayrshire*	90,606	1.2
South Lanarkshire*	252,862	3.4
Stirling	70,085	1.0
West Dunbartonshire	67,795	0.9
West Lothian*	135,244	1.8
* <i>electorate tbc</i>		55.0

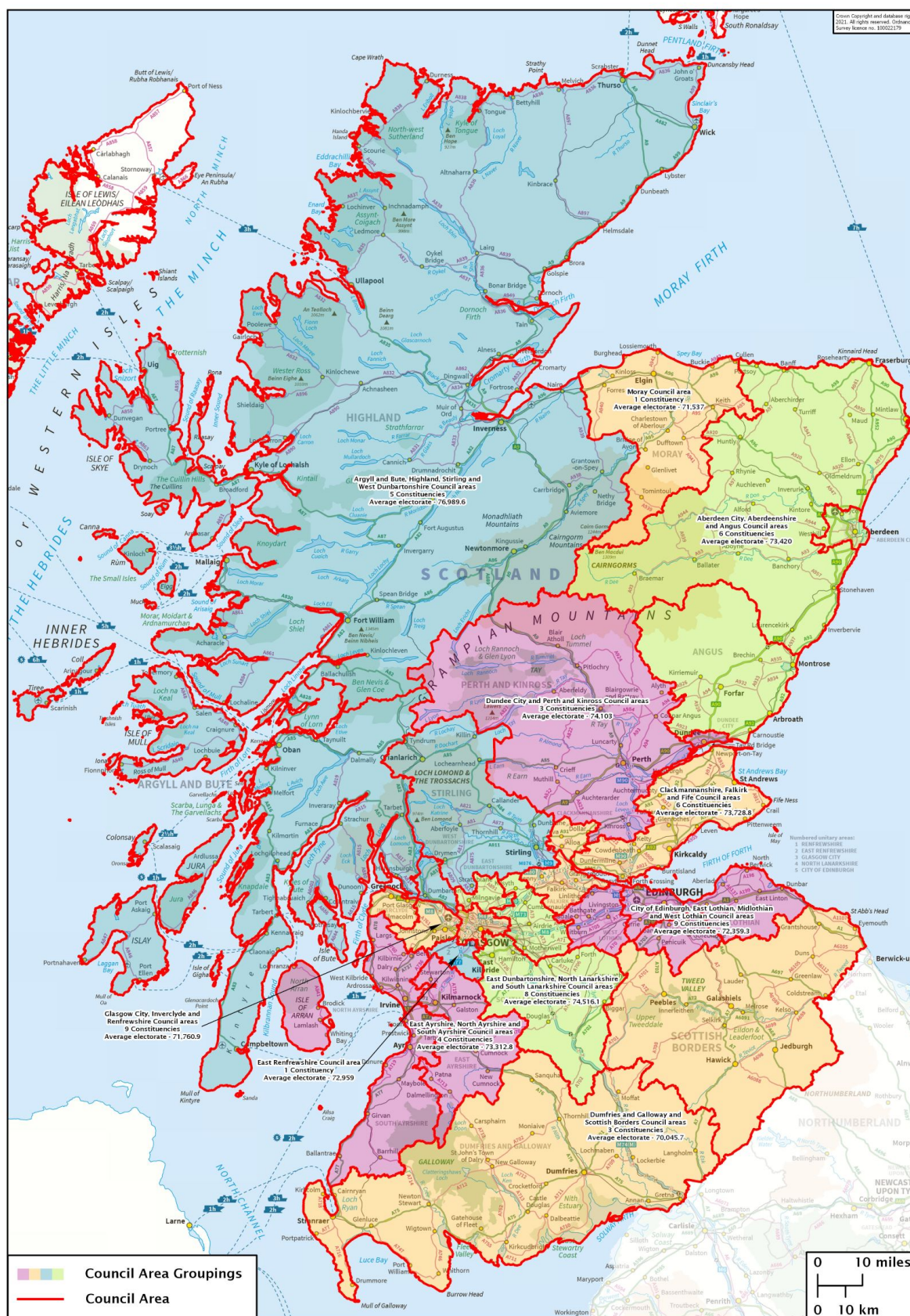
Option 1



Option 2



Option 3



Option 4

