

2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies

Final recommendations – Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to agree paragraphs 2 to 16 of this report as part of the text for its Final Report. It is also invited, in paragraph 17 to agree its Final Recommendations for constituencies in Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas.

Constituencies at the start of this review

2. At the start of this review, Midlothian council area was covered by a single constituency coterminous with the boundary of the council area. Scottish Borders council area was covered by 1 constituency wholly within the council area, and 1 constituency which also comprised part of Dumfries and Galloway and South Lanarkshire council areas. The constituencies are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Constituencies at the start of this review

Current constituency		Council areas	Designation	Electorate
Berwickshire, and Selkirk	Roxburgh	Scottish Borders	County	70,565
Dumfriesshire, and Tweeddale	Clydesdale	Dumfries and Galloway Scottish Borders South Lanarkshire	County	65,739
Midlothian		Midlothian	County	65,308
Total				201,612

Initial Proposals

3. We designed constituencies for this area within our overall approach to grouping council areas for constituency design. Our proposed grouping for this area included two constituencies exactly covering the extent of Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas.
4. We discussed our Initial Proposals for these council areas at our meeting of 5 August 2016. Paper 2016/28 and the minute of our meeting record our discussion and conclusions. We agreed proposed constituency names and designations at our meeting of 5 September 2016. Paper 2016/34 and the minute of our meeting record our discussion and conclusions.
5. In deciding upon our Initial Proposals for Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas we agreed a constituency design that respected local ties, particularly around Galashiels and surrounding towns in the Scottish Borders.
6. Our Initial Proposals were as shown in Table 2. Details of the wards contained within each constituency in the Initial Proposals were included in the maps of our Initial Proposals which are available on our website.

Table 2 – Initial Proposals

Constituency name	Council areas	Designation	Electorate
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk	Scottish Borders	County	74,428
Midlothian and Peebles	Midlothian Scottish Borders	County	76,208
Total			150,636

7. On 20 October 2016 we published our Initial Proposals for these council areas for the specified initial consultation period of 12 weeks.
8. We received 18 representations in response to the initial consultation on our Initial Proposals for Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas.
9. On 28 February 2017 we published the representations we received during the consultation for the specified secondary consultation period of 4 weeks. In response, we received a further 5 representations concerning Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas.

Revised Proposals

10. We considered the representations received on our Initial Proposals in these council areas at our meeting of 13 April 2017. Paper 2017/61 and the minute of our meeting record our discussion and conclusions.
11. There was a low number of responses during the consultation. Some responses objected to the proposed Midlothian and Peebles constituency stating there are no ties between Midlothian and Peebles and that the proposals broke local ties within the Tweed Valley.
12. Some representations contained suggestions that did not comply with the statutory rules governing this review. We did not consider those suggestions further.
13. After considering all responses to the consultation: we decided to amend the proposed boundary in the Tweed Valley by including Cardrona within the proposed Midlothian and Peebles constituency to reflect its ties with Peebles.
14. We agreed revised constituency names and designations at our meeting of 8 August 2017. Paper 2017/79 and the minute of our meeting record our discussion and conclusions. We decided to rename: Midlothian and Peebles as Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale. We retained the constituency name of Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk from the Initial Proposals.
15. Our Revised Proposals are shown in Table 3. Details of the wards contained within each constituency in the Revised Proposals were included in the maps of our Revised Proposals which are available on our website.

Table 3 - Revised Proposals

Constituency name	Council areas	Designation	Electorate
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk	Scottish Borders	County	73,812
Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale	Midlothian Scottish Borders	County	76,824
Total			150,636

16. On 17 October 2017 we published our Revised Proposals for constituencies in Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas for the specified consultation period of 8 weeks.

Draft Final Recommendations

17. The Commission is invited to consider the representations received, agree if any changes are required to its Revised Proposals and agree its Final Recommendations.

Responses to Revised Proposals Public Consultation

18. 43 responses (see Annex 1) were received during the consultation on the Revised Proposals for Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas.

19. Some representations were made, both within this grouping and nationally, that contained suggestions that did not comply with the statutory rules governing this review or which reflected general opposition to the 2018 Review.

20. The main theme to arise was opposition to the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency from residents in Peebles stating they have no links with Midlothian.

Consideration of Representations

Midlothian Council Area

21. Both the Scottish Labour Party and Midlothian Council wish to retain the existing Midlothian constituency which is coterminous with Midlothian council area boundary.

22. There are 65,308 electors within Midlothian council area. This is below the electoral quota for the 2018 Review and therefore it is not possible to retain the existing Midlothian constituency which is coterminous with the Midlothian council area boundary.

Scottish Borders Council Area

23. One member of the public supports the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency because residents from Peebles travel daily to or through Midlothian for work or to use amenities in Midlothian and Edinburgh. They also advise that within the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency, residents from Peebles are more likely to travel to Midlothian than Dumfriesshire.

24. A member of the public supports the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency because it is close to the electoral quota for the review and considers community ties in the Borders.
25. Manor, Stobo & Lyne Community Council and 35 members of the public oppose the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency arguing that:
- the Borders or Tweeddale should not be split between constituencies;
 - there are no historical or cultural links between rural Borders and urban Midlothian; and
 - they wish to retain the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency because Dumfriesshire and the Borders have many similarities.
26. Some respondents oppose splitting Scottish Borders between two constituencies. There are currently two constituencies covering the Scottish Borders: Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk; and Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale. The existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency covers three council areas and extends from Annandale (Dumfries and Galloway) to Biggar (South Lanarkshire) and to West Linton (Scottish Borders) on the Midlothian border.
27. Some respondents oppose the division of Tweeddale from other communities in the Scottish Borders. Tweeddale is currently split between two constituencies. The constituency boundary between Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale and Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk splits Tweeddale between Clovenfords and Walkerburn.
28. Over 30 members of the public state there are no links between rural Borders and urban Midlothian. Historically there have been UK Parliament constituencies linking Midlothian with the Borders. A Midlothian and Peebles constituency from 1950 to 1955 included Penicuik/ Loanhead (Midlothian), Currie/ Balerno (Edinburgh) with Peebles/ Innerleithen (Borders). More recently the Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale constituency (1997–2005) included Penicuik (Midlothian) with Peebles and Galashiels (Scottish Borders). There have also been Scottish Parliament constituencies linking Midlothian with the Borders. The Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale constituency followed the same boundary as the UK Parliament constituency mentioned above. The current Scottish Parliament Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale constituency includes Penicuik, Peebles and Galashiels.
29. Some respondents wish to retain the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency because there are similar communities within the area. The electorate of the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency is 65,739. This is below the electoral quota for the 2018 Review.
30. Manor, Stobo & Lyne Community Council oppose the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency because there are few links between rural Tweeddale and urban Midlothian. They believe that the MSP for the Scottish Parliament constituency of Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale does not spend sufficient time representing rural areas and an MP for the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency would also not consider the needs of rural electors. They have made two alternative suggestions:

- To transfer electors from the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency to the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency to balance the electorate between these two constituencies. They suggest transferring electors from the south of the Tweeddale West ward (Scottish Borders ward 1) to the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency.
 - There are approximately 950 electors in the southern half of this ward including Broughton which could balance the electorate between these two constituencies. However there are no road links between Broughton and the Yarrow Valley except for one minor (unlisted) road and a range of hills, over 800m, separating these areas.
- To design a constituency similar to the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale & Tweeddale constituency. They suggest that electors from South Lanarkshire ward 1 (Clydesdale West) could be transferred to a neighbouring Lanarkshire constituency to keep the proposed Dumfriesshire and South-East Lanarkshire constituency within the electorate quota.
 - No alternative constituency boundaries for Dumfries and Galloway, Midlothian, North Lanarkshire or South Lanarkshire council areas are provided. The South Lanarkshire ward 1 boundary follows recognised boundaries in this area – the council area boundary and the River Clyde. During the consultation on the Revised Proposals no other respondent made a suggestion to amend the boundary in this area and nor has there been opposition to the Revised Proposals in this area.

Constituency Names

31. The following alternative constituency names were suggested during the consultation on the Revised Proposals and are shown in Table 4.

32. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggested renaming Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale as Midlothian and Tweeddale or Midlothian and Peebles.

33. A member of the public suggested renaming Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale as Midlothian and Peebleshire.

Table 4 – Alternative constituency names

Proposed Constituency Names	Alternative Suggestion	Number of responses supporting name
Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale	Midlothian and Peebles	1
	Midlothian and Tweeddale	1
	Midlothian and Peeblesshire	1

34. The Commission will have the opportunity to review all constituency names and designations prior to the publication of its Final Recommendations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

35. Taking into account all of the evidence arising from the public consultation on the Revised Proposals, the Secretariat invites the Commission to decide for Midlothian and Scottish Borders council areas whether:

- to adopt without amendment the Revised Proposals as its Final Recommendations, subject to consideration of all other constituencies (see Appendix A); or
- to amend its proposals for constituency names.

Annex 1 – Summary of Representations received during public consultation on Revised Proposals

National political parties

1. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (10802) suggest renaming the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency as Midlothian and Peebles, or Midlothian and Tweeddale. They believe Upper Tweeddale refers to the areas around Tweedsmuir and Broughton and not Peebles where the majority of electors in the Scottish Borders reside.
2. The Scottish Labour Party (10791) suggest that the UK Parliamentary Constituency boundary should be coterminous with the Midlothian council area boundary.

Councils

3. Midlothian Council (10773) suggest that the UK Parliamentary Constituency boundary should be coterminous with the Midlothian council area boundary.

Community Councils

4. Manor, Stobo & Lyne Community Council (10436) oppose the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency because:
 - there are no links between urban Midlothian and rural Tweeddale;
 - the MSP for the equivalent Scottish Parliament constituency (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) ignores the concerns of remote rural areas;
 - the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale & Tweeddale constituency is predominantly rural and the concerns expressed by constituents are common despite the wide geographical area covered by the constituency.
5. They suggest designing a constituency similar to the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale & Tweeddale constituency by including some or all of Tweeddale West ward with the proposed Dumfriesshire and South-East Lanarkshire constituency. South Lanarkshire ward 1 could be transferred to one of the neighbouring Lanarkshire constituencies to retain the electorate within the quota.
6. They also suggest adding rural areas in the southern half of Tweeddale West ward to the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirkshire constituency to balance the number of electors between these two constituencies.

Others

7. There were approximately 180 local and nationwide responses that made general comments regarding the review or made comments out-with the legislation for this review.

Midlothian Council Area

8. No members of the public from Midlothian responded to the consultation.

Scottish Borders Council Area

9. A member of the public (10313) supports the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency because a large number of Tweeddale residents travel to or travel through Midlothian for work or leisure on a daily basis.

They state the proposed constituency is far more coherent than the present one as few Tweeddale residents travel to Dumfriesshire.

10. A member of the public (10337) supports the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk constituency because it is close to the electoral quota for the review and considers community ties in the Borders.
11. Members of the public (10756, 10750/10752, 10745, 10741, 10677, 10673, 10672, 10663, 10661, 10660, 10647, 10630, 10628, 10549, 10424, 10328, 10323, 10319, 10316, 10315, 10311, 10310, 10309, 10273, 10190, 10334, 10389, 10444, 10576, 10595, 10616, 10643, 10697, 10717, 10759) oppose the proposed Midlothian and Upper Tweeddale constituency because:
- all areas of the Borders should remain together and not be split between constituencies;
 - the Borders is an agricultural, rural area with strong traditions, while Midlothian is an urban area;
 - they want to retain David Mundell as their MP;
 - there is better healthcare provision in the Borders than Edinburgh;
 - they wish to retain Peebles, Cardona and Innerleithen within a Tweeddale or Scottish Borders constituency. Cardona sits within Innerleithen & District Community Council and should remain in a Berwickshire, Roxburgh & Selkirk constituency;
 - there are no historical or cultural ties between the Borders and Midlothian;
 - close links, such as education, are broken in Tweeddale between Innerleithen/ Walkerburn and Peebles;
 - they wish to retain the existing Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale constituency because Dumfriesshire and the Borders have many similarities such as its rurality, economy, lifestyle and history;
 - concern that an MP will focus on urban issues rather than rural issues and the voice of smaller communities will be lost. They want to vote for an MP who represents electors with common issues;
 - they wish to be named Peeblesshire rather than Tweeddale; and
 - concerns with differing levels of local authority service provision, such as road gritting on the A703, between Scottish Borders and Midlothian.



