BCS Paper 2022/05

2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies
Issues raised during secondary public consultation

For information

1. This paper summarises the responses and main issues which have emerged during the secondary public consultation on the Commission's Initial Proposals for constituencies. It also considers the Commission's approach to developing its revised proposals.

Initial consultation

2. During the initial consultation on the Initial Proposals (from October 2021 to December 2021), the Commission received just over 1,100 responses. The main issues raised during the initial consultation were:
   - opposition to the proposals in Perth and Kinross, Dundee, Angus and Fife council areas generally;
   - the proposed boundary in the town of Musselburgh;
   - the geographical size of the Highland constituencies;
   - Moray being split between three constituencies; and
   - the proposed change of name for the predominantly Argyll and Bute council area based "Argyll" constituency.

Secondary consultation including public hearings

3. The secondary consultation period was held from 10 February to 23 March 2022.

4. To publicise the secondary consultation and public hearings public notices were placed in the Oban Times, Perthshire Advertiser, Inverness Courier, Herald, Scotsman and Metro. Social media adverts were also placed on Twitter and Facebook during the secondary consultation.

5. Five public hearings were held throughout Scotland in: Edinburgh (16 February); Perth (18 February); Glasgow (23 February); Inverness (25 February); and March (1 March).

6. The public hearings were held on a single day with three sessions offered in the morning, afternoon and evening. The public hearings were poorly attended, partly due to weather conditions.

7. At Edinburgh a single respondent appeared on behalf of Musselburgh and Esk Community Council. They opposed the proposals in Musselburgh because they would break local ties. No alternative suggestion was provided other than the retention of the status quo. The Edinburgh public hearing closed at 4pm due to Storm Eunice cancelling all Scottish rail services.

8. At Perth Murdo Fraser MSP (Mid-Scotland and Fife) was supportive of the Commission's proposals for an Angus and Strathmore constituency citing the historical North Tayside constituency. He went on to suggest minor changes to other proposed constituencies in the area, constituency names and opposed the Commission's proposals that split Kinross-shire. A representative for Pete Wishart, MP for Perth and North Perthshire, suggested retaining the existing Perth and Kinross constituencies but amending the boundaries to follow polling district boundaries. Councillor Andrew Parrott SNP Perth City Centre ward made a representation in which he suggested alternative West Fife, Glenrothes and Loch

Leven constituencies that kept the whole of the Perth and Kinross's Kinross-shire ward in a single constituency in a way that recognised the ward's status as a historical county with long standing community ties. Due to heavy snow-fall there was one cancellation and the public hearing closed early.

9. At Glasgow the Scottish Labour Party gave an official response for all Scotland. A member of the public made a suggestion regarding a minor change to the proposed boundary south of Dumfries. Chris Stephens MP for Glasgow South West commented on how the proposals would affect his constituency and the Cardonald area in the south west of Glasgow.

10. At Inverness Jamie Stone MP for Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross suggested that the proposed Highland North constituency is too large to represent adequately. The Scottish Liberal Democrats made similar comments to their written submission which suggested alternative boundaries in Highland. Mary Scanlon, former MSP, spoke on behalf of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party and was broadly supportive of the proposals. Douglas Ross MP and MSP for Moray opposed the proposals in Moray and spoke in support of retaining Moray as a single constituency. The Inverness public hearing was covered by BBC Alba – who interviewed the Secretary - and STV, both had segments on their evening news broadcasts. The hearing was also attended by a print journalist.

11. At Oban a representative of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party spoke and suggested retaining the Argyll and Bute constituency name and generally supported the Commission's proposals. They also opposed the alternative suggestions made by the Scottish Liberal Democrats in the north of Scotland.

12. The Commission received 184 responses during the secondary public consultation period, 154 of which were submitted directly to the consultation portal, 18 by email or post and 12 at the public hearings.

13. A table showing the responses by council areas over the two stages of consultation can be found at Appendix A.

14. 14 representations were considered to be in support of the proposals and 169 in opposition. The remaining comment neither supported nor opposed the Commission's proposals. No petitions or letter writing campaigns were submitted.

15. The main themes from the secondary consultation were similar to the initial consultation stage:
    - opposition to the division of Kinross-shire;
    - opposition to the division of Musselburgh; and
    - opposition to the size of the proposed Highland constituencies.

16. As in the Initial Consultation stage the majority of responses were from individual members of the public, the breakdown of responses are:
    - 155 members of the public
    - 7 official responses from a National Political Party
    - 4 from Community Groups
    - 4 from Local Councillors or elected officials
    - 5 from Members of Scottish Parliament
    - 8 from Members of the UK Parliament

- 1 on behalf of a local authority

17. The Commission may be interested to note that it received 49 responses during its secondary consultation on Initial Proposals for 6th Review of UK Parliament constituencies. And 430 responses during its secondary consultation on Initial Proposals for the 2018 Review.

Consideration of representations

18. The Commission is invited to consider a draft paper on the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian council area grouping to assist the Commission in considering and developing its revised proposals and provide any feedback on the draft paper structure. The draft paper is at Appendix B.

19. The Secretariat can provide the Commission with a spreadsheet with all comments submitted to its consultation site as well as all postal or email submissions if requested. All comments submitted to the initial consultation stage can be viewed on the Commission's consultation site bcs2023review.com.

20. To resolve some of the issues raised during the consultations the Commission can either make amendments to its grouping of council areas or consider an alternative grouping of council areas and constituencies.

21. The Commission's grouping of council areas for its Initial Proposals is shown in table below.

Initial Proposals - council area groupings	**Electorate March 2020**	**Number of Constituencies**	**Average electorate per constituency**
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Moray	668,832	9	74,315
Angus, Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, Falkirk, Fife, Perth and Kinross, Stirling, West Lothian	958,118	13	73,701
City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian	515,990	7	73,713
Ayrshires (North, South, East)	290,225	4	72,556
East Renfrewshire	72,959	1	72,959
Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire	645,131	9	71,681
Dumfries and Galloway, East and West Dunbartonshire, North and South Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders	872,356	12	72,696
		55	

22. An alternative council area grouping is shown in the table below and map is shown in Appendix C. The alternative grouping would:
    - retain the Ayrshires, Aberdeen, East Renfrewshire and Edinburgh/ East Lothian/ Midlothian groupings from the Initial Proposals;
    - avoid the division of Moray;
    - avoid the division of Kinross-shire;
    - the groupings of Aberdeenshire/ Angus and Argyll and Bute/ Highland/ Perth and Kinross/ Dundee/ Fife/ Clackmannanshire could be merged to offer more flexibility with constituency design;
    - avoid a constituency over-lapping the Forth (Mid Forth Valley); and

- would likely retain a number of constituencies from the Initial Proposals in Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Argyll and Bute, north Highland, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire.

Alternative suggestion - council area groupings	**Electorate March 2020**	**Number of Constituencies**	**Average electorate per constituency**
*Aberdeen City	153,455	2	76,727
*Stirling	70,085	1	70,085
*City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian	515,990	7	73,713
*Ayrshires (North, South, East)	290,225	4	72,556
*East Renfrewshire	72,959	1	72,959
Moray	71,537	1	71,537
Aberdeenshire, Angus	286,739	4	71,685
Argyll and Bute, Highland, Perth and Kinross, Dundee, Fife, Clackmannanshire	786,937	11	71,540
Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, East and West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Falkirk	1,179,168	16	73,698
Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian	596,516	8	74,565
* *unchanged from Initial Proposals*		**55**	

23. Sketches with a possible solution to the existing grouping and a sketch of the alternative grouping will be presented and discussed at the Commission meeting.

24. Two individuals made all Scotland alternative constituency design suggestions which will be discussed when the Commission considers its revised proposals.

Conclusion

25. The Commission is invited to:
    - note the responses to the secondary consultation;
    - provide any feedback on the draft consideration of revised proposals paper;
    - confirm if it wishes a copy of all consultation responses; and
    - consider its approach to developing revised proposals and whether it wishes to consider an alternative grouping of council areas.

Secretariat
March 2022

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Appendix A

Summary of Responses by Council Area and Consultation Stage

Council Area	Initial Consultation	Secondary Consultation
Aberdeen City	5	2
Aberdeenshire	27	4
Angus	56	2
Argyll and Bute	43	7
City of Edinburgh	14	9
Clackmannanshire	5	3
Dumfries and Galloway	17	8
Dundee City	12	2
East Ayrshire	1	0
East Dunbartonshire	19	3
East Lothian	45	10
East Renfrewshire	12	0
Falkirk	33	7
Fife	49	7
Glasgow City	35	9
Highland	97	23
Inverclyde	5	1
Midlothian	1	0
Moray	45	8
North Ayrshire	3	1
North Lanarkshire	32	4
Perth and Kinross	297	32
Renfrewshire	33	5
Scottish Borders	9	5
Shetland Islands	1	1
South Ayrshire	5	3
South Lanarkshire	20	4
Stirling	5	0
West Dunbartonshire	1	0
West Lothian	11	5
General/All Scotland	165	19
Total	**1105**	**184**

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Appendix C

Map of alternative grouping of council areas