

To: Council

On: 15 December 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies – Consultation on Revised Proposals

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland has published its Revised Proposals for UK Parliamentary constituencies and invited comments on those Proposals no later than 5 December 2022.
 - 1.2 A response was issued by the Returning Officer which is attached as an appendix to this report. The Commission has indicated that provided an initial response was submitted to them, they would be willing to accept a final response from the Council by 15 December 2022 once it had been considered at the Council meeting.
 - 1.3 After considering the responses to the consultation on the Revised Proposals, the Commission will develop its final recommendations and submit its report to Parliament by 1 July 2023.
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2. Recommendations

2.1 Council is asked to:

- a) approve and adopt the response issued by the Returning Officer as a response on behalf of the Council to the Boundary Commission for Scotland's 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies - Publication of Revised Proposals, which forms the appendix to this report
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3. **Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 16 December 2021 the Council agreed a response to the Boundary Commission for Scotland's Initial Proposals for the 2023 Review of UK Parliamentary constituencies.
- 3.2 The Commission has now published its Revised Proposals for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies and has invited comments concerning those proposals to be submitted by 5 December 2022.
- 3.2 A link to the consultation on the Revised Proposals was issued to all elected members on 9 November 2022 and the consultation was also included on the Council's website.
- 3.3 The existing constituencies have been in place since 2005 and the last two reviews have not been implemented.
- 3.4 Scotland has been allocated 57 constituencies for the 2023 Review, two fewer than at present. Two constituencies, the Western Isles and Orkney and Shetland are protected by legislation and will not be subject to change.
- 3.5 Each constituency that the Commission recommends must contain no fewer than 69,724 Parliamentary electors, and no more than 77,062 (except the two protected constituencies) although the Commission can recommend a constituency with an electorate lower than the minimum if it is larger than 12,000 square kilometres.
- 3.6 Due to the reduction in the number of constituencies, and the requirements for each constituency to have a number of electors within set limits, the Commissioner has indicated that significant changes to existing constituencies are required.
- 3.7 The Commission's Revised Proposals are available through the following link

<https://www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk/?q=reviews/2023-review-uk-parliament-constituencies>

4. Renfrewshire Constituencies

4.1 At present Renfrewshire Council administers elections for two UK Parliament constituencies. These are Paisley and Renfrewshire North and Paisley and Renfrewshire South.

4.2 In terms of the Commission's Initial Proposals, Renfrewshire retained responsibility for two constituencies. However, both were different in several respects from the existing constituencies.

4.3 The main changes proposed were:

- Significant areas in Wards 10 and 11 were included in a new Inverclyde and Bridge of Weir constituency.
- Part of Glasgow City Council's Ward 4 in Cardonald was included within the boundaries of the proposed Renfrew North constituency.
- The boundaries between the Renfrew North and Renfrew South constituencies were different in some places than the boundaries between the two existing constituencies.
- The new constituencies had been named Renfrew North and Renfrew South.

4.4 The Revised Proposals at this second stage remain as they were at first stage with only the proposed constituency names having altered. However, the proposals are still a significant change from the existing arrangements. The proposals see two constituencies which now retain the same names as before. However, the boundaries of those constituencies are significantly different from the existing boundaries.

- Paisley and Renfrewshire North will consist of Wards 1, 2, 3 & 12. In addition it includes part of ward 4 (Shortroods and Ferguslie) and part of Ward 11 (Bishopton, Dargavel and Langbank). It also includes Ward 4 from Glasgow City Council (Cardonald).

- Paisley and Renfrewshire South will consist of the remaining part of Ward 4, Wards 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9 and part of Ward 10 (Linwood and Brookfield).

- An extended Inverclyde seat, now called Inverclyde and Renfrewshire West, includes the remaining parts of the Renfrewshire

Council Area i.e. Ward 10 (Houston and Crosslee) and Ward 11 (Bridge of Weir).

5. Response to the Revised Proposals
- 5.1 The Returning Officer has submitted a response to the Commission forming the appendix to this report. The Commission has agreed to accept a final response from the Council by 15 December 2022 to enable it to be considered at the Council meeting today.
- 5.2 The response identifies some criticisms of the approach taken by the Commission in preparing both their Initial and Revised Proposals. The Commission has developed its proposals in council area groupings with Renfrewshire being in a grouping with Inverclyde and Glasgow.
- 5.3 The main points raised in the response are:
- There is no justification for the grouping of Renfrewshire with Inverclyde and Glasgow and excluding other authorities bordering on Glasgow.
 - A different approach should be taken with identifying how the reduction in the number of constituencies in Glasgow can be achieved by looking at its boundaries with other authorities, not just Renfrewshire.
 - The grouping of Renfrewshire with Inverclyde inevitably means that parts of existing Renfrewshire wards will be included in a new expanded parliamentary constituency based in Inverclyde, and that parts of Glasgow would be taken into one of the Renfrewshire constituencies to balance this.
- 5.4 After the end of this consultation, the Commission will develop their final recommendations which they will submit in a report to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023.

Members will be kept updated on developments throughout this process.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial.** - *None*
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *None*

3. **Community/Council Planning – None**
4. **Legal – as detailed in the report**
5. **Property/Assets – None**
6. **Information Technology - None**
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety - None**
9. **Procurement – None**
10. **Risk - None**
11. **Privacy Impact - None**
12. **Cosla Policy Position – None**

List of Background Papers

(a)

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2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies Response to Proposals

1. Introduction

This response is issued on behalf of Returning Officer for the Renfrewshire Council Area. The Council will also be asked to consider the terms of this response at the Council Meeting on 15 December and it may be adopted as formal response by the Council on that date.

As was set out in the Council's initial response to this consultation, it is noted that the last two reviews of UK parliamentary constituencies were cancelled which means that the existing constituencies have remained in place since 2005. Therefore, in principle it is accepted that a review is overdue and necessary.

It is also noted that the Commission must apply the rules on constituency population as set out by the UK Parliament. This has inevitable consequences for constituency sizes across the whole of Scotland and reflects the reduction in the total number of seats allocated to Scotland.

2. Constituency Design Approach

It is disappointing to note that despite the terms of the Council's response the Commission appear to have maintained the "constituency design approach" set out in the original consultation document. This grouped Renfrewshire with Inverclyde and Glasgow City Council. As set out previously, the logic for this is difficult to understand. It created a self-fulfilling outcome that to achieve the electoral quota for a revised Inverclyde based constituency, that constituency will need to include population centres from either one or both of the Renfrewshire based constituencies.

More importantly, it was also then a self-fulfilling outcome that this would require part of one of the Glasgow constituencies being incorporated in to at least one of the Renfrewshire Constituencies.

There was no logical basis for excluding all of the Glasgow constituencies from review with all of the neighbouring council areas (West and East Dunbartonshire, North and South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire).

There was also no logical basis for any grouping involving Inverclyde not to also include the only other constituency with which it currently shares a border, which is North Ayrshire and Arran.

The outcome of this approach is that the Commission has excluded itself from considering possible boundaries which would recognise local geographical and community connections, both in respect of Glasgow and Inverclyde. It then also means that recommendations are made for areas to sit within constituencies where there are no such connections.

It is submitted that parts of the Inverclyde constituency have as good geographical and transport links to the North Ayrshire and Arran area, particularly along the Clyde Coast, as they do with the areas of

Renfrewshire included in the proposed Inverclyde and West Renfrewshire constituency.

It is also submitted that there is no reason why East Renfrewshire constituency is maintained as a stand-alone constituency outwith any grouping, which means that it is not included in any consideration of changes to the boundaries to the Paisley and Renfrewshire South constituency.

This approach also immediately excludes several of the factors established by rules for the distribution of seats namely 5(a), (c) and (e).

In particular, it excludes the existing Scottish Parliamentary boundaries between East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire Councils.

The position of Glasgow is even more fundamental. At present the seven Glasgow City constituencies are bordered by nine other constituencies that are dealt with by six local authorities: Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire Councils.

The consequence of this approach is that Cardonald is now split in two and a substantial part placed in the Paisley and Renfrewshire North Constituency. South Cardonald remains within the Glasgow South West Constituency. It is immediately clear from any examination of the map of the latter that all of Cardonald should remain within that constituency.

There is also no community or geographical connection between the relevant parts of Cardonald and the rest of the Paisley and North Renfrewshire constituency.

There are however clear community and geographical links between areas such as South Nitshill and Darnley, and Mansewood and Newlands (from the neighbouring Glasgow constituency) with East Renfrewshire.

By excluding East Renfrewshire from any grouping with Glasgow, the Commission has arrived at a result which sees areas of Glasgow with no logical connection with Renfrewshire placed in a Renfrewshire constituency, while ignoring close links with East Renfrewshire.

It is submitted that all of Cardonald should be placed in the Glasgow South West Constituency. The boundaries of that constituency should then be revisited to take the appropriate parts into the East Renfrewshire constituency.

The increase in population of the revised East Renfrewshire and South Glasgow constituency could then be balanced by Barrhead and Neilston transferring to Paisley and Renfrewshire South. This would reflect the existing Scottish Parliamentary arrangements.

Should there be any balancing required between the two Renfrewshire constituencies that can easily be adjusted by adjusting the boundaries within Paisley itself.

It is hoped that you will consider these comments on the proposals and take them into account when producing the final submission to Parliament.

Mark Conaghan

Head of Corporate Governance and Depute Returning Officer