

SCOTLAND OFFICE

Issued on behalf of
the Boundary Commission for Scotland



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before 0001 Hours on 3 September 2009**

Further Recommendations for Scottish Parliament

The Boundary Commission for Scotland today publishes its Further Recommendations for Scottish Parliament constituencies. The only changes from the Commission's earlier Revised Recommendations are in Aberdeen City; Argyll and Bute; and City of Edinburgh Council areas. The Commission is not proposing any other changes to its Revised Recommendations for constituencies.

The Commission also announces today the arrangements for a Local Inquiry into its provisional proposals for Regions. The Inquiry will be held in Glasgow on 22 and 23 October and will hear evidence on the Commission's proposals for regions of East Central Scotland; Highlands and Islands; Lothian; South Scotland; and West Central Scotland.

The Further Recommendations involve the following changes. In Aberdeen City Council area, a minor boundary change between Aberdeen Donside and Aberdeen Central constituencies. In Argyll and Bute Council area, a change of constituency name from Argyllshire and Bute to Argyll and Bute. In the City of Edinburgh Council area, revised names - Edinburgh Eastern, Edinburgh Northern and Leith, Edinburgh Southern and Edinburgh Western - and a boundary change between Edinburgh Pentlands and Edinburgh Southern, resulting in all of Craiglockhart being in Edinburgh Southern.

The Commission invites comments from the public on the Further Recommendations. Information on the proposals is on display at selected council offices and libraries, and on the Commission's website www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk.

Representations should be submitted by 3 October 2009 by email to representations@scottishboundaries.gov.uk; by using the reply facility on the Commission's web site; in writing to The Secretary, Boundary Commission for Scotland, 3 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, EH3 7QJ; or by fax to 0131 538 7511. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, representations will be made available to those interested in the Review except in very exceptional circumstances.

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Notes for News Editors

Local News Releases

This News Release gives an overview of the Commission's Further Recommendations across Scotland. The Commission has also produced a series of News Releases which describe its proposals in more detail for each of individual local authority areas affected.

Legal framework

This is the first review of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament and is governed by the Scotland Act 1998 as amended by the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004.

The current constituency boundaries were established following the Commission's Fourth Periodical Report of Parliamentary Constituencies for the purpose of returning Scottish members to the Westminster Parliament, which was published in 1995. The current region boundaries were established as European Parliament constituencies in June 1996.

The Scotland Act 1998 envisaged that the boundaries of constituencies for the Westminster and Holyrood parliaments would be coterminous. This was amended by the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004, which fixed the number of constituencies for the Scottish Parliament at 73 and thus broke the link between the Holyrood and Westminster constituencies. The Commission's Fifth Periodical Review was completed in 2004 and resulted in the number of Scottish constituencies for Westminster being reduced to 59.

The legislation stipulates:

- 73 constituencies returning members to the parliament, only 71 are subject to review – for Orkney and Shetland, the Act specifies that each will be a separate constituency;
- 8 regions in Scotland, all of which are subject to review. Each region returns 7 members to the Scottish Parliament;
- A set of rules for designing constituencies and regions.

The review

Changes in the distribution of electorate, as well as changes to local government areas since the existing constituencies were defined have led the Commission to conclude that a comprehensive review is required. The review was announced on 3 July 2007.

The Commission published its Provisional Proposals for constituencies on 14 February 2008 and published its Revised Recommendations for constituencies on 21 May 2009. This is the publication of Further Recommendations following consideration of comments received on the Revised Recommendations and only affects a small number of constituencies in City of Aberdeen, Argyll and Bute and the City of Edinburgh Council areas.

The Commission also published its provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament regions on 21 May 2009. The Local Inquiry is being held in response to the representations received concerning those proposals for regions which will consider the regions of East Central Scotland; Highlands and Islands; Lothian; South Scotland; and West Central Scotland.

The Commission is required to complete a review of the boundaries of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2010.

Constituency design

When designing constituencies, the Commission is required to observe rules which are set down in legislation. The legislation specifies that there are 73 constituencies for the Parliament. The legislation also requires the Commission to have regard to local authority boundaries, to make the electorate of each constituency as near to the average as practicable, to take into account special geographical considerations and to take account of inconveniences that would arise from, and local ties which would be broken by, alterations to constituencies.

The electoral quota for the review is 54,728 - this is the average number of electors in each constituency, outside Orkney and Shetland. The electoral quota is fixed and is used throughout the review.

In previous reviews of parliamentary constituencies in Scotland, the Commission relied on the use of local government wards as building blocks for constituencies. In 2007, a new structure of local government wards was introduced in Scotland to accommodate proportional representation for local authority elections, with much larger wards that each return either 3 or 4 members. As a result, in many areas across Scotland it is not possible to use the significantly enlarged wards to construct revised constituencies within the terms of the statutory rules. As a consequence, the boundaries for the proposed constituencies have been created from whichever geographic feature or boundary creates a constituency approaching electoral parity, while respecting community ties wherever possible.

Each constituency is designated as either a burgh constituency (BC) or county constituency (CC) - this designation affects the regulations concerning election expenditure.

Maps of Further Recommendations concerning Constituencies

The Commission has produced sets of maps showing its Further Recommendations for constituencies. The relevant maps are displayed at selected council offices and libraries for the duration of the consultation. The locations for display are listed in Statutory Notices which are being published today in newspapers, and are also available on the Commission's website. The maps are also available in PDF, GIF and TIF format on the Commission's website at www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk.

A media webpage giving access to images for use in media publications is available at:

http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/1st_holyrood/media/Sept_09.htm .

Implementation of the Recommendations

The Commission is required to submit its report on the review to the Secretary of State for Scotland by 30 June 2010. It is the Secretary of State for Scotland's duty to lay the Commission's report before the UK Parliament together with a draft Order in Council giving effect to the recommendations. The draft Order is submitted to both Houses of Parliament for approval and the new boundaries take effect at the next general election to the Scottish Parliament following the making of the Order.

A copy of the Commission's report must also be laid before the Scottish Parliament.

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