

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

NUTS boundaries are used for reporting of regional statistics to Eurostat and those statistics are used to inform regional policy. The Scottish Government is proposing to make minimal changes beyond aligning existing NUTS boundaries to Local Authority Boundaries.

### **Do you have any comments on the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 2 regions?**

No Comments

### **Do you have any comments on the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 3 regions?**

The proposals represent a missed opportunity to realign NUTS3 boundaries to better meet local reporting needs.

#### Option 1

Reporting of Stirling Council area as a single NUTS3 area, similar to that proposed for Argyll & Bute and Moray Councils. The population of Stirling Council is very similar to that of Argyll and Bute.

#### Option 2

The population levels involved indicate a more practical approach to NUTS 3 boundaries by combining Stirling Council and Clackmannanshire Council into one unit, and reporting separately for both Perth and Kinross and Fife Councils. There are obvious advantages to these authorities too when economic figures are not distorted by smaller, neighbouring authorities.

Scottish Government has reinforced the importance of cities in delivering economic growth for Scotland. Ensuring that the 2 cities of Stirling and Perth are reported separately in distinct NUTS3 areas will allow for far more robust measurement of economic growth, especially via key economic data such as GVA / GDP. In the current proposals Stirling and Perth are the only two of Scotland's 7 cities to share a NUTS3 area. Taking the cities strategy seriously should mean they are seen as distinct for economic reporting and measurement purposes. Agenda for Cities. Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/01/05104741/6>

Being formerly part of Central Region and now within the Forth Valley, Stirling and Clackmannanshire have a number of existing strong links which support the move to a NUTS3 area for their combined area. There are few, if any, such links economically or demographically between Stirling and Perth & Kinross Councils.

- Stirling & Alloa Travel to Work Area (TTWA) as identified by census results, and used for transport planning purposes.
- Stirling Housing Market Area. "The Housing Market Area is, to all intents and purposes, the existing local authority boundaries of Stirling plus Clackmannanshire Council." Stirling Council (2011) Housing Need and Demand Assessment, assessed as robust and credible by CHMA.

<http://bit.ly/R113Xg>

- The areas are represented by 2 Scottish Parliament constituencies which cover the 2 local authority areas: Stirling and Clackmannanshire & Dunblane.
- Current 2002 Stirling and Clackmannanshire Joint Structure Plan.
- Clackmannanshire & Stirling Councils are leading the way amongst local authorities in developing shared services. Currently Education and Social Services are operated on a shared management basis as well as a number of smaller services.
- The Forth Valley and Lomond Leader Area for rural development encompasses Stirling and Clackmannanshire rural areas, and does not include any part of Perth and Kinross.

Additionally, neither Stirling nor Clackmannanshire are included in the TAYplan partnership. Discrete reporting of the authorities within this group (Angus Council /Dundee City Council, Fife Council and Perth & Kinross Council) would be made possible by the establishment of a Stirling and Clackmannanshire NUTS3 area.

Eurostat have requested we consider merging the Highlands & Islands with North Eastern Scotland to create a new area that's closer to the recommended population thresholds. The Scottish Government plan to request that these areas should be allowed an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations, i.e. because of particular geographical, socio-economic, historical, cultural or environmental circumstances, especially in the islands and the outermost regions.

**Please provide any evidence in favour of or against an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations for Highlands & Islands and North Eastern Scotland NUTS 2 areas?**

No Comment

Eurostat have suggested that the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 3 should include merging Moray with Argyll & Bute Local Authority to create an area that meets their recommended population ranges.

**Please provide any evidence in favour of or against an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations for the proposed Moray and Argyll & Bute NUTS 3 areas?**

Makes little sense to combine non-contiguous council areas which have little in common economically or otherwise, where Council-level reporting is preferred. This thinking can also be applied to Stirling and Perth and Kinross, as argued above.