

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?

We agree that the NUTS 2 area boundaries should be contiguous to the boundaries of the relevant Local Authorities. We agree therefore that the Highlands and Islands NUTS 2 areas should be expanded to include all of Argyll and Bute within a single unit. The Isle of Arran and the Cumbraes should move into South Western NUTS 2 area so that they are included in the same region as the Mainland part of North Ayrshire administrative area.

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

We agree that NUTS 3 area boundaries should be contiguous with the boundaries of the relevant Local Authorities. We agree therefore that the boundaries of East, Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire and Helensburgh and Lomond should become East and West Dunbartonshire reflecting the local Authority Boundary of the same names. East and North Ayrshire NUTS areas should become East and North Ayrshire, containing both the mainland and island parts of the East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire Local Authorities. And that 3 new NUTS areas; Highlands, Moray and Argyll and Bute will align themselves to the Local Authority areas of the same name, replacing Caithness and Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness and Nairn, Moray and Badenoch and Strathspey and Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, Arran & Cumbrae

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?

The proposal to move Helensburgh and Lomond from the current NUTS 3 and NUTS 2 areas to a new Argyll and Bute NUTS 3 and Highlands and Islands NUTS 2 areas while reducing the GDP of the area would make no difference to the ranking of the area for European funding purposes. This is

because Helensburgh and Lomond's share of the whole SWS area is too small to have an impact. However moving Helensburgh and Lomond to the Highlands and Islands NUTS 2 areas may benefit these two areas as the Highlands and Islands NUTS 2 area has in the past and perhaps in future may continue to qualify for higher levels of support.

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?

The proposal to move Arran and Cumbrae from the current NUTS 3 and NUTS 2 areas to New North East Ayrshire NUTS 3 and SWS NUTS 2 areas would offset any fall in GDP in SWS resulting from the removal of Helensburgh and Lomond. It is thought that the inclusion of Arran and Cumbrae in the SWS areas would have no net effect on the area's ranking. The inclusion of Arran and Cumbrae in SWS may pose a minor threat to West Dunbartonshire Council in that it may result in new competition for European funding in the area at individual project level.