

# **Consultation paper - Process for Determining Electoral Boundaries in Scotland**

**May 2025**

## Foreword – Andrew Kerr OBE

I am delighted to have been appointed by Scottish Ministers to chair the Independent Review of the Process for Determining Electoral Boundaries in Scotland. The purpose of the Review is to consider whether there is a better way to approve changes to electoral boundaries in Scotland, and the responses to this consultation will form an important part of the considerations of this Review.

At Westminster, in other parts of the UK, and in some other countries, electoral boundary changes are not subject to a vote in Parliament, but are approved automatically. The process used varies across countries, but this type of process is referred to as ‘automaticity’. Experience in other countries shows that it is best practice to have this kind of system, where politicians do not have the ability to vote against changes to their own constituency boundaries.

Currently, Boundaries Scotland reviews the boundaries of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions and local government electoral wards and make proposals for change in a report which is laid in the Scottish Parliament. MSPs then vote on whether to approve the proposals or not.

This consultation will discuss some of the forms of automaticity used in the UK and around the world, and ask for your views on which of the models may be a best fit for Scotland. It will also ask whether any other changes should be made as a result of any change to the approval process.

Following this consultation, a report will be prepared which will make recommendations on what system for approving changes to boundaries works best for Scotland. This report will be submitted to Scottish Ministers, who will consider the recommendations and may bring forward proposals to the Parliament to seek to change the law in the future.

Readers may be aware that Boundaries Scotland recently submitted its Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries to Ministers. This consultation is not a commentary on the work of Boundaries Scotland, and should not imply any criticism of the Commissioners and their recent Scottish Parliament review. I would emphasise that this review is independent of both the Scottish Government and of Boundaries Scotland.

I invite you to respond to this consultation, and make your views heard on this important aspect of Scotland’s democracy.

**Andrew Kerr OBE**  
**Chair, Independent Review of the Process for Determining Electoral Boundaries in Scotland**

## Introduction

This consultation will consider the approval process used when electoral boundary proposals are made. It will discuss some of the forms of automatic approval (often called 'automaticity') which are used in the UK and around the world, and we would like to hear your views on what form of automaticity would be best for Scotland. The consultation will also ask whether other changes relating to the process of approving electoral boundaries should be made. It might be necessary, for example, to change the consultation process or the structure and resources of Boundaries Scotland to reflect any change to how final boundary proposals are approved.

## Methodology for reviewing boundaries

Boundaries Scotland is the independent, non-political body which reviews Scottish Parliament and local authority electoral boundaries across Scotland. The Commissioners who are members of Boundaries Scotland are appointed by Scottish Ministers and must not have any political affiliation. The Commission is responsible for reviewing the boundaries for Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions and local government electoral wards and councillor numbers. Fair electoral boundaries are the basis on which fair elections are run to elect MSPs and local councillors. So who has a say over how any proposed changes to these boundaries are approved and implemented is important.

When reviewing and recommending changes to electoral boundaries, Boundaries Scotland is required to follow a number of rules and guidelines. This helps ensure that the factors being taken into account in different areas are consistent.

One of the considerations when drawing electoral boundaries is to ensure each constituency or ward within an area contains the same number of people on the electoral register – this is often referred to as parity. In some countries, the census is used to base parity on population, rather than the number of electors. Boundaries Scotland must abide by parity as much as possible, but reviews for Scottish Parliament or local council boundaries do not have a rule for a strict percentage of leeway, as seen in some other countries. For example, UK Parliamentary constituencies can be no more than 5% higher or lower than strict parity, and Welsh Senedd constituencies can be no more than 10% higher or lower than strict parity.

When setting Scottish Parliament constituencies, Boundaries Scotland also has to take into account local authority boundaries, special geographic considerations and local ties and inconveniences caused by altering existing boundaries. For local authority ward boundaries, effective and convenient local government is the fundamental principle. Other factors to be considered are, special geographical considerations, future electoral change, local ties and whether boundaries will be easily identifiable. These may include electoral wards (when reviewing Scottish Parliament constituencies), traditional village boundaries, or natural boundaries such as lochs or mountain ridges. When local government ward boundaries and councillor numbers are reviewed, Boundaries Scotland are permitted to allocate wards with only 1 councillor when the ward is wholly or mainly comprised of inhabited islands. Non-island wards can have between 2 and 5 councillors.

Since the rules governing the creation of electoral boundaries are broadly in line with international practice, the Review is not focused on this aspect of setting electoral boundaries and change would only be recommended where it arises as a consequence of a recommendation to change the approval process.

Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Boundaries Scotland also has responsibility for reviewing the boundaries of council areas but has been under direction from Scottish Ministers not to conduct these reviews (except for in some limited circumstances) for many years. The focus of this review is on the approval process for electoral boundaries, so this consultation will not be considering Boundaries Scotland's duty to review local government administrative areas in detail.

## Current process in Scotland

Boundaries Scotland have a duty to review Scottish Parliament constituency and regional electoral boundaries every 8 to 12 years. The most recent review of this kind was submitted to Scottish Ministers on 1 May 2025. Boundaries Scotland submitted their report on the fifth review of local government electoral arrangements (ward boundaries and councillor numbers) in 2016. At this time Scottish Ministers alone were able to decide whether the proposed changes were to be implemented or not, and some reviews were rejected. Boundaries Scotland also completed a review of six island or island-mainland councils in 2021. Since the passing of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020, boundary proposals have been considered and voted on by the Scottish Parliament, and some reviews have also been rejected under this process. Reviews of local government electoral arrangements must be conducted every 15 years.

In conducting their reviews, Boundaries Scotland make initial proposals for Scottish Parliament boundaries which are then subject to a public consultation. For reviews of wards and councillor numbers, Boundaries Scotland initially must consult with local councils for a 2-month period before holding a public consultation.

For Scottish Parliament constituency and region reviews, further rounds of public consultation are held if any changes are made to the proposals in the light of the responses to the initial consultation. Local inquiries are held if Boundaries Scotland so chooses, or if local councils or a body of at least 100 electors (500 for regions) request one. Local inquiries are meetings chaired by an independent figure, often a judge/Sheriff Principal, and allow people to put their views forward on changes in a specific area. A summary of the issues raised is then prepared by the chair of the inquiry.

Following completion of their review, Boundaries Scotland submit a report with their final recommendations to Scottish Ministers, who are required to lay legislation in Parliament which gives effect to the final recommendations. Parliamentary committees then consider the recommendations and can take evidence from relevant groups or people on the changes. If the legislation is supported by the relevant committee, it is subject to a vote in Parliament by all MSPs. This process is referred to as the 'affirmative procedure'. If the vote passes, the proposals become law and the proposed boundaries are changed.

The membership of Boundaries Scotland consists of a Chair, Deputy Chair, and up to four other Commissioners. All members are appointed by Scottish Ministers through a public appointments process, which is overseen by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. Members serve four-year terms in their posts, which can be renewed one time (eight years maximum).

## Approval and Parliamentary Process

In Scotland, currently proposals made by Boundaries Scotland are subject to a vote in the Scottish Parliament before they are approved. There are a variety of processes used internationally to approve recommendations made by boundary commissions. Generally, a form of parliamentary process is required in order to set the new boundaries in law, however this process differs between countries. Some examples are set out below.

### **UK (Westminster constituencies and electoral boundaries for Welsh Senedd elections)**

- When the four UK Boundary Commissions (one Commission from each of the four countries within the UK) makes final recommendations for boundary changes for the UK Parliament they are submitted to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the relevant Secretary of State.
- A draft Order in Council must then be submitted which gives effect to the recommendations made within four months of the final recommendations being submitted.
- There is no parliamentary debate or opportunity for MPs or Ministers to vote on, or reject the recommendations made by the Boundary Commissions. However, a statement of modifications can be made in that four month period.
- This process is very similar to that used for the approval of Welsh Senedd constituency reviews. Regulations are laid under 'no-procedure', which means Members of the Senedd do not vote on the regulations.
- For both of these procedures, proposals can still be challenged via Judicial Review

### **Australia (Federal constituencies)**

- A Redistribution Committee holds a consultation on suggested boundary changes, to which the public can make objections. These objections are considered by an Augmented Electoral Commission who then make final recommendations.
- These recommendations are sent to the Minister, and then must be tabled in Parliament within 5 days.
- There is no opportunity for parliamentarians to amend or reject the proposed changes in any way, nor are the proposals subject to any appeal or legal challenge.

### **New Zealand**

- The Electoral Commission present their recommendations directly to the Governor-General at the same time as they are tabled in Parliament.
- Outside of the public consultation period, there is no opportunity for Parliamentarians to object to or vote on the recommendations.

### **Canada (Federal constituencies)**

- Recommendations are submitted to parliament, where Members of Parliament are able to table objections to the report if they have concerns about process, however any written objection must be co-signed by a minimum of 10 MPs.
- The report is returned to the commission with any approved objections, and a final report is written by the commission.

- The Electoral Commission drafts an Order describing the electoral districts published by the boundaries commission, and it is sent to the responsible Minister. Within five days of receipt by the Minister, the Order is declared to be in force by the Governor-in- Council.

## Consultation process

### **Length of public consultation periods**

Different countries consult for different periods of time:

- Currently, for Scottish Parliament constituency and region reviews, a one month long public consultation period is held on initial proposals for change, and if revised proposals are made, a further one month consultation is held. This consultation process repeats if any further changes are made.
- In Scotland when reviews of ward boundaries and councillor numbers are conducted, Boundaries Scotland hold a 2-month consultation with the local authority where the changes will take place, before then consulting publicly on any proposals put forward (for a 12-week period). There are two consultation rounds.
- During reviews of Westminster constituencies, recommendations are consulted on for an 8-week period, consultation responses are published which is then followed by another 6-week consultation period. Revised proposals are subject to a further four week consultation period.
- In Wales, changes to the Senedd boundaries are subject to a similar 8-week then 6-week consultation. If any further changes are made there is an additional 4-week period before final recommendations are made.
- In Australia, the Redistribution Committee (who review federal boundaries) asks for written suggestions for changes to constituencies over a 5-week period, which is followed by a 2-week period where the public can respond to any of these suggestions. The Redistribution Committee then draws proposed boundary changes which are subject to a 4-week period where the public can make objections.

### **Other consultation events**

- During reviews of Scottish Parliament constituency and regional boundaries, local inquiries can be held if objections are received by local authorities, or bodies of at least 100 electors (or 500 for regions) or if Boundaries Scotland believes it requires additional information that only a local inquiry can provide. These local inquiries are chaired independently by a sheriff principal and allow for groups or people to comment on proposed changes.
- Boundaries Scotland are required to hold a two-month consultation with local authorities when conducting reviews of ward boundaries and councillor numbers. This is in addition to the public consultation rounds, and allows affected councils to engage closely on any proposals. Councils are then invited to submit responses to the consultation and identify improvements.
- Events called public hearings are held during Westminster constituency reviews. The Boundary Commission for Scotland is required to hold between 2 and 5 at the secondary stage of consultation. While the criteria for holding them are different, public hearings are similar to local inquiries. Public hearings provide opportunities for dialogue between the public and the boundary commission.
- Currently, these kind of events are mostly held in-person, however there has been discussion as to whether hybrid or online events would allow greater engagement with the public, particularly in rural areas.

## Boundary commission structure and resources

Boundaries Scotland is the commission which sets boundaries for Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions, and local government ward boundaries and councillor numbers. Members of Boundaries Scotland are politically independent persons appointed by Scottish Ministers in a process overseen by the Ethical Standards Commissioner. This is a similar system to that of Wales, where all members of their boundary commission are appointed by Welsh Ministers.

Internationally, there are a range of approaches for who sits on boundary commissions.

In the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, a current or retired Judge sits on or Chairs the boundary commission for determining the electoral boundaries in national elections. The Boundary Commission for Scotland (who conduct Westminster constituency reviews in Scotland) has a judge of the Court of Session as its Deputy Chair. Boundaries Scotland and local UK commissions are not chaired by judges.

It is common in other countries to have senior public servants in specific roles to sit on boundary commissions, or to have some formal role where they contribute their expertise. Some examples of this kind of involvement includes:

- For Westminster constituency reviews in Scotland, the Director General of Ordnance Survey (an expert in mapping) and from National Records of Scotland, the Registrar General are invited to sit as assessors to the Boundary Commission of Scotland. They are not formal members of the Commission and do not comment on boundary proposals.
- In Australia, the Surveyor-General, the Auditor-General, and members of the Electoral Commission.
- In New Zealand, the Surveyor-General, the Deputy Government Statistician, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Local Government Commission Chair.

Other people who contribute to boundary reviews in other countries include:

- For federal (Canada-wide) reviews in Canada, two members of the public from areas being reviewed who are nominated by the Speaker of the House of Commons.
- In New Zealand, two political representatives – one from the governing party and one from the main opposition party.

Boundary commissions in the UK are composed of Commissioners, but also have a secretariat of civil servants which assists them in conducting reviews. Boundaries Scotland have a small secretariat for this purpose, and the same people form the secretariat for the Boundary Commission for Scotland (who conduct Westminster constituency reviews in Scotland). In Wales there is a similar Secretariat structure who serve two Commissions. Boundaries Scotland is an Advisory Non-departmental Public Body who have a budget provided by the Scottish Government. In England, by contrast, the secretariats for the Boundary Commission for England and for the local boundary commission are different.

In some other countries, boundary commissions are a part of the Electoral Commission (or equivalent), or are combined with other public bodies which have responsibility for electoral administration. In Scotland, Boundaries Scotland, the Electoral Management Board for Scotland and the Electoral Commission (which is a UK-wide body) are separate bodies. In Wales, the newly formed Electoral Management Board is part of the same public body as the devolved boundary commission (called the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru).

## Appendix – consultation questions

1. Do you think the process for approving changes to electoral boundaries (following reviews by Boundaries Scotland) should be changed so that these are automatically introduced, or should changes to electoral boundaries continue to be subject to a vote by Members of the Scottish Parliament before being introduced? Please add any comments you would like to make in support of your answer.
2. Do you think Parliamentarians should have a formal opportunity to lodge objections on the grounds of procedure when approving changes to boundaries:
  - Yes
  - No
3. If you answered 'Yes' to question 2, how should this objection be made?
  - Objections to boundary changes from MSPs should need to be submitted during the public consultation period with no further opportunity to table objections in Parliament, similar to the process for Westminster constituencies.
  - Objections should be considered if a set number of MSPs table objections to a part of the report on boundary changes submitted to Parliament, similar to the process in Canada.
  - Other, please state.
  - Don't know.
4. Do you have any further comments on the approval and parliamentary process, including any other elements of the models used in other countries that you would like to see introduced in Scotland?
5. How long do you think the consultation period(s) for electoral boundaries reviews in Scotland should be? Please provide a reason for your answer.
6. Do you think there should be additional events or processes as part of the consultation process in Scotland? Please provide a reason for your answer.
7. Do you have any further comments on the consultation process for boundary changes, including any other elements of the models used in other countries that you would like to see introduced in Scotland?
8. Different countries have different rules around who is on their Boundary Commission. Do you think there should be any changes to the rules on who should be among the members of Boundaries Scotland or how they are appointed? Please provide a reason for your answer.
9. Do you have any further comments on boundary commission structure or resources, including any other elements of the models used in other countries that you would like to see introduced in Scotland?

10. Do you have any further comments, which have not been captured in your previous responses, on the process by which electoral boundary changes are approved or implemented in Scotland?
11. Do you think any other changes to the rules or methodology around setting electoral boundaries should be made, as a result of any possible change to the approval process in Scotland? Please provide a reason for your answer.

## Appendix – international comparisons

### UK (Westminster constituencies)

When the four UK Boundary Commissions (recommend boundary changes for the UK Parliament, they are approved by an automatic process.

**Boundaries criteria:** In redrawing UK Parliamentary constituency boundaries, the following criteria must be followed or taken into account:

- Number of electors in each constituency cannot be more than 5% over or under the electorate quota. This is subject to an area rule. If a constituency is greater than 12,000 km<sup>2</sup> the Commission can recommend a constituency outwith the 5% rule. However no constituency can be greater than 13,000km<sup>2</sup>;
- Account paid to special geographical considerations (size, shape, accessibility), local government boundaries, special geographic considerations, and local ties.

**Approval Process** - Final recommendations made by the Boundary Commissions are submitted to the Speaker of the House of Commons and the relevant Secretary of State. A draft Order in Council must then be submitted which gives effect to the recommendations made within four months of the final recommendations being submitted. There is no parliamentary debate or opportunity for MPs or Ministers to vote on or reject the recommendations made by the Boundary Commissions. However, a statement of modifications can be made in that four month period.

**Consultation:** The boundary commissions publish initial proposals which are subject to an 8-week public consultation period. Once the representations are published, another 6-week secondary consultation follows. Public hearings across the UK are held during the secondary consultation and between 2-5 can be held in Scotland. Following these public hearings and the secondary consultation, revised proposals are published and a further 4-week consultation period is held. Final recommendations are then laid before Parliament.

**Commission membership:** Each of the four Boundary Commissions is chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons (who takes no part in the review), with the deputy chair being a judge of the Court of Session (Scotland) or High Court (other UK countries). The Commissions have two other members appointed by a Secretary of State through a public appointments process. They are assisted by the Director General of Ordnance Survey, as well as the Registrar General of National Records (in Scotland) or Statistics Board but these are not full members of the commissions.

## **Wales (Senedd constituencies)**

The Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Act 2024 renamed the boundary commission to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru and saw the body adopt the responsibility to conduct periodic reviews of Senedd Cymru constituencies, as well as its previous responsibilities pertaining to Local Government. The first review will be to create 16 Senedd constituencies by pairing the 32 parliamentary constituencies recently recommended by the Boundary Commission for Wales. The new constituencies will take effect at the 2026 Senedd elections. Constituencies will be reviewed every eight years and the legislation implementing proposals is laid under no procedure.

### **Boundaries criteria:**

- Each Senedd constituency must be within an electoral quota variance of no less than 10% over or under the electoral quota. The electoral quota is the electorate of Wales divided by 16 (which is the number of Senedd constituencies).
- The Commission must seek to minimise the number of changes to Senedd constituencies and have regard to the inconveniences caused by the making of any changes.

**Commission membership:** A Chair, Deputy Chair and between 1 - 7 Commissioners. All members are appointed by Welsh Ministers in a public appointments process.

**Consultation:** The DBCC publish an initial report with proposals for an eight-week period of representations. Once the representations are published, the second period for representations commences and lasts for six weeks. During the second period for representations, the Commission must hold between two and five public hearings. At the end of the second period the Commission must make and publish a second report, which sets out the detail of any changes made to the initial proposals and an explanation of why those changes have been made, or a statement that they do not consider any change appropriate. A third and final period for representations lasting four weeks (beginning with the date the second report is published). Following the third period, the Commission make and publish a final report and submit it to the Welsh Ministers.

**Approval process:** Where changes are required to be made to Senedd constituencies, the Welsh Ministers must make regulations giving effect to the determinations made in a final report of the Commission as soon as reasonably practicable after laying the report before the Senedd and, unless there are exceptional circumstances, before the end of the period of 4 months. Regulations under this section are to be made by statutory instrument, and while they are not subject to any procedure within the Senedd, the statutory instrument containing the regulations must be laid before the Senedd as soon as reasonably practicable after the regulations are made. The effect of these changes has been to align the Welsh boundary approval process with the procedure used for UK electoral boundaries.

## **Australia (Federal constituencies)**

Australia reviews its Federal constituencies (national, House of Representatives) through a process of automatic approval through an augmented commission, at the level of each state or territory. The initial recommendations made by a Redistribution Committee are then publicly consulted on, and responses considered by a larger committee, before being automatically approved.

**Boundaries criteria:** In redrawing constituency boundaries within each state or territory, the following criteria are taken into account:

- Numerical quota of within 3.5% of electoral parity. Projections for future population are taken into consideration, and some constituencies are deliberately under- or over-estimated to account for expected population change within 3 and a half years (half of the maximum 7-year period between reviews).
- Community interests within the proposed electoral division, including economic, social and regional interests
- Means of communication and travel within the proposed electoral division
- Physical features and area of the proposed electoral division
- Existing boundaries of divisions in the state or territory.

**Commission membership:** A Redistribution Committee is formed for each state and territory when a boundary review commences. The membership of the Committee is the Electoral Commissioner, the Australian Electoral Officer for that state or territory (in most cases), the Surveyor-General and the Auditor-General. The Augmented Commission consists of the initial Redistribution Committee, with the addition of the Chair of the Electoral Commission (generally a current or retired Federal judge), and an additional member of the Electoral Commission. The appointments of these Commissioners is set out in the Australian Constitution, and a senior Federal judge recommends a short list of judges to the Governor-General, who appoints the Chair of the AEC.

**Consultation:** The Redistribution Committee invites initial written suggestions for changes to constituencies over a 5-week period, which is followed by a 2-week period where the public can respond to any of these suggestions. The Redistribution Committee then draws proposed boundary changes which are subject to a 4-week period where the public can make objections. The Augmented Electoral Commission then considers these objections, and may hold public inquiries as part of this.

**Approval process:** The Augmented Electoral Commission then proposes a final recommendation, which is sent to the Minister, and then must be tabled in Parliament within 5 days. There is no opportunity for parliamentarians to amend or reject the proposed changes in any way, nor are the proposals subject to any appeal or legal challenge. It is an offence punishable by fine or imprisonment to seek to influence improperly members of either the Redistribution Committee or the Augmented Electoral Commission.

## New Zealand

New Zealand reviews its constituency boundaries using a system of automaticity. Constituencies are divided between the North and South Islands, and also provide for distinct Māori electorates.

**Boundaries criteria:** The following factors are taken into account when redrawing constituency boundaries:

- The number of people in each constituency cannot be more than 5% above or below electoral parity – population, not number of electors is used
- existing electorate boundaries
- communities of interest — including indigenous affiliations in Māori electorates
- the infrastructure that links communities, such as main roads
- topographic features such as mountains and rivers
- projected variations in electoral populations over the next 5 years

**Commission membership:** Boundaries are reviewed by a Representation Committee made up of public officials and political figures. The Commission is generally chaired by a current or retired judge. The most recent Commission also consisted of the Surveyor-General, the Deputy Government Statistician, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Local Government Commission Chair, and one political representative each from the Government and from the Opposition. When considering Māori electorates, the Commission also included a Deputy Secretary from the Ministry of Māori Development, and a Government and Opposition Māori representative.

**Consultation:** The Representation Committee publishes an initial proposal for constituency boundaries, which are subject to public consultation. Any submissions by the public or by political parties are considered, and a final recommendation is made for the revised boundaries.

**Approval process:** The Electoral Commission present their recommendations directly to the Governor-General at the same time as they are tabled in Parliament, however outside of the public consultation period, there is no opportunity for Parliamentarians to object to or vote on the recommendations.

## Canada (Federal constituencies)

Canada reviews its Federal constituency boundaries using a form of return automaticity. Proposals are written by a commission for each Province, and are sent to Parliament where written objections can be filed by MPs. The objections are then considered by the Commissions, and final recommendations are passed automatically.

**Boundaries criteria:** The following factors are taken into account when redrawing constituency boundaries:

- Population should be as close as possible to parity (may depart from parity by no more than 25% if other factors are taken into consideration)
- the community of interest or community of identity in or the historical pattern of an electoral district in the province
- a manageable geographic size for districts in sparsely populated, rural or northern regions of the province.

**Commission membership:** As in the UK there is not a single boundary commission but federal constituencies are drawn by separate provincial commissions. They consist of the following: a judge chairs the commission, and is appointed by the chief justice of the province. Two further members are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Commons, who chooses two residents of the province they deem appropriate. The commission also considers population reports and maps prepared by the Chief Statistician and Chief Electoral Officer.

**Consultation:** For federal constituencies, each provincial commission publishes a boundary proposal for its province, and a public consultation period is held which includes at least one public hearing per province. The commission finalises its report following the consultation, and the report is sent to the Speaker of the House of Commons, where it is tabled and referred to a parliamentary committee.

**Approval process:** MPs are able to table objections to the report, however any written objection must be co-signed by a minimum of 10 MPs. The report is returned to the commission with any approved objections, and a final report is written by the commission. The Electoral Commission drafts an Order describing the electoral districts published by the boundaries commission, and it is sent to the responsible Minister. Within five days of receipt by the Minister, the Order is declared to be in force by the Governor-in- Council.

## Responding to this Consultation

We are inviting responses to this consultation by 7 August 2025.

Please respond to this consultation using the Scottish Government's consultation hub, Citizen Space (<http://consult.gov.scot>). Access and respond to this consultation online at <https://consult.gov.scot/elections/electoral-boundaries-process>. You can save and return to your responses while the consultation is still open. Please ensure that consultation responses are submitted before the closing date of 7 August 2025.

If you are unable to respond using our consultation hub, please complete the Respondent Information Form to:

Independent Review of Process for Determining Electoral Boundaries in Scotland  
C/O Elections Team  
2W, St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh, EH1 3DG

### **Handling your response**

If you respond using the consultation hub, you will be directed to the About You page before submitting your response. Please indicate how you wish your response to be handled and, in particular, whether you are content for your response to be published. If you ask for your response not to be published, we will regard it as confidential, and we will treat it accordingly.

All respondents should be aware that the Scottish Government is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and would therefore have to consider any request made to it under the Act for information relating to responses made to this consultation exercise.

If you are unable to respond via Citizen Space, please complete and return the Respondent Information Form included in this document.

To find out how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy: <https://www.gov.scot/privacy/>

### **Next steps in the process**

Where respondents have given permission for their response to be made public, and after we have checked that they contain no potentially defamatory material, responses will be made available to the public at <http://consult.gov.scot>. If you use the consultation hub to respond, you will receive a copy of your response via email.

Following the closing date, all responses will be analysed and considered along with any other available evidence to help us. Responses will be published where we have been given permission to do so. An analysis report will also be made available.

## **Comments and complaints**

If you have any comments about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to the contact address above or at [ElectionsTeam@gov.scot](mailto:ElectionsTeam@gov.scot).

## **Scottish Government consultation process**

Consultation is an essential part of the policymaking process. It gives us the opportunity to consider your opinion and expertise on a proposed area of work.

You can find all our consultations online: <http://consult.gov.scot>. Each consultation details the issues under consideration, as well as a way for you to give us your views, either online, by email or by post.

Responses will be analysed and used as part of the decision making process, along with a range of other available information and evidence. We will publish a report of this analysis for every consultation. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body.



© Crown copyright 2025



This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3) or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at [www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at

The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-83691-600-0 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, May 2025

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA  
PPDAS1597254 (05/25)

W W W . g o v . s c o t