

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL28 June 2023Report by the Chief ExecutiveSECOND REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARIES**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. This report seeks approval from Council to submit a response to Boundaries Scotland regarding the proposals to change the Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies, as they affect East Renfrewshire.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Council agree to submit the response in Appendix 1 to the consultation on the review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries.

BACKGROUND

3. Boundaries Scotland is an independent, non-political body, legally responsible for carrying out reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries. It began its Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries in September 2022 and it undertook to consult on its provisional proposals for constituencies from 17 May to 17 June 2023.
4. The First Review reported in 2010 and the current boundaries have been used in the Scottish Parliament elections of 2011, 2016 and 2021. Since the last review, there has been significant change to the electorate nationally, including the extension of the franchise for Scottish Parliamentary elections to those 16 and over. Changes to the population and the electorate have varied across Scotland, with some areas experiencing significant increases and others remaining relatively unchanged or falling. Even areas which have not experienced population growth or reduction may find that the constituency boundaries alter as a result of change required elsewhere to ensure that all constituencies and regions are of a similar electoral size.
5. In terms of the Scotland Act 1998, the review is required and will recommend constituencies, and regions, of similar electorate size while also taking account of local authority areas, special geographical circumstances, maintenance of local ties and any inconveniences caused by the alteration of the existing boundaries.
6. The review of constituencies covers the 70 mainland constituencies. The constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands are protected in legislation. The overall number of MSPs (129) is fixed in legislation and will not change as a result of this review.
7. The electorate for this review is taken from the electoral register on 1 September 2022.

8. The average electorate of each Scottish Parliament constituency is 59,902 – the electoral quota, and is calculated by dividing the total electorate of Scotland (less the electorate of the three protected island constituencies) by 70 constituencies (73 less the three protected islands constituencies), as follows:

Electorate (1 September 2022)	4,250,563
Less electorate of protected constituencies	57,430
Balance	4,193,133
Divided by total non-protected constituencies	70
Quota	<u>59,902</u>

9. The Scotland Act 1998 states that the electorate of constituencies must be as close to the electoral quota as practicable. In addition, Boundaries Scotland takes into account other factors set out in the Act, namely: local authority areas, special geographical circumstances, maintenance of local ties and any inconveniences caused by the alteration of the existing boundaries.

10. Boundaries Scotland’s proposals for the East Renfrewshire area are set out below:

Constituency Name	Area size (in sq. km)	Designation	Electorate
Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock	29	Burgh	63,882
Renfrewshire South	267	County	61,966

11. The following timetable gives indicative timeframes on the lead-up to any report for change, to be submitted to Scottish Ministers by 1 May 2025.

When	Action
May 2023	One month consultation on constituency provisional proposals (17 May to 17 June).
30 June 2023	Extension of time to allow for Council response.
Autumn 2023	Local inquiries held, dependent on responses to first consultation.
Late 2023/2024	One month consultation on constituency revised recommendations.
2024	One month consultation on constituency further recommendations, if required.
2024	One month consultation on region provisional proposals.
2024	One month consultation on region revised recommendations, if required.
1 May 2025	Boundaries Scotland to submit a report to Scottish Ministers. If subsequently approved by the Scottish Parliament, the new boundaries will be effective at the next Scottish Parliament election, expected in May 2026.

REPORT

12. Under Schedule 1, Paragraph 7(2) of the Scotland Act 1998, Boundaries Scotland gave notice that the one month consultation on its provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament constituencies, opened on 17 May and would close on 17 June 2023. During that one month period, representations could be made to Boundaries Scotland on its consultation site “consult.boundaries.scot” or by email or letter. The effect of the proposals is set out on its website and the consultation site where maps detailing the changes can be viewed.

13. Given that the initial deadline date for representations fell after the date of the scheduled meeting of the Council (28 June), the Chief Executive, wrote to Boundaries Scotland to seek an extension of time to allow the matter to be considered by Council. An extension of time has been granted until Friday 30 June 2023.
14. As the extension relates only to the Council's response, all other representations were to be submitted by 17 June 2023. The Chief Executive in her role as Returning Officer has submitted a response, containing the same key messages as the Council's draft response in Appendix 1 to this report.
15. Prior to the submission, a meeting was held with political group leaders (Councillor Merrick substituted for Councillor Buchanan), in respect of how the review relates to the East Renfrewshire area. There was broad agreement across the political representatives and the Returning Officer about the challenges presented by the proposals.
16. The specific proposal, as this relates to East Renfrewshire is for
 - the dissolution of the current Eastwood seat
 - a new seat called Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock and
 - a change in the boundaries of the current Renfrewshire South seat.
17. A copy of the proposed new arrangements is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

18. There are no finance or efficiency implications arising from this report.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

19. The proposals will see
 - the dissolution of the current Eastwood seat
 - a new seat called Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock and
 - a change in the boundaries of the current Renfrewshire South seat.

RECOMMENDATION

20. That the Council agree to submit the response in Appendix 1 to the consultation on the review of Scottish Parliamentary Boundaries.

Legislation

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
The Scotland Act 1998

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Draft Response by East Renfrewshire Council**Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Publication of Provisional Proposals for Constituencies: Draft Response**

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2023, which contained details of Boundaries Scotland's provisional proposals for the review of Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies.

Please see below, the Council's submission for the East Renfrewshire area in accordance with the revised deadline of Friday 30 June 2023.

The Council recognises the need for a second review given the steady growth in population and electorate and the extension of voting rights to those aged 16+ at Scottish Parliamentary Elections. The Council also understands that the principle of fairness should be applied (electoral parity in terms of the number of electors in each Constituency where this can be achieved) but this does not negate the statutory factors to be considered in such a review.

The Council further recognises that the East Renfrewshire area has too many voters to be one constituency and is too small to become two, without overlapping at least one neighbouring local authority. The new proposals for the East Renfrewshire area divide the Council area into 2, with one constituency shared with Glasgow and the other shared with Renfrewshire. This is a significant change from the existing situation where most of the East Renfrewshire area is part of the Eastwood constituency, with 1 ward and a small part of another ward shared with Renfrewshire in the Renfrewshire South constituency. Although the existing Renfrewshire South ward is not ideal in terms of The Scotland Act 1998, which states that Local Government areas must be considered, the Council accepts that some compromise was required to achieve a degree of electoral parity.

The new proposal is not acceptable in that it does not recognise the Local Authority area, does not relate to local ties and includes areas outside the responsibility of our ERO. The main reason for the change appears to be to reduce the number of constituencies in the Glasgow/Renfrewshire area whilst at the same time Glasgow, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire are all areas where the population is expected to grow.

In your consultation document, you have asked for alternative proposals if we do not accept the new proposals. The Council's proposals are below .

Eastwood

The Eastwood constituency should remain either with the existing boundaries or alternatively it could include the part of ward 2 which is excluded from the present constituency. When council wards were reorganised in 2018, the change in East Renfrewshire was significant. The inclusion of all of the new Ward 2 would reflect the Council ward arrangements. The revised Eastwood constituency would then consist of wards 2, 3, 4 and 5 of East Renfrewshire.

The Eastwood constituency serves a cultural diverse population with the Jewish community the most prominent but with rapidly growing Muslim and Hindu populations. Equalities issues should be taken into consideration when considering constituency change as the artificial splitting of communities may lessen effective representation.

Renfrewshire South

A constituency shared with Renfrewshire is not unreasonable. In practical terms we share an ERO and the 3 councils of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire collaborate closely regarding elections, reflecting the shared ERO. However, it should be noted that the areas that have been linked in the present Renfrewshire South constituency have limited local ties, no easy transport route and are separated by hilly terrain with small local roads. Whilst on a map the areas appear close, the geography and transport routes mean that the communities are effectively on opposite sides of the Paisley conurbation.

The proposed new Renfrewshire South constituency is not practical and makes the division into 2 separate communities greater. It covers from Eaglesham to Lochwinnoch, areas to the very east of East Renfrewshire and the very West of Renfrewshire, with the majority of the voters resident in East Renfrewshire. Only 2 full wards are in common with the previous Renfrewshire South. The East Renfrewshire community and the Renfrewshire community have no geographical or community links and any MSP serving these communities would essentially be serving 2 very distinct geographical areas.

Assuming that the Eastwood constituency is maintained, a revised Renfrewshire South constituency should reflect natural ties between communities. Ward 1 which is presently part of Renfrewshire South has historical and transport links into Paisley and this would seem to be a more natural fit than with Lochwinnoch.

Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock

The proposed Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock constituency should be removed from plans. It does not reflect council boundaries and there are only limited local ties between communities. Its adoption would also mean that there would have to be significant changes to the regional arrangements, when these are considered later in the process.

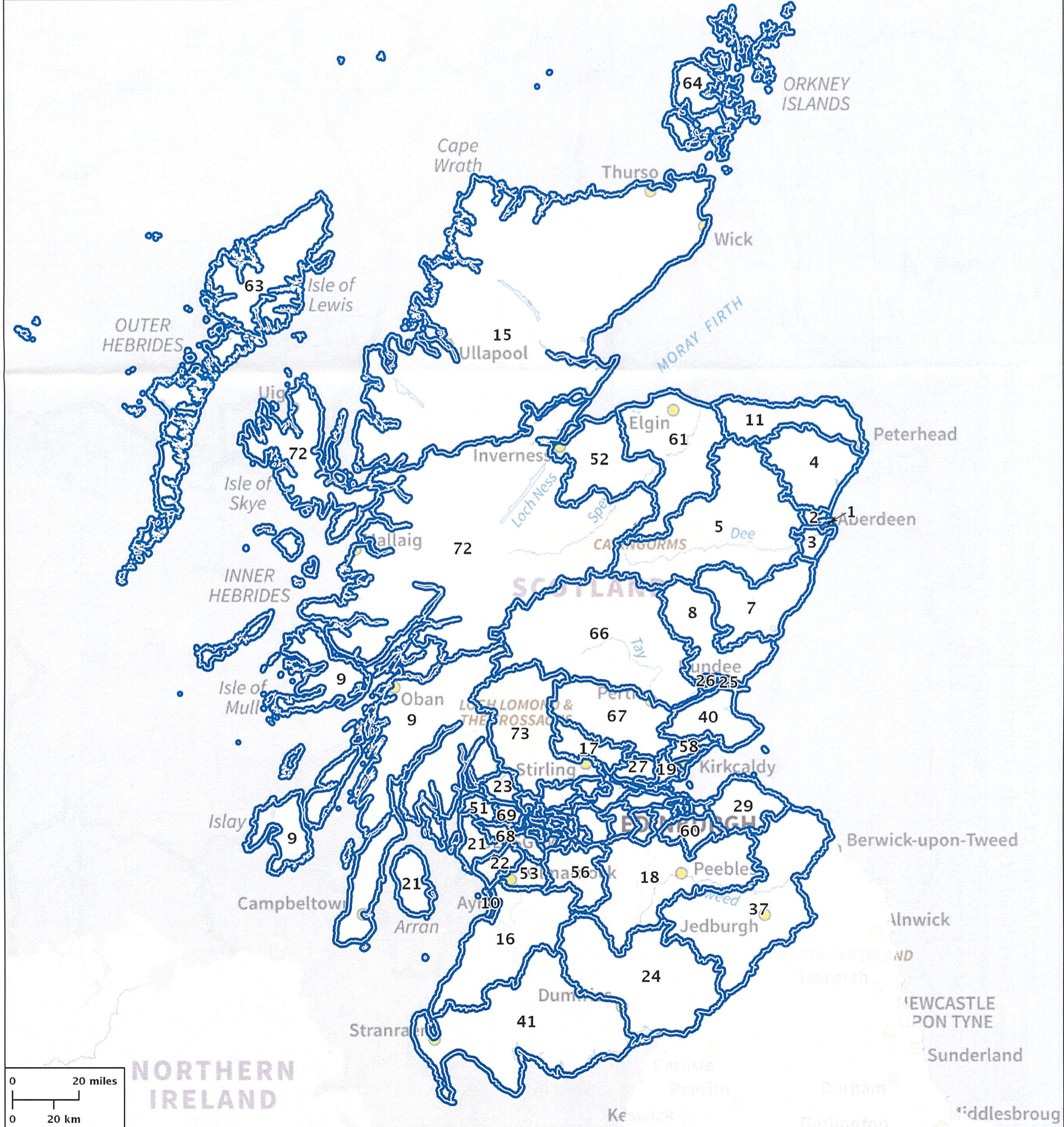
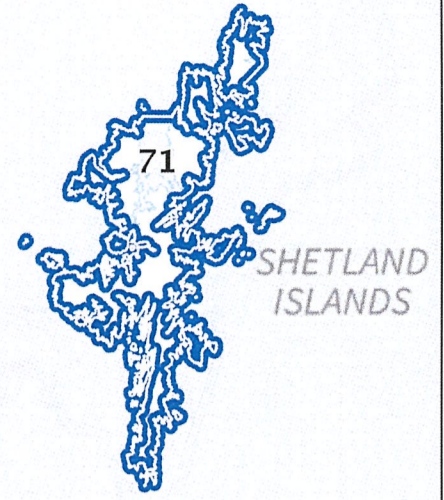
Conclusions

The Council strongly recommends that a local inquiry is held on these proposals and that further work be done within East Renfrewshire Council and with its neighbours to establish if there is a better boundary configuration that could meet the quora.

Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Provisional Proposals - Constituencies - All Scotland

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Constituency	Constituency	Constituency	Constituency
1 Aberdeen Central	20 Cumbernauld and Chryston	39 Falkirk West	58 Mid Fife and Glenrothes
2 Aberdeen Donside	21 Cunninghame North	40 Fife North East	59 Midlothian North and Musselburgh
3 Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	22 Cunninghame South	41 Galloway and West Dumfries	60 Midlothian South
4 Aberdeenshire East	23 Dumbarton and Helensburgh	42 Glasgow Anniesland	61 Moray
5 Aberdeenshire West	24 Dumfriesshire	43 Glasgow Cardonald and Pollok	62 Motherwell
6 Airdrie, Newmains and Shotts	25 Dundee City East	44 Glasgow Central and Govan	63 Na h-Eileanan an Iar
7 Angus North and Mearns	26 Dundee City West	45 Glasgow Kelvin and Maryhill	64 Orkney Islands
8 Angus South	27 Dunfermline	46 Glasgow Priesthill and Giffnock	65 Paisley and Renfrew
9 Argyll and Bute	28 East Kilbride	47 Glasgow Shettleston and Baillieston	66 Perthshire North
10 Ayr	29 East Lothian	48 Glasgow Southside and Cathcart	67 Perthshire South and Kinross-shire
11 Banff and Buchan Coast	30 Edinburgh Central	49 Glasgow Springburn and Provan	68 Renfrewshire South
12 Bathgate and Almond Valley	31 Edinburgh Eastern	50 Hamilton and Uddingston	69 Renfrewshire West
13 Bearsden, Milngavie and Clydebank North	32 Edinburgh Forth and Linlithgow	51 Inverclyde	70 Rutherglen
14 Bellshill and Coatbridge	33 Edinburgh Northern and Leith	52 Inverness and Nairn	71 Shetland Islands
15 Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	34 Edinburgh Pentlands	53 Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	72 Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch
16 Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	35 Edinburgh Southern	54 Kirkcaldy	73 Stirling
17 Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	36 Edinburgh Western	55 Kirkintilloch and Kilsyth	
18 Clyde Valley and Tweeddale	37 Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire	56 Larkhall and Clydesdale	
19 Cowdenbeath	38 Falkirk East	57 Livingston	



Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Provisional Proposals - Central Belt of Scotland

