

Boundary Commission for Scotland



17 November 2016

Boundary Commission for Scotland confirms public hearing timetable for 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies

The Boundary Commission for Scotland has today confirmed its timetable for 5 public hearings to be held throughout Scotland to allow people to make representations on its initial proposals under the 2018 Review of UK Parliament constituencies. The Commission began a 12-week public consultation on its initial proposals for new constituencies on 20 October 2016 and this runs until 11 January 2017.

The law limits the number of public hearings in Scotland to between 2 and 5. The Commission decided to hold the maximum permitted.

Public hearings are planned for:

- Glasgow Royal Concert Hall on 24 November (beginning at 10am);
- Dundee City Chambers on 29 November (beginning at 10am);
- Ayr Town Hall on 1 December (beginning at 10am);
- Inverness Town House on 5 December (beginning at 11 am); and
- Edinburgh Apex Waterloo Place Hotel on 7 December (beginning at 10am).

Those wishing to speak at any of the hearings are invited to notify the Commission in advance to enable us to schedule the meeting. Interested parties can also turn up on the day to follow the proceedings and make comments. All comments submitted at public hearings will be transcribed and published along with written comments received during the initial consultation for a 4-week period of public scrutiny in early Spring 2017.

Lord Matthews, Deputy Chair of the Boundary Commission for Scotland, said

“The upcoming public hearing in Ayr is a crucial part of our public consultation process. With a number of boundary changes proposed, we look forward to the public engaging with the Commission on 1 December. We also welcome comments on any of our proposals at any of our hearings throughout Scotland and will reflect on responses to the consultation and make changes if needed, where the legislation allows us to do so.”

Those people who wish to comment on the initial proposals but are unable to attend a hearing in person are invited to submit comments on the Commission's interactive consultation portal www.bcs2018.org.uk or in writing to the Commission at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD or by email to comments@scottishboundaries.gov.uk. If any assistance is required then people should contact the Commission.

Each hearing has a geographical focus to reduce the need for those wishing to hear comments about particular areas to attend multiple hearings. Nevertheless, people can comment on any area at any hearing.

The hearings are part of the process to reduce the number of constituencies from 650 to 600, as required by the UK Parliament. In Scotland this means that 59 constituencies will be reduced to 53; in England from 533 to 501; in Wales from 40 to 29; and Northern Ireland from 18 to 17.

Two of these 53 (Na h-Eileanan an Iar (the Western Isles) and Orkney and Shetland) are defined in the legislation and will not be subject to change.

As set out in legislation, each of the remaining 51 constituencies must:

- not exceed the maximum permitted area of 13,000 square kilometres; and
- be within five per cent of the UK electoral quota of 74,769.2 (ie to have between 71,031 and 78,507 electors), except where a constituency is larger than 12,000 square kilometres when in certain circumstances it may have fewer than 71,031 electors.

Due to the reduction in the number of constituencies, and the requirements for each constituency to have a number of electors within set limits, changes to constituencies are inevitable.

ENDS

Notes for Editors:

For further information contact Isabel Drummond-Murray, Secretary to the Commission, 0131 244 2007 / isabel.drummond-murray@scottishboundaries.gov.uk

The Boundary Commission for Scotland:

The Boundary Commission for Scotland is an independent advisory non-departmental public body sponsored and funded by the Scotland Office. The role of the Commission is to review the boundaries of constituencies at the Westminster and Scottish Parliaments.

Process of the review:

The Commission set out the first stage of the review on 24 February 2016. The process going forward is:

- A series of public hearings will be held around Scotland at the end of November and early December.
- The public have until 11 January 2017 to respond to the proposals.
- Consultation responses will be published for public scrutiny and comment in Spring 2017.
- Any revised proposals will be consulted on in Autumn 2017.
- The Commission will report to the Secretary of State for Scotland in September 2018, so that the new constituencies can be considered for approval by Parliament and be available for use in the General Election expected in May 2020.

Background to the review:

The 2018 review of UK Parliamentary constituencies is required by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. It is being conducted simultaneously by the four Boundary Commissions in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Across the UK, the number of constituencies is being reduced from 650 to 600. In Scotland there will be a decrease from 59 to 53 constituencies, with similar reductions in each part of the UK: England 501 in place of the current 533; Wales 29 in place of the current 40; and Northern Ireland 17 in place of the current 18.

The Boundary Commissions for England, Northern Ireland and Wales commenced their consultations on new constituency boundaries in September 2016.

Further details:

The electoral quota for the review, which is the average electorate per constituency across the UK, is 74,769.2, with the electorate of each constituency having to be within five per cent of that.

That means the smallest permitted electorate for a constituency is 71,031 and the largest permitted electorate is 78,507. In Scotland, exceptions to these electorate limits apply for Na h-Eileanan an Iar constituency (the Western Isles), and Orkney and Shetland constituency, each of which are defined in the legislation. An exception to the minimum electorate requirement can be made if a constituency is larger than 12,000 square kilometres which can only occur in very sparsely populated areas.

The electorate for this review is taken from the electoral register published on 1 December 2015, as required by the legislation governing the review.

Subject to the above requirements, the legislation states that we may take into account, as we think fit, other factors, namely:

- special geographical considerations, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- boundaries of council areas and electoral wards;
- existing Westminster constituency boundaries; and
- any local ties which would be broken by changes in constituencies.

Public Hearings:

Location	Venue	Chair	Date	Geographic focus
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall 220 Buchanan Street Glasgow G2 3NY	Sheriff Principal Turnbull	Thursday 24 Nov 2016 10:00 hr	Dumfries and Galloway Glasgow City East Dunbartonshire North Lanarkshire South Lanarkshire West Dunbartonshire
Dundee	The City Chambers 14 City Square Dundee DD1 3BY	Sheriff Principal Lewis	Tuesday 29 Nov 2016 10:00 hr	Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire Angus Dundee City Fife Perth and Kinross
Ayr	Ayr Town Hall New Bridge Street Ayr KA7 1JX	Sheriff Principal Abercrombie	Thursday 1 Dec 2016 10:00 hr	East Ayrshire East Renfrewshire Inverclyde North Ayrshire Renfrewshire South Ayrshire
Inverness	The Town House High Street Inverness IV1 1JJ	Sheriff Principal Pyle	Monday 5 Dec 2016 11:00 hr	Argyll and Bute Highland Moray
Edinburgh	Apex Waterloo Place Hotel 23-27 Waterloo Place EDINBURGH EH1 3BH	Sheriff Principal Stephen	Wednesday 7 Dec 2016 10:00 hr	Clackmannanshire City of Edinburgh East Lothian Falkirk Midlothian Scottish Borders Stirling West Lothian