POLICY NOTE

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT (CONSTITUENCIES AND REGIONS) ORDER 2025

SSI 2025/285

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by paragraph 6(5) of schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998. The instrument is subject to affirmative procedure.

Summary Box

This Order gives effect to the recommendations contained in Boundaries Scotland's report *Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries*[1], dated April 2025, which makes recommendations for the boundaries of the constituencies and regions of the Scottish Parliament.

Policy Objectives

The purpose of this Order is to give effect to the final proposals made by Boundaries Scotland following its review of the boundaries of the Scottish Parliament.

Background

Boundaries Scotland is an independent, advisory non-departmental public body that is responsible for:

- reviews of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions.
- reviews of local authority areas in Scotland.
- reviews of electoral arrangements in those local authority areas.

The Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries is required by the Scotland Act 1998, which provides that the boundaries of the Scottish Parliament must be reviewed by Boundaries Scotland every eight to twelve years so that they better reflect changes in the population.

There are 73 constituencies and eight regions for Scottish Parliament elections. These numbers are set in the Scotland Act 1998. Three constituencies, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands are defined directly by the Scotland Act 1998 (as amended by the Islands (Scotland) and were not within the scope of Boundaries Scotland's review.

In carrying out its review, Boundaries Scotland were required by legislation to 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.

[1] https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/SPReview2_FinalRecs/second_review_of_scottish_Parliament_boundaries_report.pdf

Report recommendations and effect of the Order

Boundaries Scotland submitted the report containing its recommendations to Scottish Ministers on 30 April 2025.

The report recommends for constituencies:

- 25 constituencies remain unchanged.
- 22 constituencies have new boundaries but their names are unchanged.
- 20 constituencies have both new boundaries and new names.
- Three constituency boundaries are unchanged but the constituency is renamed.

The report recommends for regions:

- One region is unchanged (Mid Scotland and Fife).
- Two regions have minimal changes to their boundaries and their names remain the same (Highlands and Islands; and North East Scotland).
- Three recommended regions have changes to their boundaries but retain their existing names (Glasgow; South Scotland; and West Scotland).
- Two recommended regions have changes to their boundaries and are renamed (Central Scotland and Lothians West; and Edinburgh and Lothians East)

Boundaries Scotland's full report *Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries* (https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/SPReview2_FinalRecs/second_review_of_scottish_Parliament_boundaries_report.pdf) can be read on their website: www.boundaries.scot.

Paragraph 3(9) of schedule 1 of the Scotland Act 1998 places a duty on Scottish Ministers to lay a draft Order in Council which would give effect to the recommendations contained in Boundaries Scotland's report.

The Scottish Parliament (Constituencies and Regions) Order 2025 defines the name, status and area of 70 of the 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies, and the name and area of each Scottish Parliament region. Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands constituencies are not included in the Order because paragraph 1(2) of schedule 1 to the Scotland Act 1998, as amended by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018, provides for them directly.

If subsequently approved by the Scottish Parliament, the new boundaries will be effective from the next Scottish Parliament election, scheduled for 7 May 2026. Any byelection held in the current session of the Parliament will be carried out under the existing boundaries set by the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies and Regions) Order 2020.

EU Alignment Consideration

This instrument is not relevant to the Scottish Government's policy to maintain alignment with the EU.

Consultation

Scottish Ministers are under a duty to lay an Order giving effect to the recommendations made by Boundaries Scotland, and as such, the Scottish Government has not consulted on this instrument.

In carrying out its duties under the Scotland Act, Boundaries Scotland conducted five rounds of public consultation and held nine local inquiries over the course of the review. Summarised in the timeline below:

1 Sep 2022	Start of Review
May 2023	Consultation on Provisional Proposals for constituencies
Dec 2023 – Jan 2024	Six local inquiries held
Apr – May 2024	Consultation on Revised Proposals for constituencies
August 2024	One local inquiry held
Sep – Oct 2024	Consultation on Further Proposals for constituencies Consultation on Provisional Proposals for regions
Nov – Dec 2024	Two local inquiries held
Jan – Feb 2025	Consultation on Additional Proposals for constituencies Consultation on Revised Proposals for regions
Mar – Apr 2025	Consultation on Supplementary Proposals for constituencies Consultation on Further Proposals for regions
30 April 2025	Report with Final Recommendations submitted to Scottish Ministers

Impact Assessments

Boundaries Scotland has conducted an Equality Impact Assessment for the Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, the results have been published on their website: https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/Bound_Scot_Equality_Impact_Assessment_Results.pdf

Boundaries Scotland has also conducted an Islands Community Impact Assessment, the results have been published on their website: https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/ICIA%20March%202025.pdf

Scottish Ministers are under a duty to lay an Order giving effect to Boundaries Scotland's recommendations as soon as practicably possible. Given that Scottish Ministers have no discretion to amend the recommendations before laying the Order, and noting the

requirement to lay the Order as soon as practicable, no separate impact assessments have been prepared.

Financial Effects

The Minister for Parliamentary Business confirms that no BRIA is necessary as the instrument has no financial effects on the Scottish Government, local government or on business.

Scottish Government
Constitution Directorate
22 May 2025