

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Subject: FIRST PERIODICAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUENCIES FOR THE  
SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**  
**Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL**  
**Date: 5 MARCH 2008**  
**Author: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At the meeting of Falkirk Council held on 5 December 2007, Members gave consideration to a Report advising of the First Review of the Constituency Boundaries for the Scottish Parliament and outlining the Review process in advance of the Boundary Commission for Scotland publishing its provisional proposals in early 2008.
- 1.2 The Commission published its provisional proposals for revised constituencies for public consultation on 14 February 2008, advising that the consultation period would last for one month, thereby concluding on 14 March 2008.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Report is to notify Members of the proposals for the area comprising Falkirk Council, to provide details on the consultation process and to recommend that officers respond to the Commission on behalf of the Council.

**2. THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION'S PROVISIONAL PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 The Commission proposes that the area comprising Falkirk Council shall be divided into two county constituencies for the Scottish Parliament, with the undernoted names and extents:-

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>July 2007 electorate</b>	<b>Description</b>
East Falkirk	County Constituency	57,550	The electoral wards in Falkirk Council area numbered 1, 2, 4 (part), 7 (part) 8 (part), 9.
West Falkirk	County Constituency	56,150	The electoral wards in Falkirk Council area numbered 3, 4 (part), 5, 6, 7 (part), 8 (part).

- 2.2 Members are advised that, in the Falkirk Council area, the electorate is 113,700, which gives an entitlement to two constituencies. The Commission provisionally proposes that the county constituencies are named East Falkirk and West Falkirk (currently Falkirk East and Falkirk West) with the electorate being as noted above for each constituency.
- 2.3 The Commission follows the established practice of publishing provisional proposals without prior consultation with local authorities and other interested bodies, formulating the provision proposals using all information available to it but without being influenced by any particular view point from external bodies. These provisional proposals are now made available for public comment and consultation, as outlined in Section 3 below.
- 2.4 When creating its provisional proposals for constituencies, the Commission used the following principles:-
- Constituencies will be wholly contained within a single Council area, wherever practicable
  - The Commission will try to recognise existing community ties
  - Local geographies of the area will be taken into consideration, for example transport links, electoral wards and existing constituency boundaries
  - Special geographical considerations will be considered where appropriate
- 2.5 The current Review was announced on 3 July 2007 and the electoral roll in force on that date has been used when calculating electoral numbers for proposed constituencies. The Scotland Act 1998, as amended by the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004, requires the Boundary Commission to submit its first report the Secretary of State not later than 30 June 2010.

### **3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 3.1 A copy of the statutory notice concerning the provisional proposals has been published in the Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal. In addition, a copy of the notice, press release of 14 February, maps illustrating the proposals and the Commission's descriptive booklet for the Review can be inspected at the following locations:-

Falkirk Council, Municipal Buildings, Falkirk  
Falkirk Library, Hope Street, Falkirk  
Library Service, Victoria Buildings, Queen Street, Falkirk  
Bo'ness Library, Scotland Close, Bo'ness  
Denny Library, Church Walk, Denny  
Bonnybridge Library, Bridge Street, Bonnybridge  
Larbert Library, Main Street, Stenhousemuir  
Slamannan Library, The Cross, Slamannan  
Grangemouth Library, Bo'ness Road, Grangemouth  
One Stop Shop, 308 Main Street, Camelon  
One Stop Shop, Dawson Centre, David's Loan, Bainsford

- 3.2 The Statutory Notice, maps and descriptive booklet are also available on the Commission's website at [www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk).

- 3.3 Representations on the proposals are invited to be submitted to the Commission by 14 March 2008 in writing, by e-mail or fax. Contact details have been made available to all elected Members and can also be found on the Commission's website.

#### **4. NEXT STAGES OF THE REVIEW PROCESS**

- 4.1 In the event that representations are made to the Boundary Commission objecting to its provisional proposals, received from either from a local authority for part or all of the area of the affected constituency or from 100 or more parliamentary electors for the affected constituency, the Commission requires to hold a local inquiry. The inquiry is conducted by an Assistant Commissioner appointed by the Secretary of State for Scotland. While no statutory procedure is prescribed for the conduct of the local inquiry, its purpose is to:-
- hear local opinions
  - hear criticisms of or support for the provisional proposals
  - receive counter-proposals
  - enable everyone who wishes to comment on these or on the Boundary Commission's proposals to do so
- 4.2 Following the inquiry, the Assistant Commissioner reports in writing directly to the Boundary Commission and is entitled to suggest amendments or alterations to the Commission's proposals or to substitute different proposals if these appear to command wider acceptance than the Commission's original proposals. A copy of the report is made available for public inspection in the same way as the provisional proposals have been and is also made available on the Commission's website.
- 4.3 Where there has been no local inquiry, the Boundary Commission will consider any representations received and make amendments to its provisional proposals that it considers necessary. Where a local inquiry has been held, the Commission will consider the Assistant Commissioner's report and the matters discussed at the inquiry together with any relevant information and make any amendments to its provisional proposals that it considers necessary.
- 4.4 If the Commission decides to alter its provisional proposals, the revised recommendations are published in the same way as the provisional proposals have been, with a consultation period of one month to invite further representations.
- 4.5 Any representations received by the Boundary Commission on the revised recommendations will be considered and, where the Commission determines to modify the revised recommendations before finally submitting them to the Secretary of State for Scotland, these will be published and representations invited once again. The final recommendations will be submitted by the Commission in report form to the Secretary of State for Scotland who is subsequently responsible for laying the report before Parliament and submitting a draft Order in Council giving effect to the report's recommendations. The draft Order in Council will be considered by both Houses of Parliament and, once agreed, submitted to Her Majesty in Council. The resulting Order in Council providing the new constituencies and regions comes into operation from the next general election to the Scottish Parliament following the making of the Order.

## **5. The Council's response**

- 5.1** Minimal change to the existing constituencies is proposed in the Falkirk Council area with the two new constituencies having almost identical boundaries to the existing ones. On that basis, it is recommended that the Council respond to the Commission with the suggestion that the names of the two Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies in the Falkirk Council area retain the names Falkirk East and Falkirk West, and that the names are not as proposed by the Commission.
- 5.2** Although the boundaries are almost identical to the existing Scottish Parliamentary Constituency boundaries, three small areas have been identified where the proposed boundaries lie very close to the boundaries of the multi-member wards which came into effect in May 2007 and where a slight amendment to the proposed boundaries of the Scottish Parliamentary constituencies would bring them into line with the boundaries of the multi-member wards. In only one case would any electors be affected by this change.
- 5.3** These suggested amendments are shown in the maps in the Annex to this report and are described as follows:
- (i) Rough Castle area – the boundary between East Falkirk and West Falkirk to be amended to match the boundary between Ward 5 and Ward 7 – shaded areas as shown. No electors affected;
  - (ii) Larbert/Stenhousemuir area - the boundary between East Falkirk and West Falkirk to be amended to match the boundary between Ward 4 and Ward 5 – shaded areas as shown. No electors affected. Note that this map also shows one of the two changes to the boundaries between the current and the proposed constituencies – no electors are affected; and
  - (iii) Grangemouth area - the boundary between East Falkirk and West Falkirk to be amended to match the boundary between Ward 6 and Ward 8 – shaded areas as shown. In making this amendment, the electors in Newlands Cottage (currently two) would be moved from the proposed West Falkirk to East Falkirk constituency. However, this would mean that they would remain in the constituency in which they are currently located.  
Note that this map also shows one of the two changes to the boundaries between the current and the proposed constituencies.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Members are requested to note:-**

- (i) the provisional proposals for the Scottish Parliament constituencies within the Falkirk Council area, as outlined within the body of the report and as detailed on the maps available for inspection at the locations listed in paragraph 3.1 and on the Boundary Commission's website;
- (ii) the details of the consultation and Review processes; and
- (iii) that further update reports will be submitted to Council as the Review progresses.

**6.2 Members are requested:-**

- (i) to authorise officers to respond to the Commission on behalf of the Council as follows:-
  - (a) that the names of the current constituencies i.e. Falkirk East and Falkirk West, be retained; and
  - (b) that the boundary between the proposed East Falkirk and West Falkirk be amended as shown on the attached maps to match the boundaries of the multi-member wards which came into effect in May 2007, noting that only two electors would be affected by this proposed change, and
- (ii) to notify the Chief Executive of any additional comments on the proposals by 12 March 2008 for inclusion in the Council's submission within the statutory timescale.



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Chief Executive

**Date: 21 February 2008**

**Contact Officer: Dale Robb, Business and Members' Services Manager**

**LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Press announcement by the Boundary Commission for Scotland issued on 3 July 2007.
2. Report to Falkirk Council on 5 December 2007 – First Periodical Review of the Constituencies for the Scottish Parliament
3. Letter dated 7 February 2008 from the Boundary Commission for Scotland to the Chief Executive, with enclosures (maps, Boundary Commission news release, descriptive booklet and CD-rom)

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above should telephone 01324 506111 and ask for Dale Robb.