

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: FIRST PERIODIC REVIEW OF CONSTITUENCIES FOR THE
SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**
Meeting: FALKIRK COUNCIL
Date: 24 JUNE 2009
Author: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the meeting of Falkirk Council on 5th March 2008, Members approved a Report responding to the Provisional Proposals by the Boundary Commission for Scotland for the Scottish Parliament Constituency Boundaries for the Falkirk Council area. On 21st May 2009, the Boundary Commission published their revised proposals together with their proposals for the Parliamentary Regions with a consultation period of one month, thereby concluding on 21st June 2009.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the revised proposals for the Scottish Parliament Constituencies in the Falkirk Council area, and of the proposals for the Parliamentary Regions as they affect the Falkirk Council area and to recommend that officers respond to the Boundary Commission on behalf of the Council.

2. THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION'S PROVISIONAL PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Members will recall that the Boundary Commission's Provisional Proposals for the Falkirk Council area, published in February 2008, were to divide the Council area into two constituencies which were almost identical to the existing two constituencies of Falkirk East and Falkirk West. The Council in its response to these proposals, agreed at the meeting on 5th March 2008, was to generally approve these proposals but to suggest minor amendments which would bring the boundaries of the proposed constituencies into line with the boundaries of the new multi-member wards. It was also suggested that the existing constituency names of Falkirk East and Falkirk West should be retained.
- 2.2 The Council's response was forwarded to the Boundary Commission.
- 2.3 The Commission considered the Council's response to their Provisional Proposals in conjunction with other responses and concluded that there was no need for a Local Inquiry to be held on their Provisional Proposals for the Falkirk Council area.
- 2.4 The Commission did however consider that Local Inquiries would be held in relation to their Provisional Proposals for the neighbouring West Lothian and Stirling and Clackmannanshire areas due to the number of objections received to their Provisional Proposals for these areas. Officers became aware that as part of the objections to the proposals in these areas, alternative proposals were being put forward which, if accepted by the Boundary Commission, would have resulted in changes to the proposals for the

Falkirk Council area. It was therefore decided that the Council should be represented at these Local Inquiries to state the Council's case that the Council was satisfied with the Commission's proposals regarding the Falkirk Council area. The Leaders of the Council Groups were made aware of officers actions in this regard and invited to consider being represented themselves at these Inquiries.

- 2.5 Reports of the transcripts of these Inquiries and the subsequent reports of the Assistant Commissioners appointed by the Boundary Commission to hold these Inquiries can be found on the Boundary Commission website http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/1st_holyrood/localinquiries/const_localinquiries.htm.

3. THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION'S REVISED PROPOSALS

- 3.1 On 21st May 2009, the Boundary Commission for Scotland published its revised proposals for the Scottish Parliament Constituencies in Scotland together with its first proposals for the Parliamentary Regions. There is a one month consultation period for these proposals.
- 3.2 In their Revised Proposals for the Parliamentary Constituencies for the Falkirk Council area, the Commission have accepted the amendments to their Provisional Proposals suggested by the Council, including the suggestion to retain the names of Falkirk East and Falkirk West.
- 3.3 The revised names and extents are as follows:

Constituency	Designation	July 2007 electorate	Description
Falkirk East	County Constituency	57,550	Falkirk Council electoral wards 1, 2, 4(part), 7(part), 8, 9
Falkirk West	County Constituency	56,150	Falkirk Council electoral wards 3, 4(part), 5, 6, 7(part)

- 3.4 In addition, the Commission has presented its proposals for how these constituencies are to be combined with others to form a Scottish Parliament Region and their proposals, based on the Revised Proposals for constituencies, are set out below:

Region	July 2007 Electorate	Description
East Central Scotland	552,790	The constituencies of Airdrie and Shotts; Clydebank and Milngavie; Coatbridge and Chryston; Cumbernauld and Kilsyth; Falkirk East; Falkirk West; Linlithgow; Motherwell and Wishaw; Strathkelvin and Bearsden; Uddingston and Bellshill

- 3.5 This represents a change to the Region compared to the current Central Scotland Region of which the Council is part. In terms of local authorities, the current Central Scotland Region consists of Falkirk Council, North Lanarkshire, and parts of South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire and a small part of East Dunbartonshire. The proposed East Central Scotland Region consists of Falkirk Council, North Lanarkshire, all of East Dunbartonshire and parts of South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire and West Lothian. In other words, we have "gained", Linlithgow, Bathgate and Broxburn in West Lothian,

most of East Dunbartonshire and Clydebank in West Dunbartonshire at the expense of Kilmarnock, Hamilton and East Kilbride.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A copy of the statutory notice concerning the Revised Proposals and the proposals for the Regional seats has been published in the Falkirk Herald and the Bo'ness Journal. In addition, a copy of the notice, letter to the Chief Executive, press notice of 21st May 2009 and maps illustrating the proposals can be inspected at the following locations:

Falkirk Council, Municipal Buildings, Falkirk Council
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, Hallam Road, 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, Falkirk

- 4.2 The Statutory Notice, maps and a descriptive booklet explaining the review process are also available on the Commission's website: <http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk>.
- 4.3 Representations on the proposals are invited to be submitted to the Commission by 21st June 2009, in writing, by e-mail or fax. Contact details can be found on the Commission's website.

5. NEXT STAGES IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

- 5.1 After the closing date for comments on the Revised Proposals, the Commission will consider the representations made and may decide to hold further Local Inquiries in relation to the constituency seats.
- 5.2 The Commission is required to hold a Local Inquiry into the proposed Regions if representations objecting to its proposals are received from an interested local authority (that is, a local authority for part or all of the area of the proposed region) or a body of 500 or more electors for the proposed region.
- 5.3 The Commission will consider whether to revise its provisional proposals for regions, and publish any revised recommendations for regions and consult on them in the same way as was done for constituencies.
- 5.4 Having taken into account any representations received regarding its revised proposals, the Commission will decide whether further modifications are required to its recommendations for constituencies and regions. If the Commission decides to modify its revised recommendations before finally submitting them to the Secretary of State for Scotland, these modified recommendations will be published and representations again invited.

- 5.5 Once it has completed its review, the Commission will submit its recommendations for constituencies and regions in a report to the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Commission will also lay its report before the Scottish Parliament but the Scottish Parliament has no powers to make changes to the report, although it could debate it. The review must be completed by 30 June 2010.
- 5.6 The Secretary of State for Scotland is responsible for laying the Report before the Westminster Parliament and submitting a draft Order in Council giving effect to the report's recommendations. The draft Order in Council is considered by both Houses of Parliament and, once agreed, is submitted to Her Majesty in Council. The resulting Order in Council providing for the new constituencies and regions comes into effect from the election to the Scottish Parliament following the making of the order. This should be the election due to be held in May 2011.

6. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

- 6.1 The Commission has accepted the Council's suggested amendments to their Provisional Proposals for the Falkirk Council area and the suggested alterations to the names of the two constituencies. It is therefore proposed that the Council welcome the Commission's revised Proposals and support them.
- 6.2 The Region in which the Council area will be located will necessarily extend well beyond the Council's boundaries. It is noted that there is no proposal to split the Council between different regions and this is to be welcomed as it will make it easier for the Council to deal with a single group of seven Regional MSPs.
- 6.3 Members may wish to suggest alternative groupings of constituencies to the East Central Scotland. However, before making any alternative suggestions Members should note the following.
- 6.4 Firstly, there have been significant changes to the Commission's proposals for constituencies in some of our surrounding local authorities and that there may be further changes which might affect any alternative proposed Region. Secondly, any suggested alteration to the East Central Scotland Region will have an effect on other Regions and that effect will need to be considered in any proposed alterations. Thirdly, if the Council submits an objection to the proposed Region, a Local Inquiry will require to be held and the Council would need to be represented at such an Inquiry to make its case.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members are requested to:

- (a) Note the publication of the Boundary Commission's Revised Proposals for constituencies for the Scottish Parliament and their initial groupings of constituencies into regions as set out in this report and detailed on the maps available at the location listed in paragraph 4.1 and on the Commission's website;**
- (b) Welcome the Commission's acceptance of the Council's amendments to the Provisional Proposals for the Falkirk East and Falkirk West constituencies and the suggested name changes; support the Commission's revised proposals for**

the two constituencies in the Falkirk Council area and authorise officers to respond to the Commission accordingly;

- (c) Welcome the Commission's proposals for the Regions in so far as they do not result in the Falkirk Council area being split between two regions and authorise officers to respond to the Commission accordingly;
- (d) Consider whether they wish to make representations in relation to the proposed East Central Scotland Region. Any such proposed changes would require to be submitted immediately to the Boundary Commission as the deadline for responses to the consultation has already passed;
- (e) Note that further reports will be presented to Council in future as the Review progresses.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date: 8 June 2009
Contact: Dale Robb Ext 6111
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to Falkirk Council on 5 March 2008 – First Periodical Review of Constituencies for the Scottish Parliament
2. Letter dated 21st May 2009 from the Boundary Commission for Scotland to the Chief Executive with enclosures (maps, Boundary Commission news release, CD-Rom)

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