



Constituency boundaries: the Sixth General Review in Scotland

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The *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011* made provision for the number of constituencies to be reduced to 600.

The four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions announced the commencement of the Sixth General Review of Parliamentary constituencies (also known as the 2013 review) on 4 March 2011. The Boundary Commission for Scotland announced on the same day that Scotland would have 52 constituencies, a reduction of 7. Two constituencies are preserved and exempt from the new requirement for constituencies to be within 5% of the electoral quota. These are the constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, and Orkney and Shetland.

The Boundary Commission for Scotland published its initial proposals on 13 October 2011 and revised proposals on 13 September 2012. However, following the *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* receiving Royal Assent on 31 January 2013, the date of the next boundary review has been postponed until 2018. The Boundary Commission for England has therefore ceased working on the 2013 Review.

This Note gives details of the 2013 review in Scotland, its progress and the consultation process. It should be read in conjunction with Library Standard Note 6098, [Initial proposals for new constituency boundaries: Scotland](#) which looks at the extent to which the proposed constituencies can be identified with existing seats and which existing constituencies will be most affected by the proposals.

For general background to the Sixth Review see SN 5929, [Constituency boundaries: the Sixth General Review](#) and for details in Northern Ireland, Wales and England see SN 6225 [Constituency boundaries: the Sixth General Review in Northern Ireland](#), SN 6226 [Constituency boundaries: the Sixth General Review in Wales](#) and SN 6229 [Constituency boundaries: the Sixth General Review in England](#).

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1 Background

The four Parliamentary Boundary Commissions announced the commencement of the sixth periodical review (the 2013 review) on 4 March 2011. The Boundary Commissions agreed, for the purposes of the sixth review, that the total UK electorate was 45,678,175 which gave an electoral quota for the whole of the UK of 76,641. This means that every constituency in Great Britain, apart from the specific exceptions given to four island constituencies in the *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011*, must have an electorate no smaller than 72,810 and no larger than 80,473.

The *Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004* removed the statutory link between the constituencies for the Scottish Parliament and those for the House of Commons. The constituency boundaries were no longer coterminous once the recommendations in the Boundary Commission for Scotland's Fifth Review had been implemented at the May 2005 UK General Election.

The Boundary Commission for Scotland issued a press release on 4 March 2011 which stated that Scotland would have 52 constituencies, 7 fewer than at present.¹ There are two constituencies in Scotland that are preserved and exempt from the requirement for constituencies to be within 5% of the quota. These are the constituencies of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, and Orkney and Shetland.²

The Commission issued statistics for the electorate which would be used for the review.³ Dr Hugh Buchanan, Secretary to the Boundary Commission for Scotland, said:

...the review will result in significant change for many constituencies. The new rules put great emphasis on equal electorates, and as a result there may be more constituencies crossing local authority boundaries. Consultation remains a central part of the review process, with updated processes for ensuring that the Commission's proposals are fully available for comment by anyone with an interest.⁴

In its March 2011 press release the Boundary Commission for Scotland made no comment on the use of local government wards as a basis for creating constituencies. However, in May 2011 the Commission published a document on the policies and procedures to be used for the Sixth Review.⁵ The Commission made the following comments about its use of local government wards when drawing up constituency boundaries:

3.5.1 At previous reviews between 1983 and 2005, we created constituencies by aggregating electoral wards used for election of councillors for local authorities. In 2006, single member wards were replaced by multi-member wards, each returning 3 or 4 councillors. These wards contain 3 or 4 times larger electorates than their predecessors.

¹ Boundary Commission for Scotland, *Sixth Periodic Review of Westminster Constituencies*, press release 4 March 2011

² Ibid, p1

³ Boundary Commission for Scotland, *Electoral Data*

⁴ Ibid, p2

⁵ Boundary Commission for Scotland, *Sixth Review of Westminster Constituencies Policies and Procedures*, May 2011, available here http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/6th_westminster/

3.5.2 This very substantial increase in ward electorates, together with the requirement that the electorate of each constituency is within 5% of the United Kingdom electoral quota, makes it impracticable in this Review to create constituencies by simply aggregating electoral wards.

3.5.3 Although not able to keep every ward in a single constituency, we do take account of ward boundaries when proposing constituencies, as well as other electoral boundaries, administrative boundaries and natural features. We expect that many of Scotland's 353 electoral wards will each be contained in a single constituency.

3.5.4 In some cases, a desire to fit within council area boundaries and a desire to fit within electoral wards will conflict. For example, it might only be possible to design a constituency made up of whole electoral wards by including wards from more than one council area.

2 Initial recommendations

In the initial proposals published on 14 October 2011, the Boundary Commission confirmed that 29 wards had been divided between constituencies and that 35 of the proposed seats contained 12 or more part-wards.⁶ No seat exceeded the 13,000 square kilometre limit (which would have exempted it from the lower parity target of 95% of the electoral quota); the proposed seat with the largest area, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty (12,829.8 sq km) had an electorate of 74,290.

Only three constituencies were unaltered, including the two seats preserved by the *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011*; Na h-Eileanan an Iar, and Orkney and Shetland. East Lothian also remained unchanged.

The boundaries of six seats had minor changes: Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk; Falkirk; Kilmarnock and Loudoun; Linlithgow and Falkirk East; Livingston; North Ayrshire and Arran.

Six seats have were similar boundaries to their predecessors but gain extra areas to augment their electorates; as a result some of the constituency names have been changed to reflect this: Aberdeen South; Airdrie and Coatbridge South; East Renfrewshire and Hairmyres; Motherwell, Wisham and Bellshill; Stirling and Crieff; West Dunbartonshire and Bearsden.

Five further seats gained much larger geographical areas to augment their electorates although the additional number of voters added by the increased geographical area is similar in range to the six seats mentioned above: Argyle, Bute and Lochaber; Banff and Buchan; Inverclyde; Midlothian and Tweeddale; Moray and Strathspey.

The Boundary Commission for Scotland has published details of all its meetings where each of the proposed constituencies was discussed.⁷ The Commission indicated that by doing this it hoped that it would

- demonstrate that we are operating in an open and transparent manner;
- explain the various options which we have considered and not adopted before deciding on our Initial Proposals, and the reasons for not adopting them;

⁶ Boundary Commission for Scotland, *Sixth Review of UK Parliamentary Constituencies Summary of Initial Proposals*, October 2011, p3

⁷ http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/6th_westminster/initial_proposals/meeting_lookup/

- save those engaging with the review from spending time covering ground which we have already covered; and
- improve understanding of our reasons for choosing one option over another.⁸

3 Initial consultation

The provisions for public consultations and hearings following the publication of the Boundary Commissions' initial proposals are set out in Section 12 of the *Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011*. There have been a number of changes to the procedure used for public consultations at previous boundary reviews.

The initial consultation lasts for 12 weeks from the date of publication of the initial recommendations and written representations can be made in this period. Public hearings are also held during this time, each hearing lasting no more than 2 days. The Boundary Commissions for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are able to hold at least 2 and no more than 5 hearings; the Boundary Commission for England is able to hold at least 2 and no more than 5 hearings in each region.

In Scotland the initial consultation period of 12 weeks ran from the date of the publication of the initial recommendations, 13 October 2011, to 4 January 2012.

Five public hearings were held between 14 and 29 November 2011 in Edinburgh, Lanark, Glasgow, Inverness and Dundee.

In January 2012 the Boundary Commission for Scotland published a progress report in which it stated that it had received a total of 378 comments on the initial proposals during the consultation period.⁹ The Commission also noted that around 100 people had attended the public hearings, and that there had been a total of 64 speakers.¹⁰ The transcripts of the hearings will be published at the same time as the written representations are published.

4 Secondary consultation

The secondary consultation began on 1 March 2012 and ended on 28 March 2012.¹¹ Over 500 written representations were received in the initial consultation and these were published on the Commission's website on 1 March 2012. An index to the comments was published along with the press release¹² and the full text of written representations (with personal data redacted) was published as a fully searchable list on the Commission's website.¹³ Electronic copies of the comments have been distributed to public libraries and council offices across Scotland.¹⁴

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ <http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/newsarchive/>

¹⁰ http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/6th_westminster/initial_proposals/public_hearings/

¹¹ http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/6th_westminster/resources.asp

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ <https://consultation.scottishboundaries.gov.uk/representations>

¹⁴ Boundary Commission for Scotland, *Comments on constituency boundaries published for scrutiny*, press release 1 March 2012 (issued by the Scotland Office on behalf of the Commission)

At the same time the Commission published the transcripts of the five public hearings held during the initial consultation.¹⁵ One hundred people attended the hearings and 64 people spoke.

The secondary consultation is an opportunity for people to comment on the representations from the initial consultation. The secondary consultation runs for 4 weeks from the day a Boundary Commission publishes the written representations and transcripts of the public hearings and the Boundary Commissions are required to publicise the fact that the documentation has been published and that further submissions commenting on these representations about the initial consultation are being sought.

In this four week period people can submit written submissions only. There are no public hearings.

5 Revised recommendations

Once the second consultation had finished the Commission considered all the representations made and decided whether any recommendations should be revised.

The Commission published its revised proposals on 13 September 2012.¹⁶ The two exempted constituencies (Na h-Eileanan an Iar and Orkney and Shetland) remain unaffected by these revised recommendations.

The publication of the revised proposals started a further 8 week consultation period. Only written representations were allowed, there were no public hearings, and the consultation closed on 7 November 2012.

Of the 50 seats in the Commission's Initial proposals 24 seats remained unaltered.

| Seats unaltered from Commission's Initial proposals | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Aberdeen North | Falkirk |
| Aberdeen South | Glasgow Central |
| Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty | Glasgow East |
| Clydesdale and Larkhall | Glasgow North East |
| Cumbernauld and Coatbridge North | Glasgow North West |
| Dumfries | Glasgow South West |
| East Dunbartonshire and Kilsyth | Kilmarnock and Loudoun |
| East Lothian | Linlithgow and Falkirk East |
| East Renfrewshire and Hairmyres | Livingston |
| Edinburgh Central and Leith | Paisley and Renfrew |
| Edinburgh South West | Perth and Kinross-shire |
| Edinburgh West | Stirling and Crieff |

¹⁵ http://www.bcomm-scotland.gov.uk/6th_westminster/initial_proposals/public_hearings/

¹⁶ http://www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk/6th_westminster/revised_proposals/

A further 8 seats were been renamed but the proposed boundaries were unaltered.

| Initial proposal seat name | Revised proposal seat name |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Kyle and Cumnock | Ayr North Troon and Cumnock |
| North Ayrshire and Arran | Ayrshire Central and Arran |
| Edinburgh East | Edinburgh South East |
| Galloway and Carrick | Galloway, Ayr South and Carrick |
| Glasgow South East | Glasgow South |
| Inverclyde | Inverclyde and Renfrewshire West |
| Renfrewshire South and Largs | Renfrewshire South and Ayrshire North |

There were been no changes to the Initial recommendations for the proposed seats in Edinburgh or Glasgow.

The Commission issued revised recommendations for 18 of the proposed constituencies; 13 of these retained the names as proposed in the Initial recommendations but had revised boundaries.

| Proposed Seats with revised boundaries | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Airdrie and Coatbridge South | East Kilbride and Rutherglen |
| Angus East and Kincardine | Hamilton |
| Banff and Buchan | Inverness and Skye |
| Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk | Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes |
| Clackmannanshire and Dunfermline West | Midlothian and Tweeddale |
| Deeside and Gordon | Motherwell, Wishaw and Bellshill |
| Dunfermline East | |

See Appendix for more information on the revisions.

The five remaining proposed constituencies had both boundary changes and name changes.

| Initial proposals seat | Revised proposals for modified seat |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dundee East and the Glens | Angus West and East Perthshire |
| Argyll, Bute and Lochaber | Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber |
| Dundee West and Gowrie | Dundee West |
| Cupar and St Andrews | Fife East |
| Moray and Strathspey | Moray and Nairn |

In the central belt there were minor adjustments between the proposed Airdrie and Coatbridge and Motherwell, Wishaw and Bellshill seats and between the proposed Hamilton and the proposed East Kilbride and Rutherglen seats.

In Fife, there was a minor adjustment between the two proposed seats covering Dunfermline. There was a more significant change between the proposed Fife East and the proposed Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes seats relating to which wards were split between the two seats.

In the south of the country was a minor adjustments between the proposed Midlothian and Tweeddale seat and the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk seat. This adjustment led to a ward that had previously been wholly allocated to the Midlothian and Tweeddale seat being split between the two seats.

Further north were minor adjustment between the proposed Deeside and Gordon and Angus East and Kincardine seats and between the proposed Deeside and Gordon and Banff and Buchan seats.

The most significant changes, involving the exchanges of whole wards between seats, occurred between the two seats covering Dundee and between the proposed Moray and Nairn seat and the proposed Inverness and Skye seat. There was also a significant transfer of voters between the proposed Inverness and Skye seat and the proposed Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber seat. This involved the town of Caol, in the ward of Caol and Mallaig, which has now been transferred to the Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber. While the town is only a small area of the ward it has affected 2,354 voters.

6 Final recommendations and Order in Council

The final recommendations had been due to be submitted in a report to the Secretary of State before 1 October 2013.

After the Government had received the final reports of the Boundary Commissions these were to be laid before Parliament with a draft Order in Council giving effect to the recommendations. The Government may not modify the recommendations of any of the Parliamentary Boundary Commissions, unless it has been expressly requested to do so (in writing and with reasons) by the relevant Parliamentary Boundary Commission.

The draft Order has to be approved by both Houses of Parliament for the new boundaries to come in to operation. If the draft Order in Council is debated but not approved, the Government may then amend the draft and lay an amended draft before Parliament for approval.

Once the draft Order in Council has been approved by Parliament, the Government is required to submit it to be made by Her Majesty in Council. After the Order in Council has been made, the new constituencies take effect at a next general election. Under the terms of the *Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011* the next general election is due to be held in May 2015.

Any by-elections held in the meantime have to be held on the basis of the old (existing) constituencies.

The validity of an Order in Council, once made, may not be called into question in any legal proceedings.

The Boundary Commissions therefore had to continue with their work, in the absence of any statutory requirement to desist, and, as the Deputy Prime Minister noted in his statement on 3 September 2012, there was ‘no agreement within Government to repeal that primary legislation’.¹⁷

During the passage of the *Electoral Registration and Administration Bill 2012-13*, which made provision for a legislative framework for the introduction of a new system of individual electoral registration (IER) under which electors will be registered individually instead of by household, an amendment was tabled which would amend the timing of the 2013 review.

The *Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013* therefore amends the *Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986* and delays the boundary review by one electoral cycle. It requires that the Boundary Commissions conduct a review after the 2015 general election and submit reports in 2018.¹⁸ The Boundary Commission for Scotland therefore announced all work on the 2013 Review would cease.¹⁹

Following the cessation of the 2013 Review no Orders will be laid before the current Parliament. Instead an Order will be laid after the Boundary Commission reports due in the autumn of 2018.

¹⁷ HC Deb 3 September 2012 c47

¹⁸ See Library SN05929 [Constituency boundaries: the Sixth General Review](#) and Standard Note SN06359 [Electoral Registration and Administration Bill 2012-13: progress of the Bill](#) for more details

¹⁹ Boundary Commission for Scotland, [Latest News](#), 31 January 2013

Appendix – changes included in the revised proposals

| Proposed Seats with revised boundaries | |
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| Airdrie and Coatbridge South | North Lanarkshire council ward 19 (Murdochstoun) remains split between the proposed Airdrie and Coatbridge South seat and the Motherwell, Wishaw and Bellshill but Cambusnethan is transferred from the proposed Airdrie and Coatbridge South seat to the proposed Motherwell, Wishaw and Bellshill seat. The boundary now follows polling district boundaries not community council boundaries. This has transferred 435 voters. |
| Angus East and Kincardine | The Aberdeenshire council ward 17 (North Kincardine) remains split between the proposed Angus East and Kincardine seat and the Deeside and Gordon seat but the boundary now follows polling district boundaries and not community council boundaries. This affects Upper Bernhaugh, Nether Craigwell, Auchlee, Cairnwell and Bourtreesbush. Although some voters are transferred between the two seats the total electorate of the Angus East and Kincardine seat remains at 78,545. |
| Angus West and East Perthshire* | In the Initial recommendations the seat was called Dundee East and the Glens and included 3 whole wards (East End, Ferry, North East) and one part ward (Maryfield) from Dundee Council and three whole wards from Angus Council (Carnoustie and District, Kirreimuir and Dean and Monifieth and Sidlaw). Revised proposals include the same three Angus ward but only two of the Dundee wards (Ferry and North East). In addition two Perth and Kinross wards (Carse of Gowrie and Strathmore) are included, having been transferred from the proposed Dundee West and Gowrie seat. |
| Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber* | The proposed Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber seat contains the same wards as the initially proposed Argyll, Bute and Lochaber seat (the whole Argyll and Bute Council area and Highland Council ward 22 – Fort William and Ardnamurchan). In addition the proposed Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber seat also contains Caol (the area south of the Caledonian Canal) from Highland ward 12 (Caol and Mallaig). Ward 12 was wholly allocated to the Inverness and Skye seat in the Initial recommendations but is now split. The majority of the ward remains allocated to the proposed Inverness and Skye seat. This has added 2,354 voters to the proposed Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber seat. |
| Banff and Buchan | The Aberdeenshire council ward 8 (Mid Formartine) remains split between the proposed Banff and Buchan seat and the Deeside and Gordon seat. To the east of Belhelvie the proposed constituency boundary is unchanged but to the north and west the proposed constituency boundary now follows the ward boundary rather than coming further south to South Orrock. The number of voters transferred is 50. |

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| Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk | <p>The seat now includes a split ward (Scottish Borders Council ward 2-Tweeddale East). The Clovenfords area is transferred from the proposed Midlothian and Tweeddale seat and added to the proposed Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk. The Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk seat gains 718 voters.</p> |
| Clackmannanshire and Dunfermline West | <p>Fife ward 3 (Dunfermline Central) remains split between the proposed Clackmannanshire and Dunfermline West seat and the proposed Dunfermline East seat as initially recommended but ward 4 (Dunfermline South) is no longer split and is wholly allocated to the proposed Dunfermline East seat. Pitreavie business park and industrial estate are therefore transferred from the proposed Clackmannanshire and Dunfermline West seat to the proposed Dunfermline East seat, affecting 89 voters.</p> |
| Deeside and Gordon | <p>There have been two alterations to the proposed Deeside and Gordon seat affecting 50 voters. See the changes to the proposed Angus East and Kincardine seat and the proposed Banff and Buchan seat above for the details.</p> |
| Dundee West* | <p>In the Initial recommendations the proposed Dundee West and Gowrie seat included four whole Dundee Council wards (Coldside, Lochee, Strathmartine and West End) and one part ward (Maryfield) and two wards from Angus Council (Carse of Gowrie and Strathmore). In the revised Dundee West constituency the seat contains the same four Dundee wards, the whole of the Maryfield ward and the East End ward (transferred from the Dundee East and the Glens seat proposed in the initial recommendations). The two Angus Council wards have been transferred to the proposed Angus West and Perthshire seat. The transfer of the Gowrie area has resulted in the name change to the proposed Dundee West seat.</p> |
| Dunfermline East | <p>There has been one change to the proposed Dunfermline East seat affecting 89 voters. See changes to proposed Clackmannanshire and Dunfermline West seat above for details.</p> |
| East Kilbride and Rutherglen | <p>The proposed seat has been altered in the Cambuslang area. In the initial proposals no wards were split and South Lanarkshire ward 13 (Cambuslang West) was allocated to the proposed East Kilbride and Rutherglen seat and ward 14 (Cambuslang East) was allocated to the Hamilton seat. Both wards are now split between the two seats. The East Greenlees Crescent, Road and Avenue area of ward 13 is now allocated to the Hamilton seat and the area between Greenlees Road and Hamilton Road of ward 14 is now allocated to the proposed East Kilbride and Rutherglen seat. The net effect is a transfer of 575 voters to East Kilbride and Rutherglen from Hamilton.</p> |

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| Fife East* | <p>In the Initial recommendations the proposed Cupar and St Andrews seat contained six whole wards (Buckhaven Methil and Wemyss Villages, Cupar, East Neuk and Landward, Leven Kennoway and Largo, St Andrews) and one part ward (Howe of Fife and Tay Coastal) from Fife Council.</p> <p>In the revised Fife East seat the Howe of Fife and Tay Coastal ward is now wholly within the boundaries of Fife East. The southern half has been transferred from the Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes seat. Five of the other six wards remain in the Fife East seat and the final ward. The sixth ward, Buckhaven Methil and Wemyss Villages, is now split with Methil in the proposed Fife East seat and the Buckhaven and Wemyss Villages area allocated to the proposed Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes seat.</p> |
| Hamilton | See the proposed East Kilbride and Rutherglen seat above. |
| Inverness and Skye | <p>Two wards have been exchanged between the Inverness and Skye and the Moray and Strathspey seats recommended in the initial proposals. Highland ward 21 (Badenoch and Strathspey) has been transferred to the proposed Inverness and Skye seat and Highland ward 19 (Nairn) has been transferred to the proposed Moray and Nairn seat. The transfer has necessitated a change of name to the proposed Moray seat to Moray and Nairn.</p> <p>Highlands ward 12 (Caol and Mallaig) was allocated wholly to the Inverness and Skye seat in the Initial recommendations but is now split. The majority of the ward remains allocated to the proposed Inverness and Skye seat but Caol (the area south of the Caledonian Canal) is now allocated to the proposed Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber seat. The proposed Inverness and Skye seat has a net loss of 1,370 voters as a result of these proposed changes.</p> |
| Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes | In the initial proposals Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes comprised six whole wards of Fife Council and one part ward (ward 17 – How of Fife and Tay Coast). The same six whole wards remain part of the proposed seat but the Commission has transferred the southern half of ward 17 to the proposed Fife East seat. Instead, part of ward 23 (Buckhaven, Methil and Wemyss Villages) has been transferred from the proposed Cupar and St Andrews seat to the proposed Kirkcaldy and Glenrothes seat (Buckhaven and the area to the south). Methil is included in the revised seat of Fife East. |
| Midlothian and Tweeddale | See Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk above |
| Moray and Nairn* | Initially the proposed seat was called Moray and Strathspey and comprised the whole of the Moray Council area and Highland ward 21 (Badenoch and Strathspey). Ward 21 has been transferred to the proposed Inverness and Skye seat in exchange for Highland ward 19 (Nairn). This has required a |

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| Motherwell, Wishaw and Bellshill | name change and has led to a net reduction of 984 voters in the newly proposed Moray and Nairn seat compared initial recommendations for the Moray and Strathspey seat. See Airdrie and Coatbridge South above. |
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* Seats marked with an asterisk have undergone name changes as well as boundary changes