
Report To:	Inverclyde Council	Date:	2 December 2021
Report By:	Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Report No:	LS/098/21
Contact Officer:	Anne Sinclair	Contact No:	01475 712710
Subject:	2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies – Publication of Initial Proposals		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Council of the initial proposals received from the Boundary Commission for Scotland for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies and advises that consultation responses are invited by 8 December 2021.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland (BCS) is an independent non-political body which makes recommendations for the UK Parliament Constituencies in Scotland.
- 2.2 BCS is undertaking a review of UK Parliament Constituencies in Scotland and has been conducting an eight week public consultation on its initial proposals from October to December 2021.
- 2.3 The initial proposals which have been received use electorate data from 2 March 2020 and proposes a new Inverclyde and Bridge of Weir County Constituency in Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Council areas with 70,476 electors, including Houston. Consultation comments on the proposals are invited by 8 December 2021.
- 2.4 At a meeting of the Strategic Leaders Forum it was considered appropriate that there should be an all Member consultation seeking the views of Members on the initial proposals.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- consider the BCS 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies relative to the proposed Inverclyde and Bridge of Weir County Constituency;
 - consider whether it is appropriate for the Council to remit to the Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services to respond to the consultation; and
 - if considered appropriate, to consider the terms of any such response in light of the options set out in para 7.1 of this report.

Anne Sinclair
Interim Head of Legal & Democratic Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The BCS is one of the four UK Parliamentary Boundary Commissions which are simultaneously reviewing UK Parliament Constituencies. The BCS is an independent, non-political body which is undertaking the review in Scotland in terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986. Boundaries Scotland (formerly the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland) is a separate commission which is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations for constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament.
- 4.2 The Council received on 13 October 2021 a copy of the initial proposals from the BCS. The consultation period for responses expires on 8 December 2021 and comments on the proposals are invited. The proposals form the basis of the current review for the 2023 alteration.
- 4.3 The existing 59 Parliamentary constituencies in Scotland came into force in 2005, resulting from the Fifth Periodical Review of Parliament Constituencies. Members may recall that the BCS previously undertook a consultation exercise for the proposed Sixth Review in March 2011 when the proposal at that time was to extend the Inverclyde County Constituency to include Bishopton, Bridge of Weir, Langbank, Erskine and Inchinnan. However, in January 2013 the UK Parliament amended the relative legislation and, as a result, the BCS stopped that work.
- 4.4 As part of the previous 2018 Review the revised proposals, following the initial consultation, were for an Inverclyde and Erskine County Constituency comprising the Inverclyde Council area together with Renfrewshire Council area Ward 10 and part of Ward 11 (Erskine and Inchinnan). However the Parliamentary Constituency Act 2020 removed the duty of the UK Government to implement them.
- 4.5 The SLF agreed on 9 November 2021 that it would be appropriate for the Council to conduct an internal consultation with a view to responding to the Consultation. Accordingly a consultation exercise has been carried out with responses requested by 22 November 2021.

5.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Following receipt of the initial proposals by letter dated 13 October 2021 arrangements were made for the public display of the proposals in the Customer Contact Centre and in the public libraries within Inverclyde. After the eight week consultation period on its initial proposals the Commission will conduct a six week “secondary consultation” when it publishes the consultation responses. At this stage the Commission will hold between two and five public hearings around Scotland.

6.0 PROPOSED INVERCLYDE AND BRIDGE OF WEIR COUNTY CONSTITUENCY

- 6.1 There are currently ten constituencies within the group of Glasgow City, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Council areas.
- 6.2 It is proposed by the BCS that the new UK Parliament Constituency is Inverclyde and Bridge of Weir County and this will comprise 70,476 electors with a total area of 218km square kilometres.

The proposed Inverclyde and Bridge of Weir County constituency includes the whole of Inverclyde Council area, Bridge of Weir and Houston. A copy of the proposed constituency is set out in Appendix 1.

- 6.3 The 2023 review of UK Parliament Constituencies will use electorate data as at 2 March 2020. The review is undertaken in terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 which specifies that there are to be 650 constituencies in total for the UK, with each constituency to return a single member to the UK Parliament under section 1 of the Act.

- 6.4 Scotland has been allocated 57 constituencies for the 2023 Review, two fewer than at present. The UK Parliament has retained 650 constituencies. England has been allocated 543 (an increase of 10), Northern Ireland 18 (no change) and Wales 32 (a reduction of 8). Of the two Scottish constituencies two (the Western Isles and Orkney and Shetland) are protected by legislation and will not be subject to change. Each constituency that the BSC recommends must contain no more than 77,062 electors and should not have less than 69,274 electors. If it considers it necessary, the Commission can recommend a constituency with an electorate lower than the minimum if it is larger than 12,000 square kilometres. No constituency can be larger than 13,000 square kilometres.
- 6.5 Due to the reduction in the number of constituencies, and the requirements for each constituency to have a number of electors within set limits, significant changes to existing constituencies are required.
- 6.6 By virtue of the legislation there is a UK electoral quota of 73,393 electors per constituency with the electorate of each constituency having to be within 5% of that i.e. between 69,724 and 77,062. The electoral quota is calculated by dividing the total UK electorate (less the electorate of the 5 protected island constituencies) by 645 constituencies (650 less the 5 protected island constituencies).
- 6.7 The BCS is explicit in its terms that it is aware that many people would like the boundaries of the UK Parliament Constituencies and the Scottish Parliament Constituencies to be the same: there are 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies and as there are to be 57 UK Parliament Constituents within Scotland it is not possible for their boundaries to coincide. Equally the BCS is aware that many people would wish the boundaries of the constituencies and Council areas to be the same but the same practical considerations apply with regard to the quota. In terms of the legislation the factors the BCS may take into account include:
- 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.
- 6.8 In accordance with the 2023 BCS Review timeline the Commission conducts an eight week public consultation on its initial proposals from October to December 2021. Early 2022 the Commission will conduct a six-week "secondary consultation" when it publishes consultation responses from the initial consultation for public scrutiny. The Commission will hold between two and five public hearings around Scotland. Late 2022 the Commission conducts a four week public consultation on its revised proposals and the Commission then submits its recommendations to the Speaker of the House of Commons by 1 July 2023. The Speaker is responsible for laying the report before the UK Parliament. A copy of the report will be submitted by the BCS to the Secretary of State for Scotland at the same time.
- 6.9 In terms of the BCS Policies and Procedures they state that they aim to make proposals for constituencies which are wholly within a single council area where possible and where that is not practicable, they will aim to propose constituencies which are wholly within two neighbouring council areas. Only where there are particularly compelling circumstances are they likely to make proposals for a constituency which contains parts of three or more council areas.

7.0 ELECTED MEMBERS FEEDBACK

7.1 The consultation exercise received three responses on behalf of three political groups. The responses are summarised as follows:

Responder 1 (The Labour Group) indicated a preference that the new parliamentary boundary be coterminous with that of the Inverclyde Council boundary. Whilst recognising that based on population this does not meet the criteria for the new parliamentary constituency, geographically it would be more clearly recognised as a constituency. The high levels of deprivation within the constituency would allow a special case to be made for a smaller population to be considered.

Responder 2 (The SNP Group) indicated (1) a preference for Inverclyde to be retained as a stand alone constituency, failing which (2) an extension to Langbank and Skelmorlie whilst appreciating the complexity of extending into three local authority areas, and failing either of the foregoing (3) accepting the current proposals whereby there is an extension into Bridge of Weir and Houston, but also including Langbank in the extension.

Responder 3 (The Conservative and Unionist Group) indicated that they agree with the initial proposals of the BCS.

7.2 Given the variety of responses received it is considered that it is appropriate to seek the views of Members as to whether a single response should be submitted on behalf of the Council. It is, of course, open to all Members and Political Groups to submit their own views to Boundary Commissioner for Scotland by 8 December 2021.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

8.1 There are no direct financial implications.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact		
N/A					

Legal

8.2 This review is being undertaken by the BCS in terms of the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and the Council has an opportunity to submit its written response by 8 December 2021.

Human Resources

8.3 There are no direct implications within this report.

Equalities

8.4 Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

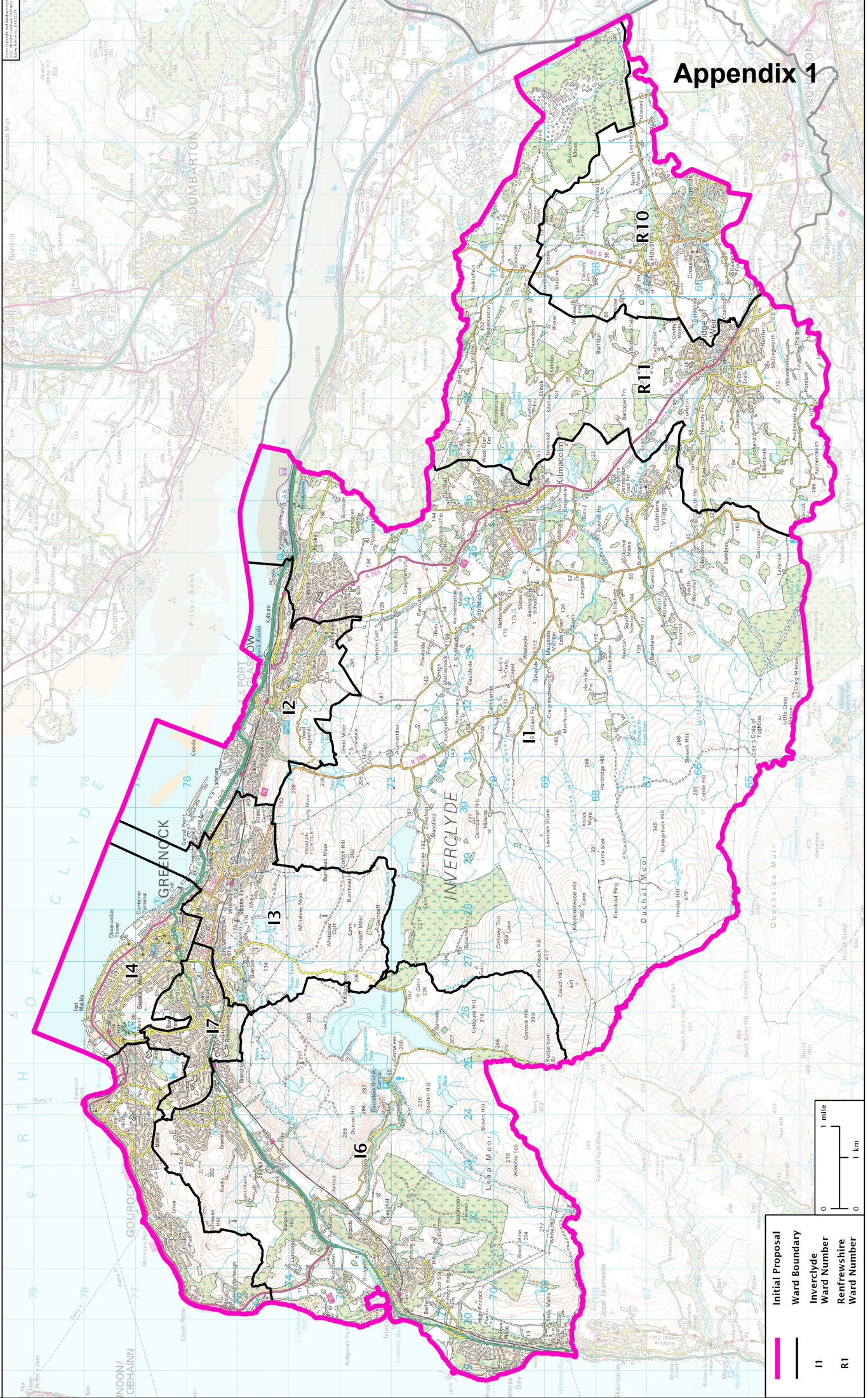
Repopulation

8.5 None.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None.

2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies - Initial Proposals Inverclyde and Bridge of Weir County Constituency - Electorate 70,476



Appendix 1

Initial Proposal	Ward Boundary	Inverclyde Ward Number	Renfrewshire Ward Number
		I1	R1