



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jackson Carlaw MSP
Member for Eastwood

Boundaries Scotland
By E-Mail: boundaries.scot@scottishboundaries.gov.uk

30th April 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Support for plans to retain Eastwood and with Neilston added to the constituency

I am formally participating in the Boundaries Scotland public consultation for revised Scottish Parliament constituency proposals and to state my support for the retention of Eastwood including the slight altering of the current boundary to incorporate Neilston.

The new proposal from Boundaries Scotland to retain Eastwood for future Scottish Parliament Elections is hugely welcome and it addresses my concerns with the initial plans to discontinue the constituency.

The amended proposals recognise Eastwood's legitimacy as a distinct geographical boundary and would ensure the maintenance of the long-standing ties between our local communities within the same Holyrood constituency.

In the published plans by Boundaries Scotland, the neighbouring community of Neilston has been added to the constituency and there is a clear logic to its inclusion within Eastwood for a number of key reasons.

Firstly, Neilston shares a council ward with part of Newton Mearns. As such, the amended proposals would unite the entirety of the Newton Mearns North and Neilston ward within Eastwood and remove the situation where it is split for Scottish Parliament Elections. It would also mean the entirety of four out of the five East Renfrewshire council wards are included as part of the Eastwood constituency.

Secondly, there is a precedent for Neilston sharing a constituency with the communities currently included as part of Eastwood's boundary. For instance, Neilston was part of the Eastwood constituency for the first three elections to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, 2003 and 2007. Neilston also shares a constituency with all of Eastwood's localities as part of the East Renfrewshire seat for elections to the UK Parliament.

Thirdly, the addition of Neilston to the constituency moves Eastwood's voting population closer to the key electoral quota benchmark for devising first-past-the-post parliamentary seats.

In my formal written response to the initial constituency proposals for future elections to the Scottish Parliament, I highlighted concerns that the plans would divide Eastwood's communities by placing Newton Mearns, Waterfoot and Eaglesham into a different seat from Giffnock, Thornliebank, Clarkston, Busby and Netherlee.

To be fair and consistent in approach, I believe it is incumbent on me to note that whilst fully supportive of the minor intended changes to Eastwood's boundary and with the revised constituency plans doing a much better job of keeping communities together, the proposals nonetheless mean that the Levern Valley areas of Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor would no longer be contained within the same first-past-the-post parliamentary seat.

Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor have been grouped together for parliamentary elections until now and the proposals would remove this long-standing local link for Holyrood. On this basis, it may have been marginally more preferable to retain Eastwood with its existing boundary.

However and on the whole, it is the case that Neilston is part of a council ward with Newton Mearns North, there is a precedent for the local area sharing a parliamentary constituency with Newton Mearns, Giffnock, Clarkston, Busby and so on at both a UK and Scottish level, and the community's electorate moves Eastwood to within margins of meeting the electoral quota ideal.

As such and in sharp contrast to the initial plans where for instance, I strongly articulated my view that there was no justification for grouping the Giffnock and Clarkston wards with parts of Glasgow for reasons including council boundaries and different issues facing the local areas, there are very strong and legitimate grounds for returning Neilston to Eastwood.

It is vital that the previous plans to disband Eastwood do not resurface and I fully support the proposals from Boundaries Scotland to retain the seat with the community of Neilston added to the constituency.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Carlaw', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jackson Carlaw CBE MSP
Member of the Scottish Parliament for Eastwood