

Public inquiry into boundary changes for Whitburn and Fauldhouse residents announced

People in Whitburn and Fauldhouse will get a chance to air their views on proposals to “move” their towns into a new parliamentary constituency in time for the next Holyrood elections.

Plans by Boundaries Scotland to lump the communities in with North Lanarkshire caused concern when first announced a month ago.

Now, a local public inquiry will take place in Whitburn early next month to give residents their say.

Boundaries Scotland is carrying out a review of constituency boundaries for the next Holyrood elections in 2026. The body has suggested that the two West Lothian communities join an Airdrie constituency based around the town 14 miles to the west.

Councillors criticised the plan when it was first mooted to them, suggesting no communal ties between Whitburn and Fauldhouse to the town in the North Lanarkshire Council area.

The same proposed changes would see West Lothian removed from the Lothians’ regional list and put into a Central Scotland

list for a choice of MSPs in the 2026 election.

Boundaries Scotland said in a statement: "The Whitburn Local Inquiry will be held on 3 December 2024 at the Whitburn Partnership Centre and will be chaired by Assistant Commissioner Ross.

"Two sessions will be held with the first starting at 2pm until 4pm and the second at 6pm until 8pm.

"The Whitburn Local Inquiry concerns proposed boundaries for the Scottish Parliament regions of Central Scotland and Lothian and the Airdrie constituency.

"The Provisional Proposal for regions amended the existing Central Scotland region boundary to include West Lothian. In response to previous consultations and Local Inquiries, the Further Proposal for the Airdrie constituency included Fauldhouse and Whitburn."

Speaking to last month's meeting of West Lothian Council's Executive Council leader Lawrence Fitzpatrick said the proposals contravened two of the four rules laid down by Boundaries Scotland governing boundary changes.

He said: "This proposal disregards the boundaries of West Lothian and very strong existing ties with these communities. By splitting two West Lothian Council wards between Airdrie and the other constituencies the proposals conflict with the fact that regard must be had to the boundaries, and rule four, they disregard local identities, links and ties with local communities.

"I think we all agree Fauldhouse and Whitburn have strong links to the rest of West Lothian. In terms of work education people from these communities are more likely to commute to and work in Livingston, Bathgate and Edinburgh."

Chair of Boundaries Scotland, Prof Ailsa Henderson said:

“Local Inquiries are held by us in areas where a local authority has objected to our proposals for constituencies or regions, where there has been a strong local response or where we feel we require additional information. They are an important part of the review process. If we subsequently change our proposals in any area we will consult again early in 2025.”

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter