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Ariane Burgess
Convenor
Local Government, Housing and Planning
Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

16 July

Dear Ariane,

Thank you for your letter of 28 June seeking an update on potential reforms to the approval process for Boundary Scotland's recommendations ahead of both the Scottish Parliament election in 2026 and the local government elections in 2027.

As you are aware, the review of Scottish Parliament constituency and regional boundaries is ongoing. Boundaries Scotland is required to submit their report on this review to Scottish Ministers by May 2025. Ministers will then prepare a single order for all the proposed boundary changes which will then be laid in Parliament and be subject to an affirmative procedure. If the order is approved, the changes to the boundaries will be able to be in place for the election in May 2026.

With regards to the question of whether the process for approving changes to Scottish Parliament and local government boundaries will be changed in the longer term, as I said in the Chamber on 27 June, during the Stage 1 debate on the Scottish Elections (Representation and Reform) Bill, I am sympathetic to the idea that the process needs to be reformed. However before making a decision about the best way forward, I intend to hold discussions with stakeholders during recess with the aim of forming a plan of action before the new parliamentary session commences.

I am conscious that the approval process for boundary changes has an impact on the work schedule for the Committee, given your responsibility for scrutinising proposed local government boundary changes under the current legislation. I intend to write to you as soon as possible with an update setting out my decision and next steps.

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I am copying this letter to the Convener of the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee.

Yours Sincerely,

JAMIE HEPBURN

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