

2018 Review of Westminster Constituencies
Considerations for constituency design in Highland and north of Scotland

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider the issue of constituency size when designing constituencies for Highland and the north of Scotland and whether it wishes to propose a constituency for its public consultation outwith the electorate quota.

Background

2. The legislation governing the review states that no constituency is permitted to be larger than 13,000 square kilometres.
3. The legislation also states that any constituency larger than 12,000 square kilometres may have an electorate lower than 95% of the electoral quota (ie less than 71,031), if it is not reasonably possible for it to comply with that requirement.
4. The constituency size rule is probably only relevant in Highland.
5. The Secretariat has considered some alternative constituency designs for Highland and the north of Scotland for discussion.
6. There are currently 3 UK Parliament constituencies wholly with Highland Council area:
 - Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross – 45,898 electors
 - Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey – 74,354 electors
 - Ross, Skye and Lochaber – 51,817 electors
7. During the 6th Review of UK Parliament constituencies the Commission developed proposals based on constituencies within the electoral quota and area limit.

Option 1 – considers electorate lower than 95% of the electoral quota in Highland

8. Option 1:

- follows the Scottish Parliament constituency of Caithness, Sutherland and Ross, that includes Highland wards 1 – 5, 7, 8 and part of ward 6. The electorate and area for the proposed Caithness, Sutherland and Ross constituency is 53,264 electors and 12,792 sq km;
- creates an Inverness constituency that includes Highland wards 9 -11, 13-18, 20 and ward 6 (part) with an electorate of 85,276.
- adds Highland wards 12 (Caol & Mallaig) and 22 (Fort William & Ardnamurchan) to Argyll & Bute Council area to create an Argyll & Bute and Lochaber constituency, with 80,549 electors.
- adds Highland ward 19 (Nairn) to Moray Council area to create a Moray and Nairn constituency with 78,477 electors.
- adds Highland ward 21 (Badenoch & Strathspey) to a constituency grouping with Aberdeenshire Council area and or other council areas.

Constituency	Electors	Area (km ²)
Highland	53,264	12,792
Inverness	85,276	6,339
Argyll & Bute and Lochaber	80,549	11,809
Moray and Nairn	78,477	2,612
Aberdeenshire and Badenoch and Strathspey	203,487	8,668

9. Option 1 creates a constituency coterminous for both the UK and Scottish Parliaments, making it simpler for the electorate to recognise their constituency boundary and all constituencies are within the 13,000 sq km limit.
10. However the electorate of the proposed Caithness, Sutherland and Ross constituency is significantly below the electorate quota and as a consequence neighbouring constituencies are above the electoral quota within this grouping.

Option 2 – considers electorate within electorate quota in Highland

11. Option 2:

- creates a Highland constituency that includes Highland wards 1 – 5, 6 (part), 7 - 10, 13 (part). Ward 6 is divided by following Strath Carron, Strath Bran and a woodland boundary in Strathconon. Ward 13 is split by following the river Beaully and a railway line. The Highland constituency has an electorate of 71,302 and covers an area of 12,565 sq km;
- creates an Inverness constituency that includes Highland wards 11, 13 – 18, 20 - 21 and ward 6 (part) with 77,090 electors and area of 8,895 sq km;
- Highland wards 12 and 22 are added to Argyll and Bute to create an Argyll & Bute and Lochaber constituency with 80,549 electors, the same as in Option 1; and
- Highland ward 19 (Nairn) is added to Moray Council area to create a Moray and Nairn constituency with 78,477 electors, as in Option 1.

Constituency	Electors	Area (km ²)
Highland	71,302	12,565
Inverness	77,090	8,895
Argyll & Bute and Lochaber	80,549	11,809
Moray and Nairn	78,477	2,612

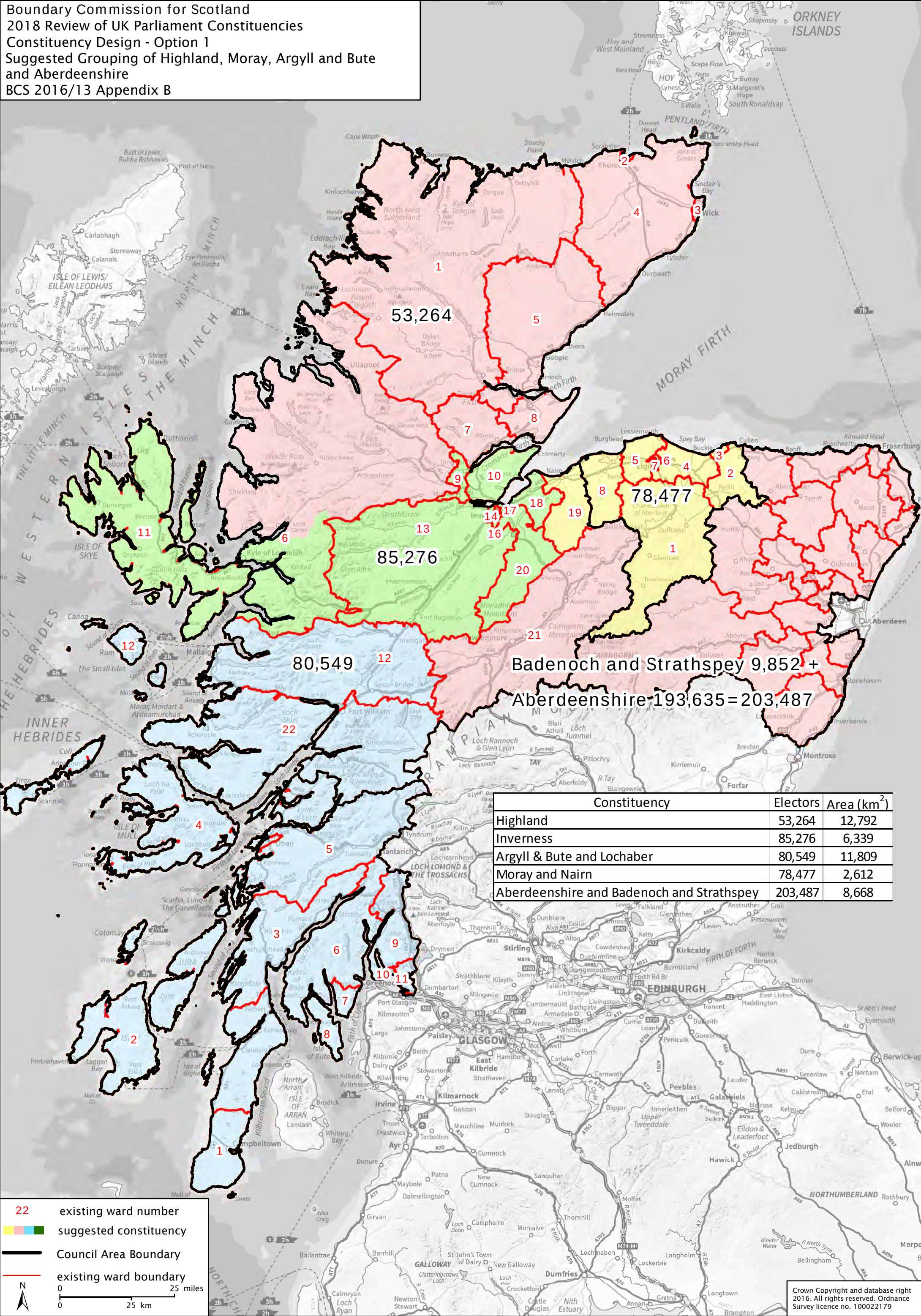
12. Option 2 creates a Highland constituency within both the electoral quota and area limit.
13. However, the electorate of the proposed Argyll & Bute and Lochaber constituency is just above the electorate quota and may have an impact on neighbouring constituency groupings. In addition, Beaully is separated from

other communities in Highland ward 13, although communities in ward 13 may look towards Inverness for local amenities and services, rather than local towns.

Conclusion

14. Although neither option offers a workable set of constituencies, Option 2 highlights that it is possible to create a constituency in the north of Scotland both within the area limit and electoral quota.
15. The Commission is invited to consider whether it wishes the Secretariat to consider further the development of constituencies for Highland and the north of Scotland using the legislative exemption from the electoral quota range set out in paragraph 3.

**Secretariat
May 2016**



22

existing ward number

suggested constituency

Council Area Boundary

existing ward boundary

N

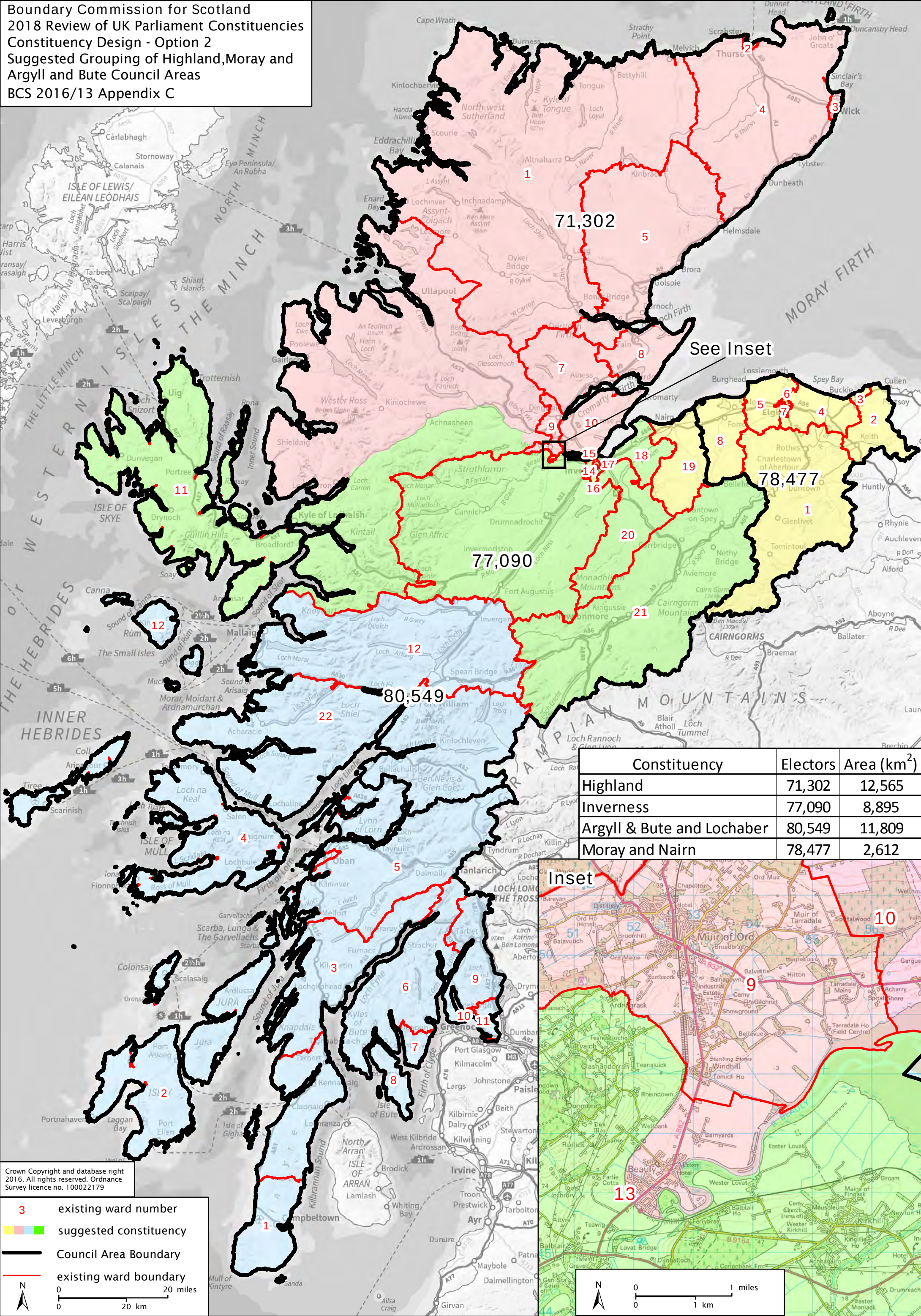
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25 miles

0

25 km

Boundary Commission for Scotland
2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies
Constituency Design - Option 2
Suggested Grouping of Highland, Moray and
Argyll and Bute Council Areas
BCS 2016/13 Appendix C



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3 existing ward number

■ suggested constituency

— Council Area Boundary

— existing ward boundary

N

0 20 miles
0 20 km

0 1 miles
0 1 km