

2023 Review of UK Parliament Approach to constituency names and designations

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider its approach on the naming and designation of constituencies ahead of the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituency boundaries.

Background

2. Both the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS) and BCS will wish to share their respective constituency naming approaches before their next reviews.
3. BCS were responsible for reviewing boundaries for both the Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament until 2017. The introduction of the Scotland Act 2016 transferred responsibility for reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries to LGBCS.
4. LGBCS will be considering its approach on the naming and designation of constituencies before it commences its Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, expected to commence in 2022.
5. An extract from the BCS policy on the naming and designation of constituencies from its 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies is shown at Appendix A.
6. The policy on the naming and designation of constituencies and regions for the First Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries, which reported in 2010, is shown in Appendix B. When considering its approach, BCS agreed at its March 2009 meeting that “names should reflect the geographical extent of constituencies and that in deciding names, the Commission should take local views into account. It was agreed that decisions on constituency names required to be taken in the light of the individual circumstances surrounding them and that this may differ from case to case. There was agreement that names of Scottish Parliament constituencies should in general differ from those of Westminster constituencies.”
7. The initial 73 constituencies for the Scottish Parliament were defined in the Scotland Act, to be the same as the UK Parliament constituencies at that time, with one exception regarding Orkney and Shetland.
8. There are currently 73 Scottish Parliament constituencies and 59 UK Parliament constituencies. None of the current mainland UK Parliament or Scottish Parliament constituencies have coterminous boundaries. However 7 mainland constituencies share the same name: Airdrie and Shotts; Argyll and Bute; East Lothian; Moray; Motherwell and Wishaw; North East Fife; and Stirling.
9. The current constituency names (Appendix C) differ most notably in the main cities. The Scottish Parliament constituency names in Glasgow use locality names such as Glasgow Kelvin or Glasgow Provan, while UK Parliament constituency names use compass points such as Glasgow East or Glasgow North. In Edinburgh, nearly all constituency names use compass points. These are differentiated as Edinburgh Southern or Edinburgh Western for the Scottish Parliament and Edinburgh South or Edinburgh West for the UK Parliament.

10. BCS has published an Information Paper listing and indexing past constituency names. That 15-page Information Paper is available on the Commission's website and has been sent as an attachment. [Information Paper: Constituency_names_since_1950](#).
11. The Commission may wish to consider some of the following points and ideas with a view to a simpler and potentially more consistent approach to constituency naming. Some of these points have been taken from <https://www.citymetric.com/horizons/here-are-uk-s-most-infuriating-constituency-names-3099>. Whilst this is a slightly tongue in cheek look at constituency naming, it does present an independent critique of some of the more idiosyncratic constituency names and policies that have been applied in recent UK Parliament Reviews. Some of these considerations include:
- its use of hyphens and ampersands;
 - to minimise use of “and”;
 - name based on the largest populated area. Arran has been included in a UK Parliament constituency name but it has a small population;
 - the consistent use of compass points (if Dundee East, have a Dundee West);
 - consideration of the length of the constituency name;
 - naming a constituency based on the historical name;
 - the consistent use of historical towns or historical local authority areas, not a mixture of both;
 - consider historical names on a map and see if proposed constituency is similar shape;
 - Central Ayrshire – there is no centre of Ayrshire;
 - If “Basildon” is in “Basildon and Billericay”, by definition there is not any Basildon left to be “Basildon South”;
 - Fife: Fife West, and North East Fife. Where is the rest of Fife?;
 - Brighton Kemptown, Brighton Pavilion – do not use the name of a building; and
 - South Holland & The Deepings – Great band.
12. Constituencies for both the Scottish Parliament and UK Parliament must designate each constituency as either a burgh or a county constituency. BCS has generally designated more urban areas as burgh constituencies, and more rural constituencies as county constituencies. The designation affects the expenses allowable at elections.

Conclusion

13. A key element for the Commission to consider in developing its approach for naming constituencies will be to ensure they in general differ for each parliament where an appropriate and distinct alternative is available.

Recommendation

14. The Commission is invited to consider its approach for the naming and designation of its proposed constituencies for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituency boundaries and to share this with LGBCS.

Extract from BCS 2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies: Policies and Procedures**Naming and designation of constituencies**

As part of a review, we recommend a name for each constituency, and whether it should be designated as a county constituency or a burgh constituency. The designation affects the expenses allowable at elections.

We have developed a set of guidelines when proposing names for constituencies:

- to use an existing constituency name where there is a successor constituency that is recognisably similar;
- to prefer constituency names that are short rather than attempt to describe an area exhaustively;
- to ensure that names of Scottish Parliament constituencies in general differ from those of Westminster constituencies where an appropriate and distinct alternative is available. Relying on word order alone (e.g. "Glasgow East" and "East Glasgow") or conjunctions (e.g. "North and East Fife" and "North East Fife") is generally not a sufficient difference;
- not to place compass points at the beginning of a name, in order to help make an alphabetically sorted list easier to use. We make an exception if a constituency is named after a council area or town which has a compass point at the start of its name (such as East Lothian or East Kilbride); and
- not to use the same name for a constituency and a council area unless the two are coterminous.

We take account of local views when recommending names for constituencies, and find suggestions from local authorities particularly useful.

We are required to designate each constituency as either a burgh or a county constituency, but the legislation does not define these terms. We consider that constituencies comprising predominantly urban areas will normally be designated as burgh constituencies, and constituencies which are predominantly rural will normally be designated as county constituencies.

Appendix B

Extract from BCS 2010 Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries: Final Report

Naming and designation of constituencies

- We noted that in previous reviews, the naming of constituencies had been contentious. We concluded that constituency names should reflect their geographic extents, and that local views should be taken into account. We also concluded that names should, wherever possible, be short and should not attempt to describe an area exhaustively.
- We were aware that confusion can arise where the names of Westminster constituencies and Scottish Parliament constituencies are the same. We therefore agreed that names of Scottish Parliament constituencies should in general differ from those of Westminster constituencies, where an appropriate and distinct alternative was available.
- When formulating our Provisional Proposals for constituencies, we decided to adopt a naming convention to help distinguish Scottish Parliament constituency names from Westminster constituency names. Under this convention, we placed the compass-point element of the name (e.g. north, south, east, west etc.) at the beginning.
- During the consultation on our Provisional Proposals for constituencies, representations were made stating that the adopted naming convention would be insufficient to distinguish Scottish Parliament constituency names from Westminster constituency names, in which the compass point appears at the end of the name. In addition, geographically adjacent constituencies would not appear near each other in alphabetical lists of constituency names.
- As a result, in our Revised Recommendations for constituencies, when we used a compass point as part of a name, we avoided placing it at the beginning of the name.
- In addition, notably in Glasgow, respondents identified a strong preference for constituency names which incorporated names of localities rather than compass points. By contrast, we received representations on constituencies in City of Edinburgh council area that asked for constituency names incorporating compass points to be retained.
- Taking all of these factors into account, we agreed that it would be necessary for decisions on constituency names to be taken in the light of the individual circumstances surrounding them. We also noted that, historically, the Commission has adopted a general approach of following the advice on names provided by Councils. We agreed to continue with this general approach.
- Each constituency has to be designated as either a county constituency or a burgh constituency. These designations affect the allowable expenses by candidates during elections. The legislation does not define these designations. We have, therefore, followed previous practice by designating constituencies which comprise predominantly urban areas as burgh

constituencies and constituencies which comprise predominantly rural areas as county constituencies.

Appendix C

Current Scottish Parliament Constituency Names	
Aberdeen Central	Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire
Aberdeen Donside	Falkirk East
Aberdeen South and North Kincardine	Falkirk West
Aberdeenshire East	Galloway and West Dumfries
Aberdeenshire West	Glasgow Anniesland
Airdrie and Shotts	Glasgow Cathcart
Almond Valley	Glasgow Kelvin
Angus North and Mearns	Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn
Angus South	Glasgow Pollok
Argyll and Bute	Glasgow Provan
Ayr	Glasgow Shettleston
Banffshire and Buchan Coast	Glasgow Southside
Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Greenock and Inverclyde
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse
Clackmannanshire and Dunblane	Inverness and Nairn
Clydebank and Milngavie	Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley
Clydesdale	Kirkcaldy
Coatbridge and Chryston	Linlithgow
Cowdenbeath	Mid Fife and Glenrothes
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	Midlothian North and Musselburgh
Cunninghame North	Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale
Cunninghame South	Moray
Dumbarton	Motherwell and Wishaw
Dumfriesshire	North East Fife
Dundee City East	Orkney Islands
Dundee City West	Paisley
Dunfermline	Perthshire North
East Kilbride	Perthshire South and Kinross-shire
East Lothian	Renfrewshire North and West
Eastwood	Renfrewshire South
Edinburgh Central	Rutherglen
Edinburgh Eastern	Shetland Islands
Edinburgh Northern and Leith	Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch
Edinburgh Pentlands	Stirling
Edinburgh Southern	Strathkelvin and Bearsden
Edinburgh Western	Uddingston and Bellshill
Eileanan an Iar, Na h–	

Current UK Parliament Constituency Names	
Aberdeen North	Glasgow North East
Aberdeen South	Glasgow North West
Airdrie and Shotts	Glasgow South
Angus	Glasgow South West
Argyll and Bute	Glenrothes
Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock	Gordon
Banff and Buchan	Inverclyde
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk	Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross	Kilmarnock and Loudoun
Central Ayrshire	Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath
Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill	Lanark and Hamilton East
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East	Linlithgow and East Falkirk
Dumfries and Galloway	Livingston
Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale	Midlothian
Dundee East	Moray
Dundee West	Motherwell and Wishaw
Dunfermline and West Fife	Na h-Eileanan an Iar
East Dunbartonshire	North Ayrshire and Arran
East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow	North East Fife
East Lothian	Ochil and South Perthshire
East Renfrewshire	Orkney and Shetland
Edinburgh East	Paisley and Renfrewshire North
Edinburgh North and Leith	Paisley and Renfrewshire South
Edinburgh South	Perth and North Perthshire
Edinburgh South West	Ross, Skye and Lochaber
Edinburgh West	Rutherglen and Hamilton West
Falkirk	Stirling
Glasgow Central	West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine
Glasgow East	West Dunbartonshire
Glasgow North	