BCS Paper 2022/12

2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies
Consideration of Revised Proposals for Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider responses to the initial and secondary consultation on its initial proposals and whether it wishes to make changes to its proposals for Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas.

2. The Commission may wish to consider merging this council area grouping with neighbouring grouping(s) as a possible solution to the issues raised in this paper.

Background

3. The total electorate for Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas is 515,377 giving a theoretical entitlement of 7.02 constituencies.

4. The Commission's initial proposals for this area proposed seven constituencies for this grouping, one less than the existing number of constituencies. One existing constituency boundary was retained, West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine. A map of the proposed constituencies is at Appendix A.

Proposed constituencies	Electorate	Wards
Argyll	71,442	Argyll and Bute – all Highland 21(part)
Banff and Buchan	72,837	Aberdeenshire 1 – 6 Moray 2, 3
Gordon and Moray South	73,121	Aberdeenshire 7 – 9, 10(part), 11, 12(part), 14(part) Moray 1
Highland Central	75,651	Highland 5(part), 10, 11, 12(part), 13-16, 17(part), 19, 21(part)
Highland East and Elgin	72,038	Highland 17(part), 18, 20 Moray 4-8
Highland North	76,654	Highland 1-4, 5(part), 6-9, 12(part)
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	73,634	Aberdeenshire 10(part), 12(part), 13, 14(part), 15-19

5. The initial proposals for Aberdeen City council area were considered with Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas earlier in the review but are considered in a separate paper for the revised proposals.

Representations received

6. 265 responses were received during the two consultation periods that related solely to Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas. All responses have been shared with the Commission. All responses to the initial consultation stage are available on the Commission's consultation site www.bcs2023review.com. Each response has been allocated a reference number from the consultation site.

Summary of responses

7. Suggestions and comments received during the initial consultation included:

- opposition to Moray being split between three constituencies, when the existing Moray constituency is within the electorate quota for the 2023 Review;
- opposition to the size of the proposed Highland North constituency;
- suggestions to name a constituency Argyll and Bute; and
- opposition to the proposed boundary in Lochaber.

8. The maps in this paper show alternative suggestions in block colours, existing ward boundaries are red and Initial Proposal boundaries are a black line.

Argyll and Bute Consultation Responses and Analysis

9. There were over 50 responses to the initial proposals for Argyll and Bute council area, most wished to retain Bute in the constituency name. Constituency names are discussed later in the paper.

10. Argyll and Bute Council agreed with the proposed constituency boundary but wish to retain the existing constituency name (11923). An Argyll and Bute Councillor made two comments, they believe the Commission should retain Bute in the constituency name and also consider the democratic effects of its proposals (10971, 11987).

11. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party accept the proposed Argyll constituency but suggest naming it Argyll, Lomond and Bute (11960).

12. Four members of the public and South Cowal Community Council stated Argyll and Bute has a unique geography with rural and island communities and by creating a larger constituency it would make it even more challenging for an MP to represent it. They wish to retain the existing Argyll and Bute constituency boundary (10960, 11011, 11264, 11410, 11735, 12143). Two further responses wished no change to the existing constituency boundary but gave no reason (10956, 11103).

13. There are too few electors (67,565) to retain the existing Argyll and Bute constituency which is coterminous with the council area boundary.

14. One member of the public (11479) argued Helensburgh is a commuter town and has little in common with Argyll and Bute and rural areas such as Dunoon.

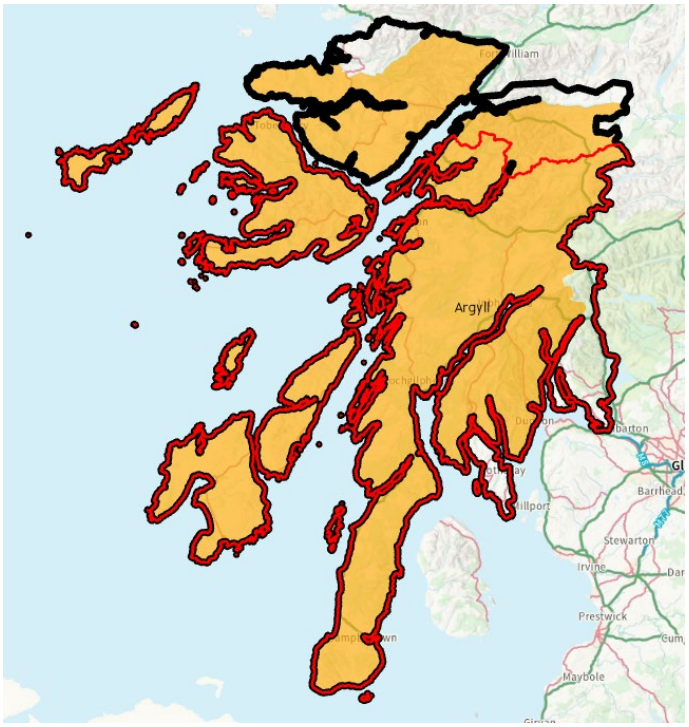
15. Helensburgh and Rhu have an electorate of approx. 14,500 electors. At its meeting of 8 March 2021 the Commission considered a constituency grouping of Argyll and Bute, Glasgow, Highland, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire council areas (Paper 2021/05) but agreed a different grouping because it took better account of council area boundaries and provided for constituency groupings with fewer constituencies per grouping.

16. A member of the public noted Ardnamurchan and Kinlochleven belonged to Argyll County Council before local government restructuring in the 1990's. They also suggested adding Arran to the proposed Argyll constituency because it belongs with other island communities (11555).

17. The historic Argyll County (shown in orange in the map below) follows a similar boundary to the initial proposals in Lochaber, but it follows Loch Leven rather

than the Mamore hills. However the Argyll County did not include Bute or Helensburgh. (The black line follows the initial proposals and the red line follows the Argyll and Bute council area boundary). Historically Arran sat within the County of Bute and Helensburgh within the County of Dunbarton.

18. The Commission could add Arran with approx. 3,850 electors to an Argyll constituency, the proposed North Ayrshire and Arran constituency has 73,588 electors and would remain just within quota but there has been some support and little opposition to the initial proposals in Ayrshire.



19. A member of the public opposed the proposals because Morvern has closer links with Highland than Argyll and Bute and an MP will focus on Oban rather than more rural areas (12084).

20. Three members of the public commented on the consultation site map style (11454, 11455, 12075). A member of the public commented on postcodes (12125).

Highland Consultation Responses and Analysis

21. There were over 110 responses to the initial proposals for Highland council area, mainly opposing the proposals and the size of the proposed Highland North constituency.

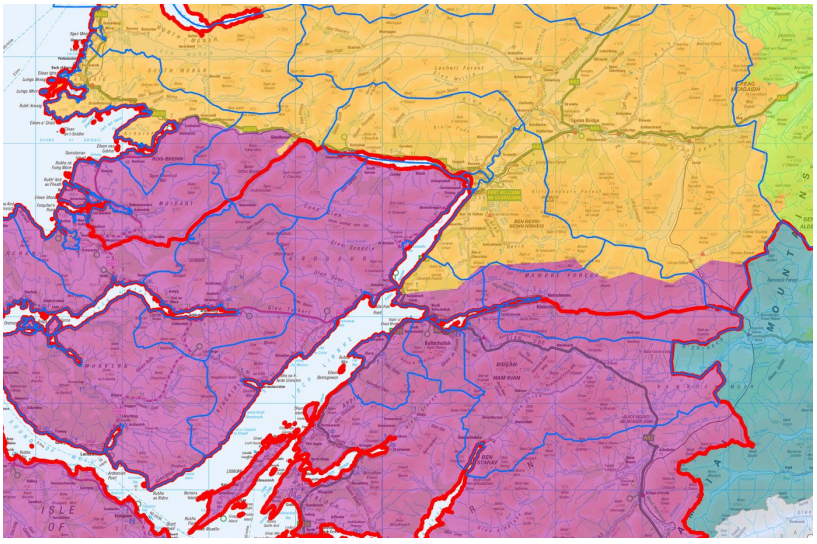
22. A number of responses from members of the public and a Highland Councillor objected to the proposed Highland North constituency due to its: large area; low population density; a belief that North Highland should be a protected constituency; poor transport links; a desire not to lose representation; more consideration of Highland geography; recognition of the poor transport links; a desire to retain three Highland MPs or no change; Nairn looks towards Inverness rather than Elgin for amenities; Inverness has no links with crofting communities; and it is already challenging for the current MP to represent the

existing, smaller Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross constituency (10888, 10910, 10914, 10917, 10920, 10923, 10936, 10996, 11083, 11122, 11141, 11185, 11206, 11231, 11297, 11362, 11366, 11367, 11369, 11370, 11371, 11373, 11396, 11429, 11449, 11493, 11517, 11526, 11603, 11612, 11614, 11645, 11649, 11652, 11657, 11673, 11720, 11721, 11746, 11750, 11778, 11782, 11794, 11868, 11943, 11846, 12018, 12025, 12029, 12053, 12059, 12063, 12064, 12107, 12111, 12113, 12122, 12139, 12159).

23. A number of responses from members of the public and Nether Lochaber Community Council objected to the proposals in Lochaber because: they break local community and historical ties in Lochaber and do not consider the geography of the area; there are no ties between Lochaber and Campbeltown, Coll or Tiree; Lochaber is served by Highland Council for health and education and not Argyll and Bute; an MP will focus on Argyll and ignore Lochaber; and it will split community council boundaries (11098, 11081, 11109, 11125, 11128, 11133, 11147, 11149, 11227, 11357, 11435, 11801).

24. There are too few electors (67,565) to retain the existing Argyll and Bute constituency which is coterminous with the council area boundary. The Commission could consider adding the whole of the Highland Fort William and Ardnamurchan ward, which includes Lochaber, to an Argyll and Bute constituency, with 8,326 electors, but this would likely break local ties between Fort William, Banavie, Caol and Corpach. It is not possible to merge Argyll and Bute and Stirling because there are too few electors in Stirling (70,085). There are several community councils within this area and the Commission could amend its proposed boundary to better reflect these boundaries. As stated earlier the Commission did consider linking Argyll and Bute with a different council area grouping.

25. The Locahber map below shows the initial proposals in block colours, Argyll County boundary in red and community council area boundaries in blue.

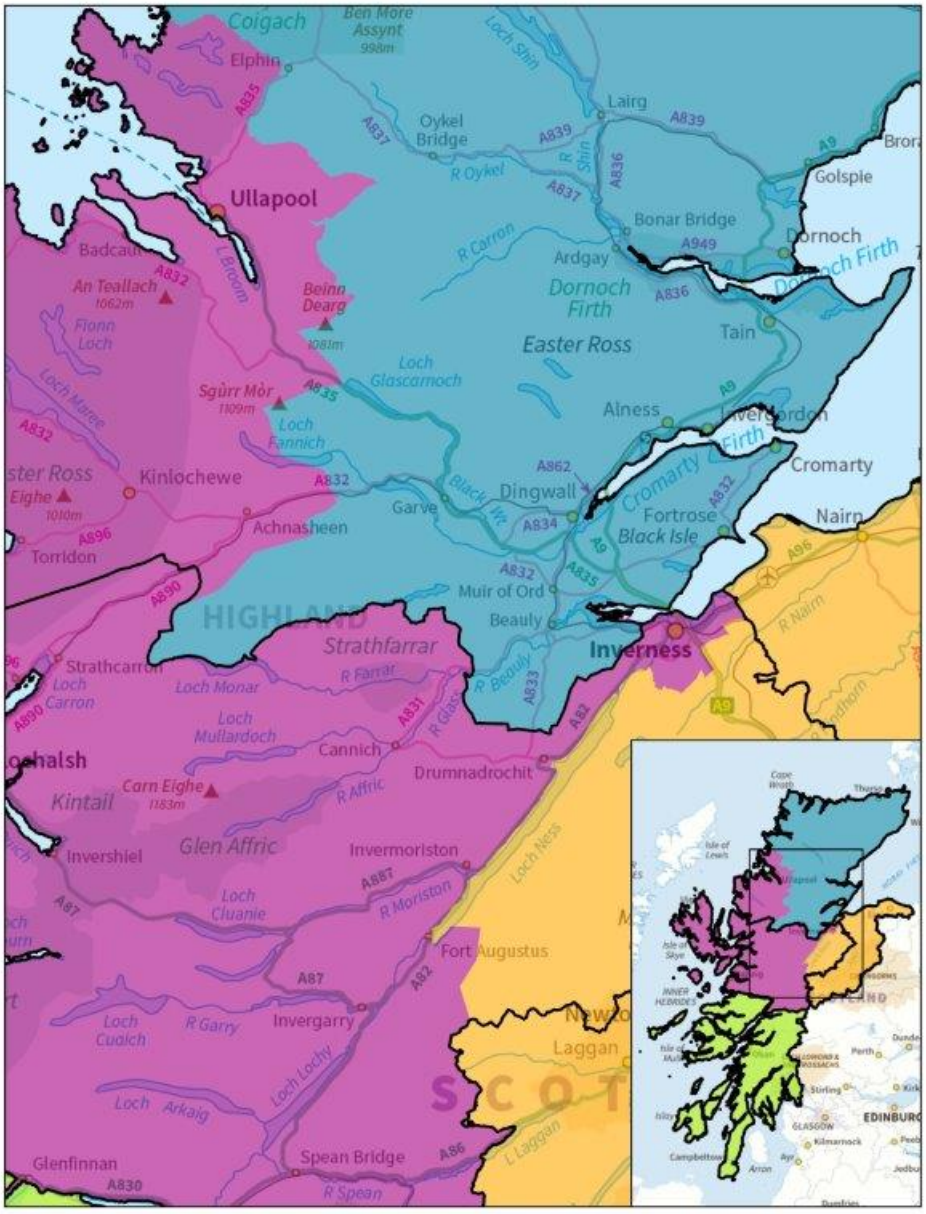


26. A member of the public supported the proposals but provided no reasons (11629).

27. The Scottish Liberal Democrats made an alternative suggestion to balance the area of the proposed Highland constituencies (see map and table below). They

believe the proposed Highland North constituency covers too large an area and suggested an alternative boundary by Wester Ross. They suggested adopting Loch Ness as a constituency boundary and making minor changes to the proposed boundaries by Inverness. They also suggested the following constituency names: Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross; and Inverness, West Highlands and Skye (11824, 12167, 12178).

Constituency	Electorate
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross	72,632
Inverness, West Highlands and Skye	76,732
Highland East and Elgin	74,979



28. The advantages of the Scottish Liberal Democrats suggestion are it:
    - creates a smaller Highland North constituency, addressing most of the concerns raised during the consultation. There were no other suggestions which addressed the size of Highland North constituency while considering the electorate quota and consequential changes;
    - proposes an easily identifiable boundary, Loch Ness; and

- retains the proposed Argyll constituency boundary.

29. They disadvantages of this suggestion are it offers an oddly shaped boundary south of Beauly and Inverness, however this could be refined.

30. Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch Labour Party sought no change to the existing boundaries in Highland. They oppose the proposals because the constituencies cover too large an area, do not consider the local geography and believe north Highland should have a protected constituency (11804).

31. Two members of the public wished to retain three MP's in Highland (11464, 11962). Another wished to retain the existing Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey constituency because it considers the geography of the area. They believe the proposals cover too large an area (11110).

32. All three of the existing constituencies are out-with the electorate quota: Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross (46,924); Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (78,254); and Ross, Skye and Lochaber (54,325).

33. A member of the public suggested East Highland and West Highland constituencies (11661).

34. Historically there has never been north east or north west Highland constituencies.

35. A member of the public suggested alternative constituency boundaries: Highland Central would incorporate the commuter belt to the north and east of Inverness; Argyll incorporates Fort William, Morven and Ardnamurchan; and Helensburgh is incorporated in West Dunbartonshire (11092). A member of the public makes a similar suggestion to include the Inverness commuter belt (Nairn and Black Isle) in the same constituency as Inverness (11326).

36. Moving the Black Isle from a Highland North constituency leaves it with a low electorate but still close to the upper area limit. Adding further electors elsewhere would likely exceed the area limit for Highland North. Adding Nairn and neighbouring communities to Inverness would result in an additional 20,000 electors, exceeding the electorate quota.

37. A member of the public suggested linking Inverness with communities in the north of Highland rather than with Fort William (11333). Another stated Inverness and Fort William should sit in separate constituencies (11698).

38. Historically Inverness was in the same constituency as Fort William from 1950 to 2005. Both sat within the historical County of Inverness.

39. A member of the public suggested that Beauly and Kiltarlity look towards Inverness and should sit within a Highland Central constituency (11594).

40. The constituency boundary by Inverness has moved numerous times over the past 70 years. Since 2005 Beauly has sat within a Ross, Skye and Lochaber constituency and Kiltarlity within an Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey constituency. Prior to this Beauly and Kiltarlity have sat within the same constituency but not always with Inverness.

41. A member of the public supported the proposed Highland East and Elgin constituency because Ardersier and Moray have historical ties (10880). A member of the public objected to the proposed Highland East and Elgin constituency because Ardersier and Strathspey look towards Inverness rather than Nairn or Elgin (10905).

42. Ardersier has always sat within an Inverness constituency. Until 1983 Grantown on Spey was in an Elgin constituency but since then has been in an Inverness constituency.

43. A member of the public objected to the proposals in Nairn (11119). Another stated Nairn has closer links to Inverness than Moray (11564).

44. Nairn has sat within an Inverness constituency since 1983. The initial proposals placed Nairn in a Highland East and Elgin constituency.

45. A member of the public supported the initial proposals in Highland that link smaller communities with Inverness (10925). A member of the public and Skye resident objected to the proposed Highland Central constituency because the MP will likely focus on Inverness and not more rural areas (11351). A member of the public objected to the proposed Highland Central constituency because Inverness will be the focus of the constituency rather than smaller rural communities (10901). Two members of the public stated Inverness has nothing in common with the west coast of Scotland (11829, 11830). A member of the public noted that Inverness will be linked with less populated areas than it currently does (11497).

46. Highland Council opposed the proposals because they: do not consider the rurality or geography of the Highlands; wish protected status for the Highlands similar to the Island constituencies; would make it more challenging for an MP to engage with constituents; do not consider ward boundaries; have no ties between Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey; oppose the proposed Lochaber boundary; and state there should a review of the methodology and approach adopted by the Commission (11985).

47. North West Highlands Geopark stated the community councils of: Coigach, Assynt, Scourie, Kinlochbervie, Durness and Tongue differ from Ullapool and the Commission should adopt the Sutherland county boundary as a constituency boundary (12101). A member of the public made a similar suggestion to transfer Ross and Cromarty from Highland North to a Highland Central constituency (11576).

48. There are too few electors (approx. 31,000) in Caithness and Sutherland for that area to become a constituency.

49. A Highland Councillor stated Badenoch-Strathspey has no social, economic or geographic ties with Elgin (12110).

50. Badenoch and Strathspey has never previously been linked with Elgin or Moray within a UK Parliament constituency.

51. An MSP made an alternative suggestion to better reflect historic and natural boundaries:

- Argyll should include Fort William;
- Highland Central to include Achnasheen, Garve, Dingwall, Muir of Ord, Beauly and the Black Isle; and
- Highland East and Elgin to include Bridge of Avon, Aberlour, Dufftown and Rothes but a preference to retain the existing Moray constituency (12148).

52. This suggestion proposed two constituencies out-with the electorate quota (Highland North approx. 58,000 and Highland Central approx 89,000).

53. A member of the public suggested adding Skye to a Western Isles constituency (12155).

54. The Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles) constituency boundary is preserved and cannot be amended.

55. Drew Hendry MP opposed the initial proposals because: of the size of the constituencies; Inverness and its environs could be represented by three MP's; no consideration is given to the rapid housing growth; an Inverness constituency does not include Inverness airport; no common interests between urban Inverness and rural Mallaig; poor public transport links; impact on access to healthcare; and to travel from Inverness to Portree is 114 miles (12164). Dores and Essich Community Council supported the issues raised by Drew Hendry MP. They oppose a reduction in representation when the local population is growing rapidly and ask that some flexibility is applied on electoral numbers due to the geographical spread of the population (12165).

56. The current Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross MP opposed the proposals because they expand the existing constituency which is already challenging to represent due to its size. They believe Wester Ross has closer links with Skye and to Inverness than to the north (12176).

57. Historically Wester Ross has never been linked with a Caithness and Sutherland constituency.

58. Nairn BID opposed the proposals because: Inverness Airport would no longer be situated within an Inverness constituency; it would impact on local infrastructure projects such as creating an A96 dual-carriageway and Nairn by-pass; affect access to local healthcare services; loss of connectivity between Nairn and Inverness; and the proposed Highland East and Elgin constituency would be represented by three MSP's (12183).

59. A member of the public suggested introducing proportional representation (11609).

Aberdeenshire Consultation Responses and Analysis

60. There were over 30 responses to the initial proposals for Aberdeenshire council area. There was some support for retaining the existing West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency but opposition to the initial proposals elsewhere.

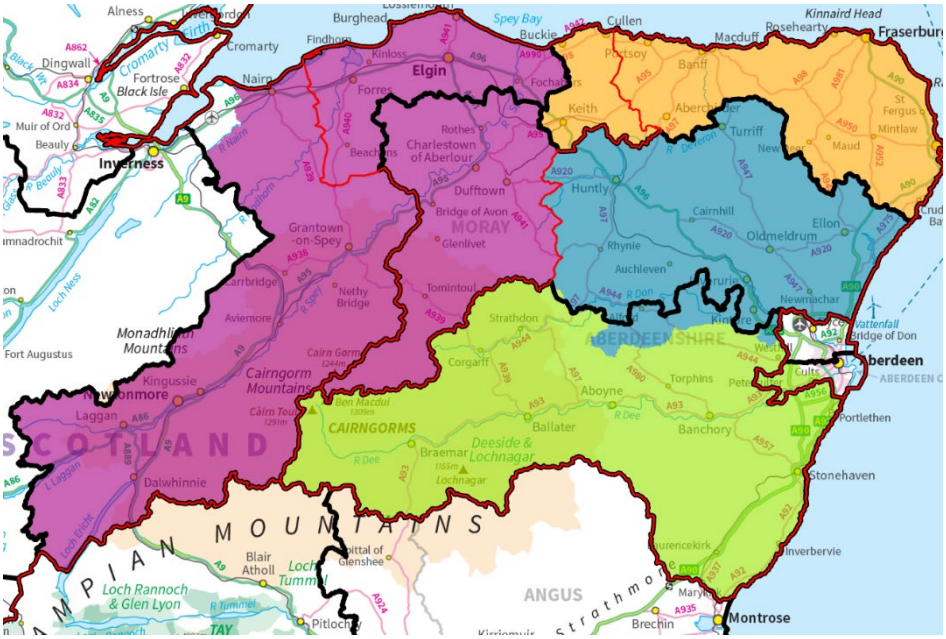
61. A local councillor and several members of the public supported the proposed West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency because it retained the existing

constituency boundary (11339, 11340, 11341, 11342, 11343, 11469, 11484, 11684, 11687, 11689, 11763, 11904).

62. A member of the public objected to the proposed West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency because it covers too large an area (11398). Another opposed retaining the existing West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency because it splits Keig from Bridge of Alford and Kemnay from Inverurie (12052).

63. Two members of the public supported the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency because it includes rural communities and no longer includes parts of Aberdeen (11444, 11446). Another objected to the size of the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency (11171).

64. A member of the public (10942) made an alternative suggestion which they believe better reflects community ties. The map below shows the initial proposals with a black line and the existing constituency boundaries as a red line. They suggested:
    - retaining the proposed Banff and Buchan constituency;
    - merging Aberdeenshire wards (Mearns, Stonehaven, North Kincardine, Banchory, Aboyne and Westhill) with Lower Deeside ward from Aberdeen City = 76,034 electors;
    - a Gordon constituency containing Aberdeenshire wards (East Garioch, Inverurie, Mid Formartine, Ellon, West Garioch, Huntly and Turiff) with 75,497 electors; and
    - a constituency with part of Moray and the Highland Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey wards with 76,697 electors.



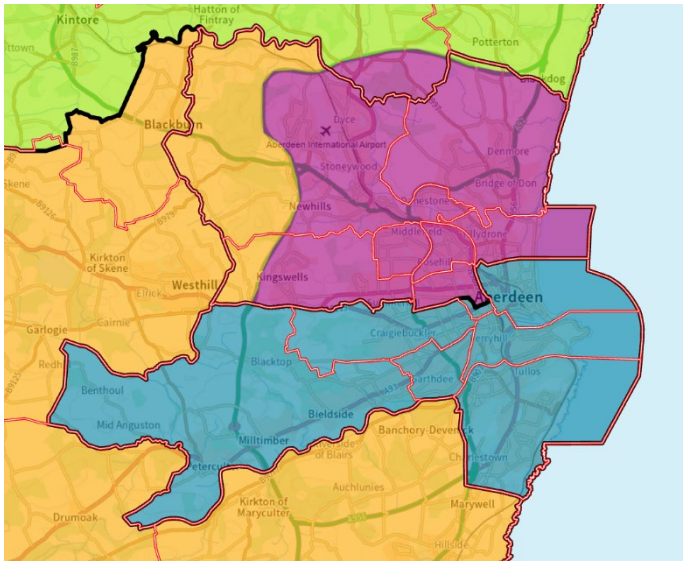
65. The advantages of this suggestion are Moray is only split between two rather than three constituencies.

66. The disadvantages of this suggestion are it:
    - makes changes to constituencies where there has been some support (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine and Aberdeen South);
    - retains a Banff and Buchan which has not been well supported; and

- does not consider the approx. 2,500 electors in Ardersier and Croy. (2,500 electors + 75,651 electors from Highland Central = 78,151).

67. A member of the public suggested adopting the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR) as the Aberdeen North constituency boundary (11130).

68. This suggestion would only affect about 400 electors but would result in splitting four wards and would make changes where there has been some support and little opposition to the initial proposals, see map below.



69. A member of the public wished to retain Ellon in a Banff and Buchan constituency (11273).

70. Ellon currently sits within a Gordon constituency and has nearly 12,000 electors. Adding Ellon to the proposed Banff and Buchan constituency, with 72,837 electors would require consequential changes across the grouping.

71. A member of the public suggested placing Ellon in the same constituency as Fraserburgh and Peterhead. They also suggested placing Banff, Macduff, Keith and Huntly in the same constituency instead of a coastal constituency (12099).

72. Ellon hasn't been in the same constituency as Fraserburgh and Peterhead since 1974. Since 1950 the towns of Banff, Macduff, Keith and Huntly have never sat within the same constituency.

73. A member of the public objected to the proposed Banff and Buchan constituency because Cullen has ties with Elgin and Moray rather than Aberdeenshire (11338).

74. Historically Cullen has sat within a Moray constituency since 1983.

75. A member of the public stated the proposed Banff and Buchan constituency includes communities with few links such as Banff and Fraserburgh (11207). Another stated there are no ties between Banff and Fraserburgh (11997).

76. Banff and Fraserburgh have sat within the same constituency since 1983.

77. A member of the public stated Banff has closer ties with Turriff or Huntly than the coastal towns of Buckie or Cullen (11693).

78. Banff and Turriff have been in the same constituency between 1983 – 1997 and then from 2005 to present. Banff, Buckie and Cullen sat within the same constituency until 1983.

79. Three members of the public objected to the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency because: there is little to link the Cairngorm mountains with coastal towns; it covers two council areas; does not recognise existing community ties or the local geography (lowland Aberdeenshire and highland Morayshire); and there are no public transport links between communities within the constituency (11608, 11246, 11717).

80. A member of the public wished no change to the existing Gordon constituency. They state Gordon has no links with Moray (11677).

81. The existing Gordon constituency has an electorate out-with the quota (80,535).

82. A member of the public stated Gordon and the Gordon Highlanders belong in Aberdeenshire and not Moray (12068).

83. A member of the public suggested alternative boundary colours for the consultation site (11448).

Moray Consultation Responses and Analysis

84. There were 60 responses to the initial proposals for Moray council area mainly opposing Moray being split between three constituencies when the existing Moray constituency is within quota.

85. A local councillor and several members of the public objected to the proposals because: the existing Moray constituency is within the electorate quota; Moray has its own identity and no links with Highland or Aberdeenshire; they seek no changes as the existing UK Parliament constituency follows the council area boundary and is similar to a Scottish Parliament constituency boundary; the proposals do not consider the local geography or historic ties; they split Moray between three constituencies; the proposed constituencies are oddly-shaped; there are no links between Kingussie and Forres; Elgin is the focus in Moray; the proposals have no natural or logical boundaries; there are no links between Doric and Highland culture; a desire to retain the existing Moray constituency; and consideration should be given to transport links and size of a constituency (12013, 12014, 12097, 12124, 12137, 12138, 10932, 10937, 10964, 11009, 11087, 11089, 11095, 11127, 11140, 11176, 11230, 11263, 11298, 11301, 11311, 11330, 11399, 11417, 11284, 11500, 11509, 11513, 11535, 11542, 11578, 11650, 11662, 11682, 11728, 11738, 11773, 11800, 11815, 11783).

86. Moray SNP Constituency Association opposed Moray being split into three constituencies because the proposals do not consider council area boundaries or existing community ties. They wish to retain the existing Moray constituency because it is within the electorate quota (11710).

87. The Moray Conservative Councillor group opposed the proposals. They believe the proposals would impact on Moray Council's improvement plans and economic development plans. They believe a single MP would be crucial in continuing to develop these plans and improve relationships between different towns. They advise there are some frustrations that the Moray Scottish Parliament constituency differs from the UK Parliament constituency boundary and council area boundary and the proposals would magnify those frustrations. They also fear that larger areas of Aberdeenshire and Highland will be the focus rather than Moray. Their submission was signed by eight Moray Councillors (11894).

88. Moray Council opposed the proposals because they: divide Moray across three UK Parliament constituencies; do not recognise community ties, locals recognise the constituency boundary as it follows the council area boundary; have no common geography or identity and there is lack of travel links within them; and would cause disruption breaking up recognised communities and local authority areas. They wish to retain the existing Moray constituency (11935).

89. Douglas Ross, MP for Moray, wished to retain Moray as a single constituency. He opposed the proposals because they split Moray between three constituencies breaking local historic links within Moray. He further mentions that Moray Council unanimously objected to the proposals (11975, 12175).

90. A member of the public objected to the proposed Highland East and Elgin constituency because of its size, they state there are 120 miles between Loch Laggan and Portgordon (10883).

91. Two members of the public stated Buckie and Cullen should be placed within a Moray constituency (11452, 11093).

92. Buckie and Cullen have sat within a Moray constituency since 1983 and prior to that a Banff constituency.

93. A member of the public argued that Tomintoul has no links with coastal Aberdeenshire, they look towards Elgin, Inverness or Aviemore instead for local amenities (11102).

94. Tomintoul has always sat within a constituency that stretches north to the Moray coast. Historically Tomintoul has never sat within a constituency with Inverness or Aviemore.

95. A member of the public opposed the proposals because they split Rothes from Elgin and there are no links between Dalwhinnie and Elgin. They stated the MP could represent vastly contrasting issues and local cultures such as an international airport, three UK military bases, a ski resort town, half the Moray coast and significant sparse farmland (11211).

96. Elgin and Rothes have been in the same constituency since 1950. Elgin and Dalwhinnie have never been in the same constituency.

97. A member of the public sought no change in Moray but if that is not possible they suggested linking Moray with Nairn (including Grantown and Aviemore) (11212).

98. The Highland Nairn and Cawdor ward contains 10,398 electors. Adding these to Moray with 71,537 electors would be out-with the quota.

99. A member of the public objected to the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency because it does not recognise existing community ties or local geographical features – mountains split the constituency, and the name is irrelevant because the link to the Moray Firth coastline is lost (11254). Another objected to the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency because it splits Dufftown from Elgin (11547).

100. Dufftown has been in the same constituency as Elgin since 1983.

101. A member of the public suggested adding Nairn or parts of Aberdeenshire to Moray rather than dividing Moray (11519). Another wished to retain the existing Moray constituency and 59 MP's in Scotland (11097). No details of consequential changes were submitted with these suggestions.

102. A member of the public submitted an alternative suggestion but did not provide electorate data. They suggested the following constituencies: Highland East and Moray; Inverness; Highland North; Banff and Buchan); and Gordon (11148).

103. This alternative suggestion is incomplete as it does not make provision for Moray ward 8 (Forres) and Highland ward 21 (Fort William and Ardnamurchan) while offering other suggested constituencies out-with the electoral quota.

104. A member of the public suggested amending the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency by Dallas, so Dallas sits in a Moray or Elgin constituency (11209).

105. A member of the Moray Council staff highlighted a number of minor variances with UK and Scottish Parliament and other boundaries (11495).

All Scotland Consultation Responses that apply to this grouping and Analysis

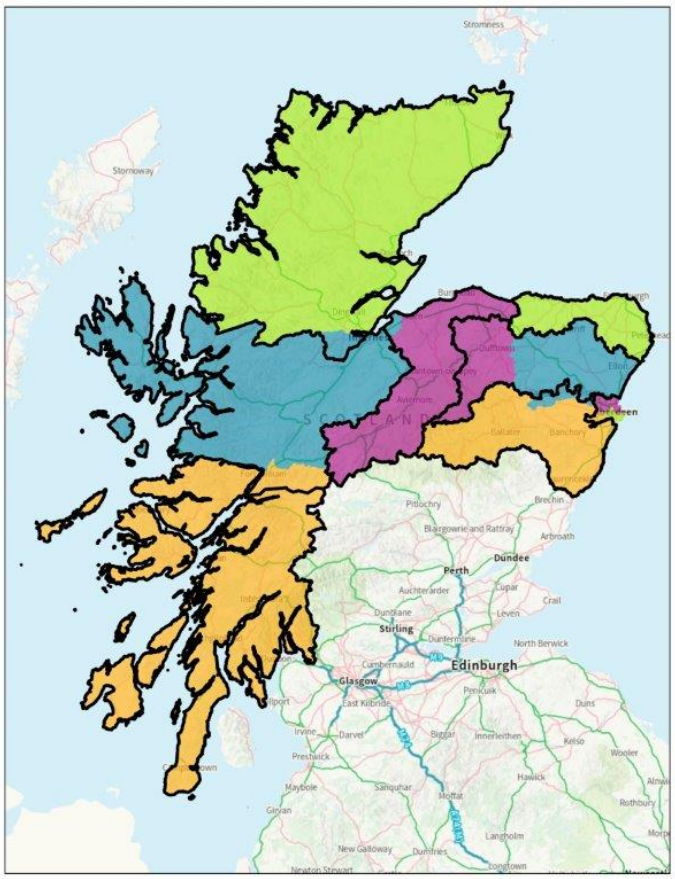
106. There were approximately 140 general responses to the initial consultation opposing the 2023 Review or making comments out-with the legislation for the review.

107. A member of the public suggested that the Commission should not group council areas for designing constituencies because it offers less flexibility in constituency design and may bring political bias. They also suggest constituency names based on the principle of a main area or town and a subsidiary area (12161).

108. A member of the public (11879) suggested smaller constituencies across Scotland.

109. A member of the public submitted an alternative suggestion for Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray (see map below). In Moray they suggested an Elgin and Nairn constituency because it broadly recreates an historical Moray and Nairn constituency and splits Moray in a similar way to Scottish Parliament boundaries. In Aberdeenshire they suggested retaining the

proposed Banff and Buchan constituency but amending the proposed West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency boundary to include the Aberdeen Lower Deeside ward. They stated there is no inherent reason to maintain the boundaries of Aberdeen City, it retains north-south constituencies in Aberdeen and the area was part of a historical Kincardine and Deeside constituency (1983 – 1997) (11844).

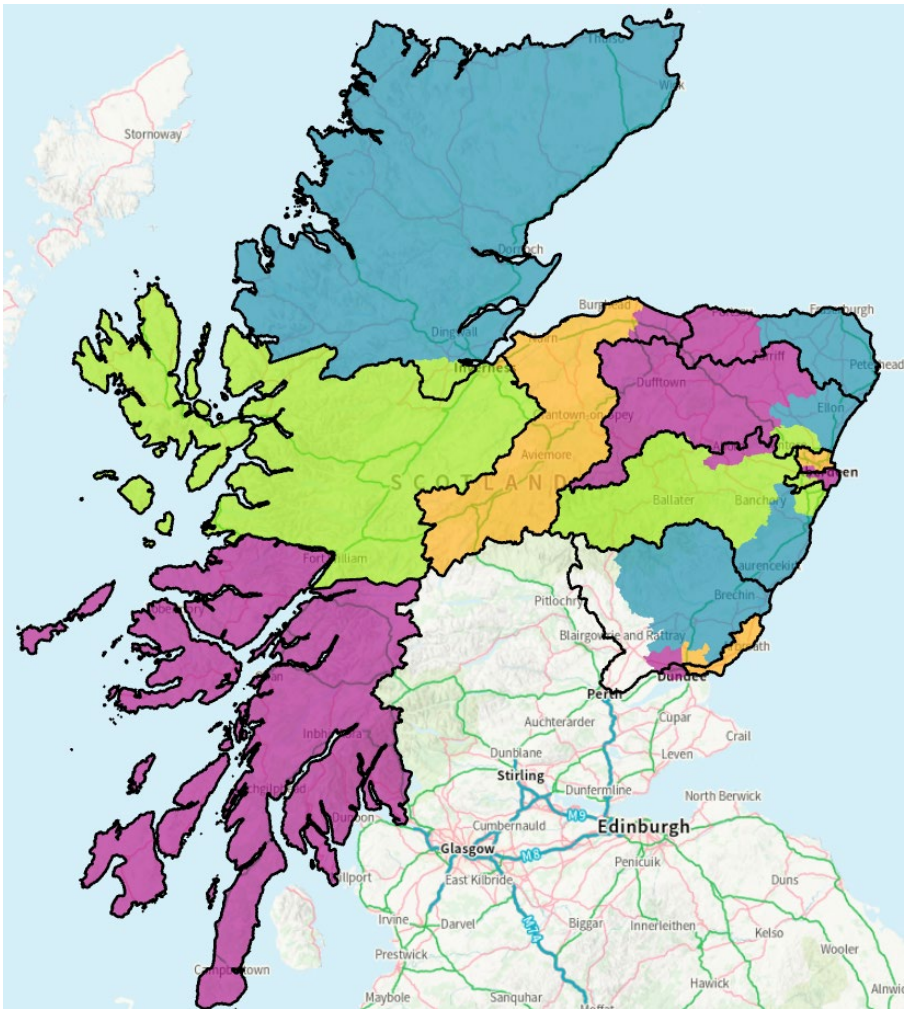


110. The advantages of this suggestion are:
- it considers the Commission's council area grouping;
- Moray is split between two, rather than three constituencies; and
- all constituencies are within the electorate quota.

111. The disadvantages of this suggestion are:
- it adds Fort William to an Argyll constituency and would likely break local ties between Fort William, Banavie, Caol and Corpach;
- it makes changes to constituencies where there has been some support (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine and Aberdeen South); and
- retains a Banff and Buchan which has not been well supported.

112. A member of the public made an alternative suggestion that creates new council area groupings (see map below). It combines Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee City, Highland and Moray council areas. They suggested:
- adding the whole of the Aird and Loch Ness ward to Highland Central;
- adding the Culloden and Ardersier ward to the Highland East and Elgin constituency but losing the Fochabers and Lhanbryde ward;

- a Buckie, Banff and Huntly constituency comprising the four eastern Moray wards and four Aberdeenshire wards;
- Peterhead and Buchan constituency similar to the existing Banff and Buchan constituency;
- West Aberdeenshire constituency similar to the existing West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency;
- two Aberdeen City constituencies which split the Midstocket/Rosemount ward in the north of the ward; and an
- Angus and Mearns constituency (11876).



113. The advantages of this suggestion are:
- it retains the proposed Argyll constituency;
- Moray is split between two, rather than three constituencies; and
- all constituencies are within the electorate quota.

114. The disadvantages of this suggestion are:
- it does not consider the Commission's council area groupings; and
- it makes changes to constituencies where there has been some support (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine and Aberdeen South).

115. The Scottish Labour Party were pleased that Inverness is not split between constituencies but noted the existing Moray constituency has been split between

three constituencies when the existing Moray constituency was within quota (12174, 11802, 12147).

116. Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party supported the proposed constituency boundary at Lochaber. They would prefer to retain the existing Moray constituency but accept the proposed boundaries because there is good road connectivity and there are some historical ties between Moray and Nairn, with a Moray and Nairn UK Parliamentary Constituency from 1918 to 1983. Grantown was also situated in the historical Moray county. They oppose the alternative suggestion from the Scottish Liberal Democrats in Highland as it may cause more issues than it resolves. They supported retaining the existing West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency and the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency. They believe Turriff should sit in a Banff and Buchan constituency but are unable to find an alternative suggestion (11960, 12177, 12179).

117. The Scottish Liberal Democrats made an alternative suggestion in Highland which is discussed earlier in this paper (12167, 12178).

Constituency Names

118. A member of the public suggested the Commission should consider Gaelic constituency names (11619).

119. A member of the public suggested retaining constituency names similar to the existing names (11467).

120. Three members of the public wanted Nairn to be included in a constituency name (11118, 11120, 11121).

121. A member of the public (11921) suggested the following names:
- Strathspey, Elgin and Nairn or Speyside and Nairn;
- Bennachie or Gordon and Glenlivet;
- Inverness-shire; and
- Ross, Caithness and Sutherland.

122. A member of the public suggested renaming Highland Central as Inverness and Highland Central (11020). Another suggested re-naming it Inverness and Loch Ness or Great Glen and Skye (11527).

123. A member of the public suggested renaming Highland East and Elgin as Badenoch, Strathspey, Nairn and Elgin (11091).

124. A member of the public suggested renaming the proposed Highland North constituency as Ross, Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness or The Northern Counties or The Northern Highlands or Highlands North (11809).

125. A member of the public suggested an alternative constituency name Inverness-shire and Skye (12033).

126. A member of the public suggested renaming the constituencies: Argyll, Bute and Lochaber; Inverness and Skye; and Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty. (11844).

127. The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party suggested naming the constituencies:
    - Argyll, Lomond and Bute;
    - Inverness or Inverness-shire;
    - Caithness, Ross and Sutherland; and
    - Moray North and Nairn (11960).

128. The Scottish Liberal Democrats suggested naming the constituencies:
    - Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross;
    - Inverness, West Highlands and Skye;
    - Elgin, Nairn and Badenoch; and
    - Argyll, Bute and South Lochaber (11824, 11828, 12167).

129. In Argyll and Bute nearly 40 responses, including Argyll and Bute Council and a Councillor, wished to retain Bute in the constituency name.

130. A member of the public supported the proposed Argyll constituency name but they argued that other islands could be included in the constituency name rather than Bute (12153).

131. A member of the public supported the proposed Gordon and Moray South constituency but suggested re-naming it Gordon and Speyside (11910).

132. A member of the public suggested renaming the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency as Aberdeenshire South (11874).

133. A member of the public submitted a general comment on constituency names and enclosed an article from Political Quarterly "What's in a Name? The Length of Westminster Constituency Titles, 1950-2024" (11977).

134. The constituency names in this paper are provisional. The Commission will have the opportunity to review all constituency names and designations prior to the publication of its revised proposals.

Summary

135. There was opposition to the initial proposals within this grouping but few alternative suggestions were submitted to resolve the issues raised. The Commission may wish to consider an alternative council area grouping to resolve these issues.

Argyll and Bute

136. A large number of respondents wished to retain the existing Argyll and Bute constituency name. The Commission named the constituency Argyll because it no longer followed the Argyll and Bute council area boundary. However the initial proposals also proposed a West Dunbartonshire constituency and a Dumfries and Galloway constituency that no longer follow their council area boundaries. The Commission can review all constituency names after it has agreed its revised proposals.

137. Some responses objected to the proposals in Lochaber because they broke local ties in Lochaber, Morvern and Ardnamurchan. The proposed boundary was

supported by Argyll and Bute Council. There are too few electors to retain the existing Argyll and Bute constituency.

138. The Commission could consider adjusting its proposals in Lochaber to follow community council area boundaries or a county boundary. Prior to 1983 an Argyll constituency followed the historical Argyll county boundary. The Commission could consider following the historical county boundary, it follows Loch Leven and Loch Shiel, easily identified boundaries but may split Kinlochleven between constituencies.

Highland

139. There was strong opposition to the proposed Highland North constituency due to its area. The proposed Highland North constituency is 12,781 km² but this is only slightly larger than the existing Ross, Skye and Lochaber constituency at 12,768 km². No responses commented on the size of the existing Ross, Skye and Lochaber constituency or the challenges of representing it as it includes island communities.

140. The Scottish Liberal Democrats offered an alternative suggestion to create more equally sized Highland constituencies. It is the only response to address concerns on the size of the proposed Highland North constituency. It offers an oddly shaped boundary by Beauly and Inverness but this could be amended.

141. In considering the size of constituencies the Commission could consider a constituency below the electorate quota if it covers an area between 12,000 and 13,000 km².

142. There was some opposition to the proposed boundary in Lochaber but this is discussed above, under Argyll and Bute.

143. Few comments were submitted regarding the proposed boundaries in Inverness.

144. There was opposition to the proposed Highland North and Highland Central constituency names. The Commission has the opportunity to discuss constituency names at a later meeting.

Moray

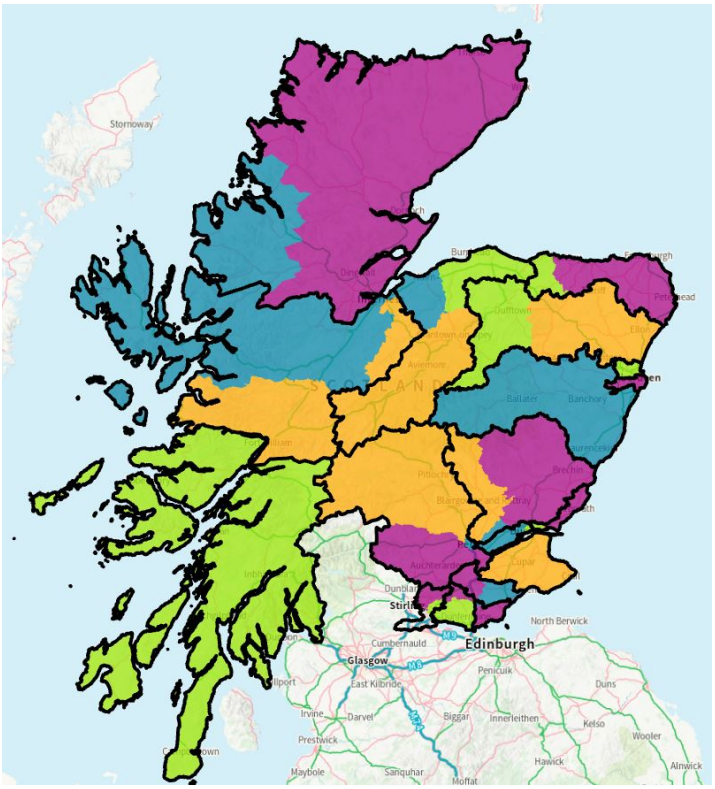
145. In Moray there has been strong opposition to the initial proposals but no alternative suggestions were submitted which retained the existing Moray constituency.

146. The existing Moray constituency is within the electorate quota but the initial proposals split Moray between three constituencies.

147. A member of the public made an alternative for this grouping which made minimal changes to the initial proposals suggestion (11879 – see map under all Scotland responses). The Commission may wish to consider this suggestion further as it splits Moray between two constituencies and considers the Commission's council area grouping. Due to a lack of alternative suggestions there might be a preference to split Moray between two rather than three constituencies.

148. The Commission could consider retaining a Moray constituency but it requires a new grouping of council areas. See table and map below:

Council area	Electorate	Theoretical entitlement
Angus and Aberdeenshire	286,739	3.9 (average 71,684)
Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray AND Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Fife, Perth and Kinross	858,474	11.7 (average 71,539)



149. The advantages of this option are:
- all constituencies are within the electorate quota;
- it avoids splitting Moray between constituencies; and
- it could resolve issues in neighbouring areas such as Kinross-shire and Forth Valley.

150. The disadvantages of this option are it:
- creates a large constituency which includes north Perthshire, partly Inverness and Fort William;
- may raise similar issues in different areas. The Secretariat have still to consider constituency boundaries in central Scotland.

Aberdeenshire

151. There was some support for retaining the existing West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency but opposition to the initial proposals elsewhere.

152. A number of responses questioned local ties within the proposed Aberdeenshire constituencies but there was no clear delineation of where each community looks towards. Some responses opposed linking coastal Aberdeenshire with Moray.

153. Two alternative suggestions suggested Aberdeen City – Aberdeenshire constituencies. The existing Gordon constituency includes the north of Aberdeen with Aberdeenshire. However there was some support and little opposition to the initial proposals in Aberdeen.

Alternative Options

154. The Commission can retain this grouping of council areas or propose new council area groupings.

155. The advantages of retaining the initial proposals council area grouping are it:
- minimises change in areas where there has been some support, such as the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency;
- allows the Commission to consider a smaller Highland North constituency and Aberdeenshire and Lochaber boundaries.

156. The disadvantages of retaining the initial proposals grouping are it:
- is not possible to retain the existing Moray constituency, although it could be split between two rather than three constituencies; and
- offers no flexibility to resolve issues elsewhere.

157. The Commission could adopt a new grouping of council areas, such as:

Council areas	Electorate	Theoretical entitlement
Aberdeenshire, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Dundee, Highland and Moray	713,294	9.72 (average 71,329.4 electors per constituency)
Aberdeen City	153,455	2.09 (average 76,727.5 electors per constituency
Clackmannanshire, Fife, Perth and Kinross	431,919	5.89 (average 71,986.5 electors per constituency)
Stirling	70,085	1
Dumfries and Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, Scottish Borders and West Dunbartonshire AND Glasgow City, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire AND Falkirk and West Lothian	1,775,684	24.19 (average 73,986.8 electors per constituency)

158. The advantages of a new grouping are it:
- offers flexibility to resolve issues in neighbouring areas such as Kinross-shire, Forth Valley and Carse of Gowrie;
- could retain constituencies where there has been some support such as: Stirling; North East Fife; Aberdeen City; Dumfries and Galloway; Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale; and Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk; and
- allows the Commission to consider a smaller Highland North constituency and Aberdeenshire and Lochaber boundaries.

159. The disadvantages of a new grouping are it:
- makes changes where there has been some support, such as the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency;and

- may raise similar issues elsewhere. Alternative grouping constituency designs have still to be considered in detail across the whole of Scotland.

160. The Commission may wish to ask the Secretariat to further develop this or other alternative groupings and present constituency design options at a later meeting or may consider the initial proposals suitable for publishing as revised proposals.

Recommendations

161. Taking into account all of the evidence arising from the public consultations on the Initial Proposals, the Secretariat invites the Commission to decide whether:
- to adopt any of the alternative suggestions or options;
- to amend its proposals for constituency names; or
- to adopt without amendment the Initial Proposals for Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas are adopted without amendment as the Commission's revised proposals (as in Appendix A), subject to consideration of all other constituencies.

Secretariat
May 2022

BCS Paper 2022/12

Appendix A

Initial proposals - Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray council areas