



SENT BY EMAIL:

Scottish Boundary Commissions' Secretariat
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

14th of March 2022

To whom it may concern,

I am writing concerning the significant concerns that I hold regarding the current proposals for the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies and the impact that these proposals will have on the Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey (INBS) constituency.

As you will be aware, the initial proposals for the Review divide INBS across 3 new constituencies: 'Highland North', 'Highland Central' and 'Highland East and Elgin'. This division has multiple issues that I am keen to highlight with the Boundary Commission and which I believe requires additional consideration, notably:

- The scale of the newly created Highland North and Highland Central constituencies; Highland North would be both the largest constituency in landmass, 12781kmsq (larger than 49 countries), and retains a significant number of electors, 76654 electors. It has this scale even though the rules, as laid out, would allow it to have electors below the minimum threshold for a constituency. With Highland Central also having a significant scale, 8717kmsq and 75651 electors, the Highland's is left disserved in the geographical size of these proposed constituencies.
- There is an increasing possibility that Inverness would have 3 different MP's under these review proposals. With an MP for the city centre and one for both the East and West hand sides of the city's immediate adjoining areas. There are already growing suburbs in these areas, with more proposed, and as you may be aware, Inverness remains one of the fastest-growing cities in Europe. The Scottish Cities Alliance named Inverness the fastest growing city in Scotland in 2020, stating its population has increased by 15% since 2001.
- INBS has consistently had significantly above average new housing registrations on the NHBC's assessments. In fact, According to NHBC registration data, which covers 70-80% of new homes in the UK, INBS has consistently had significantly above average new homes. NHBC registrations for INBS were over twice the national constituency average for the whole of 2021, more than double for 2019, and even during 2020 were nearly 20% higher than the UK average.
- This growth causes additional problems with the proposed Highland North constituency, with house building already proposed in areas on the edge of Inverness within Highland North. The

constituency, which is only 408 electors from the maximum number of 77062, will, in all probability, begin 2024, exceeding the maximum allowable figure.

- Inverness Airport is outside of the constituency comprising most of the city of Inverness, Highland Central, putting a major city employer out of its representative's scope. With additional clear issues for representation on regional connectivity for the city resulting from this discrepancy. Infrastructure, and the lack of consideration of representation in relation to communities' usage of infrastructure, is a consistent theme in the proposal's treatment of the Highlands.
- Highland Central would span from the East to the West Coast of Scotland and have highly urban communities like Inverness combined with traditional fishing communities like Mallaig. This creates issues in the ability for focused advocacy on communities' behalf regarding economic activity in this proposed constituency. With diverse interests between urban and rural and island communities, any MP would be hard-pressed to reflect all those needs at once.
- Badenoch and Strathspey, which would be in 'Highland East and Elgin', would;
 - Have no easy singular public transport system to the largest urban area within the new constituency, Elgin.
 - Be in a constituency that excluded core healthcare facilities. Raigmore not Dr. Grays is the main treatment centre for the area.
 - No longer be included with Inverness as a commuter route along the A9. Giving Badenoch and Strathspey representation didn't include a major aspect of its local economy.
- Nairn has similar issues to Badenoch and Strathspey and has been added to the 'Highland East and Elgin' constituency. The same issues with health care representation and no longer been included with Inverness, where a significant number of people from Nairn commute to via the A96, exist for Nairn.
- Additionally, 'Highland East and Elgin', would;
 - Have 3 different constituency MSPs.
 - Span 2 Local Authority areas Highland and Moray.
- And, from a practical standpoint; To go from Inverness to Portree for a surgery would be 114 miles one way, or about a five and half hour round trip. Currently, only one constituency requires additional funding for a second office; Ross, Skye and Lochaber. This would inevitably need to be replicated in the new 'Highland Central' constituency due to the scale and scope of the travel links, whilst also being required in 'Highland North' due to its geographical area.

Although understanding the challenges facing the Boundary Commission for Scotland, as I hope you can see from the above, I have given considerable thought to the significant issues that will face the people of my constituency if the proposed changes move forward. The Highlands should be represented to

reflect the real lives of the people who live here. I would urge a radical rethink of the current proposals for the 2023 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies.

I hope this information is helpful, and I look forward to hearing from you in relation to my concerns soon.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Drew Hendry', with a horizontal line underneath.

Drew Hendry MP
Member of Parliament for Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey