

## Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries Highland Council area

### Action required

1. The Commission is invited to: -
  - Consider the consultation responses for Highland Council area and decide whether to hold a local inquiry.
  - Consider whether it wishes to
    - a) adopt the published Further Proposals and names/designations as Final Recommendations subject to satisfactory design in other groupings being agreed or
    - b) amend its proposals for constituency boundaries or names and consult upon them again.

### Background

2. At its meeting of 19 June 2024 the Commission considered Paper BS 109 ([boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/BS\\_109\\_Highland.pdf](https://boundaries.scot/sites/default/files/BS_109_Highland.pdf)) which discussed the responses to the Revised Proposals consultation for Highland Council area and agreed to consult on Further Proposals which retained one existing constituency – Caithness, Sutherland and Ross and made changes to the other two constituency boundaries (Inverness and Nairn; and Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) at Strathdearn to align with a ward boundary as suggested during the consultation. All of the existing constituency names were retained.
3. The Further Proposals are shown in the table below and map at Appendix A.

Constituency name	Council area	Designation	Electorate	Variation from Electoral Quota
Caithness, Sutherland and Ross	Highland	County	56,532	-5.6%
Inverness and Nairn	Highland	County	65,464	9.3%
Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch	Highland	County	67,222	12.2%

4. On 26 September 2024 the Further Proposals were published for the specified consultation period of one month.

### Responses to Further Proposals Public Consultation

5. Some representations contained suggestions that did not comply with the statutory rules governing this review. We did not consider those suggestions further.

### Local Inquiry

6. Highland Council did not object to the Further Proposals nor did a body of 100 electors.

### General Comments

7. A member of the public suggested constituencies in Highland and the north-west of Scotland should have Gaelic and English constituency names.

8. A member of the public stated that the area of constituencies should be considered because a Glasgow constituency, with the same number of electors, is so different in size to a Highland or north-east Scotland constituency.
9. A member of the public suggested a historical Caithness and Sutherland constituency. They stated that since the boundary was changed they are being treated as second-class citizens.
10. From at least 1950 to 1997 there was a UK Parliament Caithness and Sutherland constituency that included Dornoch. Since then, the boundary has extended southwards to include Easter Ross (Tain and Invergordon).

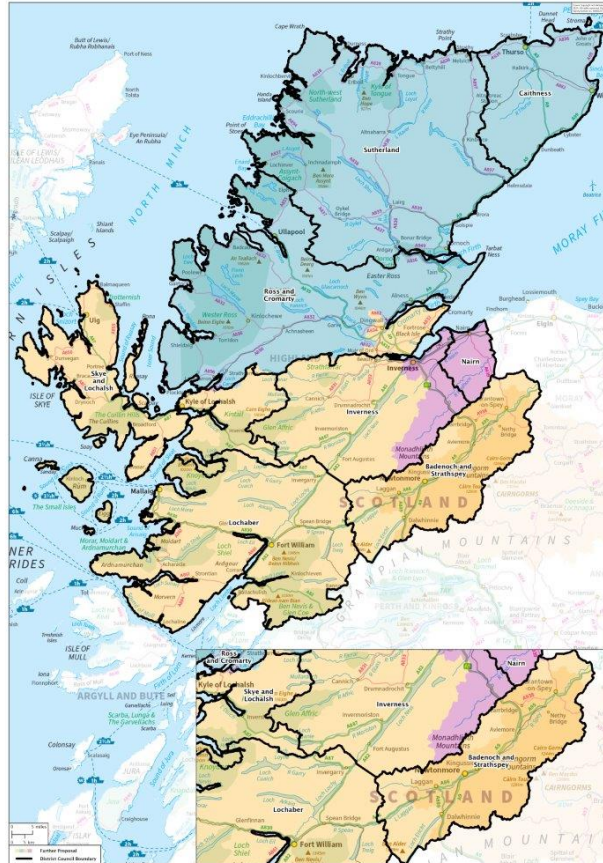
### **Inverness and Nairn**

11. A member of the public supported the proposed Inverness and Nairn constituency because it is a mainly an urban constituency.

### **Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch**

12. A member of the public opposed the proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency because: it is too large; those in the rural west of the constituency have nothing in common with those in urban Inverness; and they are concerned rural areas will be under-represented.
13. There are no rules regarding the area of Scottish Parliament constituencies or regions.
14. A member of the public opposed the proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency name but provided no alternative suggestion.
15. A member of the public opposed the proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency because the Black Isle has little in common with Skye, Lochaber or Badenoch. They stated that the Black Isle has closer local ties with the Moray Firth, Inverness, Caithness/ Sutherland or Ross/ Cromarty than with Skye. They suggested that the Black Isle, Cromarty or Ross-shire should be included in the constituency name.
16. From 1999-2011 the Black Isle was situated in a Ross, Skye and Inverness West Scottish Parliament constituency. Since 2011 the Black Isle has been situated in a Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency. The Black Isle is currently in Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross UK Parliament constituency but prior to this (2005-2024) it was in a Ross, Skye and Lochaber constituency.
17. A member of the public supported the proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency because it includes Grantown on Spey and Nethy Bridge (Strathspey) with Badenoch. They suggested including Badenoch and Strathspey in the constituency name.
18. A UK Parliament constituency was named Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey from 2005 - 2024.
19. A member of the public wished no change to the existing boundaries because Grantown, Carrbridge and Nethy Bridge are all part of Strathspey and have very little in common with Moray. They also suggested including Strathspey in the constituency name.

20. A member of the public suggested Strathspey be included in the constituency name because the proposed constituency includes the historical Badenoch and Strathspey District Council area which clearly defines the geographical area.
21. The map below shows District Council boundaries in place from 1975 – 1996. The further proposals are shown as block colours.



22. Nethy Bridge and Vicinity Community Council wish Strathspey to remain in a Highland constituency because they have very little in common with Moray and suggested Strathspey be included in the constituency name.
23. A member of the public found it difficult to note the changes to the proposed boundary.
24. A member of the public noted that that the proposed boundary change affects few electors.

### Summary

25. The Further Proposals aligned the proposed constituency boundary with an electoral ward boundary by Strathdearn.
26. Highland Council did not object to the Further Proposals nor did a body of 100 electors during this consultation stage or any of the earlier consultations.

27. A number of comments stated the proposed constituencies are too large but there are no constituency area rules for the Scottish Parliament. UK Parliament constituencies are to be no larger than 13,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency covers an area of 12,745 km<sup>2</sup> and the Caithness, Sutherland and Ross constituency covers an area of 12,792 km<sup>2</sup>.
28. There were suggestions to include Strathspey in the proposed Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch constituency name. Historically Strathspey has been included in a UK Parliament constituency name. When considering constituency names at its July 2024 meeting (Paper BS 117), the Commission agreed to retain the existing constituency name of Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch. The Commission is guided by Boundary Commission for Scotland's naming policy which refers to trying to keep names short rather than attempt to describe an area exhaustively.
29. Overall, the responses to this consultation commented on similar issues to those that had previously been raised at the Revised Proposal stage and which the Commission considered previously.

### **Conclusion**

30. After considering the consultation responses the Commission is asked to confirm whether: -
- a local inquiry should be held in this grouping.
  - it wishes to adopt the Further Proposals as its Final Recommendations for each constituency in this grouping.
  - if any changes should be made to any of the constituency boundaries and consulted on further.
  - confirm its earlier decision on names and designations as its Final Recommendations.

**Secretariat**  
**November 2024**

# Further Proposals - Highland Council Area Appendix A

