

LGBCS: SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

For discussion

1. The Commission will wish to consider further its approach to the next review of Scottish Parliament boundaries following its initial discussion during the meeting of 14 March (LGBCS Paper 2408 refers).

Background

2. The Commission assumed responsibility for Scottish Parliament boundaries on 18 May 2017 following commencement of section 8 of the Scotland Act 2016.
3. The Scotland Act 2016 requires that the Commission must submit its next report on Scottish Parliament boundaries "no earlier than 1 May 2018 and no later than 1 May 2022". At its March meeting, the Commission considered some of the advantages and disadvantages of proceeding earlier or later with the Review and, while inclined to see the advantages of proceeding early, asked the Secretariat to consider whether there was precedent of reviews being conducted over a period within which an election falls; and to consider the degree to which electorates fluctuate over time.
4. On the first point, it is clear that elections have taken place during reviews but care is taken to avoid consultation or announcements during the pre-election period. Appendix A sets out detail drawn from Scotland and the other UK Commissions.
5. With regard to electorate change, the Secretariat undertook analysis of the period 2007 to 2016. This is at Appendix B and shows overall electorate change of 4.3%. It is worth noting that this period covered the referendum on Scottish independence in 2014, the lowering of the voting age to 16 and the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration.
6. The Commission also asked for information on the data used for reviews relative to election date; information is set out in Appendix C.

Scheduling

7. It is difficult to schedule the Scottish Parliament review in isolation from the ongoing 2018 Westminster Review and the impending Islands review. The Westminster Review will not complete until September 2018 and the Islands work is likely to commence in early 2018. The last Scottish Parliament review commenced in 2007 and ended in 2010. It is not unreasonable to assume the next review would take a broadly comparable time.
8. There are however inherent uncertainties. For example, local inquiries for constituencies and regions are triggered by external factors, outwith the Commission's control. Any decision to undertake the review early - with a completion date of 2020- will therefore carry greater risk.
9. One option it may be worth pursuing with Scottish Government is the potential for amending the legislation to allow a later end date for the review. This could allow for a review start date after the scheduled 2021 election, with completion by 2024 in time for the 2025 election.
10. The Commission will be meeting the Minister for Parliamentary Business on 13 June as part of the regular engagement with Scottish Government and may wish to explore some of these issues then. The Secretariat understands that there is no date set yet for the consultation on electoral reform announced in the Programme for Government and its scope, and potential implications for LGBCS, has not yet been decided. The Commission for Parliamentary Reform is still scheduled to report in June.

Conclusion

11. The Commission is invited to consider the issues raised in this paper and agree its approach to the scheduling of the next Scottish Parliament review..

Secretariat
May 2017

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Boundary Reviews and Elections

Summary

- Elections during reviews appear to have been fairly common in the past.
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In Scotland:

- No relevant elections were held when the 1st Scottish Parliament review was conducted between 2007 and 2010.
- Elections were held during the first 4 reviews of UK Parliament constituencies, in July 1945, March 1966, May 1979 and April 1992.
- Elections were held during the first ('76-'85) reviews of electoral arrangements and the 2nd reviews ('89-'92), in May 1977, May 1978, May 1980, May 1982, May 1984 and May 1990.

In England:

Following the 1944 institution of a standing commission, here are the General Reviews and the UK Parliament General elections that have been held whilst they were in progress:

- Initial Review (1944-7): 1945 UK general election
- First Periodic Review (1953-4): No General election
- Second Periodic Review (1965-9): 1966 General election
- Third Periodic Review (1976-83): 1979 General election
- Fourth Periodic Review (1991-5): 1992 General election
- Fifth Periodic Review (2000-6): 2001 and 2005 General elections
- 2013 Review (2011-2013): No General election

In Wales:

The local government elections were as follows:

- May 1996 – electoral reviews took place (no consultation or publication of proposals over election period)
- May 2012 – electoral reviews and 2013 Parliamentary Review took place (no consultation or publication of proposals over election period)
- May 2017 – electoral reviews taking place (only initial consultation taking place in 3 areas over election period).

The National Assembly elections were:

- May 1999 - electoral reviews took place (no consultation or publication of proposals over election period)
- May 2011 - electoral reviews took place (no consultation or publication of proposals over election period)

Parliamentary elections were:

- May 1997 – electoral reviews took place (no consultation or publication of proposals over election period)
- May 2010 – electoral reviews took place (no consultation or publication of proposals over election period)

In Northern Ireland:

BCNI Reviews

- 5th Review - (Commenced 2004, Reported 2007) - 1 Westminster election during review period (GE 2005). There were also 2005 (local government) & 2007 (Assembly) elections.
- 4th Review - (Commenced 1993, Reported 1995) - No Westminster election during review period. There was, however, the 1993 (local government) election.
- 3rd Review - (Commenced 1976, Reported 1982) - 1 Westminster election during review period (GE 1979). There were also 1981 (local government) & 1982 (Assembly) elections.
- 2nd Review - (Commenced 1964, Reported 1969) - 2 Westminster elections during review period (GE 1964 & GE 1966)
- 1st Review - (Commenced 1951, Reported 1954) - 1 Westminster election during review period (GE 1951).
- Initial report – (commenced 1944, Reported 1948) - 1 Westminster election during review period (GE 1945)

LGBC Reviews in NI

- 11 council model review (July – Dec 2007) – no elections
- 7 council model (July 2006 – March 2007) – no elections
- 26 council model (1969 - 1972) – Only the Westminster (GE 1970) held during review period.

Electoral change 2010-2016

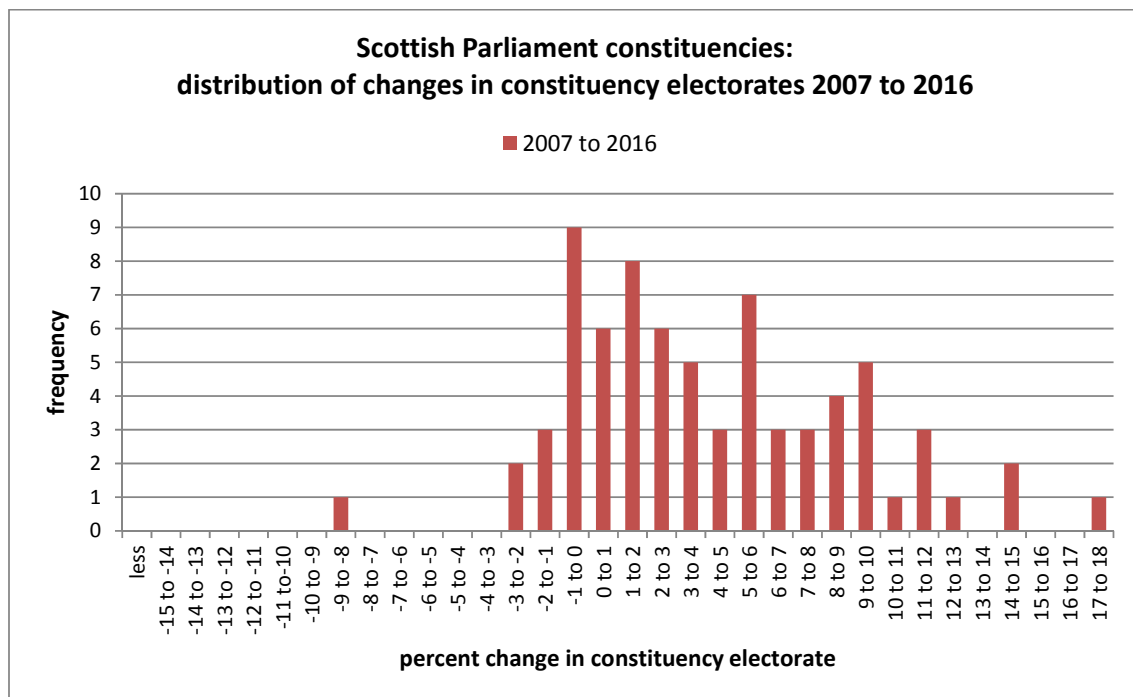
Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Scottish Parliament constituency electorates and disparities 2007 to 2016¹

Electorate movements

Between July 2007 and December 2016, the local government electoral register in Scotland increased by 4.3% to 4,089,477 electors. This period saw a surge in electorate because of the recent referenda and the inclusion of 16- and 17-year-olds in the register, countered by the impact of individual elector registration.

The frequency of percent changes in Scottish Parliament constituency electorates over the period are shown in the histogram below:



The largest percentage increase in constituency electorate was in *Edinburgh Northern and Leith* constituency, which grew by almost 18% in the 9 years to 2016. Other notable increases in electorates were in *Aberdeenshire East* constituency and *Linlithgow* constituency, both having increases of around 14.5%.

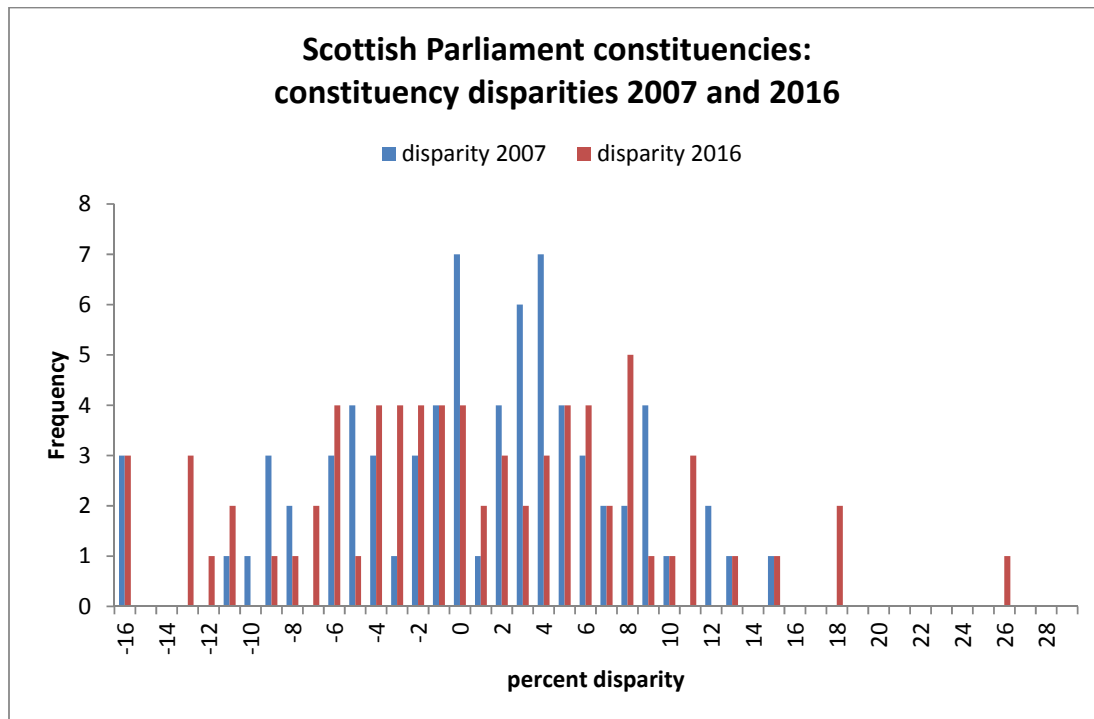
The largest decrease in electorate over the period was in *North East Fife* constituency, which saw a fall of almost 9% in its electorate. This mainly occurred in the aftermath of the independence referendum and when IER was introduced.

¹ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/electoral-stats/1-12-16/electoral-stats16-tab4.xlsx> accessed 22/03/17

Of the Island constituencies, *Orkney Islands* constituency and *Shetland Islands* constituency saw increases in electorate of 4% and 3% respectively, similar to the national increase. *Na h-Eileanan Siar* constituency electorate decreased by 2% over the same period.

Parity changes

The distributions of constituency disparities in 2007 and 2016 are shown in the histogram below:

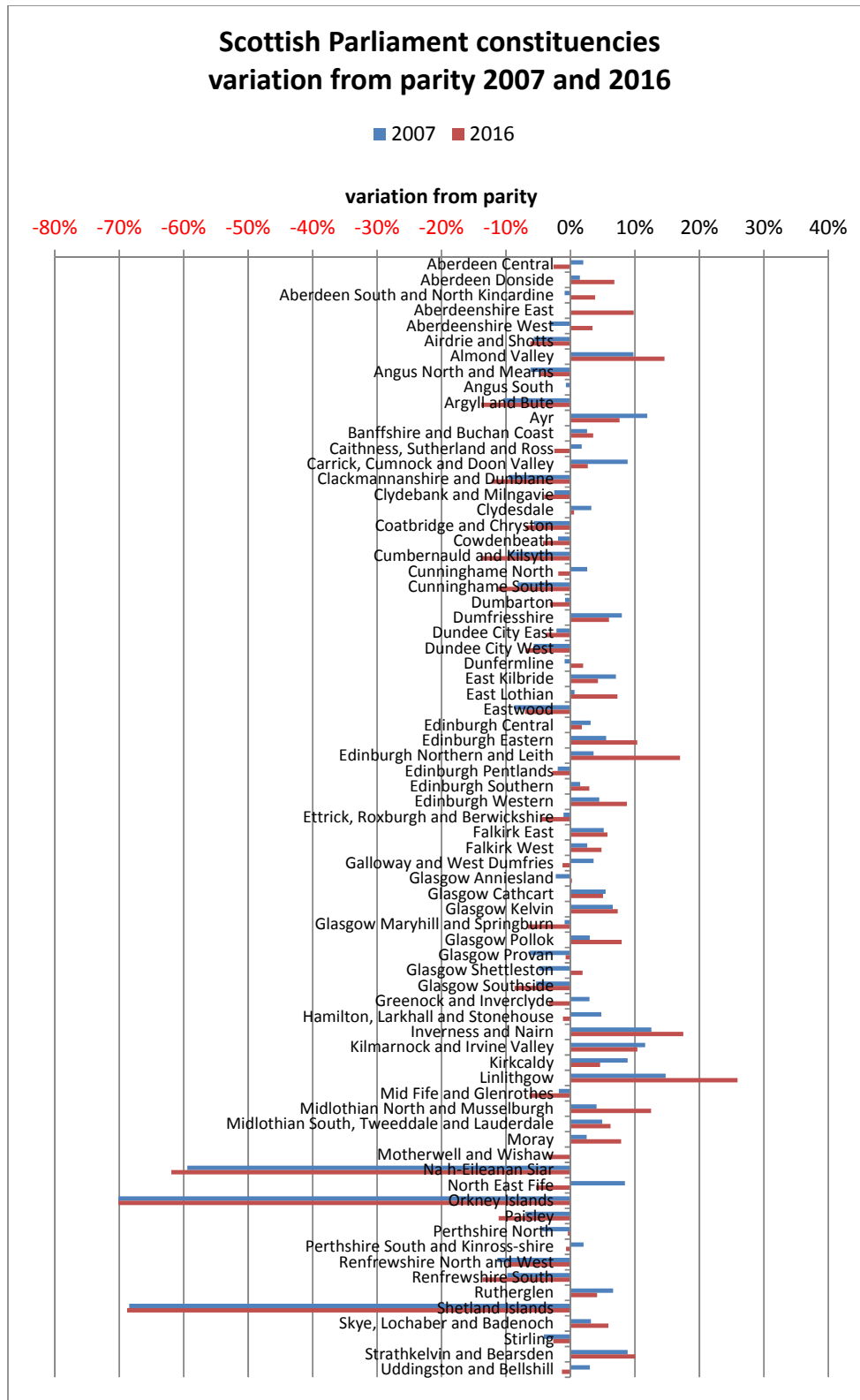


The chart illustrates the wider, flatter distribution of disparities in 2016 relative to 2007. (The 3 constituencies appearing in the chart with “-16%” disparity are the island constituencies with around -70% disparity.)

The largest, and therefore the most under-represented, constituency in 2016 was *Linlithgow* with a disparity of almost 26%, which had increased from almost 15% in 2007. The next largest constituency in 2016 was *Inverness and Nairn* constituency with a disparity of 18% which had increased from almost 13% in 2007. *Edinburgh Northern and Leith* constituency also had a disparity of over 17%, which had increased from almost 4% in 2007.

The most over-represented constituencies in 2016, excepting the island constituencies, were *Cumbernauld and Kilsyth* constituency (-14%), *Argyll and Bute* constituency (-14%) and *Renfrewshire South* constituency (-14%). All 3 constituencies were over-represented by around 10% in 2007. The increases in over-representation in *Cumbernauld and Kilsyth* constituency and *Argyll and Bute* constituency appear to have been caused by the areas not keeping up with the national increases in electorate, whereas *Renfrewshire South* constituency’s electorate fell in the period immediately preceding the independence referendum (as did other neighbouring constituencies).

The following chart shows the actual variations from parity of all Scottish Parliament constituencies in 2007 (the enumeration date for the First Periodic Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries) and in 2016.



Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Data and election dates

Review	Electorate Data	Date Reported	Next Relevant Election
BCS-2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies	December 2015	[September 2018]	[May 2022]
BCS – Fifth Periodical Review of UK Parliament Constituencies	June 2001	December 2003	5 th May 2005
BCS – Fourth Periodical of UK Parliament Constituencies	February 1992	March 1993	1 st May 1997
BCS – Third Periodical Review of UK Parliament Constituencies	February 1978	February 1983	9 th June 1983
BCS – Second Periodical Review of UK Parliament Constituencies	February 1965	June 1969	18 th June 1970
BCS – First Periodical Review of Scottish Parliament Constituencies	July 2007	May 2010	5 th May 2011
LGBCS – Fifth Statutory Review	September 2013	May 2016	May 2017
LGBCS – Fourth Statutory Review	July 2004	November 2006	3 rd May 2007
LGBCS – Third Statutory Review	1991 Census Population Data – for categorisation	August 1998	6 th May 1999
LGBCS - Second Statutory Review	Date not recorded	June 1992	5 th May 1994