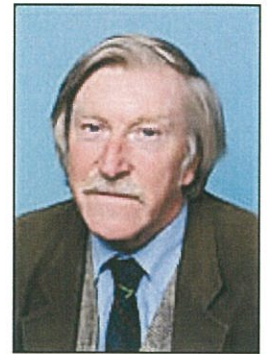


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10 January 2017

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An Independent Councillor

Dear Sir/Madam

**2018 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies – Initial Proposals
Public Consultation on Proposals affecting Perth and Kinross (PKC) Area**

I note the publication of your above proposals on 20/10/16 inviting comment by 11/1/17. In particular, I refer to the proposals as they affect the existing UK parliamentary constituencies of Perth and North Perthshire and Ochil and South Perthshire.

I write in my capacity as the elected member for Kinross-shire Ward 8 since May 1999, having been re-elected on three more occasions since, an area I am proud to continue to represent.

I understand the Commission is proposing the creation of two Westminster Wards for the PKC area, these being Perthshire County Constituency and Kinross-shire and Cowdenbeath County Constituency. At their meeting on 14/12/16 PKC unanimously decided to oppose this proposal and I seconded a motion by my Independent colleague, Councillor Dave Cuthbert, to that effect.

I strongly suggest you reconsider your proposals affecting the PKC area for the following reasons, viz:-

Fixation on Voter Numbers and Area of Representation

I note your Review is required by the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 and the requirement to reduce Scotland's constituencies from 59 to 53. Also that, apart from the 2 island constituencies, every one in Scotland must be between 71,031 and 78,507 voters and no constituency may exceed 13,000 square kilometres. I further note that because of these constraints on constituency design, you have not been able to construct all constituencies from complete electoral wards. There is therefore, in my view, a fundamental flaw that results from these constraints, in producing proposals that are the outcome of being fixated on voter numbers rather than the identity and history people feel for their areas in our very diverse island. The proposals artificially force disparate communities together and force other strongly linked communities apart.

Whilst PKC and myself are content with your proposals for the Perthshire County Constituency, it is suggested this should be renamed 'Perth and North Perthshire Constituency, reflecting Perth's recent re-affirmation of City status and recognition it does not contain southern Perthshire.

PKC and myself completely oppose your proposal for a Kinross-shire and Cowdenbeath County Constituency, for reasons outlined below:

Southern Perthshire and Kinross-shire have little in common with Central Fife. Your current proposal pairs 4 rural wards of PKC with 4 urban wards from Central Fife that include the towns of Cowdenbeath, Kelty, Kirkcaldy and Lochgelly. The levels of population density and deprivation in these central Fife wards are much higher, meaning that the issues of this half of the proposed constituency would dominate the MP's time and leave Kinross-shire in particular effectively under-represented.

Even more significantly, since Scotland began sending representatives to the UK Parliament in 1710, no Westminster constituency has paired Kinross-shire with Fife.

PKC in our motion debate of 14/12/16 afore-mentioned, unanimously called upon yourselves to consider alternative groupings of the Perth & Kinross, Fife, Clackmannanshire, Stirling and Falkirk Council areas, including the suggested constituencies of Kinross-shire and South Perthshire and Stirling City and Falkirk North.

I agree that Central Fife would be better paired with Clackmannanshire and Kinross-shire and South Perthshire better paired with Stirlingshire. This would allow for the creation of two entirely rural and two entirely urban constituencies, which makes more sense.

I note that in your 2013 Review, the Commission proposed a constituency of Clackmannanshire and Dunfermline West.

The suggested constituency of Kinross-shire and South Perthshire would pair the remaining parts of PKC with the rural parts of Stirling Council, the majority of which were in the historic former larger county of Perthshire and there remain strong local ties with these communities. It is submitted broadly that this constituency would be made up of PKC wards 6 – 9 and Stirling wards 1 – 3.

More detailed figures on the revised alternative groupings PKC have asked you to consider can be provided and I commend the research done by my colleague, Councillor Dave Cuthbert, prior to his detailed submission.

I urge the Commission to reconsider their proposal to ensure that Kinross-shire is not paired with Fife and serious thought given to the suggested alternative constituency of Kinross-shire and South Perthshire.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Michael Barnacle
Independent Member for Kinross-shire

Circulation:

Kinross-shire Ward Community Councils
Councillors Dave Cuthbert, Joe Giacobazzi, Willie Robertson – Kinross-shire Ward
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Alex Rowley, MSP, Mid Scotland and Fife (Labour)
Alexander Stewart, MSP, Mid Scotland and Fife (Conservative)
Willie Rennie, MSP, Leader of Liberal Democrats in Scotland