

Boundary Commission for Scotland,
3 Drumsheugh Gardens,
Edinburgh,
EH3 7QJ

19th June 2009

Dear Sirs,

**First periodic review of Scottish Parliament boundaries Milngavie and
Bishopbriggs/Strathkelvin and Bearsden**

I wish to appeal against the revised proposals of the Boundary Commission in relation to the above constituencies, which fall partly within my Westminster Parliamentary constituency of East Dunbartonshire.

I believe the original constituency boundaries were a natural fit for the communities contained within it, particularly Milngavie and Bearsden which have many historical links and are now also linked in both the local authority and Westminster constituency. This is demonstrated by the fact that there was no substantive objection to these boundaries prior to the Public Local Inquiry. Surely natural justice tells us that where the communities feel a sense of shared identity, any separation imposed by constituency boundaries would be artificial. The people of Milngavie and Bearsden have many common concerns, and it therefore makes sense that they should be represented by a single MSP.

I am concerned that the new proposals divide the community of Bearsden, putting most of Bearsden town centre and the whole of Bearsden North ward into the new Clydebank and Milngavie constituency and leaving a substantial part of Bearsden in the new Strathkelvin and Bearsden constituency.

I feel it also makes better sense to link the town of Bishopbriggs with the western area of East Dunbartonshire, particularly given the Kirkintilloch area's historic ties

with the Kelvin Valley. This linkage was also recognised in the original proposals for the constituency in which Kirkintilloch was included.

None of the points in favour of the Milngavie and Bishopbriggs constituency were heard at the Public Local Inquiry, as comments in favour of a new constituency proposal were specifically excluded from the criteria under which the inquiry proceeded. Indeed, I have been told that the reason why the Milngavie and Bishopbriggs constituency was not discussed was because no complaints had been received about it except regarding the name, which further suggests that this arrangement was the one most acceptable to the local community. If this constituency was not part of the public inquiry process then it should not have been changed. I believe this is a *prima facie* breach of natural justice and I would urge the Commission to review these issues in light of this. I am confident that such a review would reinforce the case for reinstating the original constituency boundaries for Milngavie and Bishopbriggs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Yours Faithfully,

Jo Swinson MP