

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council: 27 August 2008

Subject: Local Inquiries into the Scottish Parliament Boundary Review

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To advise that the dates have been fixed for the Local Inquiries into the proposals of the Boundary Commission for Scotland for the review of Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Boundary Commission for Scotland published its provisional proposals for a review of constituencies for the Scottish Parliament on 14 February 2008. These proposals were submitted to Council at its meeting of 27 February. The proposals comprise:-

- 1) linking two of West Dunbartonshire's wards, Clydebank Central and Clydebank Waterfront, with part of the Renfrewshire Council area to create the North Renfrewshire and Clydebank Burgh Constituency; and
- 2) joining the Kilpatrick Ward with Dumbarton, Lomond and Leven wards and two wards of Argyll and Bute Council to form the Dumbarton and Helensburgh County Constituency.

- 2.2** The Council duly objected to the proposals for both constituencies on the grounds that Kilpatrick Ward should not be split from the other two Clydebank Wards and that the linking of Clydebank Central and Clydebank Waterfront with Renfrewshire Council areas was anomalous and unacceptable. The Council proposed that the status quo be maintained.

- 2.3** Where a local authority submits an objection to a proposed boundary, a local inquiry must be held.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The timetable for these inquiries has now been set. The inquiries for all affected constituencies in the West of Scotland will be held in Paisley Sheriff Court from 26 to 28 August and in Clydebank Town Hall on 1 and 2 September, before Sheriff Principal Kerr.

- 3.2** It is not necessary to make a presentation at both inquiries. However, it will be in the Council's interest to have a presence at the Paisley Inquiry to observe proceedings and other presentations which may in turn be beneficial to the Council's submission to the Clydebank Local Inquiry the following week.

3.3 Since notification of the dates for the Local Inquiries was received during the recess, initial preparations have had to be made in advance of this Council meeting. To this end, informal discussions have taken place between representative Elected Members and relevant officers and between officers of this Council and of Renfrewshire Council.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Boundary Commission will meet the costs of the Clydebank Local Inquiry.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 There are no significant risks involved in participating in the inquiries. There are, however, significant risks for the electoral future of Clydebank if the Sheriff overrules the Council's objections and upholds the Boundary Commission's proposals.


7. Conclusions

7.1 It is important that the Council puts forward its best possible case to the Local Inquiry. The Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition are working together to prepare the Council's submission. It is hoped that clear consensus between the political groups will strengthen the Council's case.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Council is requested to:-

- 1) note the dates of the local inquiries; and
- 2) remit to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, S.S.P. and Independent Members to prepare the Council's case for presentation at the Clydebank Local Inquiry.



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David McMillan
Chief Executive
5 August 2008

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Background Papers: Scotland Act 1998
Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004
Letter dated 7 Feb 2008 from the Boundary Commission for Scotland with proposals for the review
Report by the Chief Executive to West Dunbartonshire Council on 27 February 2008 and minute thereof.
Letter dated 7 July 2008 from the Boundary Commission for Scotland with the timetable for the local inquiries

Wards Affected: All wards