

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council: 30 August 2006

Subject : Boundary Review : Final Recommendations by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report is to advise Members of the final recommendations published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, to outline the main issues raised from the recommendations and to propose the Council's response to these matters.

2. Background

- 2.1** The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 makes provision for the election of Councillors by way of single transferable vote for the next local authority elections in 2007. At the Council meeting of 25 August 2004, Members agreed to the establishment of a Working Group on the Local Government Boundary Review, which has met on several occasions to, *inter alia*, consider the arrangements proposed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland.
- 2.2** The Council received initial proposals in March 2005, the details of which were reported to Council in April 2005, (pages 1606-1607 of Minutes refer). Members will recall that these proposals were considered unacceptable in that they linked areas together that had limited community focus, administrative function and parity, and the Council proposed it's own alternative arrangements.
- 2.3** This alternative arrangement suggested 7 wards, 6 x 3 member wards and 1 x 4 member ward, and with wards which had community focus, administrative function and parity. These were submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland for consideration.
- 2.4** The Commission published revised proposals in July 2005, which took account of elements of the Council's suggested alternative arrangements, but retained 6 wards for West Dunbartonshire: 4 x 4 member wards and 2 x 3 member wards. The revised proposals significantly altered the proposed boundary arrangements in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven, which, although an improvement on the initial proposals, were considered limited in community focus and parity. Again the Council submitted its alternative arrangements for consideration.

- 2.5** The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has now published its final recommendations for West Dunbartonshire, which are set out in Appendix 1. These vary from the previously published arrangements in only one insignificant detail (the move of one farm between wards).
- 2.6** The recommendations of the Boundary Commission have been submitted to Scottish Ministers for approval; however the Council is entitled to make comments on them by 31 August 2006. Ministers then have the option to give effect to the recommendations with or without modifications. Where they decide to make an order including modifications, they can require the Boundary Commission to make a further review of the electoral arrangements and make a further report containing revised proposals.
- 2.7** The Local Government Boundary Review Working Group at its meeting of 17 August 2006, agreed to report to Members the Boundary Commission's final recommendations, and seek approval of alternative arrangements which would be submitted to Scottish Ministers for consideration.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The Final recommendations of the Boundary Commission allow for 6 wards as set out in Appendix 1. The Working Group, having considered the final recommendations, remains concerned that the Boundary Commission has not fully taken into account community focus and has also treated West Dunbartonshire differently from other areas such as East Dunbartonshire, where 3 member wards dominate.
- 3.2** It appears that the Boundary Commission has decided to ensure that a certain number of Councillors should apply to a certain area based on the projected electorate. Therefore the basis of the review for West Dunbartonshire is predetermines that Clydebank should have 11 Councillors and that the remainder of the Council area should be arranged around this fixed position.
- 3.3** The Council, in recommending alternative arrangements, have sought to ensure that wards have community focus, administrative function and parity. In addition it has recognised that, in light of the significant regeneration initiatives that are taking place in West Dunbartonshire, the revised wards should be constructed to take account of these initiatives
- 3.4** It is of concern that the Boundary Commission have indicated within their Report to Ministers (para 31) that the Council failed to provide information on the extent of perceived communities within West Dunbartonshire. During the course of meetings between the Boundary Commission and Officers of the Council, this matter was considered in detail, and advice was offered on which communities could be linked, but equally importantly, which communities should not be linked.

This has not been recognised in the Boundary Commission's report and should not remain unchallenged. It is also the case that at these meetings the regeneration initiatives that were taking place in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria were also highlighted and the importance of ensuring that they were not split between wards was emphasised. It is therefore disappointing to note that neither of these issues has been taken account of in the Final Recommendations.

- 3.5** In particular, Members should be aware that it is proposed that the area covered by the Strathleven Regeneration Company would be split between 2 x 4 member wards which would result in 8 members having a direct interest in this initiative. It should also be pointed out that, of other parties making representations to the Boundary Commission, no-one supported the linking of part of Dumbarton (High Overtoun and Bellsmyre) with the Vale of Leven. Whilst the Boundary Commission has acknowledged the problems this causes, it has not proposed any changes which cut across the principle of retaining 11 Councillors for Clydebank. This rigid approach to the establishment of the wards is a serious failing in the Boundary Commission's proposals. (Strangely the Commission say that they would have liked to create a 5 member ward for Dumbarton, but this is not possible within the legislation).
- 3.6** The alternative arrangements previously agreed by Members are set out in Appendix 2. Again it is suggested that these alternatives represent more appropriate arrangements for the formation of revised wards. Parity is better; appropriate communities are linked; and, as importantly, communities which have no previous linkages are not combined to form wards.
- 3.7** Within the suggested Ward 3 the Vale of Leven Industrial Estate and Strathleven Park would form part of a ward for Dumbarton. Given the regeneration initiative at Strathleven it means that the entire Strathleven Regeneration Company interests would be located in a single ward. It is also the case that as this initiative develops, Strathleven Park may become increasingly linked to Dumbarton North through the provision of improved infrastructure.
- 3.8** Within Old Kilpatrick, that part of the village west of the Erskine Bridge would link with Milton and Bowling to Dumbarton. All of these settlements are linked through their connection to the River Clyde and the regeneration initiatives at Bowling and Dumbarton Waterfront. It is also the case that in recent studies the residents of Bowling, Milton and Old Kilpatrick area are increasingly using Dumbarton for food shopping, which means that there are existing linkages between these communities.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** None

5. Financial Implications

5.1 None

6. Conclusions

6.1 It is disappointing that the Council's previously submitted arrangements to the Boundary Commission have not been taken on board. The alternative arrangements proposed by the Council display greater community focus and parity, and, as importantly, do not seek to link areas which have no existing or historical linkages. The Council in constructing alternative arrangements have adopted a more flexible approach than the Boundary Commission, and has sought to ensure that the regeneration initiatives that are in place are not split between wards.

7. Recommendations

7.1 **Members are requested to:-**

- **note the Final Recommendations prepared and published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland;**
- **note the issues arising as a result of these proposed arrangements;**
- **consider the alternative arrangements as set out in Appendix 2 to this report; and**
- **agree to submit these alternative arrangements to Scottish Ministers for consideration, as set out in the attached letter as Appendix 3.**

Tim Huntingford
Chief Executive
Date: 21 August 2006

Wards Affected : All

Background Papers : The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004
Report to Council on the Initial Proposals for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire March 2005
Revised Proposals for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire July 2005
Final Recommendations for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire July 2006

Person to Contact :

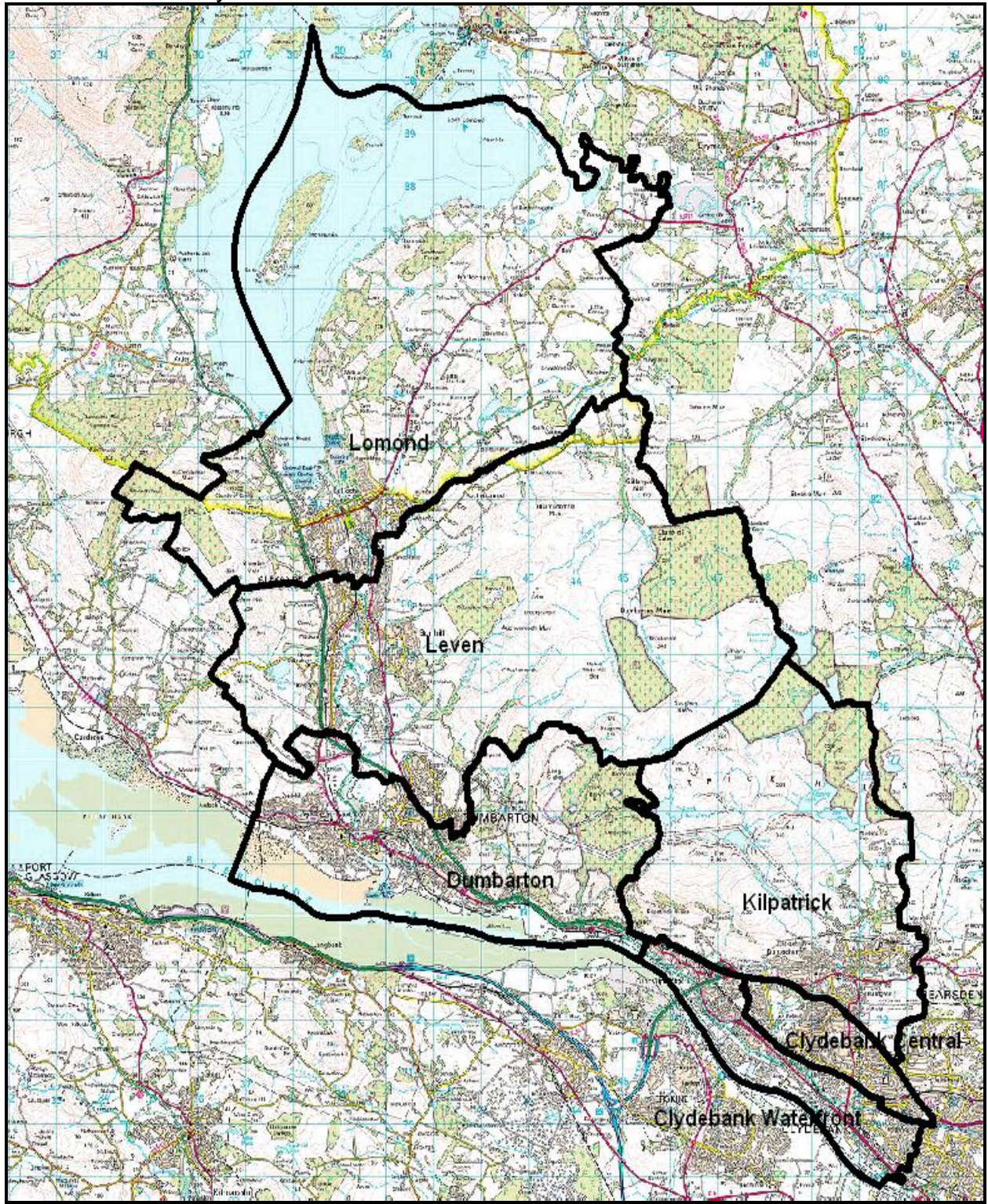
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Appendix 1

Final Recommendations for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire July 2006

Ward	Electorate	Members	Parity	Deviation from parity	% Deviation from parity	No of electors per member
Lomond	8,950	3	9,517	-567	-5.96	2,983
Leven	13,570	4	12,689	881	6.94	3,393
Dumbarton	13,840	4	12,689	1,151	9.07	3,460
Kilpatrick	8,780	3	9,517	-737	-7.74	2,927
Clydebank Central	12,100	4	12,689	-589	-4.64	3,025
Clydebank Waterfront	12,540	4	12,689	-149	-1.17	3,135
	69,790	22				
Parity	3,172					
3 member	9,517					
4 member	12,689					

Final Recommendations for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West
Dunbartonshire July 2006

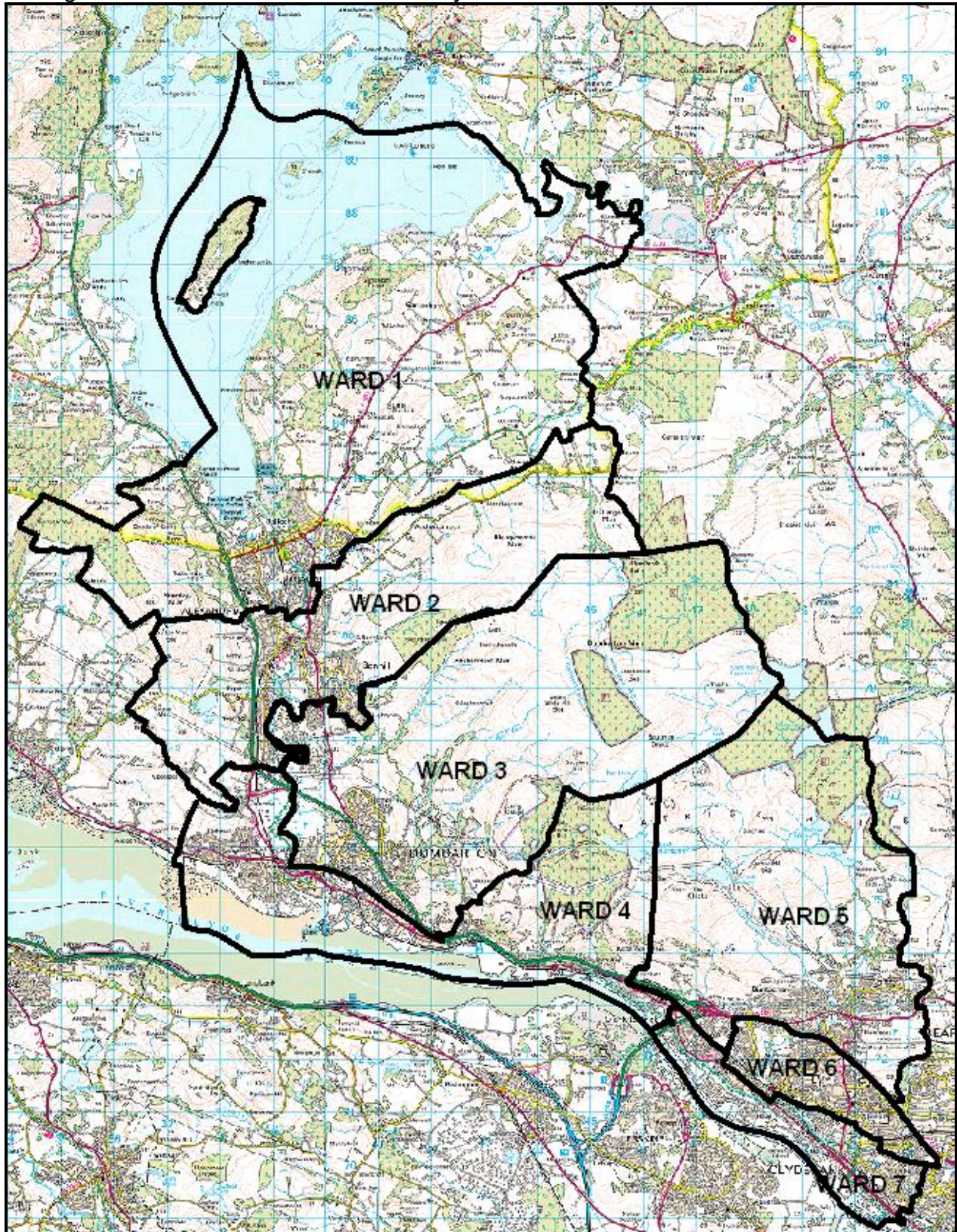


Appendix 2

West Dunbartonshire Council Alternative Arrangements for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire July 2006

Ward Number	Electorate	Members	Parity	Deviation from parity	% Deviation from parity	No of electors per member
1	8,960	3	9,517	-557	-5.85	2,987
2	9,315	3	9,517	-202	-2.12	3,105
3	9,225	3	9,517	-292	-3.07	3,075
4	9,950	3	9,517	433	4.55	3,317
5	9,510	3	9,517	-7	-0.07	3,170
6	13,430	4	12,689	741	5.84	3,358
7	9,400	3	9,517	-117	-1.23	3,133
	69,790	22				
Parity	3,172					
3 member	9,517					
4 member	12,689					

West Dunbartonshire Council Alternative Arrangements for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire July 2006



West Dunbartonshire Council Alternative Arrangements

- Ward 1 would comprise of Balloch, Haldane, Jamestown, Tullichewan and Levensvale and the rural area around Gartocharn. The existing Council Boundary would form the northern, eastern and western boundaries. The southern boundary would run east-west north of Christie Park north of Alexandria town centre, and include Lomond Industrial Estate and Jamestown and follow the urban edge of Haldane. This would be a relatively large ward and include a number of contiguous communities but also seeks to combine communities where there are limited linkages at present. It does however ensure all of the National Park is contained in a single ward
- Ward 2 contains Alexandria, Dalmonach, Bonhill and Renton. The existing Council boundary would form the eastern and western boundary to this proposed ward. The northern boundary would run east-west south of Christie Park and include Alexandria town centre, around the edge Lomond Industrial Estate through Jamestown to follow the urban edge of Haldane. This ward has the advantage of linking a number of contiguous communities and retaining the core of central Alexandria in a single ward.
- Ward 3 would comprise part of Dumbarton north of the railway line; and would include Bellsmyre, Garshake, Barnhill, Townend, Silverton. The ward would also include Strathleven Park in Bonhill. The River Leven and railway line would form the western boundary and the railway. The southern boundary would follow the urban edge of Milton, whilst the northern boundary would follow the edge of Wheatcroft and Bonhill. This is a relatively compact urban area with a large rural hinterland of the Kilpatrick Hills and Lang Craggs. It links a number of contiguous communities but also combines part of Dumbarton with Bonhill where there are limited existing linkages, although the regeneration proposals for the former J&B plant at Strathleven will provide for greater linkages in the future.
- Ward 4 comprises Dumbarton West Central and East and stretches through to include Milton, Bowling and part of Old Kilpatrick. The River Leven and A82 form the northern boundary, with the River Clyde the southern. The Council boundary forms the eastern edge of this proposed ward whilst the western boundary stops short of the Erskine Bridge. This ward uses the River Clyde as a common link with communities and has the advantage of ensuring all of central Dumbarton and the riverside regeneration initiatives that are planned or are in place are contained in a single ward.
- Ward 5 comprises Hardgate, Duntocher and Faifley and the former tank farm at Old Kilpatrick. It primarily comprises of the area north of the A82, which forms a strong physical boundary. This ward would contain a large rural hinterland of the Kilpatrick Hills, but is a relatively compact urban area and links contiguous communities.

- Ward 6 comprises Linnvale, Drumry, Kilbowie, Parkhall, through to the west of Mountblow Road. This proposed ward would stretch from the Council boundary in the east to Auchentoshan Distillery in the west. The A82 would provide the northern boundary, whilst the canal/railway line and Dumbarton Road at Mountblow would provide the southern, both of which provide strong physical boundaries. This is a primarily residential area with a compact urban form and links a number of contiguous communities.

- Ward 7 is focussed on the Riverside communities and would consist of Whitecreek, Central Clydebank and Dalmuir. This proposed ward stretches from the Council boundary of the east using the canal/railway line and Dumbarton Road at Mountblow. It would also include part of Old Kilpatrick at the Erskine Bridge. This would be a relatively extensive urban area within which the majority of regeneration initiatives in Clydebank are focussed, and does link a number of the riverside communities.

Our Ref: TH/CM

APPENDIX 3

Date: August 2006

Mr Tom McCabe
Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform
Scottish Executive,
Finance and Central Services Department,
Local Governance and Licensing Division,
Local Governance Team,
3H, Victoria Quay,
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Dear Mr McCabe

Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 - Final Recommendations for the Review of Electoral Arrangements in West Dunbartonshire

I refer to the letter and report published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland on 14 July 2006, which the Commission has made to the Scottish Ministers on the review of electoral arrangements for the introduction of STV PR for local government elections in West Dunbartonshire Council area.

West Dunbartonshire Council has considered the final recommendations published by the Commission and have concluded that these recommendations remain unacceptable. The proposed new wards link areas that have limited community focus, administrative function and parity. As a consequence the Council has set out its own alternative arrangements for your consideration.

The Council received initial proposals in March 2005, and following consideration of these proposals by Members they were considered unacceptable in that they linked areas together that had limited community focus, administrative function and parity, and the Council proposed its own alternative arrangements. This alternative arrangement suggested 7 wards, 6 x 3 member wards and 1 x 4 member ward. These were submitted to the Commission for consideration.

The Commission published revised proposals in July 2005, which took account of elements of the Council's suggested alternative arrangements, but retained 6 wards for West Dunbartonshire: 4 x 4 member wards and 2 x 3 member wards. The revised proposals altered the proposed boundary arrangements in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven, which, although an improvement on the initial proposals, were considered limited in community focus and parity. Again the Council submitted its alternative arrangements for consideration. The Commission has now

published their final recommendations for West Dunbartonshire. These vary in only one insignificant detail from the previously published arrangements.

The Final recommendations of the Boundary Commission allow for 6 wards as set out their report of July 2006. The Council, having considered the final recommendations, remains concerned that the Boundary Commission have not fully taken into account community focus and also have treated West Dunbartonshire differently from other areas such as East Dunbartonshire, where 3 member wards dominate rather the 4 member wards that are in the majority in this Council area.

It appears that the Commission have decided to ensure that a certain number of Councillors should apply to a certain area based on the projected electorate and upon that basis configure boundaries. Therefore the basis of the review for West Dunbartonshire is predetermined that Clydebank should have 11 Councillors and that the remainder of the Council area should be arranged around this fixed position.

The Council in recommending alternative arrangements has sought to ensure that wards have community focus, administrative function and parity. In addition it recognised that in light of the significant regeneration initiatives that are taking place in West Dunbartonshire, the revised wards should be constructed to take account of these initiatives.

It is of concern that the Boundary Commission have indicated within their Report of July 2006 that the Council failed to provide information on the extent of perceived communities within West Dunbartonshire (paragraph 31). During the course of meetings between the Boundary Commission and Officers of the Council, this matter was considered in detail and advice was offered as to what communities could be linked. In addition and of equal importance, advice was given on areas that had limited linkages. This has not been recognised in the Boundary Commission's report and should not remain unchallenged. It is also the case that at these meetings the regeneration initiatives that were taking place in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria were highlighted and the importance of ensuring that they were not split between wards was emphasised. It is therefore disappointing to note that neither of these issues has been taken account of in the Final Recommendations.

In particular the Council wishes to draw to Ministers' attention the ward that is proposed for the area that is covered by the Strathleven Regeneration Company, a partnership comprising West Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire, The Walker Group and Diageo plc. This is a key urban regeneration initiative in Dumbarton, comprising of over 250 new homes, industrial and business space and roadside/tourist facilities, split between 2 x 4 wards which would result in 8 members having a direct interest in this initiative. It should also be pointed out that of other parties making representations to the Boundary Commission no-one supported the linking of part of Dumbarton (High Overton and Bellsmyre) with the Vale of Leven, and whilst the Commission have acknowledged the problems this causes they have not proposed any changes, as a result of preserving the position of ensuring there are 11 Councillors for Clydebank. This rigid approach to the establishment of the wards is a serious failing of the Commission's proposals. Strangely the Commission say that they would have liked to create a 5 member ward for Dumbarton, but that this was not possible within the legislation.

The alternative arrangements previously proposed by the Council are set out as an Appendix to this letter. Again it is suggested that these alternative arrangements represent more appropriate arrangements for the formation of revised wards. Parity is better; appropriate communities are linked, and as importantly, communities which have no previous linkages are not combined to form wards.

Within the suggested Ward 3 the Vale of Leven Industrial Estate and Strathleven Park would form part of a ward for Dumbarton. Given the regeneration initiative at Strathleven referred to above, it means that the entire Strathleven Regeneration Company interests are located in a single ward. It is also the case that as this initiative develops Strathleven Park may become increasingly linked to Dumbarton North through the provision of improved infrastructure.

At Old Kilpatrick that part of the village west of the Erskine Bridge would link with Milton and Bowling to Dumbarton. All of these settlements are linked through their connection to the River Clyde and the regeneration Initiatives at Bowling and Dumbarton Waterfront. It is also the case that in recent studies the residents of Bowling, Milton and Old Kilpatrick area are increasingly using Dumbarton for food shopping thus developing existing linkages between these communities.

It is disappointing that the Council's previously submitted arrangements to the Boundary Commission have not been taken on board. The alternative arrangements proposed by the Council display greater community focus and parity, and as importantly do not seek to link areas which have no existing or historical linkages. The Council in constructing alternative arrangements have adopted a more flexible approach than the Boundary Commission, and have sought to ensure that the regeneration initiatives that are in place are not split between wards.

In light of the above and the information provided in the attached Appendices Ministers are requested to consider the alternative arrangements proposed by West Dunbartonshire Council and agree that they form a better review of electoral arrangements in West Dunbartonshire.

Yours sincerely

Mr T. Huntingford
Chief Executive