

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 30 September 2009

Subject: Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries – Provisional Proposals for Regions

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise that the Boundary Commission has now confirmed the revised constituency boundaries for the Scottish Parliament and that it has fixed a date for a Local Inquiry into its provisional proposals for the Regional boundaries.

2. Background

2.1 The first phase of the review of Scottish Parliament electoral boundaries dealt with the constituencies. The Council successfully contested the original proposals which would have seen the Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency split, with the Kilpatrick Ward becoming part of the Dumbarton constituency while the Clydebank Central and Clydebank Waterfront wards were to be combined with parts of Renfrewshire Council in a cross Clyde constituency.

2.2 Following a local inquiry, the Commission abandoned these proposals in favour of retaining the original boundaries for Dumbarton Constituency while extending the boundary of the Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency to include the whole of Ward 2 of East Dunbartonshire as opposed to only part as at present. This was a gratifying outcome as it recognised the representations and concerns expressed at the Inquiry by the Council and local residents. The Boundary Commission has now confirmed these revised proposals.

2.3 The Commission has now embarked on the next phase of the review, which is to set Regional boundaries. Its initial proposals were reported to Council on 27 May 2009. These proposals involved the inclusion of Dumbarton Constituency in Highland and Islands Region, while the Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency would become part of East Central Scotland Region.

2.4 At its meeting on 27 May, the Council agreed to make representations on these proposals on the understanding that this would necessitate the holding of a further local Inquiry.

3. Main Issues

3.1 The Boundary Commission has now advised that the Local Inquiry into the Commission's Provisional Proposals for Regions will be held in the Parish Halls, George Street, Glasgow on 22 and 23 October.

- 3.2** The Inquiry will consider representations in respect of five of the eight proposed regions, namely East Central Scotland, Highlands and Islands, Lothian, South Scotland and West Central Scotland. The Inquiry will not consider the proposals for the regions of Glasgow, Mid Scotland and Fife, or North East Scotland. The Commission will consider all representations received for the regions under review, together with the Local Inquiry report, before deciding if any revisions are required to its provisional proposals.
- 3.3** The representations previously agreed by the Council were as follows:-
- a) There are no natural linkages between West Dunbartonshire Council and Highland Council;
 - b) The inclusion of parts of West Dunbartonshire Council in the Highland list would result in the area being represented by 14 list MSPs and 2 local MSPs;
 - c) Natural linkages exist between West Dunbartonshire Council and Glasgow/East Central Scotland;
 - c) The whole of the West Dunbartonshire Council area should be included either in East Central Scotland or in the Glasgow list
- 3.4** Since the Commission is not going to hear representations about the Glasgow Region at the Inquiry, it would seem unlikely that the Council's request to be included in that Region can now be considered.
- 3.5** However, the Council can still make its representations in relation to the split of the two constituencies between different regions and the inappropriateness of the solutions proposed for this area.
- 4. Personnel Issues**
- 4.1** There are no personnel issues associated with these proposals.
- 5. Financial Implications**
- 5.1** There are no financial implications associated with these proposals.
- 6. Risk Analysis**
- 6.1** The new proposals for the Regions will increase the complexity of the poll in this area. Voters may feel remote from the new Regions and it is possible that turnout for the Regional poll will fall or that there will be an increase in spoiled papers for that part of the poll.

7. Conclusions and Officers' Recommendations

- 7.1** It is recommended that the Council remit to the Chief Executive to prepare a formal submission to the Local Inquiry, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, SSP and Independent Members.
- 7.2** The Council is asked to nominate a member to present its representations at the Local Inquiry, assisted by appropriate officers.

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 3 September 2009

Officer to Contact: Anne Laird, Manager of Administrative Services, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton
Tel: 01389 737514
E-mail: anne.laird@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Background Papers: Reports by the Chief Executive to West Dunbartonshire Council on 27 February and 27 August 2008 and on 27 May 2009 and minutes thereof

Letters dated 27 April, 18 May and 27 August 2009 from the Boundary Commission for Scotland

Wards Affected: All wards