

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 27 May 2009

Subject: Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This is a supplementary report to item 10 on the agenda. It contains details of the revised boundary proposals for this area which were not available when the agenda was issued and makes recommendations to Council on action to be taken.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland's original proposals for this area were as follows:-
- a) to link Clydebank Central and Clydebank Waterfront Wards with part of the Renfrewshire Council area in a North Renfrewshire and Clydebank Burgh Constituency, and
 - b) to include Kilpatrick Ward with Dumbarton, Lomond and Leven Wards and two wards of Argyll and Bute Council in a Dumbarton and Helensburgh County Constituency.
- 2.2 The Council made representations to the Local Enquiry held in Paisley and Clydebank in August 2008, arguing for the retention of the existing Clydebank and Milngavie and Dumbarton constituencies.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 The proposed constituencies for this area are now as follows:-
- a) Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency – comprising West Dunbartonshire Council Wards 4, Kilpatrick, 5; Clydebank Central and 6, Clydebank Waterfront, with wards 1 and 2 of East Dunbartonshire Council; and
 - b) Dumbarton Constituency - comprising West Dunbartonshire Council Wards 1, Lomond; 2, Leven and 3, Dumbarton with Wards 9, 10 and 11 of Argyll and Bute Council

Both are County Constituencies.

- 3.2 The proposals largely reflect the Council's recommendation that the status quo be maintained, although the proposed Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency includes the whole of Ward 2 of East Dunbartonshire instead of only part as at present.

- 3.3** The Commission has invited further representations on its revised proposals. Since there has already been a Local Inquiry, it is not obliged to hold a further inquiry in light of any representations received, but may do so if it considers it necessary.
- 3.4** At the same time, the Commission has issued its first proposals for the Scottish Parliament Regions. There are 8 Regions, each electing 7 MSPs. At present, the two constituencies in this area are part of the West of Scotland Region administered from Renfrewshire Council.
- 3.5** The Commission's proposals are as follows:-
- a) The inclusion of the Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency in the **East Central Scotland Region** with the following other constituencies:- Airdrie and Shotts; Coatbridge and Chryston; Cumbernauld and Kilsyth; Falkirk East; Falkirk West; Linlithgow; Motherwell and Wishaw; Strathkelvin and Bearsden; Uddingston and Bellshill; and
 - b) The inclusion of the Dumbarton Constituency in the **Highlands and Islands Region** with the following other constituencies; Argyllshire and Bute; Caithness, Sutherland and Ross; Inverness and Nairn; Moray; Na h-Eileanan an Iar; Orkney Islands; Shetland Islands; Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch.

Plans of the proposed new regions are attached to this report as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

- 3.6** The Council has to consider whether it would wish to make representations on these proposals. The deadline for submission of any such representations is 21st June 2009, so the matter must be decided at this meeting.
- 3.7** Objectors to the proposals have to give reasons for their objections and representations will be more effective if the Council offers an alternative proposal. Possible options are as follows:
- a) To accept the provisional proposals by the Commission
 - b) To recommend retention of the status quo – i.e. that both constituencies remain with the Regional Returning Officer of Renfrewshire Council in the West Central Scotland Region; or
 - b) The inclusion of both constituencies within the Glasgow Region
- 3.8** If any interested Council makes representations, the Commission is obliged to hold a Local Inquiry on its provisional proposals in the same way that it did for the constituencies.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues arising from this report.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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 accordingly it is possible that turnout for the Regional poll will fall or that there will be an increase in spoiled papers.

7. Conclusions & Officers' Recommendations

- 7.1** The Constituency proposals reflect the representations made by the Council at the Local Inquiry and it is recommended that the Council welcomes these proposals.
- 7.2** The Regional proposals give more cause for concern. The inclusion of Dumbarton Constituency in Highlands and Islands Region and of Clydebank and Milngavie Constituency in East Central Scotland Region is clearly motivated by numerical parity rather than by any issues of community or commonality of interest.
- 7.3** It is recommended that the Council makes representations on the Commission's proposals for the Regional boundaries.
- 7.4** The Council objected to the creation of a cross Clyde constituency. This being the case, it would be inconsistent to argue for a retention of the status quo by both local constituencies being included in the West Central Scotland Region.
- 7.5** In these circumstances, it is suggested that the logical alternative would be for the constituencies to be included within the Glasgow Region.
- 7.6** It is recommended that officers prepare a case on this basis for submission to the Boundary Commission for Scotland by the deadline of 21 June 2009.

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David McMillan
Chief Executive
Date: 21 May 2009

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Appendix 1 & 2: Plans of proposed new regions

Background Papers: Scotland Act 1998: Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004
Letters dated 7 Feb and 7 July from the Boundary Commission for Scotland
Report by the Chief Executive to West Dunbartonshire Council on 27 February 2008 and minute thereof
Report by the Chief Executive to West Dunbartonshire Council on 27 August 2008 and minute thereof

Letters dated 27 April and 18 May 2009 from the
Boundary Commission for Scotland the new proposals.

Wards Affected:

All wards