

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING - 25 JUNE 2009

BOUNDARY REVIEW FOR SCOTLAND: FIRST PERIODICAL REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BOUNDARIES

Report by the Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide the Council with:

- (i) information on the Boundary Commission for Scotland's **revised recommendations** for Scottish Parliament Constituencies and **provisional proposals** for 8 Scottish Parliament Regions (copies of the plans illustrating the Boundary Commission's proposals are on display within the Main Meeting Room); and
- (ii) information on the implications for East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland, which is an independent body established by statute, is responsible for keeping under review, the boundaries of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament.
- 2.2 As a result of changes in the distribution of electorate, as well as changes to Local Government areas since the existing constituencies were defined (1995), the Commission has determined that a comprehensive review is required. The Commission is required to complete a review of the boundaries of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament between 1 July 2007 and 30 June 2010.
- 2.3 The Commission published its provisional proposals for constituencies on 14 February 2008. The Council at a special meeting on 13 March 2008 (item 1, page 290, 2007/12), gave consideration to the provisional proposals and agreed to lodge objections to those proposals and submit alternative options which focused on an Ayrshire wide basis and provided for all parliamentary constituencies for Ayrshire to be contained solely within Ayrshire.
- 2.4 The Council's submissions were presented at the public local inquiry held on 26 and 29 September 2008 within the County Buildings, Ayr to consider all objections made in respect of the Boundary Commission's proposals within this area.

3. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND: REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland has revised its provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament Constituencies in the light of representations received and local inquiries held.

3.2 The revised recommendations provide for East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council areas being combined to comprise 3 constituencies, exactly covering those combined council areas.

3.3 The Commission's revised recommendations are:

Constituency/Name	Designation	Electorate	Description
Ayr	Burgh Constituency	61250	South Ayrshire Council Electoral Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	County Constituency	59580	East Ayrshire Council Electoral Wards 7, 8, 9 and South Ayrshire Council Electoral Wards 6, 7 and 8
Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley	County Constituency	61070	East Ayrshire Council Electoral Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

3.4 The Boundary Commission's proposals for North Ayrshire remain unchanged namely the creation of 2 constituencies – North Cunninghame and South Cunninghame.

3.5 The Commission also proposes that the undernoted constituencies be combined to form a Scottish Parliament region:

Region	Electorate	Description
South Scotland	465,770	The Constituencies of Ayr; Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley; Clydesdale; Dumfriesshire; Etrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire; Galloway and West Dumfries; Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley; Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale.

3.6 Members were notified of the proposals by letter on 21 May 2009 and a copy of the related maps were submitted to each political group.

4. CURRENT REVIEW PROCESS

4.1 As part of the ongoing support to the Boundary Commission for Scotland in terms of its review, a copy of relevant notices and maps illustrating the proposals have been made available at the undernoted locations:

- Council Headquarters, London Road, Kilmarnock;

- Cumnock Library, 25-27 Ayr Road, Cumnock;
- Dalmellington Library, Townhead, Dalmellington;
- Dick Institute, 1 Elmbank Avenue, Kilmarnock;
- Newmilns Library, 4 Craigview Road, Newmilns;
- Stewarton Area Centre, Avenue Street, Stewarton.

4.2 Representations on the Boundary Commission's proposals require to be submitted by 21 June 2009.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST AYRSHIRE

5.1 Parliamentary Constituencies

5.1.1 The Boundary Commission's revised proposals to create constituencies within Ayrshire meets the main argument submitted by East Ayrshire Council in its representations. The proposed Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley constituency aligns with the existing Scottish Parliamentary Constituency for that area. There has been a slight amendment to the Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency in terms of its boundary with the proposed Ayr constituency. This amendment has resulted in the majority of the electorate within the Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency now residing within East Ayrshire.

5.2 Regional Constituencies

5.2.1 The second part of the Boundary Commission's proposals relates to the submission of provisional proposals which places East Ayrshire within the proposed South Scotland region as outlined in paragraph 3.4. Presently under the existing arrangements East Ayrshire is currently divided between 2 parliamentary regions namely Central Scotland (covering the North of East Ayrshire i.e. Kilmarnock and Loudoun) and South Scotland (covering the south of East Ayrshire i.e. Cumnock and Doon Valley).

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 In terms of the revised parliamentary constituency boundaries, the proposals provide for 5 parliamentary constituencies within Ayrshire. The 2 proposed parliamentary constituencies covering East Ayrshire, closely align with existing boundary arrangements and accordingly it is recommended by Officers that the proposals should be supported. The only issue that Members may wish to give consideration to is to the naming of the proposed parliamentary constituencies as detailed the first column at paragraph 3.3 above.

6.2 In terms of the Boundary Commission's regional proposals, the proposal that East Ayrshire be contained within a single region is considered by Officers as a good arrangement and there are no areas of concern. Accordingly it is suggested that the proposal should be supported.

6.3 In light of the timescales involved consultations have taken place with representatives of the 3 groups covering East Ayrshire and it is understood that the only issue that the Council may wish to give consideration to is the

naming of the proposed parliamentary constituencies. Consultation has taken place with the Boundary Commission for Scotland and notwithstanding the requirement to make representations not later than 21 June 2009, indications have been received from the Boundary Commission's secretariat that any suggestions by East Ayrshire Council in respect of the naming of the parliamentary constituencies following consideration of the matter at its meeting on 25 June 2009 would be accepted on that date.

7. FINANCIAL/LLEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS – Nil.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The Council is asked to:

- (i) Confirm its acceptance or otherwise of the Boundary Commission for Scotland's proposals in terms of the proposed boundaries for the revised Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies and provisional Scottish Parliament Region as outlined in this report;
- (ii) give consideration to the naming of the parliamentary constituencies;
- (iii) remit authority to the Chief Executive to notify the Boundary Commission for Scotland of the Council's position; and
- (iv) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

Fiona Lees
Chief Executive

BW/KS
10 June 2009

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Boundary Commission for Scotland First Periodic Review of Scottish Parliamentary Constituencies documentation (revised proposal) and provisional regional proposals.

Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on Tel No (01563) 576135. Any person wishing to inspect the background papers in respect of this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services on Tel No (01563) 576135.

Implementation Officer: Bill Walkinshaw, Head of Democratic Services.