

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 30 SEPTEMBER 2004

LOCAL GOVERNANCE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2004: REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Report by the Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To submit for consideration of the Committee, proposals for establishment of a Member/Officer Working Group to allow the Council to participate in the consultation process with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland in regard to the proposed review of ward boundaries associated with the review of electoral arrangements under the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Andy Kerr, MSP, Minister for Finance and Public Services has issued a Direction to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland in relation to any consultation carried out by the Commission with any Council in connection with the review of ward boundaries.
- 2.2** The Council has also received a Direction from the Minister (copy attached under Appendix A) in respect of the consultation process.
- 2.3** The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has now written to East Ayrshire Council in compliance with the aforementioned Direction in respect of the following, viz:-
- the timetable proposed by the Commission for the consultation;
 - the timetable proposed by the Commission for the review;
 - the general approach the Commission proposes to adopt in formulating its proposals for ward boundaries;
 - the information the Commission would like to have available to use in formulating those proposals;
 - the assistance which the Council would be asked to render to the Commission in the process of review; and
 - such other matters the Commission considers appropriate.

3. INITIAL CONSULTATION WITH EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

- 3.1** Under stage 1 of the review timetable, the Commission proposes to meet with representatives of East Ayrshire Council on 13 October 2004. The meeting will provide an opportunity:-

- to allow the Boundary Commission to provide background information/suggestions on how the review might be progressed and to outline methodology;
- to further flesh out all details as to how the review might be conducted;
- to discuss how the Commission and the Council can work together;
- to exchange information; and
- to allow the Council to raise any issues/areas of concern for discussion and to allow the Council to make suggestions on proposals/designs for wards.

4. REVIEW: PROPOSED TIMETABLE

- 4.1** The main stages and expected timescales for the review are detailed in Appendix B to this report. The Commission anticipates that the review will be completed by August 2006.

5. PROPOSED MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP

- 5.1** The timescale for responding to the Commission's requirements under stage 1 of the review timetable is extremely tight. Members through the Political Groups of East Ayrshire, will be given notification by Officers of the issues in respect of which Member input is required. This information will be considered by the Member/Officer Working Group proposed under this paper. The remit for the Member/Officer Working Group is attached under Appendix C.

- 5.2** In terms of the Direction to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, the Commission is required to receive the concluded view of the Council in writing on any matters raised during the consultation exercise, no later than the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the date of any meeting (in the case of East Ayrshire Council, that date would be by 9 November 2004).

- 5.3** Accordingly, following the meeting between the Member/Officer Working Group and the Commission, a report will be submitted to a special meeting of Council to obtain the concluded view of Council on the matters raised under the first stage of the consultation process.

6. FURTHER CONSULTATION STAGES

- 6.1** Members will note from Appendix B that the Council will have further opportunities to comment on terms of the review timetable. The next opportunity will be at stage 3 when the Commission's initial proposals are released to the Council for consideration.

- 6.2** Members will also note from the timetable that provision exists for the public to participate in the consultation process.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** There will be costs associated with the production of any maps and the normal administrative arrangements in relation to operating a Member/Officer Working Group. All such costs will be met from the democratic process budget.

8. LEGAL AUTHORITY

- 8.1** The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, and the attached Direction provides for the Council to participate in the review process.

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS - NIL.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1** The Committee is asked:-

- (i) to establish a Member/Officer Working Group to meet and work with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland in respect of the review of ward boundaries carried out under the review of electoral arrangements under the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004;
- (ii) to agree the remit of the Member/Officer Working Group as detailed in Appendix C to this report; and
- (iii) to otherwise note, the contents of the report.

Fiona Lees
Chief Executive

9 September 2004

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Copy of Direction under Section 18(2A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland from the Scottish Ministers.
2. Letter dated 6 September 2004 from the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland to the Chief Executive.

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers relative to this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager, on telephone number 01563 576135. Any person wishing further information on this report should contact Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager, on telephone number 01563 576135.

Implementation Officer: Bill Walkinshaw, Administration Manager.