

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

7 October 2015

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland – Fifth Statutory Review of Local Government Electoral Arrangements in Scotland – Public Consultation on Proposals for Wards In Perth and Kinross Council Area**Report by Head of Democratic Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report advises on the public consultation by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland on its revised proposals for wards in the Perth and Kinross Council area in relation to the Fifth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements by the Commission, and seeks the Council's views on the proposals.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Council's current electoral arrangements with 41 members in 12 multi-member wards are set out in The Perth and Kinross (Electoral Arrangements) Order 2006. The Order came into force on 14 July 2006 following the Fourth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland ('the Commission'). The Review had been undertaken as required by the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 which introduced multi-member wards, and the final recommendations of the Review were reported to the Council on 29 March 2006 (Article 226 and Report 06/217 refer).
- 1.2 In a letter dated 6 June 2013, the then Chair of the Commission, Peter Mackay, provided the Chief Executive with an update on the planning for the Fifth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements. This letter was circulated to group leaders and was reported for information to the Modernising Governance Member / Officer Group on 17 July 2013.
- 1.3 The Group asked that the Head of Democratic Services seek clarification from the Commission on the calculation used to determine councillor numbers and also the potential effect on that calculation of Perth having been awarded city status. The Council determined the boundary for the bid for city status on 11 February 2011 (Article 111 and Report 11/73 refer). The Head of Democratic Services spoke with the then Secretary to the Commission, Hugh Buchanan, on 26 July 2013 who advised that the Commission would look at the electorate numbers for the designated Perth City area in the context of the electorate numbers for the rest of the Perth and Kinross Council area. The Commission were supplied with a copy of Report 11/73.

- 1.4 A further update on the planning for the Review was provided in a letter dated 6 February 2014 from the new Chair of the Commission, Ronnie Hinds. The letter explained that the Review would be conducted in two phases –
- Firstly, the Commission will consult and decide on councillor numbers for each council;
 - Secondly, the Commission will consult and decide on ward boundaries.
- 1.5 The Commission requires to submit a final report to Scottish Ministers in May 2016, with a view to revised boundaries being in place for the scheduled Local Government Elections in May 2017.
- 1.6 On 21 February 2014, the Commission wrote with their proposals on councillor numbers.
- 1.7 The Commission arranged a meeting with the Council and this was held on 27 February 2014, attended by Professor Ailsa Henderson, Commissioner and Colin Wilson, Casework Manager, Councillors Miller, Roberts, MacLellan and Cuthbert, the Chief Executive, the Head of Democratic Services and Brenda Murray, Local Development Plans Team Leader. The Commission representatives outlined the background and context for the review and provided opportunity for dialogue and clarification.
- 1.8 In particular, it was emphasised that in determining councillor numbers, the Commission had to have regard to –
- Minimum 18, maximum 85 councillors
 - 10% limit on change in councillor numbers in a council area
 - Categorisation of councils –
 - population distribution – settlements of 3000 or more
 - deprivation – Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data
- 1.9 In addition, Scottish Ministers had indicated to the Commission that they would find it hard to justify an increase in the overall number of councillors in Scotland.
- 1.10 The Commission's methodology is based on categorising each local authority in Scotland and applying the same formula to all local authorities in each category.
- 1.11 In a letter dated 21 February 2014, the Commission proposed that the councillor numbers for Perth and Kinross Council be reduced from 41 to 40. In terms of the timetable for the first stage of the Review, the Council required to respond to the Commission on the proposed councillor numbers no later than 23 April 2014.

- 1.12 On 23 April 2014 (Article 251 refers), the Council agreed –
- (i) Given the GROS projected population increase for Perth and Kinross over the coming years, the Council feels that there is insufficient basis for a reduction in councillor numbers in Perth and Kinross.
 - (ii) The Head of Democratic Services respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland confirming the Council’s view that the “status quo” of 41 elected members should be retained for Perth and Kinross Council.
- 1.13 The Commission undertook a subsequent period of public consultation ending in August 2014.
- 1.14 The Council suggested minor changes to the ward boundaries at Aberfeldy, Bamff and Logierait as set out in Appendix A to this report.

2. PROPOSALS

Council Consultation

- 2.1 On 19 March 2015, the Commission published its proposals for wards in the Perth and Kinross Council area. These proposals were for consultation with Councils from 19 March 2015 until 19 May 2015. It was noted that there would be a 12 week public consultation between July and October 2015.
- 2.2 The Commission’s proposals were for 40 councillors representing 8 3-member wards and 4 4-member wards, reducing councillor numbers in the area by 1.
- 2.3 The Commission’s proposals, intended to improve overall forecast parity and address forecast disparities in Ward 5 (Strathtay), were to -
- make no changes to Ward 1 (Carse of Gowrie), Ward 6 (Strathearn), Ward 7(Strathallan) and Ward 10 (Perth City South);
 - reduce the number of councillors in Ward 8 (Kinross-shire) by 1;
 - make changes to ward boundaries by Aberfeldy, Almondbank, Bamff, Logierait, Perth and north of Kinross. These changes incorporate the suggestions from the Council; and
 - make no proposed changes to ward names.
- 2.4 The Commission discussed the proposals for the Perth and Kinross Council area at its meetings of 25 November 2014 (See LGBCS Paper 2259/14); and decided on its proposals at its meetings of 3 February 2015 and 3 March 2015 (See LGBCS Paper 2276/15) – www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk

- 2.5 The Commission's proposals were circulated to group leaders on 19 March 2015 and were discussed at a special meeting of the Modernising Governance Member Officer Group on 22 April 2015. A copy of the proposals booklet was placed in the Councillors' Lounge.
- 2.6 On 13 May 2015 (Article 310 refers), the Council agreed:-
- (i) Note the proposals by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland for wards for the Perth and Kinross Council area.
 - (ii) Note that there are no proposed changes to Ward 1 (Carse of Gowrie), Ward 6 (Strathearn), Ward 7 (Strathallan) and Ward 10 (Perth City South).
 - (iii) Note that there are no proposed changes to ward names.
 - (iv) Agree to accept the proposed changes to ward boundaries by Aberfeldy, Bamff and Logierait as suggested by the Council.
 - (v) Agree that the Council's preferred position is that it does not accept the proposals to reduce the number of councillors in Ward 8 (Kinross-shire) by 1 and to make changes to ward boundaries by Almondbank, Perth and north of Kinross, but agrees to maintain the Council's previous position that:
 - (a) given the GROS projected population increase for Perth and Kinross over the coming years, the Council feels that there is insufficient basis for a reduction in councillor numbers in Perth and Kinross and
 - (b) the Head of Democratic Services respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland confirming the Council's view that the "status quo" of 41 elected members should be retained for Perth and Kinross Council.
 - (iv) Agree that if the Commission remains of the view that the number of councillors in Perth and Kinross Council should be reduced by 1, the Commission be urged to:
 - (a) Take cognisance of the following factors in relation to the existing Ward 8 (Kinross-shire) boundaries:
 - 1. The interests of effective and convenient local Government:
 - i. The current proposal cuts 2 community council areas in half
 - ii. Ward 9 (Almond & Earn) Councillors would have 9 Community Councils to attend
 - iii. Three Community Councils could be attended by 7 Councillors

2. Councillor Parity:
 - i. LGBCS figures indicate a 6.98% variation to the mean number of voters to Councillors under the existing proposal, using the existing methodology.
 - ii. Retaining the existing ward 8 boundary gives a 5.51% variation when increasing population is taken into account.

3. Local Ties:
 - i. Kinross-shire is an ancient Scottish County with a strong sense of identity.
 - ii. All communities within the existing Ward 8 look to Kinross and Milnathort for their services (including administrative hub, local services and High School provision).

4. Easily Identifiable Boundaries
 - i. The proposal takes the A91 as the northern boundary of ward 8. Whilst this is easily identifiable, it also cuts communities like Carnbo in half.
 - ii. The existing Boundary for ward 8 utilises the ridge line of the Ochils as the Boundary. This is easily identifiable and does not cut communities in half.

5. Geographic Reasons
 - i. The existing Ward 8 (Kinross-shire) is in a natural bowl formed by hills.
 - (b) Include the complete parish of Arngask in Ward 8 as currently a small area of this parish is in Ward 9 (Almond & Earn).
 - (c) Give further consideration to proposed consequential changes to the boundaries of Wards 5 and 9 by Almondbank, Perth and north of Kinross.

2.7 The Commission considered the Council's response at its meeting on 9 June 2014 (see Local Government Boundary Commission Scotland's paper 2297/15 – www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk) and an extract from the minute of that meeting is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Public Consultation

2.8 On 30 July 2015, the Commission published its revised proposals for wards in the Perth and Kinross Council area. These proposals are for public consultation from 30 July 2015 until 22 October 2015.

2.9 The Commission's proposals were circulated to group leaders on 30 July 2015, and a copy of the guidance booklet was placed in the Councillors' Lounge ([Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland - Fifth Electoral Reviews - Perth and Kinross](#)).

- 2.10 The Commission's proposals remain for 40 councillors representing 8 3-member wards and 4 4-member wards, reducing councillor numbers in the area by 1.
- 2.11 Overall, the Commission's proposals in relation to ward boundaries remain intended to improve overall forecast parity and to address forecast disparities in Ward 5 (Strathtay); and to -
- make no changes to Ward 1 (Carse of Gowrie), Ward 6 (Strathearn), Ward 7 (Strathallan) and Ward 10 (Perth City South);
 - reduce the number of councillors in Ward 8 (Kinross-shire) by 1;
 - make changes to ward boundaries by Aberfeldy, Almondbank, Bamff, Logierait, Perth and north of Kinross. These changes incorporate the suggestions from the Council; and
 - make no proposed changes to ward names.
- 2.12 The Commission has revised its proposals for the boundary north of Kinross which it considers will offer acceptable electoral parity of 10%, whilst addressing some of the Council's concerns regarding the boundary between Wards 8 and 9.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Fifth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland commenced in February 2014.
- 3.2 As part of the current phase of the Review, the Commission is undertaking public consultation on its revised proposals for wards in the Perth and Kinross Council area as set out at Paragraphs 2.10 - 2.12 above.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Council –
- i) Notes the revised proposals by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland for wards for the Perth and Kinross Council area.
 - ii) Notes that there are no proposed changes to Ward 1 (Carse of Gowrie), Ward 6 (Strathearn), Ward 7 (Strathallan) and Ward 10 (Perth City South).
 - iii) Notes that there are no proposed changes to ward names.
 - iv) Agrees to accept the proposed changes to ward boundaries by Aberfeldy, Bamff and Logierait as suggested by the Council.
 - v) Agrees that the Council's preferred position is that it does not accept the proposals to reduce the number of councillors in Ward 8 (Kinross-shire) by 1 but agrees to maintain the Council's previous position that:
 - (a) given the GROS projected population increase for Perth and Kinross over the coming years, the Council feels that there is insufficient basis for a reduction in councillor numbers in Perth and Kinross and

- (b) the “status quo” of 41 elected members should be retained for Perth and Kinross Council.
- vi) Gives further consideration to the proposals to make changes to ward boundaries by Almondbank, Perth and north of Kinross.
- vii) Instructs the Head of Democratic Services to respond to the Commission by 22 October 2015.

Author

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Approved

| Name | Designation | Date |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Bernadette Malone | Chief Executive | 9 September 2015 |

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

| Strategic Implications | Yes / None |
|---|-------------------|
| Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement | N/A |
| Corporate Plan | N/A |
| Resource Implications | |
| Financial | N/A |
| Workforce | N/A |
| Asset Management (land, property, IST) | N/A |
| Assessments | |
| Equality Impact Assessment | N/A |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | N/A |
| Sustainability (community, economic, environmental) | N/A |
| Legal and Governance | N/A |
| Risk | N/A |
| Consultation | |
| Internal | N/A |
| External | N/A |
| Communication | |
| Communications Plan | N/A |

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The proposals set out in this report do not relate directly to the achievement of priorities in the Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The proposals set out in this report do not relate directly to the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the proposals set out in this report.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce implications arising directly from the proposals set out in this report.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no asset management implications arising directly from the proposals set out in this report.

3. Assessments

- 3.1 No assessments have been undertaken in relation to the proposals set out in this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.2 There are no legal and governance implications arising directly from the proposals set out in this report.

Risk

- 3.3 No key risks have been identified in relation to the proposals set out in this report.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The proposals by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland were circulated to group leaders on 30 July 2015.

External

- 4.2 There has been no external consultation in relation to the proposals set out in this report.

5. Communication

- 5.1 There is no requirement for the Council to undertake communications activity in relation to the proposals set out in this report.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers other than those referred to in this report were relied on in preparing the report.

3. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Extract from minute of meeting of the Local Boundary Commission for Scotland of 9 June 2015.

Appendix A

Extract of minute of Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland meeting 9 June 2015

The Commission considered Paper 2297 and noted Perth and Kinross Council's opposition to the ward boundary proposals in Kinross-shire, Perth and at Almondbank. The Council also wished to include the parish of Arngask within a single ward.

The Commission agreed to adopt Option 1 in Paper 2297, where the proposed boundary follows a polling district boundary and partly follows the recognisable historical county boundary, the A91 and M90. The proposal offered acceptable electoral parity of 10% whilst addressing some of the Council's concerns regarding the boundary between wards 8 and 9.

The Council's opposition to the proposals for Wards 4, 5 and 9 was noted but the Commission agreed that these changes had been proposed to deal with electoral disparity and in the absence of an alternative suggestion from Perth and Kinross Council these wards would remain unaltered for public consultation.

As such the Commission provisionally agreed to consult with the public on the ward boundaries as outlined in Paper 2297 Option 1 Appendix C.