

**Local Government Boundaries Commissioner
for Northern Ireland**

Your Transcript
Thank You.

Transcript Details					
	Assistant Commissioner	Zayd Al-Jawad			
Consultation Details					
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Transcript begins on following page.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you for coming. I now formally open this public hearing into the proposed local government district of Causeway Coast. My name is Zayd Al-Jawad and I have been appointed by the Department of the Environment to conduct this hearing. Firstly, I would stress that I am independent of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner Dick Mackenzie, and it is not my function to defend his recommendations. My role today is to listen and consider the evidence put forward at this hearing, and then to report my findings and recommendations to the Commissioner. My recommendations are to be made within four weeks of the close of this hearing so we are looking at mid-December. As far as the times of this hearing are concerned, we have two days available if we need them. I intend to start at ten am each morning, break for lunch between twelve thirty and one thirty and expect to finish around four each evening. I do not intend to stop for coffee or tea breaks, but I will, of course, stop for adjournments if necessary and if it is possible to conclude the hearing within the first day we may be able to do that.

Copies of the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations are available for inspection here, as are copies of the Procedural Guidance which governs the conduct of this hearing. There are some maps over to my right as well if you want to have a look at those. There are also copies of the written representations relating to this District which have been made to the Commissioner's Secretariat during the eight week consultation period which closed on the twelfth of November this year.

I should also point out that the hearing will be recorded and that a transcript will be made available on the Commissioner's website in due course. If anyone cannot access the website and wishes to receive printed copies of these transcripts, please leave your name and contact details with a member of the support staff.

There are maps on display showing the eleven council model, the boundary proposals for the Local Government Districts and the adjacent Districts. Staff from Land and Property Services are also on hand if you wanted to look at any maps in more detail, and they can also help by advising me on the detail of any boundary proposals that are put forward at this hearing; they are also able to assist in any representations that you want to make relating to specific mapping matters.

The purpose this public hearing is to consider oral representations concerning the Provisional Recommendations of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, for the local government district of the Causeway Coast. If you have a view on the Commissioner's report, this is your opportunity to be heard. I should, however, emphasise that you cannot reserve your position to await my report. It will not be possible for you to make any written or oral submissions to me after this hearing has concluded. Some of you may have already made written representations. I have studied those carefully as part of the preparation for this hearing and I will certainly take them into account in preparing my report to the Commissioner. Those of you who have already made written representations may want to elaborate on the representations today; however, I will not be assisted by the repetition of written submissions. If you have already made your point fully in writing, you may simply wish to state that you support or oppose a particular recommendation for the reasons that you have already stated within your written representation. I can assure you that full account will be taken of all written representations, regardless of whether or not they were referred to during the course of this hearing. I would also be grateful if other speakers would try not to repeat points already put forward at the hearing, but rather simply record their support of views expressed previously. On the other hand if you wish to present substantial proposals that you have not already made, it would be helpful if you could inform the staff during the short adjournment. We have already got Mr Lewis down to speak first off so there will be no adjournment. Above all it is important that you back up your proposals with any evidence where possible, rather than relying on unsubstantiated statements and if you can bear in mind that in making the recommendations the Commissioner was constrained by the rules set out in the relevant legislation and replicated on the back of the Procedural Guide.

There are, however, a number of issues that are outside the scope of this hearing either because they have already been agreed by the Government or because they are matters for the new councils, the Department of the Environment or the Secretary of State to address. These include: the number of the new district councils to be delineated; the groupings of the current councils from which they will be constituted; the location of the headquarters of new councils; the financial consequences of any boundary changes; the District Electoral Areas into which the proposed wards will be combined; and the city or borough status of the new councils. The city or borough status of the councils is a matter for the Department

of the Environment to address in bringing forward the legislation for the reorganisation of local government. I would therefore ask you not to raise issues relating to these in your representations.

Upon entering the room today you will have been given the opportunity to record your attendance and to indicate whether you wish to speak or not. If you have not already done this, I would strongly advise that you do so.

As we mentioned the order of speakers, we have one gentleman first from Moyle Council. We will hear him shortly and then anyone else will be able to put their points forward.

I would like to explain the procedures that we will follow in relation to the oral submissions. In making your submission could you please start by stating your name and whether you are speaking in a personal capacity or in a representative capacity and if so, for whom. Can you please speak clearly and try not to use abbreviations or colloquialisms as it may cause difficulties for the transcribers. Also can you please state whether you have already made a written submission. If you have a summary or a note of your submission, it would be very helpful if you provide it to me or a member of staff. If you do not have copies of your submissions with you, please speak to a member of my staff during the adjournment and they will be happy to make copies for you.

Your oral submission will be of particular assistance if you are able to explain the reasons why you have taken that particular position, any counter-proposals which you wish to make to the Commissioner's recommendations, and the reasons for those counter-proposals. When you have finished your submission other people may wish to put questions to you and I also may have some questions or points of clarification.

I would like to emphasise that I intend the hearing to be conducted in an informal manner, conducive to all those who wish to contribute. Formal cross-examination is not appropriate at this hearing, however, I am happy for people to put questions to the speaker through myself and, similarly, I will facilitate the person answering the questions in the best way possible. The most important thing today is to hear any relevant information available in respect of the Commissioner's proposals, hear any counter-proposals and conduct the hearing as effectively and efficiently as possible. All the details of the procedures I intend to follow are contained in the

Procedure Guide available at the back of the hall or from members of my team.

I want to touch very briefly on site visits; after the hearing is over I may go to view some of the areas under consideration and I have already been to some that I have been made aware of. If there are particular boundaries or features that you want me to look at then please mention it during the course of your submission, it will be noted and I will try and go and see it.

I will be assisted in the running of this hearing by a team composed of staff from the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner's Office; Land and Property Services; and Morrow Communications. Please feel free to approach any of these staff with any queries that you have and they'll be pleased to help you or draw your matter to my attention.

Mr Lewis, if you would like to come forward?

**Richard
Lewis**

Thank you - I will not keep you very long. My name is Richard Lewis, Chief Executive of Moyle District Council. The Council took a decision not to make any written representations on the Boundaries Commissioner's proposals. Instead, it decided to leave it to individual political parties or councillors. However, what I want to do this morning very briefly is to respond to some of the written representations which have been made concerning the name of the Cushendall or Lurigethan ward. There was some confusion in the publication: one map described the ward as Cushendall and another map described it as Lurigethan, I understand from the Commissioner that the intention was Lurigethan. A couple of written representations have suggested that the name of that ward should be Cushendall. The name Lurigethan, I assume, comes from the name of the mountain which separates the village of Waterfoot and Cushendall. It was a suggestion of Moyle District Council at the Boundaries Commission last year that the name should be Lurigethan, and I think the Council would wish that that name is retained, and that it is not changed from Lurigethan to Cushendall.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Could I ask why? Why the Council supports the name Lurigethan?

**Richard
Lewis**

The ward covers more than the Cushendall community, and it is more encompassing if it takes in a geographical feature

rather than the name of one particular settlement. I did explain that Lurigethan is the name of the mountain which is a prominent feature of that area.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

As you are aware we have had some submissions in favour of it being called Cushendall. Do you have any further response to that?

**Richard
Lewis**

This is why I am making a presentation because the Council would support the retention of the name Lurigethan. Thank you.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you. We are going to adjourn the meeting to allow people to have a look at some maps. We are aware that a couple of people wish to make representations in the afternoon so we will adjourn now until two pm unless anyone else comes in. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Councillor, McGuigan, if you would like to come forward? I have got your representations from Sinn Fein here.

**Philip
McGuigan**

I am just going to talk to what is in front of you. We have put forward four recommendations. The first one on the overall name of the council. We believe it should be Causeway Coast and Glens. There are a number of other tourism and health-related bodies with that name and we believe it keeps the identity of the Glens. One of the other recommendations is with regard to the name of the Stranocum ward. We believe this should be changed to either the Loughgiel ward or, at the very least, Loughgiel and Stranocum, given the fact that Loughgiel and its parish makes up the majority of that ward. With regards to Stranocum, it is a small village just at the very left hand corner of the ward, whereas Loughgiel, although still being a small village, the parish of Loughgiel makes up the majority of the ward. There are other arguments there in terms of the history of the area. We are saying the local Boundaries Commissioner did not take into account the fact that the majority of the ward falls into the civil parish boundaries of Loughgiel. Loughgiel is a fairly extensive parish taking its name from a lake in the town land of Castlequarter, within the

woodland demesne of Lisanure, so you need to realise that place names and town lands names are often the oldest fragments of the Irish language remaining live in the district.

Our next recommendation relates to the Rasharkin ward. Part of the actual village is not within the ward, it is within the Clogh Mills ward so we believe that Rasharkin ward should include the whole village of Rasharkin. We are making the same argument with regard to Ballycastle town ward. Part of Ballycastle town, which was previously in the Knocklayd ward in the old ward system, is now in the Kinbane ward so we believe that, again, Ballycastle ward should include the whole town.

**Assistant
Commissioner** Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**Assistant
Commissioner** It is now 10.50 and Councillor McGuigan would like to continue his representations.

**Philip
McGuigan**

Thank you, I just want to elaborate on some of the points I made earlier and bring forward a couple of different points. I know that it was argued at the Ballymena hearing that the ward Lurigethan be moved into the Mid Antrim Council. I would argue strongly against that in the sense that that ward is part of the Glens, which obviously has a local connection. It should be kept with the rest of the wards that were previously Moyle Council because it has a connection with Coleraine and Ballymoney; in my view, more of a connection than its connection with Ballymena. We are arguing that the name of the Council should be changed to the Causeway Coast and Glens, that ward is part of the Glens and its connection lies within the council that it is in.

More in terms of the argument for Rasharkin ward to be kept within the town. Previously the parish townland of Rasharkin was made up of 4 wards, Killoquin Upper, Killoquin Lower, The Vow and Seacon. There was no kind of connection with Clogh Mills: in the new make-up of these wards Clogh Mills is an "L" shape. In my view people who live in Rasharkin should be electing the same councillor. Because we do not know the make-up of the District Electoral Area's you could have a situation where somebody in Rasharkin who lives within the village could be electing somebody to represent them differently from somebody else within the village who lives 20

yards away in a different road or different street. We should have everybody in Rasharkin within the one ward electing the same representative who will be looking after their interests. The same argument needs to be made with regard to Ballycastle. In the absence of any knowledge of the District Electoral Areas we would be arguing that in Rasharkin and Ballycastle, the people should be kept within the one ward.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

And just so I am clear for Ballycastle, you want it to revert to the previous ward boundaries that had been there?

**Philip
McGuigan**

What we are saying is that within one of the previous wards Knocklayd is in what is now the Kinbane ward. What was previously known as Knocklayd is not within the Ballycastle town ward, and we will be arguing that that be put back into the new ward of Ballycastle, so that it contains everybody within the town of Ballycastle. Thanks very much.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you. It is now nearly eleven am. If no one else wants to make any representations, we are going to adjourn until half past one. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT FOR LUNCH

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, my name is Zayd Al-Jawad and I have been appointed by the Department of the Environment to conduct this hearing. Firstly I would like to stress that I am independent of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Dick Mackenzie, and it is not my function to defend his recommendations. My job is to listen and to consider the evidence put before me at this hearing and to report my findings with the recommendations to the Commissioner. My recommendations are to be made within the next four weeks of the close of this hearing.

For those of you wishing to present an oral submission it will be of particular assistance if you are able to explain the reasons why you have taken a particular position, any counter-proposals which you wish to make to the Commissioner's recommendations, and the reasons for those counter-proposals. Mr O'Loan, if you would like to come forward. I have a copy of your written notes, thank you.

**Donell
O'Loan**

My name is Donell O'Loan and I live in Glenariff and I am making this submission on my own behalf. I wish to submit that the present wards of Glendun, Glенаan and Glenariff, which for the rest of this I would like to designate as the 'Mid Glens', in Moyle District Council area should not be part of the new Causeway Coast Council but should be included in Mid Antrim Council. Ballymena as the major town will presumably be the site of the central council offices for Mid Antrim and the town of Coleraine for Causeway Coast. Ballymena is an average distance of 20 miles from the Mid Glens area while Coleraine, the major town in Causeway Coast, is twice that distance by an inferior road network which crosses high ground, creating severe problems in winter. The main A43 from the Glens area to Ballymena is not as subject to these problems, and is gritted regularly when required. There is a regular six times per day public bus service connecting the area to Ballymena. The service to Coleraine runs twice per day but only the mid-morning service would permit a period in Coleraine for business purposes from 12.59 to 15.40, of which one hour is the normal lunch period.

The facts stated in the above paragraph clearly show that the proposed arrangement does not meet the democratic rights of the electorate of the Mid Glens area and that these rights would be met if the area was included in Mid Antrim. There will be many situations where residents have to meet Council Officers, and rate payers also have the democratic right to attend council meetings. By car these journeys will entail an 80 mile round trip and for those depending on public transport it will be practically impossible. These will have a window of about one and a half hours to reach council offices, carry out business and return to Coleraine bus depot. Residents of the Mid Glens area have always naturally been focused towards Ballymena. It is the main shopping and working town for the area, and certain aspects of health service provision are still based in Ballymena. In fact, patients and their families prefer to make use of Antrim Hospital, 10 miles further than Ballymena, over Coleraine due to accessibility. Coleraine is not made use of for normal everyday purposes by Mid Glen's residents. Recently a local business man assured me that he has never had the occasion to visit Coleraine. It is, therefore, quite unnatural to join the Mid Glens area to Causeway Coast for local government purposes. One has only to look at the map of the new Council areas on the Commission's own website to recognise the peripherality which is built into this arrangement. Locals fear, not without justification, that this factor will militate against them in the future. In fact, the location of this public

hearing, which has not recognised our geographic position, is an example of this. Equally, a very brief examination of the map shows that the area fits perfectly into Mid Antrim Council and I have attached maps to make as Appendices to help you there. It has been suggested as a counter argument that it is better to retain the linkage between the Causeway and Glens areas as has been the case with Moyle Council. Presumably this is based on a tourism perspective, and it is important that these areas are developed and marketed as one unit; however, this role is not carried out at Council level but by the regional tourism organisation which has input from a wide range of councils, including Ballymena and Larne, which would make up Mid Antrim. In fact, if my proposals are adopted, seven of the nine Glens of Antrim will fall within Mid Antrim Council which could assist a hitherto somewhat neglected area. I request that the Commission take due note of these arguments in reaching a final decision and hope that they will lead to a change in the Provisional Recommendations. I am aware that such a change would lead to a re-drawing of the boundaries of the Torr and Rathlin wards and perhaps neighbouring wards to rationalise voter numbers, but argue that this exercise should not be permitted to lessen the democratic rights of Mid Glens' residents. Thank you.

Assistant

Commissioner Thank you, are you aware of other people that share your position?

Donell

O'Loan Yes, I have spoken to several people who share that position.

Assistant

Commissioner And they are all in the same area?

Donell

O'Loan Yes, that is right.

Assistant

Commissioner Thank you. Does anyone have any questions that they'd like me to put to him? No, okay, thank you for your time. Councillor Leonard would you like to speak? We have had the formal representations from Sinn Fein already.

Billy

Leonard Yes. I can just reinforce two main points. That is all I need to cover, I do not need to go into all the detail. I am Billy Leonard, Sinn Fein, Coleraine Borough Council. There are two points that

I would like to make at this hearing. One is the nature of the consultation and it is perhaps coming from the bigger picture angle in that we have been asked to consult on the ward boundaries, and now very obviously the next step of the formation of District Electoral Areas is going to be vitally important to the representation that is yielded under the new system. I, therefore, think that it is quite unsatisfactory to be asked to be consulted on one half of the job because we are obviously being consulted in the dark, given that the permutations could be very different if District Electoral Areas are drawn in different manners. To give an example if, for instance, what would constitute the present Bann ward was largely reflected in the new system, there would not be too much change in the electoral representation but if the southern part of the Bann ward extended eastward into some of what would be presently Ballymoney Council, obviously representation figures would be completely different. Therefore, the consultation exercise in the process of only looking at one half of the process is flawed. My second point is, within the context of the ward boundaries and in the present Coleraine Council area, there are a couple of difficult areas recommended; in the Portstewart ward, there does not seem to be any serious numerical or geographical reason to take some streets out of the Portstewart area, around the Old Coach Road area. Numerically, it does not seem to make any sense and geographically it would make more sense to leave things as is?

**Assistant
Commissioner**

If I may ask just for my own clarification, you prefer to retain the boundaries in Portstewart as they currently are?

**Billy
Leonard**

Yeah. There are three to four streets that have been re-designated in the new nearby ward, and there is not a numerical reason for it and geographically there does not seem to be any great sense with it either. The second is Churchlands and Coleraine - a sizeable area has been taken out of Churchlands and into Macosquin ward. This would be quite significant in terms of representation, though admittedly the number in the Churchland is 24 so it is going to be very hard under the numerical averages to argue that it goes back, but this could be quite significant in representational terms. The names of the streets would roughly be to the Somerset Ridge area, there would be quite a large housing area near the Jet Centre area and it would be largely known as the Somerset area. That is quite a significant pocket of electorate to be taken out of one ward, which has been largely looked upon as

very much within Coleraine town, and it has been put into the rural Macosquin area. This could be significant depending on which way the wards are grouped together in District Electoral Areas.

Assistant Commissioner And would you like them to remain in Coleraine?

Billy Leonard To be retained in the Churchlands ward of Coleraine, so those are the two specific ward issues and my general comment about the nature of the consultation.

Assistant Commissioner Okay, we are expecting some other speakers, so we will adjourn temporarily so that we can have a look at some maps and if anyone else wants to speak they can express this now and we can restart it, thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

Gerry Lynch I am Gerry Lynch, Executive Director Alliance Party. I am just going to amplify really on what we have said in our written submission. The Commissioner had a problem in the western side of Coleraine town, in the part of Coleraine west of the River Bann in that there are almost exactly 2 ½ wards worth of electorate there. That essentially left the Commissioner with no choice but to have a mixed urban/rural ward, which is not ideal, but sometimes is forced on one by the pattern of electorate. We do not see any way round that, but we think there is a better pairing than the one that the Commissioner has recommended. If you look at that area west of the Bann in Coleraine which consists of all of Waterside ward, all of Churchlands ward, a wee bit of Castlerock ward and a bit of Macosquin ward, that area is in terms of community identity relatively homogeneous. It does have some quite big social differences, there are some very deprived areas there and also some quite well-off areas, but by and large there are not absolutely rigid natural boundaries between districts in that western part of Coleraine. It is possible to shuffle streets backwards and forwards without absolutely disrupting the flow of community. There obviously are very identifiable natural boundaries between the urban community and the rural area that surrounds it, namely the end of the built up area of Coleraine. What the Commissioner has done is put two

completely urban wards there and two mixed urban and rural wards. Our scheme would give two completely urban wards, one mixed urban/rural ward although the rural component would be, let us say, the less traditional part of the rural area and one entirely rural ward and we think that balance provides for better cohesion and better community representation. In all our proposals, we have checked the electorate against the Geographical Information System and all would lie within 10% of tolerance, which I presume the Assistant Commissioner will check further anyway - but they have been researched, they are not off-the-cuff things.

The first thing we would do is to move the Somerset area which is currently in Macosquin ward and transfer it in the Churchlands ward. That area has about 750 electors; it is relatively new build private housing on the edge of Coleraine. It obviously has strong identity with Coleraine town and relatively weak identity with Macosquin and the rural area around it. Obviously that would then result in an oversized Churchlands which would need to be solved by transferring electors from Churchlands to Waterside. If you see in our written submission, there is a reasonably complicated line that we have proposed for the boundary between those two and to compensate for the fact that that would give an oversized Waterside. Electors from the northern part of Waterside would be transferred into Castlerock ward and that would give a Castlerock ward which is mixed, urban/rural in character. This is not ideal, but for a number of reasons we think that is better than the Commission's original proposal. Firstly, the Commissioner's proposed Castlerock ward already has several hundred electors from the north western corner of Coleraine town in it, so the Commissioner's proposal has already created a mixed urban/rural ward. Secondly, in our proposed Castlerock ward, the western most end of the ward would transfer into Macosquin ward so that would give a very coherent rural Macosquin ward with a clear rural character, and also very common interests in terms of particular interests in the community. For example, a large number of the people in that ward would have an interest in agricultural issues and that makes for more effective representation. Castlerock and Articlave as well as this urban fringe of Coleraine would be in our proposed Castlerock ward. The rural electorate in that ward is much smaller than in the Commissioner's proposal, but also if you look at the character of those three villages, Articlave to some extent and Castlerock in particular, are actually quite suburbanised villages. A lot of people in both villages would commute to Coleraine to work. There are very, very strong social ties with Coleraine, and to some extent

Macosquin does as well. In Castlerock in particular, if you look at the type of housing that has been built there in recent years, there is a very high number of apartments and high density housing developments very much designed to attract people either who live in Coleraine and commute back in there to work or even people moving from further afield from the Belfast area and from Derry. It is actually a very different character of a village than Macosquin. Articlave is a very working class village, it has a history of being quite industrial and it has always depended on people travelling into Coleraine for work rather than its rural context. By transferring electorate around those four wards we think we achieve a better balance and more coherent representation than the Commissioner's original proposals.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you, are you aware of any support from the communities in those areas or any other?

**Gerry
Lynch**

The timetable that has been imposed on us by legislation has been so compressed, there really has not been time to do anything that would give a meaningful reflection of community support. We could have done something half baked using largely our own supporters but I do not actually think that is terribly worthwhile. I think if the Assistant Commissioner is planning to have any site visits, firstly a visit to the Somerset area would reveal how clearly urban its character is and how much it leans towards Coleraine rather than Macosquin, and secondly a visit to Castlerock would help the Assistant Commissioner see how the character of that village is as much suburban and commuting as it is rural. Thank you very much.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you for your time.

(NB: At this point in the proceedings a problem occurred with the audio recording and the transcription service were unable to recover it. Part of the submission by Richard Holmes, Steven Barr and Thomas Fleming, on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party, was lost)

Stephen Barr

If you also notice, it would be possible to follow the railway line a little bit more there. You see how coming out of Coleraine Town there is a straight boundary, and it suddenly becomes quite higgledy piggedly across field boundaries. I do not think it

will affect any electors, but I think that is an industrial estate and it can be tidied up.

Assistant

Commissioner Did you say that you had issue about Mountsandel or is that just the name?

Richard Holmes The name Mountsandel is a fairly historic name and it is probably better that it is kept, but the area that is in the map does not really refer very much to Mountsandel.

Richard Holmes It is more of a town centre ward if anything

Assistant

Commissioner So would you like to see it changed to? Should it be Coleraine Town or Coleraine Town Centre?

Stephen Barr If there are other submissions in favour of calling it Coleraine Town or Coleraine Town Centre we would be happy with something like that. We would not die in the ditch for it but what people would locally call Mountsandel is actually split between that ward of Windy Hall and that ward of Mountsandel.

Richard Holmes The only other area in Coleraine is over on page 213, the University ward. This is something we touched on earlier with the Portstewart boundary, where Stephen was saying that there was really only fields between those houses within Portstewart and Coleraine. Again, that is an area that is getting taken into to the Dundooan ward, and it may be an area where you want to look to expand the University out to meet with Portstewart. It is going to affect very few voters but it does reduce the size of Dundooan which is a fairly unwieldy ward.

Assistant

Commissioner Okay, thanks very much for your time. Do you have any representations or support for what you are proposing in terms of any of the local electorate in those areas or is it merely a geographical thing that you are looking at changing it so it better fits and better reads in terms of the townscape?

Stephen Barr In terms of the Portstewart and Portrush proposals, I was born and bred and lived in those wards all my life so I would be involved locally, the party there, friends, family and so on. I would be confident no matter which party you spoke to in Portstewart, they would certainly tell you, whether it was Sinn Fein, Ulster Unionist, DUP, Alliance, that there is no political advantage for any party in what we would propose there, it is

purely tidying up. Similarly in the Portstewart/Portrush side of things, again, there is no political advantage for anyone there, it's simply a case of trying to just get a better boundary between them.

**Richard
Holmes**

In terms of the proposals, we have discussed this with our councils across the entire Causeway area to go and the proposals that were done are all based on discussions with them, obviously they are representing the electorate and their views there as well so I think it would broadly reflect the views of the electorate in places, there are very few contentious issues other than tidying up some of the boundaries allowing for some future development as well and reflecting perhaps where people would tend to gravitate to in terms of schools and shopping and so on as well.

Stephen Barr

Certainly at Portstewart South and the Dundooan point, if Portstewart is to expand the only place it really can expand is south. There is a virtual green belt just about separating Portstewart and Portrush. You have got golf courses and so on, so we would not want to see if the town keeps developing and in another 10 years time there would be a significant portion of the town not in a ward of the town and that would be an anomaly which would grow up. We had this in the past with polling stations. It became an issue where half of Portstewart was voting in Portrush polling stations, and it was crazy and turnout was atrocious and we could not get people to travel two miles/three miles across, as they saw it, so it will make it easier for people if they are voting in Portstewart polling stations.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you for your time, we are just going to adjourn for a few minutes to check that we have got the necessary documents that we need.

UUP

Thank you.

**Assistant
Commissioner**

Thank you. Okay thank you very much for your representations, we are going to adjourn for today and will either reconvene in the next half an hour to finally close business here or tomorrow at ten am. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**Assistant
Commissioner**

I have just confirmed that no one else wishes to speak, therefore, if everyone is content that they have had their full opportunity to air their views and present their submissions I propose to bring the hearing to a close. May I remind everyone that once I have closed the hearing I cannot receive any further evidence. Before I formally close these proceedings I would like to place on record my gratitude to everyone who has attended, particularly those who have made representations. Everyone has given their views in a forthright and frank way and have kept to the point. I appreciate that as it makes my job a lot easier. I should also like to thank my support team from the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner's Office, Land and Property Services, Morrow Communications and the transcribers and audio engineers for the help they have given me preparing and conducting the hearing. I would also like to thank the management and staff of Bushtown House for the excellent facilities they have provided. My immediate task now is to consider carefully all the evidence that I have heard at this hearing as well as the written representations that were received during the recent consultation period and to prepare a report for the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner within the next four weeks. My report will be made publicly available together with the Commissioner's revised recommendations report, if he decides to produce one, or his final recommendations report. My understanding is that my report will be sent to everyone who has requested a copy on registration at this hearing. It will ultimately be a matter for the Commissioner to decide whether to accept any of my or all of my recommendations or to reject them or to take whatever course of action he thinks fit. Should the Commissioner decide to publish a revised recommendations report, written representations will be invited within a specific period but there will be no further public hearings. The Commissioner is to submit his final report to the Department of the Environment by the 30 June 2009. Thank you all very much for your assistance and your participation.

ENDS
