

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER ROISIN  
McGLONE ON THE COMMISSIONER'S PROVISIONAL  
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BELFAST LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT DISTRICT**

**16 February 2007**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1.1 The start of the current review of local government boundaries in Northern Ireland was announced in a Public Notice on 9 June 2006, which explained the role and remit of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, and advised that in due course the Commissioner would publish Provisional Recommendations and cause a public hearing to be held in each of the seven proposed new Local Government Districts. The Notice also explained the process of public consultation on the Provisional Recommendations whereby interested parties would have the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the review.
- 1.2 The terms of the review are set out in the Local Government (Boundaries) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. A copy of the Order is available on [www.lgbc-ni.org/index/legislation.htm](http://www.lgbc-ni.org/index/legislation.htm) or from Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- 1.3 The Provisional Recommendations for the boundaries and names of the seven new Local Government Districts and in respect of the number, boundaries and names of their constituent wards were formally announced at the Ramada Hotel, Belfast on 7 November 2006 and simultaneously published on the office website, [www.lgbc-ni.org/index/publications.org](http://www.lgbc-ni.org/index/publications.org). A Public Notice of the Provisional Recommendations, together with details of the programme of public hearings, was published on 8 November 2006 in a number of daily and provincial newspapers. Copies of the Provisional Recommendations, including detailed maps, were made available for public inspection at all district council headquarter offices, the Electoral Office and Area Electoral Offices, all public libraries and at the office of the Electoral Commission in Northern Ireland and that of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner on 8 November 2006.
- 1.4 The Public Notice of 8 November 2006 invited written representations with respect to the Provisional Recommendations within an eight-week public consultation period. The closing date for written representations was 5 January 2007.
- 1.5 The Commissioner received 92 written representations from a range of interested parties including political parties and political representatives, district councils, community organisations and individual members of the public. All representations were acknowledged giving details of the public hearings and have been published on the Commissioner's office website, and were made available for viewing at each of the public hearing venues.
- 1.6 On 2 January 2007, I was appointed as an Assistant Commissioner by the Minister of the Environment, David Cairns MP. My task is to assess and report on the representations and hearing on the

Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations in relation to one of the seven proposed Local Government Districts and to submit a report to the Commissioner, to include conclusions and recommendations, within four weeks of the end of the relevant public hearing. Subsequent to my appointment, I was invited by the Commissioner to conduct a public hearing into the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations affecting the proposed Belfast district incorporating Belfast District Council and part of Lisburn City Council and part of Castlereagh Borough Council.

### **Written Representations**

- 1.7 Written representations of relevance to the Provisional Recommendations for the district are listed (in alphabetical order) in Appendix A. All representations were considered by me in advance of the public hearing, and in anticipation of the preparation of this Report.

### **Public Hearing**

- 1.8 The public hearing into the Provisional Recommendations in the proposed Belfast district commenced in Belfast City Hall on 18th of January 2007 and concluded on 19th January 2007. Six attended the hearing with six oral representations being made. Five of the participants had already submitted their representation in writing during the eight-week public consultation period. It was conducted in an informal manner where all participants were afforded the opportunity to give their views and to question and discuss the viewpoints of others. All aspects of the Provisional Recommendations relating to the Belfast District were discussed to ensure full consideration and examination was given to the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations. Details of those who made oral representations are attached at Appendix B and a copy of the transcript of the hearing is attached at Appendix C and can also be viewed on the office website [www.lgbc-ni.org](http://www.lgbc-ni.org).

### **Content of Report**

- 1.9 This Report presents and addresses the written and oral views of interested parties on the Provisional Recommendations for the proposed Belfast district. In particular, it addresses relevant local information and opinion on the boundary of the district and the number, boundaries and names of the wards into which the district has been divided and details support of, objections to or counterproposals in relation to the Provisional Recommendations. It also presents my recommendations and conclusions on the representations, views and opinions based on the legislative framework for the review and in particular the statutory rules as set out in Part III of Schedule I to the Local Government (Boundaries) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.

## **2. DISTRICT REPRESENTATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 In this section of the report, I include details of the written and oral representations on the district boundary of Belfast; provide an analysis of these proposals with reference to the Provisional Recommendations and the legislative framework for the review; and, where appropriate, make recommendations for revision of the Provisional Recommendations.

2.2 A number of representations received made proposals and counter proposals. These are presented as follows in the report:

- Each proposal is detailed with the identity of its proposer.
- Counter proposals are then identified.
- The proposals are discussed in line with the rules and other considerations.
- Recommendations are made with illustrative maps.

2.3 A number of written and oral representations were received suggesting changes to the boundary between the Belfast District and the proposed East District. These were as follows:

- Belfast should be extended to include existing wards of Castlereagh, namely, Galwally, Newtownbreda, Beechill, Four Winds, Knockbracken and Carryduff.
- The area of Holywood Exchange should be moved from Belfast District to East District.
- The District boundary at Knocknagoney should be redrawn along the Knocknagoney Road/Old Holywood Road.
- The district boundary at Castlereagh should be redrawn along the Knock dual carriageway.
- The boundary between Cregagh ward and Newtownbreda ward should be readjusted to move a small row of houses into Cregagh ward.

2.4 The proposal that Belfast should be extended to include existing wards of Castlereagh, namely, Galwally, Newtownbreda, Beechill, Four Winds, Knockbracken and Carryduff was made by:

- The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (one written representation by the party and an oral representation by Dr Stephen Farry)
- SDLP (two written representations by Cllr Carmel Hanna MLA and Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA and one oral representation by Mr Ray Kennedy on behalf of Dr Alasdair McDonnell).

This proposal was not supported by:

- SDLP Down Councillors (one written representation)

- Sinn Fein (one written representation and one oral representation from Mr Sean Begley. Both representations broadly supported the Commissioner’s Provisional Recommendations on this boundary).
- Dr M H Gould (written representation) objected to the inclusion of Four Winds in the Belfast District.

2.5 In considering these representations, on district boundaries, I am guided by three specific rules in accordance with which the Commissioner’s Provisional Recommendations have been made. These are set out in part three of Local Government (Boundaries) (NI) Order 2006 and are as follows:

“14. Regard shall be had to the desirability of determining district and ward boundaries which are readily identifiable.

15. A townland shall not, except where in the opinion of the Commissioner it is unavoidable be, included partly in one district or ward and partly in another.

16. As far as practicable: –

- a) A district shall not be wholly or substantially severed by the boundary of another district; and
- b) A district shall not be wholly or substantially encompassed within the boundary of another district.”

2.6 I have studied the Commissioner’s Provisional Recommendations and the criteria he used in delineating the boundaries for the Belfast District. The Commissioner has provisionally recommended that the boundary of the Belfast District should reflect its setting, as encompassed by the surrounding hills, a number of natural features and some major roads. To the north lies Belfast Lough, and in a southward direction there is the broad valley of the River Lagan. The hills and the Lough provide a readily identifiable boundary to the city on the northern, western and eastern sides.

2.7 The Commissioner acknowledged that, in a number of localities, a boundary cannot be defined by these features. These locations were north at the Cavehill, in the east, the south and south-west. In these locations he decided to use the “landscape wedges” as defined in the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001 and the draft Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2015 as “lands reserved for landscape, amenity or recreation use”. Additionally the Commissioner recommends that the major roads of the M2 and the Outer Ring be used to create “readily identifiable boundaries”.

- 2.8 On checking these provisional boundaries with the staff from the Ordnance Survey NI, there is an obvious readily identifiable boundary in landscape wedge which is in the “Knocknagoney locality” and the Outer Ring Road.
- 2.9 On studying all of the representations, I acknowledge the reasons for the proposals to include a number of additional wards within the Belfast District. However, I cannot conclude that the inclusion of these wards would provide a readily identifiable boundary for this part of Belfast. Furthermore, if I were to recommend this change to the boundary, I would be deviating from the criteria that have been used to determine the Belfast District as detailed above. I conclude that the Commissioner’s Provisional Recommendations with regard to this part of the Belfast boundary are consistent with the criteria that he has used across all of the Belfast District and that an alteration to this boundary would be making an exception to the use of the criteria, which is not warranted.
- 2.10 Consequently, I do not recommend any change to the provisionally recommended Belfast District boundary, in relation to the Newtownbreda/Four Winds area.
- 2.11 The proposal that the area of land at Hollywood Exchange should be moved from Belfast District to East District was made by Mr Trevor Polley Chief Executive of North Down Borough Council (written and oral representation); Hollywood Chamber of Commerce (written representation); and Hollywood and Bangor Town Centres Committee (written representation).
- 2.12 I have studied this proposal with the aid of aerial photography and the Hollywood Exchange has an identifiable boundary along the main Belfast Road. To include this area in the proposed East District would necessitate creating an artificial boundary, which does not correspond to any logical criteria. The issue of access which was raised in the representations could be easily rectified by moving the boundary to the right-hand side of the road and would not involve any electorate.
- 2.13 Consequently, I do not recommend any change to the provisionally recommended Belfast District boundary, in relation to the East District at Hollywood Exchange.
- 2.14 I have studied the impact of the proposal to redraw the boundary between East and Belfast Districts at Knocknagoney along the Knocknagoney Road and Old Hollywood Road using aerial photography supplied by the OSNI staff. This proposal would, in effect, cut off part of a housing estate from its natural neighbours. There is a landscape wedge to the north of this housing estate which continues across the Hollywood Hills that creates a very logical and readily identifiable boundary — whereas this proposal would create an isolated pocket of residents in this area.

- 2.15 Consequently, I do not recommend any change to the provisionally recommended Belfast boundary, in relation to the proposed East District at Knocknagoney.
- 2.16 North Down Borough Council proposed redrawing the proposed boundary between East and Belfast Districts in the present Castlereagh area along the centre of the Knock dual carriageway.
- 2.17 Again the issue of consistency of boundaries around Belfast is my consideration. The Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations use the Castlereagh Hills, Holywood Hills and the landscape wedges as readily identifiable boundaries for the city. However, to implement this proposal would mean isolating parts of housing developments to the south of the hills, in effect, leaving them surrounded by hills to the north but cut off from Belfast to the south.
- 2.18 Consequently, I do not recommend any change to the provisionally recommended Belfast District boundary, in relation to the Knock dual carriageway.
- 2.19 The Alliance Party proposed that the Belfast-East District boundary between Cregagh ward and Newtownbreda ward should be readjusted to move a small row of houses into Cregagh ward.
- 2.20 The purpose of this proposal is not to adjust the Belfast boundary but to reunite a row of houses with the remainder of the housing estate within the Cregagh ward. Under the Provisional Recommendations they have become isolated from the rest of that housing estate.
- 2.21 Consequently, in order to create a more logical and readily identifiable boundary, I recommend that the Provisional Recommendation be revised accordingly to make this change to the Belfast District Boundary.

### **3. WARD REPRESENTATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 In this section of the report, I include details of the written and oral representations on the ward names, numbers and boundaries within the proposed Belfast District, and an analysis of those representations with reference to the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations. Where appropriate, I make recommendations for revisions to the Provisional Recommendations. There are a number of considerations to be addressed in the analysis and presentation of this information.
- A number of representations made the same proposals, both in terms of ward names and boundaries.
  - There were a number of multiple representations involving multiple wards.

- I have received more than one proposal for changes to particular wards.
- Proposals for ward boundary changes can impact on adjoining ward electorates.

3.2 In the interests of clarity and to avoid repetition, I have decided to present the proposals and analysis of those proposals as follows. I will deal with ward names and boundaries separately in that order. I will deal with the representations on ward boundaries as follows:

- Wards are grouped where the suggested changes impact on more than one ward to include adjoining wards.
- Where the same proposal for change to a boundary between wards is worded differently and with a different outcome, I detail each of the proposals.
- Where there is more than one change to a ward, even if from different representations, these proposals will be detailed together.
- Each proposal within the ward groups will be detailed and include the names of those making the representations.
- I will then discuss proposals and make a recommendation in accordance with the statutory Rules and other considerations.

### **Ward Names**

3.3 Written and oral representations were received with regard to the names of three wards in the proposed Belfast District. I also received one representation for a ward name change in the East District, which I cannot consider as it is outside my remit.

3.4 I received written submissions from Belfast City Council and Cllr Ian Crozier LLB proposing that Alexander Park ward should be renamed “Duncairn” ward.

3.5 Belfast City Council proposed this name change because of the historical significance of the name Duncairn. In his representation, Cllr Crozier, as a councillor for the area and lifelong resident, detailed the significance of the name of Duncairn as being deeply reflective of the history and heritage of the area, referring to the origins of the Duncairn estate as far back as the 1850s. The estate was the home of Adam Macrory, a renowned Belfast solicitor who had a strong social conscience and was closely associated with the Belfast Royal Hospital and Belfast Charitable Society. Macrory was commemorated in the naming of Macrory Memorial Presbyterian Church, which was opened in January 1895 and unfortunately is now closed. Many street names around the area are connected to the Macrory family.

- 3.6 I agree that the importance of that history and heritage should be retained in the name of Duncairn ward. Consequently, I recommend that Alexandra Park ward should be renamed “Duncairn”.
- 3.7 I received written and oral representations from both Blackstaff Community Development Association and Cllr Bob Stoker, proposing that the Boucher ward should be renamed “Blackstaff” ward.
- 3.8 These representations strongly advised that there was no local identification with the name Boucher. They emphasised the need to have local identification with ward names and local roots. Mr William Dickson, representing the Blackstaff Community Development Association’s local history group at the Belfast public hearing, was impressive in his knowledge of the history and geography of the area. He emphasised the pride that local residents have in their ward being named after the ancient river of Blackstaff, shown in the earliest map of Belfast in the 1570’s. Mr Dickson also made the point that this ward is actually the only one where the Blackstaff River can still be seen. It runs parallel with the Boucher Road, follows into the Donegall Road, then a culvert goes to Ulsterville Avenue and into the river Lagan. Mr Dickson also outlined the issue of community identity. There are small pockets of housing separated along the Donegall Road that are united under the Blackstaff name. The name appears to be very important to community unity and identity.
- 3.9 Based on these representations, I recommend that the ward of Boucher should be renamed “Blackstaff”.
- 3.10 I received three written representations (two from Rugby Residents’ Association and one from J D C Charlton) proposing that the University ward should be renamed “Botanic”.
- 3.11 Although these representations did not give specific reasons for the retention of this ward name, they all had strong objections to the change of this ward name from Botanic to University and wanted the name “Botanic” retained.
- 3.12 I acknowledge the significance of the name “Botanic” for the local residents and accept that these representations reflect in good faith local residents’ views. Consequently, I recommend that the University ward should be renamed “Botanic”.
- 3.13 I am unable to consider the proposal for the Four Winds ward to be renamed “Cairnshill” as this ward is not within the proposed Belfast District.

#### **Ward boundaries**

- 3.14 It is important to contextualise the review of Northern Ireland local Government boundaries. Currently there is a vast variation in the wards

electorates. This ranges from 9572 in the current Botanic ward to 3784 in Shankill ward. At present the range of ward electorates across Northern Ireland is just as wide. For example, the existing Bushmills ward, in Moyle District Council, has an electorate of 511, whereas the existing Glencolin ward, in Belfast City Council, has an electorate of 4257.

3.15 The Local Government (Boundaries) (NI) Order 2006 states that:

“within any one district there shall, as far as reasonably practicable... be substantially the same number of local electors in each ward”.

In the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner’s Provisional Recommendations, the Belfast ward electorates range from 3098 in Alexander Park to 3523 in Belvoir, with an average ward electorate in Belfast ward of 3329. In framing my recommendations, I have allowed a 10% variance, which gives a range of between 2997 and 3661. I have worked on the premise that if proposed changes are sensible and can be accommodated within that range, I will recommend them. Exceptionally, I have recommended ward changes that fall outside the 10% variance where it makes for a sensible and natural boundary.

#### **Finaghy, Balmoral, Malone, Upper Malone and Stranmillis wards**

3.16 The Alliance Party (in written and oral representations) and Carmel Hanna (SDLP) MLA and Dr Alasdair McDonnell (SDLP) MP MLA proposed that the Ardmore/ Ashton area, currently split between the Finaghy and Balmoral wards, should be united in the Balmoral ward. This would involve the transfer of the northern end of the proposed Finaghy ward to the Balmoral ward, taking the railway line as the boundary.

3.17 I have considered this proposal and the impact on the wards using the Ordnance Survey (OSNI) Geographic Information System (GIS). This proposal will re-unite a housing development which the proposed boundary splits between two wards. The number of electors affected is 224.

3.18 I recommend that the Ardmore/Ashton area be reunited in the Balmoral ward, on the basis that this is a more readily identifiable boundary.

3.19 Dr Alasdair McDonnell MP MLA and The Greater Village Regeneration Trust (written representations) and Cllr Bob Stoker (oral representation) proposed that Stockman’s Lane should be transferred from the Blackstaff (Boucher) ward to the proposed Balmoral ward.

3.20 I have studied this proposal and the impact it will have on the wards. The land to the west of Stockman’s Lane is industrial and if this proposed boundary is not changed, it will isolate Stockmans Lane to the far north corner of the Balmoral ward. The number of electors affected by this proposed change is 133.

- 3.21 I recommend that Stockman's Lane should be included in the Balmoral ward, on the basis that this is a more readily identifiable boundary.
- 3.22 The SDLP and Dr McDonnell, in written representations, proposed the transfer of a number of houses in Balmoral Avenue and Harberton Park from the Balmoral ward to Malone ward.
- 3.23 This is a sensible change, as the houses to the rear of Balmoral Avenue back onto a park, and if the boundary were to remain unchanged it would isolate these homes in the Malone area within the Balmoral ward. The proposed change at lower Harberton Park would unite a housing estate. These proposed changes will affect 59 electors and 24 electors respectively.
- 3.24 I recommend that the part of Balmoral Avenue and Lower Harberton Park be transferred from the Balmoral ward to the Malone ward, on the basis that this creates a more readily identifiable boundary.
- 3.25 The SDLP and Dr McDonnell, in written representations, proposed a change to the splitting of a housing development at Harberton Park (odd numbers) at the middle.
- 3.26 This seems a sensible change as it places neighbours in the same street within the same ward. This proposed change affects 132 electors. I therefore recommend the transfer of Harberton Park from Upper Malone ward to Malone ward.
- 3.27 Dr McDonnell (written representation) and the Alliance Party (written and oral representations) proposed that Piney Hill and New Forge Lane should not be split between Stranmillis ward and Upper Malone ward; and that the boundary between Stranmillis and Upper Malone wards should be realigned between New Forge Lane and Piney Hills, rather than down the main drive of Piney Hills.
- 3.28 This seems to be a sensible change as it re-unites streets that are split between two wards and places them within a single ward. This proposed change affects 158 electors. I therefore recommend that Piney Hills and New Forge Lane should be reunited in the Upper Malone ward and that the boundary with Stranmillis ward should follow the line of Newforge Lane and not the main drive of Piney Hills.
- 3.29 If these recommendations are accepted, the revised ward electorates will be as follows,

Finaghy	3134
Balmoral	3578
Malone	3593

Upper Malone	3355
Stranmillis	3071

**Beersbridge, Woodstock, Orangefield and Sandown, Knock wards**

3.30 The Alliance Party proposed that the boundary between Beersbridge and Woodstock wards should be straightened at Redcar Street.

3.31 This is a sensible change and as it straightens the boundary and affects only 71 electors. I therefore recommend that the boundary between Beersbridge and Woodstock wards be straightened at Redcar Street.

3.32 The Alliance Party proposed that the triangle of land at the north of Orangefield ward should be transferred to either Beersbridge or Sandown wards. However, the impact of this proposal would be to reduce the Orangefield ward electorate substantially below the 10% variance and increase the Sandown and Beersbridge ward electorates substantially above it. I therefore do not recommend this change.

3.33 The Alliance Party proposed moving the Knock / Sandown ward boundary from the Kings Road to the former railway line. This proposal was submitted by the Alliance party of Northern Ireland.

3.34 I recommend that the boundary between the Knock and Sandown wards should be changed to the railway line, transferring electors north of the railway line into the Knock ward, in order to create a more readily identifiable boundary.

3.35 If these recommendations are accepted, the revised ward electorates are as follows:

Beersbridge	3511
Knock	3483
Sandown	3124
Woodstock	3160

**Bellevue, Innisfayle and Cavehill, Oldpark wards**

3.36 The Alliance Party proposed that the southern part of the proposed Bellevue ward should be divided between the proposed Cavehill and Innisfayle wards.

3.37 As the proposed boundary splits existing housing development, it is sensible to re-unite the development. This can only be done if the housing development is re-united within the Cavehill ward. These proposed changes will affect 429 electors. I therefore recommend that the housing development at the southern end of the Bellevue should be transferred to the Cavehill ward.

- 3.38 The Alliance Party proposed that the wards of Bellevue and Innisfayle should extend to the M2.
- 3.39 This is a sensible change as the current proposals separate residents on the Shore Road, whereas this proposal would re-unite residents in that area. I therefore recommend that the ward boundaries of Bellevue and Innisfayle should extend to the M2, on the basis that this would create more readily identifiable boundaries.
- 3.40 The Alliance Party proposed that a row of houses at the top of the proposed Oldpark ward should be transferred to the Cavehill ward to avoid splitting a street.
- 3.41 Working on this proposal with OSNI, I discovered that by using a river at the part of the adjoining wards as the new boundary would correct the problem. This would involve the transfer of 395 electors into Oldpark ward and 48 into Cavehill ward.
- 3.42 I recommend the transfer of a row of houses from the Cavehill ward to Oldpark ward using the river at this point as the ward boundary, in order to create a more readily identifiable boundary.

#### **Crumlin and Shankill wards**

- 3.43 The Alliance Party, in its written representation, proposed that the Shankill/Crumlin ward boundary should be aligned along Crumlin Road, Tennent Street and Shankill Road.
- 3.44 Although this change would affect only 317 electors, it would, in effect, split the Shankill Road community between two wards, using the Shankill Road as a boundary. The Shankill community are an identifiable community — as the Commissioner has acknowledged with the provisionally recommended boundary — and I recommend that the provisional boundary should not be changed.
- 3.45 The Alliance Party (written representation) proposed redrawing the boundaries of the proposed Crumlin ward to take in the former Crumlin Road Prison and possibly all of the Crumlin Road as far as Carlisle Circus.
- 3.46 This appears to be a sensible proposal and would mean that the former Crumlin Road Prison and surrounding electorate would be retained within Crumlin ward. This proposed change would affect 38 electors.
- 3.47 I therefore recommend that Crumlin ward should include the former Crumlin Road Prison and all of the Crumlin Road to Carlisle Circus, on the basis that this would create a more readily identifiable boundary.

**Ormeau, Stranmillis, University, Ravenhill, Belvoir and Rosetta wards**

- 3.48 The SDLP and Dr McDonnell, in written representations, proposed that Church Road/Galwally Avenue Park, Hampton Park and the southern half of Annadale Avenue should transfer from Belvoir ward to Rosetta ward.
- 3.49 This is a sensible proposal as it re-unites a housing development that is currently proposed to be split between Belvoir and Rosetta wards. This change would give a revised electorate for Belvoir ward of 3408.
- 3.50 I therefore recommend that Church Road/ Galwally Avenue and Park, Hampton Park and the southern half of Annadale Avenue be transferred from the Belvoir ward into Rosetta ward, on the basis that this would create a more readily identifiable boundary.
- 3.51 The SDLP and Dr McDonnell, in written representations, proposed that the entire Stranmillis village should be included within Botanic (University) ward. This change would affect only 87 electors.
- 3.52 I recommend that the entire Stranmillis village should be contained within Botanic ward, on the basis that this would create a more readily identifiable boundary.
- 3.53 Dr McDonnell, in a written representation, observed that the Ormeau/Rosetta ward boundary was “obscure and messy” at Annadale but made no proposal for an alternative boundary. I make no recommendation for a boundary change in this regard.
- 3.54 Dr McDonnell (written representation) proposed that, in the Rosetta ward, Knockeden Parade and Gardens and the bottom part of Knockeden Park should not be split.
- 3.55 This is sensible proposal as it re-unites a housing development, which, under the Provisional Recommendations, is split between Rosetta and Ravenhill wards. This proposed change would affect 69 electors.
- 3.56 I therefore recommend that Knockeden Parade, Knockeden Gardens and the bottom of part of Knockeden Park should be included in the Rosetta ward, on the basis that this would create a more readily identifiable boundary.
- 3.57 The Alliance Party (written representation) proposed that the Ormeau ward should be re-aligned so as not to cross the river Lagan, which the party claimed was a key local boundary. The party suggested that the western portion of the ward should be transferred to the Botanic ward. However, to do so would mean the transfer of 625 electors to the Botanic ward, which would contravene the legal requirement for electoral equality between wards within a district. I therefore do not recommend this change.

### **University, Blackstaff and City Hall wards**

- 3.58 A number of representations were made with regard to the University, Boucher (Blackstaff), and City Hall wards. Carmel Hanna MLA (written representation) proposed that:
- The Donegall Road streets to the rear of the Belfast City Hospital should be included in the Boucher (Blackstaff) ward.
  - A number of streets in the Boucher (Blackstaff) ward from Donnybrook Street southwards should be transferred to the University (Botanic) ward.
  - The Donegall Road streets should be added to the City Hall ward.
- 3.59 The Blackstaff Community Development Association, in written and oral representations, proposed that the Boucher (Blackstaff) ward should include the Middle Donegall Road, taking in the streets alongside Belfast City Hospital including parts of the Donegall Road and the Abington Drive area, as community links were far stronger with the Middle Donegall Road than the Lisburn Road.
- 3.60 Dr McDonnell (written representation) disagreed with the proposed splitting of the Donegall Road community in three between University, Boucher, City Hall wards. He suggested that the University (Botanic)/City Hall ward boundary should be redrawn along University Street/Botanic Avenue. He proposed that the University (Botanic) ward boundary should go down Beechlands and that compensatory adjustments should be made to City Hall and Boucher (Blackstaff) wards. He suggested that more attention needed to be given to the City Hall ward around Barrack Street and Hamill Street as they were clearly part of West Belfast and the bulk of the City Hall ward was in South Belfast.
- 3.61 Cllr Bob Stoker, on behalf of The Greater Village Regeneration Trust, made an extensive oral representation to the Belfast public hearing where he also supplied maps and a further written representation. The Trust proposed that “Blackstaff-St Georges” ward should be extended to take the Westlink to the junction of Grosvenor Rd including the railway line and Boyne Bridge; following Grosvenor Road and Howard Street to Bedford Street; following Bedford Street to Dublin Road to Hope Street; linking to Great Victoria Street following a line through Shaftsbury Square and Bradbury Place along the Lisburn Road to the area at the rear of Dunluce Avenue to the railway line; following the line to the junction of Balmoral Road; and taking in the lower area of the Boucher Road to the junction of the Broadway roundabout.
- 3.62 The Greater Village Regeneration Trust also made the following proposals for ward boundary changes, with a view to securing local accountability and community ownership:

- The Falls ward should be extended to take in that area known as Hamill Street, to be bounded by Grosvenor Road, Howard Street to Donegall Place, Divis Street, Castle Street, Royal Avenue Junction.
- The Shankill ward should be extended to take in the area known as Browns Square to Royal Avenue.
- The University area should be extended to the City Hall to take in the Donegall Pass area.
- The area known as the Middle Donegall Road should be transferred from the University area to the proposed Blackstaff (Boucher) ward.
- The area bounded by the Stranmillis Road and the Botanic Gardens to Eblana Street should be transferred to the Stranmillis ward.
- The area known as the Markets should be included in the proposed Ormeau ward.
- The portion of the proposed Boucher ward bounded by Donnybrook Street to Adelaide Avenue should be transferred to the University ward and the area from Adelaide Ave to Stockman's Land should be transferred to the Malone ward.
- The area which includes Stockman's Lane and Weston Drive should be included in the proposed Balmoral ward.

3.63 The above proposals have been very well thought out and clearly taken a lot of time to prepare, albeit that, without access to the GIS system, the Trust was disadvantaged in not knowing how its proposed changes would affect ward electorates. By using the OSNI GIS system, I was able to ascertain which proposals could be accepted without contravening the legal requirement for electoral equality between wards within district. As the proposals have knock-on effects on each other, to detail the impact of each proposal would unnecessarily complicate this report. A GIS analysis of the proposals showed that, in some instances, they would have the effect of increasing ward electorates above the 10% variance — Blackstaff ward by 419 electors Botanic ward by 628 and Ormeau ward by 1001. However, I am able to make the following recommendations, based on the proposals, as they provide for readily identifiable ward boundaries and comply with the statutory Rules in relation to electoral equality:

3.64 I recommend that the Donegall Road streets to the rear of the Belfast City Hospital should be transferred from the University (Botanic) ward to the Boucher (Blackstaff) ward. This proposed change would affect 439 electors.

3.65 I recommend that a number of streets in the Boucher (Blackstaff) ward from Donnybrook Street southwards should be transferred to the University (Botanic) ward. This proposed change would affect 625 electors.

- 3.66 I recommend that the boundary of the City Hall ward should be moved to the railway line to unite the Sandy Row area. This proposed change would affect 105 electors.
- 3.67 I recommend that 225 electors be moved from University (Botanic) ward to City Hall ward.
- 3.68 I recommend that the Brown Square area be transferred from City Hall ward to Shankill ward.
- 3.69 I recommend that the Barrack Street, Hamill Street area should be transferred from the City Hall ward to the Falls ward.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **The boundary between the proposed Belfast and East District Districts**

- 4.1 I recommend that the boundary between Cregagh ward and Newtownbreda ward should be readjusted to move a small row of houses from the Newtownbreda ward into Cregagh ward.

##### **Ward Names**

- 4.2 I recommend that the proposed University ward should be renamed "Botanic".
- 4.3 I recommend that the proposed Boucher ward should be renamed "Blackstaff".
- 4.4 I recommend that the proposed Alexander Park ward should be renamed "Duncairn".

##### **Finaghy, Balmoral, Malone, Upper Malone and Stranmillis wards**

- 4.5 I recommend that the Ardmore/Ashton area be united in the Balmoral ward.
- 4.6 I recommend that Stockman's Lane should be included in the Balmoral ward.
- 4.7 I recommend that a part of Balmoral Avenue, Lower Harberton Park should be transferred from the Balmoral ward to the Malone ward.
- 4.8 I recommend that Harberton Park be transferred from Upper Malone ward to Malone ward.
- 4.9 I recommend that Piney Hills and New Forge Lane should be united in the Upper Malone ward.

### **Beersbridge, Woodstock, Sandown and Knock wards**

- 4.10 I recommend that the boundary between Beersbridge ward and Woodstock ward be straightened at Redcar Street.
- 4.11 I recommend that the boundary between Knock ward and Sandown ward should be moved to the railway line, transferring electors north of the railway line into the Knock ward.

### **Bellevue, Innisfayle, Cavehill and Oldpark wards**

- 4.12 I recommend that the housing development at the southern end of the Bellevue ward should be transferred to the Cavehill ward.
- 4.13 I recommend that the boundaries of Bellevue and Innisfayle wards should extend to the M2.
- 4.14 I recommend that a row of houses at the top of the proposed Oldpark ward should be transferred to the Cavehill ward.

### **Crumlin and Shankill wards**

- 4.15 I recommend that Crumlin ward should include the former Crumlin Road Prison and all of the Crumlin Road to Carlisle Circus.

### **Ormeau, Stranmillis, University, Ravenhill, Belvoir and Rosetta wards**

- 4.16 I recommend that Knockeden Parade, Gardens and the bottom of Knockeden Park should be united within the Rosetta ward.
- 4.17 I recommend that Church Road/Galwally Avenue and Park, Hampton Park and the southern half of Annadale Avenue should be transferred from Belvoir ward into Rosetta ward.

### **University, Blackstaff (Boucher) and City Hall wards**

- 4.18 I recommend that the Donegall Road streets to the rear of the Belfast City Hospital should be included in the Blackstaff ward.
- 4.19 I recommend that a number of streets in the Blackstaff ward from Donnybrook Street southwards should be transferred to the University (Botanic) ward.
- 4.20 I recommend that the boundary of the City Hall ward should be extended to the railway line at Botanic to unite the Sandy Row area within that ward.
- 4.21 I recommend that 225 electors should be moved from Botanic ward to City Hall ward.
- 4.22 I recommend that Brown Square area should be transferred from City Hall ward to Shankill ward.

4.23 I recommend that the Barrack Street, Hamill Street area should be transferred from the City Hall ward to the Falls ward.

## **5. OTHER MATTERS**

5.1 I was unable to consider oral and written representations on the following matters, as they did not fall within my remit:

- Representations relating to the number of local governments districts.
- A representation requesting that the review be suspended until an impact assessment had been carried out.
- A representation that an area should be transferred to a different ward, on the basis that its community could get better political representation.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 I would like to thank all those individuals, political parties, district councils and other organisations for their oral and written contributions. I hope that they feel they have had a fair hearing and that their views have been accurately reflected in this report.

6.2 I would also like to thank Mandy Morrison, secretary to the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Dermot Harkin, deputy secretary, Crawford McIlveen, Boundaries Manager, Catherine Martin, Mapping and Charting Officer, and the staff of the Secretariat for their assistance and professionalism throughout the entire process.

6.3 My thanks also to the staff of Morrow Communications and the audio engineers for the administrative and technical support that they provided during the public hearing.

6.4 Finally, I am grateful to Belfast City Council and its staff for facilitating the public hearing.

Roisin McGlone  
Assistant Local Government Boundaries Commissioner  
16 February 2007

**List of Written Representations**

Alliance Party of Northern Ireland  
Bangor and Holywood Town Centres Limited  
Belfast City Council  
Blackstaff Community Development Association  
Bradshaw, P  
Charlton J D C  
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership  
Crozier, Cllr I  
Donaldson, Ald J (MP MLA)  
Gould, Dr M H  
Green Party  
Holywood Chamber of Commerce  
Morris Dr C  
Murphy P  
North Down Borough Council  
Rugby Residents' Association  
SDLP (Balmoral Branch)  
SDLP (Down Councillors)  
SDLP (R Kennedy)  
SDLP (Dr A McDonnell)  
Sinn Fein  
Stoker Cllr R  
The Greater Village Regeneration Trust  
UUP  
Wilson Cllr B

**List of Oral Representations**

Begley, S (Sinn Fein)  
Dickson, W (Blackstaff Community Development Association)  
Farry, Dr S (Alliance Party)  
Kennedy, R (SDLP South Belfast)  
Polley, T (Chief Executive North Down Borough Council)  
Stoker, Cllr R (The Greater Village Regeneration Trust)