

To: Benson, Liz; McAreavey, John
Subject: Newry City and Down

FAO: Mr Alastair Adair, Assistant Commissioner

Further to Seagoe Hotel hearing last Monday-

At the hearing last Monday, when examining our support for retaining Ballyward within the new Armagh/Banbridge/Craigavon Council, you enquired about our view on amending the interface between the proposed Ballyward and Castlewellan wards. I indicated that this was not something we had not expressed a view on.

However having since given it some consideration, there does seem to be a reasonable argument for tidying this boundary up since a small stretch of Castlewellan does encroach into Ballyward. We would be supportive in principle but clearly could not give a full commitment without having sight of any revised proposal.

On a related matter, we have not demonstrated within our written submission the extent of local support for the inclusion of the Rathfriland ward within the proposed new Newry City and Down District Council. The Rathfriland ward is within the South Down constituency and would provide coterminosity with the Westminster boundary. Rathfriland has been until recently part of the Newry and Mourne Council.

This change coupled with the inclusion of Ballyward within the Armagh/Banbridge/Craigavon would permit there still to be 40 wards in each without necessitating major reconfiguration of the other proposed wards.

The strong feeling of our local elected members around the requirement for Rathfriland's inclusion in Newry/Down has widespread support across the Party and represents an omission from our original submission.

I hope this is of assistance.

Dr Philip Weir (Director of Policy, DUP)