

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
ALAN L MONEYPENNY
ON THE
BOUNDARIES COMMISSIONER'S
PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE
EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRICT**

23 February 2007

| Contents | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Section | | Page |
| 1 | Introduction | 3 |
| 2 | District Name | 5 |
| 3 | District Boundary | 6 |
| 4 | Ward Names and Boundaries | 16 |
| 5 | Summary of Recommendations | 26 |
| 6 | Other Matters Raised | 28 |
| 7 | Conclusion | 29 |
| Appendices | | |
| Appendix A | Written Representations | 30 |
| Appendix B | Oral Representations | 31 |

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. It 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 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. 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 for 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 East Local Government District incorporating the current Castlereagh, Ards, North Down Borough Councils and Down District Council.

Written Representations

1.7 Written submissions 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 East Local Government District commenced in Lough Moss Centre, Carryduff on Tuesday 23 January 2007 and concluded on Wednesday 24 January 2007. Seven attended the hearing with seven oral submissions being made. All the participants had already submitted their representations 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 East Local Government District were discussed to ensure that full consideration and examination was given to the Commissioner's provisional recommendations. Details of those who made oral submissions are attached at Appendix B. A copy of the transcript of the hearing can be viewed on the Commissioner's website 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 East Local Government District. In particular it addresses relevant local information and opinion on the boundary and the name of the district and the number, boundaries and names of the Wards into which the district has been divided. It includes details of support for, objections to and 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 NAME

2.1 A number of the written submissions considered the naming of the Local Government District; all but four were supported orally by the authors at the public hearing.

2.2 Mr Grieve in his written submission suggested either “Strangford” or “East Down”. The latter referring to the actual geographic location and the former to indicate what is arguably the most significant geographic feature within the proposed new district.

2.3 The written and oral submissions made by the Down District Council SDLP grouping suggested “Down”, as the designation was already incorporated in the title of two of the councils within the proposed amalgamation.

2.4 Dr. Farry representing the Alliance Party, proposed “East Down”.

2.5 Mr Andrews, a community worker from Crossgar suggested either “Strangford” or “Strandown”. The latter is a combination of the words Strangford and Down, which Mr Andrews contended would perpetuate the names and the identities of the area.

2.6 North Down Borough Council did not make any proposals regarding a name but expressed concern at the designation “East”.

2.7 Dr Adamson, in a written submission suggested “Ulidia”.

2.8 Chris Atkinson, in a written submission, suggested that the predominant wildlife found in each of the areas should be used and an appropriate name derived from that source.

2.9 Mr Patrick Murphy, in a written submission, suggested “Drumlins and Strangford”.

Conclusion

2.10 It was clear that the designation “East Local Government District” was not popular with those who responded but there was no consensus regarding an alternative.

Recommendation

2.11 That the name promoted by the Commissioner should be adopted, and that the designation “East Local Government District” be considered by the newly elected council when in place with a view to achieving a consensus opinion regarding possible re-designation. Mr McCammick, Chief Executive, Antrim Borough Council, in a written submission suggested that enabling legislation may be needed to do this.

3. DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Mourne National Park

3.1 Cllr O'Neill, representing the SDLP grouping on Down District Council, which also forwarded a written submission, raised the issue of the Mourne National Park, indicating that as the period for consultation was drawing to an end, it appeared that a clear majority of contributors favoured the creation of such an entity. He contended that the servicing of such a park should be driven by a single local authority and not divided between two as was the case under the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations. His oral submission amplified the written one. The written submission confirmed this position suggesting that there would be difficulty under the Provisional Recommendations in providing a consistency in Planning, Community Planning, Housing and Roads services.

3.2 In response to a direct question from Cllr Wilson, who asked why it should remain within the East Local Government District and why it should not be entirely placed within South Local Government District. Cllr O'Neill responded by suggesting it should be incorporated in East Local Government District as it would create a highly attractive economic base with the Mournes and the fishing ports all being contained within the one Local Government District.

3.3 Dr Farry, representing the Alliance Party, asked Cllr O'Neill to identify which wards he was seeking to re-locate. Cllr O'Neill pointed out that as the boundaries for the National Park had not yet been identified it was not possible to nominate the relevant wards. He indicated that it would be unlikely to extend totally into the Warrenpoint ward but would become a matter of debate in both the Rostrevor and Kilkeel wards. Dr Farry suggested that as some of the wards mentioned extended into the heart of the Mournes, it might be more appropriate to service them from a Newry-based council or sub council than from Downpatrick or Newcastle. Cllr O'Neill responded to that by suggesting that service delivery could become a problem no matter where the service point was based.

3.4 Mr Neale speaking on behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party indicated that his party was not fully committed to the concept of a National Park. He also noted that the creation of such a park was still a matter at consultation. He supported the view that in the event of such a park being created, it made sound sense for its administration being vested within a single district council, outlining how he felt that there could be anomalies created in dealing with issues such as planning approvals etc if two authorities were dealing with them. He also suggested that it would be appropriate for the National Park to be within the East Local Government District suggesting that the Annalong, Cranfield, Hilltown, Kilkeel, Narrow Water, Rostrevor and Warrenpoint wards be moved into the East District Council Area.

3.5 Cllr Wilson representing the Green Party suggested that the Donard and Newcastle wards should be transferred into South Local Government District offering compatibility in local identity terms with that area rather than an area extending from the boundaries of Belfast.

3.6 Mr Polley, Chief Executive, North Down Borough Council suggested that it would appear appropriate if the boundary in this part of East Local Government District be redrawn to ensure that the responsibility for the proposed National Park remain with a single council. He suggested moving the "Mountain Area" and its hinterland into the proposed South Local Government District. Specifically that would be the proposed Donard, Newcastle, Murlough and Castlewellaan wards.

3.7 Dr Farry also suggested that the wards of Donard, Murlough and Castlewellaan be transferred into the South Local Government District on the grounds that the Mourne Mountains are a tourism product and there was efficiency in mandating a single authority to promote and service them. He contended that transferring Wards into East Local Government District could create a major physical barrier by the Mourne Mountains and cause service delivery problems if any other solution was recommended. He did not specifically mention the National Park but his submission covered basically the same grounds as the others who did.

3.8 Mr King, in a written submission, also supported the view that the National Park should be contained within a single council area.

Conclusion

3.9 There was clear support that the National Park in its entirety should be in a single council area and the logic for arguing for such a solution is sound.

3.10 There were separate views made as to which Local Government District the National Park, if created, should be located; either East or South with Cllr O'Neill and Mr Neale favouring East Local Government District. Cllr O'Neill argued on the grounds of coherence in terms of tourist development and Mr Neale cited consistency in development, tourism, protection and management. Both Cllr O'Neill and Mr Neale mentioned that the period of consultation regarding the possible creation of the National Park was just concluding and the findings from that process were not yet available.

3.11 Dr Farry, Cllr Wilson and Mr Polley suggested that the National Park should be in South Local Government District. Dr Farry's views were on the grounds of service delivery and local identity, with the service hub ideally being Newry City. Cllr Wilson and Mr Polley broadly supported that view.

3.12 Mr King, in a written submission, suggested that not having the National Park within one council area would remove the potential for a commonality of purpose but did not suggest which area he favoured.

3.13 I believe it is impossible to positively identify what the designated boundaries of the park, if it is created will be. Similarly it is not clear what powers the Agency to administer such a park, if created, will have and where or how it will interface with the Local Government Districts. Further, any decision made now could be considered pre-emptive of a Government/ Ministerial directive. Whilst I have sympathy with the argument that the park, if created should be within a single Local Government District and accept the logic of that, I find that I cannot, on the basis of the information made available to me, suggest the re drawing of boundaries in this part of East Local Government District.

Recommendation

3.14 I recommend no change to the provisional proposals in the boundary between East and South Local Government Districts.

The Belfast/Castlereagh boundary in the Beechill/Newtownbreda/Four Winds area

3.15 Dr.Farry, representing the Alliance Party, raised what they perceived as inconsistency with the Commissioner's recommendations that wards from the Castlereagh East and Castlereagh District Electoral Areas (DEAs) be transferred into the new Belfast Local Government District and that a number of the more westerly wards be transferred into the proposed East Local Government District. Dr Farry also suggested that the Provisional Recommendation could create service delivery issues. He contended that either the Knock dual carriageway around this part of Belfast Local Government District he used as the boundary between the new Belfast and the East Local Government Districts (which would remove the inconsistency), or the build-line. The latter would then bring Beechill, Four Winds and Newtownbreda wards into the Belfast Local Government District.

3.16 Mr Kennedy, representing South Belfast SDLP, gave me a summary of his oral presentation. He also suggested inconsistency indicating that if the Tullycarnet area of the present Castlereagh Borough Council be included in the proposed Belfast Local Government District so should BT8 suggesting that it might be more appropriate to include the Newtownbreda and Carryduff areas in Belfast - specifically the new wards of Newtownbreda, Four Winds and Beechill. He also contended that Tullycarnet should remain in East Local Government District to balance the inclusion of the Newtownbreda and Carryduff areas into Belfast Local Government District.

3.17 He further contended that Carryduff should be included in the Belfast Local Government District, suggesting that there was a perception from an undisclosed number of people residing in Carryduff that they were part of Belfast. He asserted that the Belfast district boundary should be on the South side of Carryduff and in so doing include all of the Carryduff urban development, Newtownbreda, Beechill, Four Winds and the new Purdysburn ward in Belfast Local Government District. Mr Kennedy also asked if the

name of the Four Winds ward could be changed to Cairnshill which he felt was more appropriate considering the area defined by it.

3.18 Cllr Wilson, representing the Green Party, also concurred with the views already expressed proposing that the Newtownbreda, Beechill, Four Winds and Carryduff wards should be included within the Belfast Local Government District as they “were clearly suburbs of Belfast”.

3.19 Mr Polley, Chief Executive North Down Borough Council, noted the comments made by the Alliance Party, Green Party and SDLP, and suggested that his council agreed that the boundary between the proposed Belfast and East Local Government District in the vicinity of the current Castlereagh Borough Council should be looked at. He highlighted what his council believed to be inconsistency in the establishment of the boundary taking the view that the Commissioner had appeared to have applied a “mix and match” approach, in some places using either the main route or the build-line. He suggested that there was inconsistency in the use of Glencreagh Road as the boundary rather than the Saintfield Road and in general terms suggested the build-line or carriageway should be used. I should point out that the Commissioner in his Provisional Recommendations makes no reference to having used the build-line.

3.20 Dr Morris submitted a written representation including evidence in the form of extracts from the 2001 census. The figures submitted indicated that the vast majority of residents of Beechill and Carryduff predominantly work in the Belfast area. He used this information to suggest that there was virtually no link between the Belfast suburbs south of the dual carriageway and Downpatrick, Newtownards or Bangor.

3.21 Carmel Hanna, MLA representing SDLP Balmoral Branch, suggested by way of a written submission, that the principle applied in including the Belvoir area within the new Belfast Local Government District should also be utilised in locating Galwally, Newtownbreda, Beechill, Cairnshill, and Knockbracken in the new Belfast Local Government District. Ms Hanna’s contention was that this would allow for consistency with the Parliamentary Constituency boundary of South Belfast.

3.22 Dr Alisdair Mc Donnell MP MLA (SDLP), in a written submission, also suggested that the Belfast boundary should be on the southern side of Carryduff. This would effectively place Newtownbreda, Beechill, Four Winds, Purdysburn wards and all of the Carryduff urban development in the new Belfast Local Government District. He suggested that attention should be paid to natural community and neighbourhood boundaries. He contended that strict adherence to 60 wards in Belfast was unnecessary as more or less could perhaps create a better fit, suggesting that there had been too much adherence to the exact arithmetical or numerical guidance. He also stated that mistakes made now with the boundaries would be compounded at a later stage when wards were grouped together to form DEAs.

3.23 Sinn Fein, in a written submission endorsed the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations.

3.24 The Down grouping of SDLP Councillors in their written submission generally supported the proposal not to include the urban areas of the present Castlereagh Borough Council in the new council (East). They further suggest, that it would be appropriate to divide the present Castlereagh Borough Council along rural and urban lines. They suggested that there has always been a strong argument that the new Belfast Local Government District should be larger and more discrete if it included all the areas whose identities are Belfast based.

3.25 Dr M H Gould made a written submission expressing concern that having chosen to live in the Castlereagh Borough because he believed that the environment it provided was more compatible to himself than that of near neighbour Belfast there was a possibility that he could find himself residing there under the Provisional Recommendations.

Conclusion

3.26 I received a number of submissions regarding the proposed new boundary between the Belfast and East Local Government Districts in the western side of the proposed district in the overall vicinity of the Four Winds/Beechill areas.

3.27 Propositions put were that the residents of that area saw themselves as part of Belfast, mainly working there. Indeed there were figures submitted in extract from the 2001 Census which largely supported that view. The wards in question are those proposed as Beechill, Four Winds and Newtownbreda.

3.28 At this point I have to comment that of those submissions I received there were only two in favour of the boundary as advised through the Provisional Recommendations. The other submissions clearly saw the wards in question as part of Belfast. These included both written and oral submissions.

3.29 Regarding the movement of the Beechill, Four Winds and Newtownbreda wards into the Belfast Local Government District, I find the level and source of representations made, compelling on the basis of the following representations:

- The Alliance Party suggested inconsistency stating that it was not clear why some of the most westerly wards in Castlereagh Borough Council should be retained in the proposed East Local Government District and others in the present Castlereagh East and central DEAs are proposed for transfer to Belfast Local Government District.
- The Down District Council, SDLP grouping, suggest that they supported the proposal not to include the urban areas of Castlereagh in the new council and further suggested that it would be sensible that the division of the present Castlereagh Borough Council area be made

along urban and rural lines. They also suggested that the proposed Belfast Local Government District should be larger and more discrete if it included all the areas whose identity is Belfast based.

- The SDLP, South Belfast, suggested that BT8 in its entirety should be part of the proposed Belfast Local Government District and that Tullycarnet should be in the proposed East Local Government District. They also suggested that the Four Winds ward be re-designated “Cairnshill” as that title was more relevant to the area defined by the proposed boundary.
- The SDLP Balmoral Branch argued that such a move would create a compatibility with the Parliamentary Constituency boundary of South Belfast.
- Dr McDonnell MP MLA, SDLP, in his written submission, on behalf of the South Belfast Constituency, questioned whether the strict adherence to 60 wards in Belfast was really necessary and suggested that 58, 59, 61, or 62 wards may provide a better fit. He suggests that there has been too close an adherence to meeting the exact arithmetical guidance and little or no recognition to the potential disruption to the social and community aspect of neighbourhoods at election time. He promotes the view that attention should be paid to natural and neighbourhood boundaries. Dr McDonnell also contended that Carryduff should also be included in the proposed Belfast Local Government District. He also suggested that mistakes made now in drawing the boundaries would be compounded when wards were grouped together to form DEAs.
- The Green Party states that Newtownbreda and Four Winds are clearly suburbs of Belfast and should be incorporated in the proposed Belfast District.
- North Down Borough Council, which as already stated, consists largely of representatives of the Alliance, Democratic Unionist and Ulster Unionist Parties - suggested a mix and match or inconsistency indicating that the boundary should be drawn not at Glencregagh Road but rather at the Saintfield Road. Associated with these were written representations from two residents of the area supporting the potential move, one supporting his view with figures from the 2001 Census. That respondent contended that the figures supported the view that a high percentage of the residents of the area in question work in Belfast and that there was no real link from south of the dual carriageway to Downpatrick, Bangor or Newtownards.
- Views were also promoted that residents of Carryduff concurred with the point of view that they were also part of Belfast.
- A number of submissions expressed the view that the local government boundaries should be drawn to be compatible with those applicable to DEAs or Parliamentary Constituencies. However, as I mentioned at the hearing there is no direction through the active legislation to support such consideration and consequently it lies outside the statutory rules governing this consultation.
- Sinn Fein supported the Commissioner’s Provisional recommendations.
- Two residents supported the view that they resided in Belfast

- One submission suggested that the wards in question should remain within the proposed East Local Government Area.

3.30 The Commissioner has taken into account the fact that the current boundary of Belfast does not include significant areas of post war development which lie into the urban form of the city. He used where possible the hills and the lough which he contended gave a readily identifiable boundary.

3.31 Regarding the rest he introduced “landscape wedges” which are identified within the Belfast Urban Area Plan 2001. He has also used identifiable boundaries. He also indicates in his remarks in his Provisional Recommendations Report under General Approach (Paragraph 4.4) and in his Introduction (Page 5), that although the Order does not provide an interpretation of readily identifiable boundaries he has taken a view that it includes ground features such as road and railway lines, estuaries, lakes, rivers and upland areas, footpaths, cycle paths, garden and field boundaries, walls, and the boundaries of open space such as parks, cemeteries and golf courses. He also states that readily identifiable boundaries would include roads.

3.32 The contention that there has been inconsistency by including Tullycarnet in the proposed Belfast Local Government District and not in the proposed East Local Government District is not valid if one accepts the principal of the “landscape wedges” as Tullycarnet lies within the wedge defined by Knock Golf Club, Dundonald Cemetery and open ground at Tullycarnet. This area lies on the country side of the Outer Ring Road.

3.33 The contention that the Commissioner has varied in a mix and match approach between the carriageway (Outer Ring) and the build line is only partly correct because he makes no reference to the build line per se but does suggest that he intended to bring a number of significant post war developments into the new Belfast Local Government District.

3.34 It does appear to me that he has brought a substantial part of development on the country side of the Outer Ring into Belfast and has placed another adjacent part into the proposed East local Government District. I have driven and walked this area both in the pre and post hearing periods to determine if I could identify a clear reason why the swathe of development on the countryside of the Outer ring from Glencregagh to the Ballygowan Road intersection is included in the proposed Belfast Local Government District and the Four Winds/Newtownbreda/Beechill areas are not. It seems to me that travelling along the Outer Ring from the Knock direction everything to the left of the road is clearly uphill and quite steeply so in certain places. Everything to the right hand side of the road is clearly downhill. It therefore does not appear that the Commissioner has applied the “hill scape” maxim in this instance.

3.35 The Commissioner also makes reference to a “landscape wedge” in this area, indicating that the boundary should follow the edge of the wedge at

Glencregagh Road to Shaw's Bridge. This as it may be, I cannot see the reason for using the Glencregagh Road rather than the Saintfield Road, as all of the submissions with the exception of one support the view that the wards in question lie in Belfast. One of the submissions received suggested that there had been too much adherence to numerical guidance. I believe this is where the inconsistency or mix and match have occurred.

3.36 The selection of the Glencregagh Road as the boundary rather than the Saintfield Road appears to support this view. I believe that it should be the Saintfield Road, (which is an identifiable boundary), as per the submission made by North Down Borough Council, thus including all of the post-war development on the country side of the Outer Ring Road in the proposed Belfast Local Government District.

3.37 The suggested separation of the urban and rural parts of the present Castlereagh Borough Council and the case put for that has merit, as it promotes the view that it would remove the potential of a conflict of separate identities. The two residents who supported the proposal that the wards in question should be in Belfast supported that view.

3.38 The endorsement of the Commissioner's recommendations by two respondents was in the context of the overall responses a minority view.

3.39 The suggestions that Carryduff should, also be included in the proposed Belfast Local Government District do not I believe, carry the thrust or support as do the proposals regarding Four Winds/Beechill/Newtownbreda. There are clear green fields between Primrose Hill and Carryduff, and it appears that Knockbracken Road provides an ideal boundary and is an identifiable boundary. The revised electorate in each ward would be: Beechill 3309, Four Winds 3217, and Newtownbreda 3031.

3.40 The suggestion that the Four Winds ward should be re-designated "Cairnshill" causes me difficulty as the area has been known as Four Winds for many years - indeed as long as I can remember - and that designation is used by all that I know who live or visit there.

Recommendation

3.41 I recommend that the Beechill, Newtownbreda and Four Winds wards be included in the proposed Belfast Local Government District. I also recommend that the developments at both Primrose Hill and Laurel Grove are included in that District.

3.42 Views were expressed that Carryduff should be included in the proposed Belfast Local Government District. I cannot support that view, as there is clear open countryside between Primrose Hill and Carryduff.

3.43 A request was made to re-designate the Four Winds ward as Cairnshill on the grounds of it being a title more relevant to the area it represents. I

cannot support this view as the title Four Winds is used by a wide range of people who live or visit there and organisations which are based there.

The boundary between the proposed Belfast and East Local Government Districts in the general area of the Outer Ring Road.

3.44 Mr Polley, Chief Executive North Down Borough Council representing the Council's policy or view, as already stated, noted the comments made by the Alliance Party, Green Party and SDLP, and stated that the council agreed that the boundary between the proposed Belfast and East Local Government Districts should be looked at. He highlighted what his council believed to be an inconsistency in the establishment of the boundary and that it was taking the view that the Commissioner had appeared to have applied a "mix and match" approach, in some places using either the main route or the build-line. He suggested that the council favoured the use of either the centre of the dual carriageway (Outer Ring) or the build-line, but not a combination of both. He suggested that inconsistency was demonstrated in the use of Glencregagh Road as the boundary rather than the Saintfield Road. I should point out once again that the Commissioner in his Provisional Recommendations makes no reference to having used the build-line.

3.45 Working on this principle the North Down Borough Council's proposition would mean that Glencregagh, Castlereagh, Braniel and Tullycarnet wards would move from the proposed Belfast Local Government District to East local Government District.

Conclusion

3.46 Whilst I accept that the proposal promoted by North Down Borough Council provides a ready and tidy solution in drawing the boundary in this part of the proposed Belfast/East Local Government Districts, it does not take account of the Commissioner's intention to bring a number of the significant areas of post-war development into the urban form of the city. The Commissioner considered it important that a number of these were brought within the boundary of the new Belfast Local Government District. Nor does it take account of his use of "landscape wedges". Rather he has used the identifiable boundary of the roads on the country side of the proposed wards.

3.47 Consequently, I feel that the Commissioner had the inclusion of this post-war development very much in mind when he drew the boundary in this area. And as in the matter of the Beechill, Four Winds and Newtownbreda wards, I would contend that the area to the left hand side of the Outer Ring, travelling from the direction of Knock, is clearly part of the Belfast Urban Area.

Recommendation

3.48 I recommend no change to the boundary as per the Provisional Recommendation.

Hollywood Exchange

3.49 Cllr Wilson suggested that Hollywood Exchange related more closely with North Down /Hollywood than with Belfast and should be included in the East Local Government District. Mr Polley also supported this view, indicating that letters of support had been submitted from the Hollywood Town Manager and the President of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, indicating the organisations/events that the Hollywood exchange supported in the town. He also contended that the Exchange was only accessed through what was at present North Down Borough Council territory, and on that basis should be transferred into the proposed East Local Government District

Conclusion

3.50 Although the name implies a location which is part of Hollywood rather than Belfast, I heard no compelling argument to justify that it should be transferred to East Local Government District. Ongoing support to the various organisations and events is unlikely to be conditioned by which local council area the Exchange happens to be in. I visited this area in the post-hearing period and would suggest that one can access the Exchange from at least one other point, not as was suggested only through existing North Down Council territory.

Recommendation

3.51 I recommend no change to the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendation.

The boundary between the proposed East and Belfast Local Government Council Districts at Knocknagoney and Hollywood.

3.52 Mr Polley suggested that the boundary should be drawn along the Knocknagoney and Old Hollywood Roads and not as shown in the Provisional Recommendations that have included part of the present North Down Council area at the top of the Knocknagoney Road into the proposed Belfast Local Government District. He contended that the original boundary should be maintained, providing a much clearer dividing line.

Conclusion

3.53 I walked the area referred to and whilst I have some sympathy for the view that re-drawing it as requested may provide an "easier" dividing line, the proposal if implemented would compromise the mathematical criterion we are operating within.

Recommendation

3.54 I recommend no change to the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendation.

4. WARD BOUNDARIES AND NAMES

I have dealt with these representations in alphabetical order as per those submitted in written form. This means that those submitted by the Alliance Party (Dr Farry) lead in virtually all cases.

4.1 Dr Farry observed that boundaries in rural areas should not cut across townlands or villages and in urban areas they should utilise natural features - rivers, railway lines - and when that is not possible, arterial routes. He contended that the wards were the building blocks for the DEAs.

4.2 Mr Polley also suggested that boundaries should be drawn to reflect identities of areas especially where likely boundaries between DEAs are concerned. This could lead to the eventual “clustering” of wards for the purposes of creating DEAs. He also suggested that natural boundaries should be used where possible and that care was required as future planning policy could change the nature of communities.

Helens Bay

4.3 Dr Farry contended that Helens Bay should be contained within a single ward and not two as currently proposed. This created the situation that there would be two DEAs, when logically the identity of the entire village could be preserved within the single unit.

Clandeboye Ward

4.4 Dr Farry contended that the boundaries of this ward were difficult to understand, spreading from the rural areas of North Down to the fringes of Bangor. He felt that it should become part of either a Bangor or Holywood DEA.

4.5 Mr Polley contended that the ward was too large and without identity and that consideration should be given to re-drawing it and increasing the electorates of Priory and Craigavad wards. He suggested that this could be the basis of a functional DEA.

4.6 Dr Farry suggested that the Ardnagh development was split between the Clandeboye and the Primacy wards which could lead to a split between DEAs and felt that it would be better to extend the Primacy ward as far as the Newtownards Road dual carriageway. He also suggested that, given the potential for housing growth in the area, the Primacy ward should only extend as far as the Gransha Road. Dr Farry raised the question of pending development in this ward and how the numbers could be dramatically affected within a relatively short space of time. He lodged a drawing to demonstrate this point.

4.7 Mr Polley also concurred with this view and although he indicated that his council had not had a chance to observe the map Dr Farry had obtained,

he had had an opportunity to examine it and his personal view was that there was sound sense in re-examining the overall boundaries of this ward. Mr Polley also shared the view that the proposed ward was too large and lacked identity. The solution put forward by North Down Borough Council was to increase the Priory and Craigavad wards.

4.8 Cllr Wilson also raised questions regarding the make-up of this ward, suggesting that the rural area in the Hollywood Hills should be incorporated into the two Hollywood wards and that Clondeboyne should be based on Bangor and extend towards Newtownards.

Orlock Ward

4.9 Dr Farry suggested similar problems existed with the proposed Orlock ward.

Priory Ward

4.10 Dr Farry pointed to an apparent anomaly where two houses on Ballymenoch Road were placed in Priory ward whilst all of the rest on the same road were in Craigavad. Mr Polley indicated that the eastern boundary had been drawn to exclude two dwellings and that it should be redrawn to include them.

Crawfordsburn Ward

4.11 Dr Farry contended that there was a case to run the Crawfordsburn ward along the north of the Crawfordsburn Road as far as Strickland's Glen. This would permit the Wandsworth area and some pockets of housing along the Old Belfast Road to be consolidated into the present Carnalea ward. Cllr Wilson suggested that a small bit of Helens Bay presently included in Craigavad ward should be transferred into Crawfordsburn ward to avoid splitting the village in two. Mr Polley also concurred with this view and also suggested that the Sinclair area of West Bangor should be in this ward.

Carnalea Ward

4.12 Mr Polley suggested that the Crawfordsburn Road/Worcester area should be in this ward.

Ballyholme Ward

4.13 Mr Polley suggested that the Donaghadee Road/Ward Avenue/Fairview Gardens area should remain in this ward.

Kilcooley Ward

4.14 Dr Farry suggested that the Meadowvale area be transferred into the Kilcooley ward. Cllr Wilson also suggested that because the busy A2 splits this ward that the Rathmore estate, which is estranged from the main body of

the ward by the road, should be transferred into the Springhill/ Bangor West ward. He also agreed that the Meadowvale area should be incorporated into the Kilcooley ward.

Bangor Marina Ward

4.15 Dr Farry suggested that the boundary should run down the Bryansburn Road and then down the centre of Osborne Drive. He also suggested that the boundary between Bangor Marina and Ballyholme wards should be run down Ward Avenue, running north from Ballyholme Road.

Bryansburn Ward

4.16 Dr Farry suggested that if the boundary were to run along the laneway at Oakwood, this would allow all of Church Street to be in the same ward. Cllr Wilson suggested that the proposed Bryansburn ward, minus that part currently allocated to it from across the Princetown Road, if added to the old Princetown ward, would create a homogeneous ward within the size required. Mr Polley suggested that the boundary should be re-drawn down the centre of the Bryansburn Road.

Castle Park and Rathgael Wards

4.17 Dr Farry suggested that the Clandeboye Road open space should be one boundary rather than running it down the middle of Chester Park. He also suggested there was no need to divide Church Avenue, with the cemetery providing an ideal boundary to permit all of the Church Area to go into Castle Park. Similarly the boundary should run down the back of Abbeyhill Drive rather than down the centre of the street. Cllr Wilson suggested that the ward should be extended outwards to include Rathgael Road, especially Lord Wardens and the new housing estate at the Juvenile Justice Centre, the main Newtownards Road being retained as the boundary line, with the Whitehill area being added to the Castle Park ward.

Moneyreagh Ward

4.18 Dr Farry had suggested that the housing at western end of the ward should be transferred to either the Carryduff or Purdysburn wards, and the housing in the eastern should be placed in Comber West, otherwise the scope for creating DEAs would be restricted.

Crossgar Ward

4.19 Dr Farry suggested that the small piece of housing within Crossgar placed within the Killyleagh ward should be retained within the village. This was a view shared by Mr Terry Andrews, who indicated that housing sited within the 30 mile per hour zone in Crossgar was included in the provisional proposal for the Killyleagh area.

Lisbane and Ringhaddy Wards

4.20 Dr Farry suggested that the village of Whiterock should not be split between these two wards, but did not provide an alternative. He also suggested that all of the village of Balloo should be included in the Ringhaddy ward.

Ballycrochan Ward

4.21 Mr Polley suggested that an area of new housing indicated on a submitted map should be included in this ward.

Millisle Ward

4.22 Mr William Hamilton, in a written submission, indicated that he resided in Donaghadee and that the area of the town he lived in had been included in Millisle ward, some 2.5 miles away by indirect route. Mr Mark Simpson made exactly the same point.

Ward Names

4.23 Dr Farry suggested that another name be found for the Holywood ward, as the entire town was not within the ward. He made no recommendations. He suggested that the Bangor Marina ward should be renamed "Bangor Bay", as the area in which the Marina is sited is within a designated Targetting Social Need (TSN) area. Whilst the people of Bangor were proud of the Marina, he suggested that the use of the name may have a negative influence on would be investment sought through the TSN status. This view was also put forward by Mr Polley. He also suggested that the Bloomfield ward was awkwardly titled, as only part of the Bloomfield Road lay within it and it excluded the shopping centre. He suggested Gransha as a substitute. He further suggested that the Crawfordsburn ward was misnamed and should be re-titled "Rathmore".

4.24 Cllr Wilson suggested that Carnalea ward was inappropriately named as all of Carnalea is included in the Crawfordsburn ward. He suggested either "Rathmore", "Bangor West" or "Springhill". Cllr Wilson felt that the Rathgael ward was inappropriately named as it did not include the Rathgael area.

Conclusion

4.25 I will deal with the ward names first. In all cases I have taken account of local knowledge and opinion. Where the name suggested in the Provisional Recommendations has been challenged but no alternative advised, I have asked the Commissioner to take note of that and if he considers it appropriate to consider the matter further.

Hollywood Ward

4.26 Dr Farry suggested that because the entire town was not within the ward it should be re-titled. However, he did not make a counter proposal and I have no alternative but to make no recommendation. However, this may be a matter that the Commissioner would wish to consider.

Rathgael Ward

4.27 A similar situation existed regarding Rathgael ward where Cllr Wilson indicated that it was not appropriately named as no part of the Rathgael area was within it. He did not make a recommendation. Once again the Commissioner may wish to consider this.

4.28 I make the following recommendations, based on the submissions from Dr Farry, Mr Polley and Cllr Wilson, as the cases put are sound and in the main represent as I have already mentioned local knowledge.

Recommendation

- Bangor Marina ward should be renamed “Bangor Bay” ward.
- Bloomfield ward should be renamed “Gransha” ward.
- Carnalea ward should be renamed “Rathmore” ward.

Ward Boundaries

4.29 Before proceeding with this part of my report, I visited some parts of East Local Government District, and also spent time with Ordnance Survey officials to get a clear understanding of what was being suggested. I also wish to put on record that I have considered carefully the representations made both in writing and orally on the basis that they are based on local opinion and knowledge.

4.30 What I have done is to recommend change where I can see clear justification for that and where those alterations do not interfere with the mathematical criterion in place which govern the upper and lower size of the electorate in each ward. Where the representations suggest a substantial increase or decrease of a ward electorate, and where I cannot see a solution requiring other than a major re-engineering of a substantial part of the local government district, I have noted this and suggested that this is a matter that the Commissioner may wish to consider if he feels it appropriate. I have also, where possible, reviewed situations where villages and recognised and established communities or districts have been split by the boundaries in the Provisional Recommendations. I have in mind places like Helens Bay, Crossgar, Balloo, and Whiterock.

4.31 Could I also, as a final comment, say that a number of the representations suggested that the ward formation would impact on or become building blocks for future DEAs. I would simply restate what I said at the hearing, and have already mentioned in this report, that DEAs are not a

consideration for determining ward boundaries and it is not within the statutory rules. The same applies to the compatibility issue with parliamentary constituency boundaries. These matters have therefore not played a part of my deliberations.

Crawfordsburn Ward

4.32 The representation suggested that the village of Helens Bay should be contained within a single ward and not, as provisionally recommended, split between two. I support the representation made that the village or district should not be split between two wards in order that the single identity be preserved. The revised electorate for Crawfordsburn ward would be 2812.

Recommendation

4.33 I recommend accordingly.

Clandeboyne Ward

4.34 The representations suggested that the boundaries of the ward were difficult to understand, being widespread and too large and not ideally bringing together rural and urban parts of North Down and Holywood respectively. Once again I have taken account of the representations made which basically suggested that the ward was too big. I have attempted to resolve this by recommending a realignment of the boundary. This has included moving the Ardnagh development into the Primacy ward. The revised electorate for the Clandeboyne ward would be 2774, and for Primacy 3206.

Recommendation

4.35 I recommend accordingly.

Orlock Ward

4.36 The representations indicated that the boundaries were also difficult to understand. I have looked at this and whilst I have sympathy for the representations made I feel that it is difficult to advise change without a substantial re-drawing of the entire conurbation in that part of the local government district.

Recommendation

4.37 That the Commissioner, if he feels it appropriate, reviews the boundaries to explore the possibility of making the area more compact with the potential for developing a more obvious identity.

Priory Ward

4.38 The representation indicated that two houses on the Ballymenoch Road had been included in Priory ward whereas all of the rest of the houses on that road or district were in Craigavad ward, the contention being that all of the houses should be in a single ward. I agree with this on the grounds that it is important not to split the district to maintain the local identity. The revised electorate would be 2858.

Recommendation

4.39 I recommend accordingly.

Crawfordsburn Ward

4.40 The representations indicated a request for a substantial change in the overall make-up of this ward. I have already recommended the transfer of Helens Bay into this ward. It is difficult to see how further change could be effected without a substantial re-engineering of a number of the wards within East Local Government District. It may be that the Commissioner will have to consider the potential for a major restructuring of a substantial part of the conurbation in this part of the Local Government District.

Recommendation

4.41 I feel I must leave this to further scrutiny from the Commissioner, if he feels that to be appropriate.

Carnalea Ward

4.42 The representation suggested that the Crawfordsburn Road and Worcestor area should be included in this ward. This would once again consolidate an existing community. The revised electorate would be 3201.

Recommendation

4.43 I recommend accordingly.

Ballyholme Ward

4.44 The representation suggested that the Donaghadee Road/Ward Avenue/Fairview Gardens area should be transferred to this ward. Representations were made regarding the same issues from the stand-point of the neighbouring Bangor Marina ward. I would accept the local viewpoint that this is a very unnatural boundary and, if amended as suggested, it would use a more manageable identifiable boundary and minimise splitting a local district. The revised electorate would be 3254.

Recommendation

4.45 I recommend accordingly.

Kilcooley Ward

4.46 The representation suggested that the Rathmore estate should be transferred into the Carnalea ward. It would appear to me that this once again splits a district. The revised electorates would be Kilcooley 2678 and Carnalea 3201.

Recommendation

4.47 I recommend accordingly.

Bangor Marina Ward

4.48 This matter has been dealt with in the redrawing of the common boundaries associated with Ballyholme ward. The revised electorate would be 2905.

Bryansburn Ward

4.50 The representations suggested that the boundary be redrawn to allow all of Church Street to be in the same ward; and also that the boundary be redrawn down the centre of the Bryansburn Road. I support this once again as it maintains Church Street within a single ward and the use of the centre point on Bryansburn Road provides a better boundary. The revised electorate would be 3006.

Recommendation

4.51 I recommend accordingly.

Castle Park and Rathgael Wards

4.52 The representations suggested that the boundary be redrawn using the Clandeboye Road open space, the cemetery and down the back of Abbeyhill Drive. The representations suggested that this boundary was a mess. The Provisional Recommendation takes the boundary down the middle of Chester Park and divides Church Avenue. The representations mean that all of the Church area could go into Castle Park. Once again, listening to local opinion, I would support the representations as it would avoid dividing Church Avenue. The revised electorates for Castle Park and Rathgael would be 3207 and 2768 respectively.

Recommendation

4.53 I recommend accordingly.

Moneyreagh Ward

4.54 The representations suggested that the boundary be redrawn to allow the housing at the western end of the village to be transferred to the Carryduff ward, and that the housing at the eastern end of the village be transferred to Comber West ward. I support the representations made on the basis that the Provisional Recommendation will split recognised districts. The revised electorate will be 2807.

Recommendation

4.55 I recommend accordingly.

Crossgar Ward

4.56 The representations indicated that the boundary should be redrawn to include the entire village in this ward. The boundary as promoted through the Provisional Recommendations splits the village or district. I support the view of the local representations that the village should be contained in a single ward. The revised electorate would be 2944.

Recommendation

4.57 I recommend accordingly.

Lisbane and Ringhaddy Wards

4.58 The representations suggested that the boundary be redrawn to avoid splitting the village of Whiterock and that the village of Balloo should be located in the Ringhaddy ward. I support the representations made that Whiterock should be in a single ward. I accept the same argument for the village of Balloo. The revised electorate would be 3004.

Recommendation

4.59 I recommend accordingly that the entire villages of Whiterock and Balloo be located within the Ringhaddy ward.

Ballycrochan Ward

4.60 The representations suggested that an area of housing developed after the publication of the maps used in the preparation of the Provisional Report should be included in this ward. The maps in use by the Commissioner when he made his Provisional Recommendations were updated a short while later, with the consequence he was unable to consider this new development. I recommend that it be included in the Ballycrochan ward. The revised electorate figure would be 3031.

Recommendation

4.61 I recommend, accordingly that the area of new housing not shown on the map utilised for the mapping exercise be included in this ward.

Millisle Ward

4.62 The representations suggested that Donaghadee should be maintained as a single entity and not split. Representations were made from two residents of Donaghadee who find themselves within the Millisle ward through the Provisional Recommendations. I have sympathy for their position and as I have already stated I have attempted to avoid making recommendations where recognised districts are split. However, as I cannot see a ready resolution to this because of the numerical criterion I must apply, I must therefore refer this to the Commissioner for his further consideration.

Recommendation

4.63 That the Commissioner, if he considers it appropriate, re-examines the situation where Donaghadee has been split between two wards when an ideal scenario would appear to avoid that.

5 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That the name “East Local Government District” should remain, as recommended by the Commissioner in his Provisional Recommendations.

5.2 That the local government district boundaries in the Mourne region remain as proposed by the Commissioner in his Provisional Recommendations.

5.3 That the Four Winds, Beechill and Newtownbreda wards be incorporated into the proposed Belfast Local Government District, along with the new developments at Primrose Hill and Laurel Grove.

5.4 That the boundary between the proposed East and Belfast Local Government Districts in the vicinity of the Outer Ring Road should remain, as per the Provisional Recommendation.

5.5 That the Holywood Exchange should remain within the Belfast Local Government District.

5.6 That the boundary between the proposed Belfast and East Local Government Districts in the vicinity of Knocknagoney/Old Holywood Road should remain as per the Provisional Recommendation.

Ward Names

5.7 The recommended name changes are as follows:

- Bangor Marina ward should be renamed “Bangor Bay” ward.
- Bloomfield ward should be renamed “Gransha” ward.
- Carnalea ward should be renamed “Rathmore” ward.

Ward Boundaries

5.8 The recommended boundaries changes are as follows:

- Crawfordsburn Ward - The boundary around Helens Bay should be redrawn and the village be included as part of Crawfordsburn ward.
- Clandeboye Ward - The boundary should be redrawn to allow a portion of western Clandeboye ward to be transferred into Craigavad ward; and the Ardnagh development to move into the Primacy ward.
- Orlock Ward - That the Commissioner re-examine the boundaries of this ward to determine if it is possible to redraw the boundaries to permit it to become more compact and develop a personal identity.
- Priory Ward - The boundary of Priory ward should be redrawn to allow two houses to be moved into Craigavad ward.
- Crawfordsburn Ward - That the Commissioner re-examines the overall boundaries of this and its neighbouring wards.

- Carnalea Ward - That the Crawfordsburn Road and Worcester areas should be included in Carnalea ward.
- Ballyholme Ward - That the Donaghadee Road/Ward Avenue/Fairview Gardens area should be transferred to this ward.
- Kilcooley Ward - That the Rathmore estate should be transferred into the Carnalea ward.
- Bangor Marina Ward - This matter has been dealt with in the redrawing of boundaries associated with Ballyholme ward.
- Bryansburn Ward - That the boundary should be redrawn to allow all of Church Street to be in the same ward, and that the boundary be redrawn down the centre of the Bryansburn Road.
- Castle Park and Rathgael Wards - That the boundary should be redrawn using the Clandeboye Road open space and the cemetery and down the back of Abbeyhill Drive.
- Moneyreagh Ward - That the boundary be redrawn to allow the housing at the western end of the village to be transferred to the Carryduff ward; and the housing at the eastern end of the village should be transferred to Comber West ward.
- Crossgar Ward - That the boundary should be redrawn to include the entire village in this ward.
- Lisbane and Ringhaddy Wards - That the boundary be redrawn to include the villages of Whiterock and Balloo in the Ringhaddy ward.
- Ballycrochan Ward - That the area of new housing not shown on the maps should be included in the ward.
- Millisle Ward - That the Commissioner re-examines the situation where Donaghadee has been split between two wards when an ideal scenario would be to avoid that.

6. OTHER MATTERS RAISED

6.1 Councillor Brian Wilson raised issues regarding the methodology employed in the production of the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations and indeed the efficiency of the related processes. He was reminded that everything had been carried out within the legislative framework.

6.2 A written submission from the General Consumer Council provided a qualified support for the seven-council model. Sinn Fein in a written submission also provided support for the seven-council model. Miss Sandra Millsop, in a written submission, challenged the seven-council model. With the exception of one person who appeared at the hearing, Mr Andrews, all expressed concern at the seven-council model. They were reminded that that matter was not for consideration as the number of councils had been proscribed in the legislation.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 In conclusion, I believe the recommendations I have made are within the spirit of The Local Government (Boundaries) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. I hope that they have fairly reflected local opinion and the representations made.

7.2 I would like to place on record my grateful thanks to those who assisted me in the conduct of the hearing, the essential research required in compiling this report and the detailed briefing provided at the commencement of the exercise. I would also like to thank those who appeared at the hearing, for the dignified and courteous way that the various presentations and question and answer sessions were conducted. It was a great credit to all concerned.

Alan L Money Penny
Assistant Local Government Boundaries Commissioner
23 February 2007

List of Written Representations

Alliance Party
Andrews T
Bangor and Holywood Town Centres Limited
Gould M H
Green Party
Greenway I
Grieve S
Hamilton W
Holywood Chamber of Commerce
King C
Morris C
Murphy P G
North Down Borough Council
SDLP (Balmoral Branch)
SDLP (Down Councillors)
SDLP (Ray Kennedy)
SDLP (Dr Alasdair McDonnell)
Simpson M
Sinn Fein
UUP (Newry and Armagh, Upper Bann and South Down Associations)
Wilson B

List of Oral Representations

Andrews, Terry (Crossgar Community Project)

Farry, Dr Stephen (Alliance Party)

Kennedy, Ray (SDLP South Belfast)

Neale, Mark (UUP)

O'Neill, Cllr Eamonn (SDLP)

Pollley, Trevor (Chief Executive North Down Borough Council)

Wilson, Alderman Brian (Green Party)