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Ms Elizabeth Benson  
Secretary to the Commissioner  
Office of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner  
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Dear Ms Benson

**Review of Northern Ireland Local Government Boundaries  
Antrim and Newtownabbey District**

The following is my submission in respect of the proposed ward boundaries for Antrim and Newtownabbey District. It is made on the assumption that no significant change is likely to the external boundary of the two existing Boroughs, and without prejudice to my previously expressed concerns that the eleven council model (the so-called "11b") is not the best arrangement for Northern Ireland as a whole.

Yours sincerely

David Ford  
MLA for South Antrim and  
Councillor for Antrim Town

**Review of Northern Ireland Local Government Boundaries  
Provisional Recommendations Report, Autumn 2008  
Antrim and Newtownabbey District  
Submission by Cllr David Ford MLA**

## **Introduction**

Alliance has adopted the following general principles:

- Wards do not in themselves have huge political significance, but they are the building blocks for District Electoral Areas (DEAs); the latter are entities around which political representation is organised. Therefore, where ward boundaries are flawed, the potential exists for natural communities to be split between different DEAs
- The process should avoid splitting townlands in rural areas/avoid splitting villages (where population is less than the average quota for a ward)
- The process should avoid running boundaries down residential streets, or through clearly defined residential developments
- In urban areas, the commissioner should try to use arterial roads or other natural barriers as ward boundaries
- The process should avoid creating large wards, in particular with a sparsely populated centre and population concentrations on the edges – this will significantly restrict the scope for creating viable/coherent DEAs
- There are also dangers in running ward boundaries along current development lines; if these are subsequently breached, then ward boundaries (and potentially DEA boundaries) may not best reflect natural communities

Whilst I acknowledge the pressures under which the Commissioner and his staff are obliged to operate, I believe that the provisional recommendations for Antrim and Newtownabbey breach these principles in a number of areas. There is also conflict with the requirement of Rule 14, that boundaries should be easily identifiable.

While the proposed Carnmoney Hill ward is probably the worst example, many other urban wards have ill-defined boundaries which meander through streets and there are rural wards of very limited coherence. After examination of the provisional recommendations, and comparing them to both the existing pattern of wards and districts and the new Parliamentary boundaries, it appears that improvements could be made by using the discretion provided by the legislation to increase the total number of wards to 41.

In particular, this would allow the current Borough boundary to be maintained as a ward boundary and avoid the ugly and incoherent extension of Parkgate ward to the north-east. It would also make it easier to deal with the problems round Carnmoney hill.

The inter-Borough boundary was established in 1972, modified in the 1983 revision and remained since then. The recently established Parliamentary boundaries were the

outcome of extensive discussion. It therefore seems reasonable to take account of them at this stage when attempting to set easily recognised boundaries, while acknowledging that they will not always provide an easy answer.

The detailed submission deals with logical groups of wards as this appears an appropriate way of recognising some of the local factors. It assumes 41 wards.

### **Toome, Randalstown, Parkgate**

The current six wards are entitled to five new wards. The proposed Toome ward extends the existing ward east to leave an awkward Cranfield. It would be more logical to add the rural Cranfield/Staffordstown/Creggan area to Toome.

The existing Drumanaway ward should be joined to most of the urban part of Cranfield ward, with the Neillsbrook area added to existing Randalstown.

In turn, Randalstown would lose the eastern edge of the urban area to Shilvodan, which would lose the townlands of Artnagullion, Carncombe, Edenvale and Lislunna to Parkgate.

### **Antrim Town**

The existing seven wards become five new wards. An expanded Balloo ward would gain the Moylena Road and Greenvale area, leaving the remainder of Massereene ward largely unchanged.

A new Greystone ward would include the current ward, plus additional housing on the south of Greystone Road and Stiles estate.

Round Tower ward would include most of the current Steeple plus Springfarm area.

Fountain Hill would continue to cover the inner Belfast Road, Folly and Parkhall areas, also taking in Queen's Road and Mallusk Gardens from Steeple.

### **Crumlin, Muckamore and Templepatrick**

Existing Crumlin ward would lose the Tromery estate and Bramblewood to Ballydonaghy ward, with the small urban area at present in Aldergrove moving into Crumlin.

The new ward of Ballydonaghy would take in the remaining parts of east Crumlin and towards Ballyutoag from Clady, becoming more Crumlin focused. The area north of Loanends which looks to Templepatrick would be added to the existing Templepatrick ward.

A new ward would combine the urban fringe areas of Farranshane and Ballycraigy, though losing Muckamore Garden Village to a revised Aldergrove ward.

## **Ballyclare**

The current five wards in Ballyclare area are entitled to six seats, with the addition of Ballycraigy townland.

Doagh is a single ward, including Burnside and Cogry.

The rural Rashee area should transfer to Ballyclare North, while a new Ballyclare East would include areas round the Ballyeaston, Ballycorr and Ballynure Roads.

Ballyclare South would contain the remaining parts of the town, although Mill Road would remain in Ballyrobert.

Ballynure would remain largely unchanged, as would Ballyrobert except where indicated above.

## **Mallusk**

The existing, extremely large, Mallusk ward would be split. Ballycraigy townland looks towards Ballyrobert. The Mallusk urban fringe (from Hightown to Highgate/Tudor and Rogan Manor/Antrim Road) would form one ward with the remainder of the rural area and the Ballyhenry Rd/Ballycraigy Rd area forming a second.

## **Glengormley area**

Using the new constituency boundary as a key divide, there are five current wards which are in Belfast North. Adjacent are two small areas, at the O'Neill Rd/Antrim Rd junction and the Brackens on the north of Carnmoney Hill.

Glebe would gain the two adjacent areas, losing the Ashgrove area to Glengormley, which would transfer Burnthill Ave/Queens Park to Ballyhenry. This would entail drawing a ward boundary along the townland boundary over Carnmoney Hill, rather than along roads round the hill.

The existing Collinbridge ward can continue without significant change.

Hightown ward should gain the Sandyknowes estate from Ballyhenry.

## **Carnmoney area**

The five existing wards within South Antrim become four new wards. Burnthill needs a small addition in the Wynland area.

Mossley should include all of New Mossley estate, with the remaining two wards centred on Carnmoney and Ballyduff estate.

## **Jordanstown area**

Taking account of the Parliamentary boundary and the railway line, Rostulla should remain unchanged.

The current Jordanstown becomes two wards, on a west/south east split. While these three wards are larger than Monkstown, there are readily identifiable boundaries between them.

Monkstown would thus remain unchanged., although it would be possible to transfer the area of Rostulla south of the Threemilewater river to Monkstown

### **Whiteabbey, Whitehouse**

This area has lost significant population. It is now entitled to five seats only. Abbey should include the area east of Doagh Road and Princess Crescent/Park as far south as Whitehouse Park.

Valley should include all of Bawnmore/Longlands and Merville, extending along the Shore Road to Whitehouse Park.

Cloughfern would include the current Cloughfern ward, plus the small addition in the Fernagh area, excluding the area transferred to Glebe. The western boundary would run across the top of the hill.

Rathcoole estate would provide the remaining two wards, with a split between the western and south-eastern parts of the estate and external boundaries along the Doagh and O'Neill Roads.