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**To:** Council

**On:** 24 September, 2015

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**Report by:** Director of Finance and Resources

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**Heading:** **Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland – Fifth Review of Electoral Arrangements – Consultation on Ward Boundaries**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Council at its meeting held on 30 April, 2015 approved its response relative to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's (the Commission) proposals for consultation in relation to the ward boundaries within Renfrewshire Council local authority area in terms of its Fifth Review of Electoral Arrangements.
- 1.2 The Council also agreed unanimously, under the terms of Section 19 (1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to call on the Commission to hold a local inquiry into the impact on Renfrewshire of the Review of Electoral Arrangements.
- 1.3 The Commission considered responses received before agreeing its proposals for consultation with the public. The Commission has intimated that these are not the final recommendations. Once the public consultation has closed the Commission will revisit all 32 reviews before deciding on the next steps.
- 1.4 This report provides details of the Commission's response to the Council's proposals, as appended hereto, and the 12-week public consultation which started on 30 July, 2015 and runs until 22 October, 2015.
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## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the report be noted.
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## **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Council at its meeting held on 30 April, 2015 considered a report relative to the Commission's Fifth Review of Electoral Arrangements in Scotland.
- 3.2 The report noted that the consultation document did not provide a great deal of information and was insufficient to enable the Council to determine all that had been taken into account by the Commission when creating the proposals for the new wards. However, the main points noted were that the number of wards was increased from 11 to 13; none of the wards remained unaltered; there would be nine wards each electing three members and four wards each electing four members; Johnstone had its own single ward and Paisley was given two additional wards which, if Gallowhill was included, would be divided into seven wards, all of which would be three-member wards. It was also noted that Erskine would be split between two wards.
- 3.3 The Commission wrote to the Council in July, 2015 and indicated that they rejected the Council's request for a local inquiry at this stage. The letter stated that the Commission would normally hold a local inquiry when it considered it did not have sufficient information to reach an informed decision about a particular area therefore it was not minded to consider a local inquiry in advance of receiving responses to the public consultation.
- 3.4 The Commission did however accept a limited number of the changes to their proposals put forward by the Council which will now form part of the consultation and these were detailed in the appendix to their letter and which is appended to this report. For example, they have accepted the changes to the ward names that the Council put forward. They have also accepted the criticism made by the Council of the intention to split Erskine and it looks as if the existing Ward 11 will be retained as one of the wards. They advise that they have also made some changes to the boundaries between the new wards 8 and 9 and between wards 9 and 10 to reflect physical boundaries.
- 3.5 Apart from these limited points the document issued for public consultation was the same as that considered by the Council at its meeting held on 30 April, 2015.

- 3.6 The 12-week public consultation started on 30 July, 2015. The Leadership Board at its meeting held on 18 February, 2015 had agreed, recognising the importance of facilitating the fullest local discussion of potential ward boundaries, and the possible permutations thereof, in the interests of local democracy, to request that the Commission consider the consultation period being from 15<sup>th</sup> May to 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. However, the Commission rejected this proposal. The following link is to the relevant page on the Commission's website which contains full details of the consultation and the proposals in respect of the Ward boundaries in Renfrewshire, [http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th\\_electoral/renfrewshire/](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/renfrewshire/)
- 3.7 As detailed in paragraph 1.3 above, once the public consultation has closed the Commission will revisit all 32 reviews before deciding on the next steps.
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## **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** - none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community Planning** –
4. **Legal** – in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the electoral boundaries for local authorities must be reviewed every 8 to 12 years.
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
  - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
8. **Health & Safety** - none
9. **Procurement** – none
10. **Risk** - none
11. **Privacy Impact** - none

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**Background papers:** letter received on 21 July, 2015 from the Boundary Commission for Scotland

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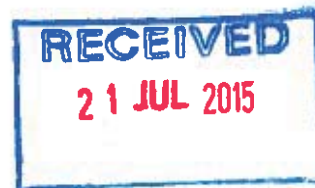
# Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5HD

Chair: Ronnie Hinds CPFA

Secretary: Isabel Drummond-Murray

Sandra Black  
Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council  
Renfrewshire House  
Cotton Street  
Paisley  
PA1 1WB



Dear Ms Black,

## FIFTH REVIEWS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Thank you for Renfrewshire Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation on its proposals for ward boundaries that ran between 19 March and 19 May 2015. I am writing to update you on the Commission's consideration of responses received and plans for the public consultation phase.

The Commission considered responses received at its meetings on 9 June and 7 July before agreeing its proposals for consultation with the public. It is important to note that these are not final recommendations. In many cases the Commission has agreed to adopt changes suggested by Councils for the purposes of the public consultation; in other cases it has retained its original proposals at this stage. Once the public consultation has closed the Commission will revisit all 32 reviews before deciding on next steps.

The Commission considered Renfrewshire Council's response at its meeting on 9 June. An extract from the minute is attached at Appendix A. The Secretariat is preparing consultation materials that will reflect the position agreed at that meeting.

Your Council requested that the Commission hold a local inquiry into the impact on Renfrewshire of the Review of Electoral Arrangements. The Commission would normally hold a local inquiry when it considered it did not have sufficient information to reach an informed decision about a particular area. For that reason the Commission is not minded to consider a local inquiry in advance of receiving responses to the public consultation.

The public consultation phase will begin on 30 July and run to 22 October. We will shortly be providing your Council with materials for display points and appreciate your help in distributing and displaying these. We will also send your office a copy of the consultation materials for your information. All materials and meeting papers and minutes will be published on our website at the start of the consultation.

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established by Parliament to advise Ministers on local government boundaries

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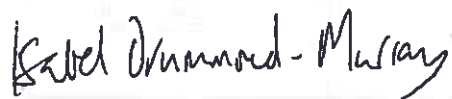
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The Commission is grateful for the input from Councils received to date and hope to continue that positive engagement during the public consultation phase. We are of course happy to take further views from the Council prior to preparing final recommendations to Ministers. It would be helpful too if your officers were able to help answer points that may arise during the next phase of the review and on which the Secretariat may require clarification.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at all on the process to date and the next steps.

**Isabel Drummond-Murray**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Isabel Drummond-Murray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Secretary**

## **Appendix A**

### **Extract of Minutes of Meeting held at Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh**

**Tuesday 9 June 2015**

#### **Consultation with Councils on ward boundaries: Renfrewshire (LGBCS Paper 2307)**

1. The Commission considered Paper 2307 and noted that Renfrewshire Council made a number of points regarding the proposed wards and the Commission's work during the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements.
2. The Commission was disappointed that Renfrewshire Council felt that the consultation document lacked detail as to what has been taken into account by the Commission. However, it agreed that more could be done to publicise the Commission's meeting papers and associated minutes online and include a statement on the Commission's reasons for deciding on its preferred option in the consultation document, such as an extract from the minutes of the relevant meetings.
3. The Commission noted the misinterpretation of the overall parity benchmark and agreed to include a definition in future consultation documents.
4. The Council offered alternative suggestions for names of some proposed wards. The alternative suggestions were:
  - Ward 1: Renfrew North and Braehead
  - Ward 2: Renfrew South and Gallowhill
  - Ward 3: Paisley Northeast and Ralston
  - Ward 8: Paisley Southwest and Elderslie
  - Ward 10: Bridge of Weir, Howwood, Kilbarchan and Lochwinnoch
  - Ward 11: Linwood and Craigends
5. The Commission agreed to adopt these alternative names for the proposed wards.
6. The Council queried the Commission's proposals for wards 3 and 4 however the Commission was content that its proposals dealt effectively with community ties in those wards given the levels of deprivation and limits on acceptable parity.
7. The Commission was also content that its proposals did not risk breaking ties between Elderslie and the southern part of Johnstone, which have shared a ward since 2007. The Commission considered that the links within the town of Johnstone are probably stronger than those between Elderslie and parts of

Johnstone. That, combined with the opportunity presented by the increase in councillor numbers to enable Johnstone community council area to be coterminous with a single ward boundary, had greater weighting for the Commission than those ties developed since the existing ward's establishment in 2007.

8. The Council's response highlighted the division of Erskine in the Commission's proposals. The Secretariat suggested that the existing Erskine and Inchinnan ward could be largely reinstated and the remainder of Erskine community council area north of the A898 retained in a ward with Bishopton and Langbank.
9. The Commission was content to agree to the suggested changes to the proposals for ward 13 which would improve alignment with non-denominational primary school catchments in the area and keep the entire Inchinnan community council area in a single ward. The resulting forecast overall parity for the council area would not be significantly affected.
10. The Council highlighted Bridge of Weir's links with villages in the north and northwest of the council area, with which it has shared a ward since 2007. The Commission was of the opinion that Bridge of Weir's inclusion in ward 10 allowed the ward to comprise an integer number of community council areas and avoided the division of settlements elsewhere in the council area.
11. In its response, the Council pointed out that some proposed boundaries between wards 8 and 9 and between wards 9 and 10 that followed community council boundaries in the area did not reflect physical features. The Commission agreed to adopt the suggested amendments as shown in Appendix D of LGBCS Paper 2307.
12. Renfrewshire Council had called for a local inquiry into the impact on Renfrewshire of the Review of Electoral Arrangements and this was noted by the Commission. The Commission decided that a local inquiry without the benefit of a public consultation beforehand would be premature.
13. As such the Commission provisionally agreed to consult with the public using the ward boundaries unaltered from the Council Consultation except for the changes agreed as described in LGBCS Paper 2307 Appendices C and D.