



Your Ref:                      Our Ref: CH/AF/lp

Email: [REDACTED]

24 September 2020

**By email only:** [REDACTED]  
**Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray**

**Dear Isabel**

**2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements – North Ayrshire Council area**

Thank you for your letter of 16 July consulting with the Council on the Commission's proposals for North Ayrshire wards. Can I again thank you for extending the period for response to 30 September to enable this to be considered by a meeting of full Council.

Council met yesterday and agreed to support the Boundary Commission's proposals for all wards subject to one change. The change is that of the boundary between the North Coast and Garnock Valley where the Commission's proposals for a small area south of the Muirhead Reservoir on the A760, depart from the watershed and the Locality Boundary. I attach a plan which shows the section of moorland which is currently excluded from the ward 2 boundary. This area contains no electorate so there should be no impact on issues of parity.

The background to this request is not simply one of aligning ward boundaries with those of North Ayrshire Localities. The issue of windfarms was a factor in determining the boundaries of Locality Partnerships. If Locality Partnerships were to be responsible for the distribution of community benefits, it was important that the boundaries of Locality Partnerships followed watersheds. In other words, if a windfarm was located on one side of a ridge line where it looked down onto a locality, then in future, community benefits should go to that community and its Locality Partnership. That had been a particularly sensitive issue for the Garnock Valley where none of the Kelburn windfarm money went to Dalry, the community which it overlooks.

The problem here is that the slight alteration has removed two wind turbines which look down on the Garnock Valley. This was identified by an eagle-eyed Dalry resident with whom a local councillor had shared the plans. Given that the area does not have any electors, I would hope this change can be accommodated.

I can confirm that this is the only change currently sought.

The Council appreciate the Commission's work in aligning wards with our Locality boundaries, which was our main ask at the last review. In case anyone raises this at the second stage of consultation, it may be helpful to reiterate the reasons why this is essential.

The need to align wards with the 6 Localities of North Ayrshire recognises that increasingly the business of the Council, Community Planning Partners and community organisations would be done on a Locality basis. This has increasingly been the case since the Commission's last review. Audit Scotland's 2020 Best Value Report on the Council notes that our approach to community empowerment through Locality Planning is recognised by the Scottish Government and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) as sector leading.

At its heart, Locality Planning is about all Community Planning Partners and Communities agreeing the priorities relevant to the needs of their individual Locality. Thereafter everyone, Council, CPP and Community Groups, work together to deliver outcomes which address the agreed priorities. The reasons why wards and Locality boundaries need to align are: -

- Increasingly service delivery and resource allocation by the Council and Community Planning Partners will be aligned along Locality boundaries.
- Councillors need to be able to work along Locality boundaries. Where Councillors represent more than one Locality, not only do they have responsibilities to different Localities (which may even conflict), but time constraints make it difficult for them to be fully involved in the overall planning and allocation of resources to different Localities. For example, the current Ward 6, cuts across three separate Localities, each of which have differing needs and priorities.
- As communities with similar interests become empowered, and work in partnership with Council and CPP, it will be essential that Members are able to find time to support communities and their joint working in the Locality. This becomes difficult if Members are split across different Localities.
- This is relevant to those considerations which the Commission must have regard to, namely to fix boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable, and to local ties. The six Localities of North Ayrshire do exactly this. They are not merely areas which share a common demographic profile. The reason that they share a common demographic profile is often due to geographical factors, such as the hill barrier lying between the North Coast and the Garnock Valley or the geographical separation of Arran. That in turn has led to historical differences and local ties in terms of industry and agriculture, such as the development of Irvine as a port and the development of the ICI Ardeer munitions factory on a more isolated promontory adjacent to Stevenston. These are areas which have easily identifiable boundaries, local ties and special geographical considerations, not just similar demographic profiles.
- The fact that Locality boundaries were subject to extensive public consultation and acceptance, is relevant to the legislative factor of 'local ties'.

I hope this helps, but please do not hesitate to get in touch should you need any further clarification

Yours sincerely



**Andrew Fraser**  
**Head of Service, Democratic Services**

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland  
 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements  
 North Ayrshire Council Area  
 Initial Proposals  
**Ward 2 (Garnock Valley) – 5 Member Ward**

