

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

5 SEPTEMBER 2013

Agenda Item	10
Report No	HC/30/13

### Local Government Boundary Commission - Review of Wards

#### Report by the Chief Executive

#### SUMMARY

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has notified the Council that it expects to start substantive work on the review of Wards in early Autumn 2013. The Commission has asked whether the Council may wish to begin taking a view as to whether it is content with the present number of Councillors so that preliminary views can be passed to the Commission as it begins its own consideration.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has notified the Council that it expects to start substantive work on the reviews in early Autumn 2013. A copy of the Commission's letter is appended to the Report. Once the settlement data from the 2011 Census becomes available, later this calendar year, it will write to all councils with their initial thoughts about an appropriate number of Councillors for their area, on which views will be welcomed.
- 1.2 The Commission has asked whether the Council may wish to begin taking a view as to whether it is content with the present number of Councillors so that preliminary views can be passed to the Commission as it begins its own consideration. The Commission has indicated that because of the statutory requirement for electoral parity, it should be remembered that any change in Councillor numbers, even of only 1 or 2 Councillors, may result in substantial changes to ward boundaries across the council area to ensure that each Councillor represents, so far as possible, the same number of electors
- 1.3 The results of the review will be in place for the next Local Government Election in May 2017.

#### 2.0 THE COMMISSION'S APPROACH

- 2.1 At earlier Reviews, the Commission used a formulaic approach (as in the Third and Fourth Review which concluded in 1998 and 2006 respectively)

to determining the number of Councillors, taking into account the population density and distribution of a council area. It is likely that the Commission will use a similar sort of approach in this review.

- 2.2 In 2006, this approach had the Highland Council as a Category 6 Authority – with 60% or more of the population living outwith settlements of 10,000 or more persons AND an overall population density of less than 0.2 persons per hectare. The ratio of Councillors to electorate was 1:2,000. Argyll and Bute was the only other Category 6 Local Authority in Scotland.
- 2.3 In 1998, the Commission was not prepared to accept proposals for 82 or 83 Councillors and devised a scheme for 80 Councillors.
- 2.4 In July 2013, based on an electorate of 182,000, this ratio is 1: 2,276 electors.
- 2.5 In this review, Wards must contain 3 or 4 members, as required by legislation. Details of the configuration of Wards will be considered at a later date.
- 2.6 Analysis of the current electorate (July 2013) of each ward is attached. It will be noted that there are 12 Wards that are 5% above or below electoral parity. It is therefore very likely that some ward Boundaries will require adjustment.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

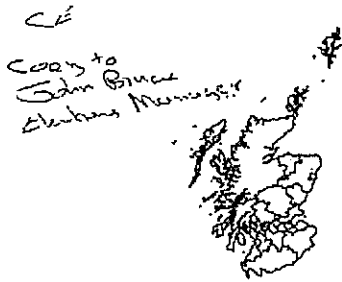
- 9.1 It is recommended that the Council makes no comment on the review at this stage and awaits the Commission's proposals due later this year.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 27 August 2013

Author: John Bruce, Elections Manager

Background Papers:– LGBCS letter of 6 June 2013



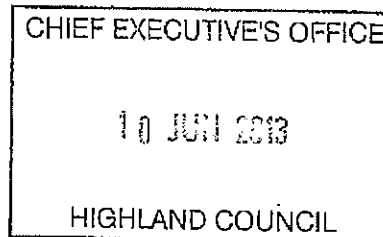
# Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

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

Chairman: Peter Mackay CB

Secretary: Dr Hugh Buchanan MRICS

Alistair Dodds  
Chief Executive, Highland Council  
Council HQ  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
IV3 5NX



6 June 2013

Dear Alistair Dodds,

I am writing to update you on the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's planning for its Fifth General Reviews of Electoral Arrangements.

The Commission expects to start substantive work on the reviews in early autumn 2013, with the intention of making recommendations to Scottish Ministers in 2015 or 2016. That timing will allow the implementation of our recommendations in time for the local government elections in May 2017.

We have been in correspondence with Scottish Ministers, and they have confirmed that they do not intend to amend the legislation governing our reviews. That legislation is sections 12 to 28 and Schedule 6 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, and a copy of the text of that legislation incorporating all current amendments is available on our website. The legislation includes the requirement that within each ward of a council area, the number of electors per councillor is "as nearly as may be the same" - this requirement is referred to as electoral parity.

We consulted with you in 2011 on our intended approach to the first stage of the review, which will be to determine the appropriate number of councillors on each of Scotland's councils. The responses to that consultation indicated general support for a continuation of our predecessors' approach of using a formulaic approach to determining the number of councillors, with the formula taking into account the population density and distribution of a council area. We are currently awaiting the release of settlement data from Census 2011 to allow us to take a view on councillor numbers for each council in Scotland. Once that further 2011 Census data becomes available we will, later in this calendar year, write to all councils with our initial thoughts about an appropriate number of councillors for your council, on which we will welcome views. For that reason your council may wish to begin taking a view as to whether it is content with the present number of councillors so that any

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established by Parliament to advise Ministers on local government boundaries

phone: 0131 538 7510

email: [lgbc@scottishboundaries.gov.uk](mailto:lgbc@scottishboundaries.gov.uk)

fax: 0131 538 7511

web: [www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)

preliminary views may be passed on to the Commission as it begins its own consideration.

The determination of the number of councillors for a council is a very important early stage in a review. Because of the statutory requirement for electoral parity it should be remembered that any change in councillor numbers, even of only 1 or 2 councillors, may result in substantial changes to ward boundaries across the council area to ensure that each councillor represents so far as possible the same number of electors.

You will find copies of the correspondence between myself and our Minister on the approach to the review on the Publications section of our website (see [http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/publications/meeting\\_papers/2012/02\\_04\\_jul\\_2012/02\\_04\\_jul\\_2012\\_index.asp](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/publications/meeting_papers/2012/02_04_jul_2012/02_04_jul_2012_index.asp)).

The Commission is looking forward to undertaking this programme of reviews, and to working with councils to make the review process timely and effective. My term as Chairman of the Commission will come to an end later this year, and it will be for my successor to take this work forward. However, I felt it important to ensure at this stage that you are aware of the Commission's forthcoming programme of work.

Yours sincerely

Peter Mackay CB  
Chairman, Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland



**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**  
**WARD PARITY 2013**

Name of Ward		No. of Councillors	2005 Forecast Electorate for 2009	Electorate 1 July 2013	With electoral parity 2013	% of parity
Ward 1.	North, West and Central Sutherland	3	4,685	5028	6828	73.6%
Ward 2.	Thurso	3	6,085	6302	6828	92.3%
Ward 3.	Wick	3	5,425	5786	6828	84.7 %
Ward 4.	Landward Caithness	4	7755	8663	9104	95.2%
Ward 5.	East Sutherland and Edderton	3	5660	6335	6828	92.8%
Ward 6.	Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh	4	6925	9913	9104	108.9%
Ward 7.	Cromarty Firth	4	8625	9654	9104	106.0%
Ward 8.	Tain and Easter Ross	3	6255	7242	6828	106.1%
Ward 9.	Dingwall and Seaforth	4	8875	9480	9104	104.1%
Ward 10.	Black Isle	4	7610	8503	9104	93.4%
Ward 11.	Eilean a' Cheò	4	7845	8511	9104	93.5%
Ward 12.	Caol and Mallaig	3	8580	7007	6828	102.6%
Ward 13.	Aird and Loch Ness	4	8130	9341	9104	102.6%
Ward 14.	Inverness West	3	6640	6935	6828	101.6%
Ward 15.	Inverness Central	4	8935	9951	9104	109.3%
Ward 16.	Inverness Ness-side	4	8690	8995	9104	96.1%
Ward 17.	Inverness Millburn	3	5960	6560	6828	96.1%
Ward 18.	Culloden and Ardersier	4	7975	8869	9104	97.4%
Ward 19.	Nairn	4	8980	9439	9104	103.7%

Ward 20.	Inverness South	4	9115	10141	9104	111.4%
Ward 21.	Badenoch and Strathspey	4	9140	10516	9104	115.5%
Ward 22.	Fort William and Ardnamurchan	4	8280	8886	9104	97.6%

The highlighted test indicates the Wards that are more than + / - 5% of Parity

**Note.** As at 1 July 2013, the electorate of Highland was 182,057. Electoral parity is achieved by dividing the electorate by 80, giving 2,276. A 3 member Ward should therefore have 6,828 electors and a 4 member Ward 9,104 electors.