

**REPORT TO: POLICY COMMITTEE ON 5 MARCH 2008**

**SUBJECT: FIRST PERIODICAL REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BOUNDARIES – PUBLICATION OF PROVISIONAL PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUENCIES**

**BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee that the Boundary Commission for Scotland published its provisional proposals for revised constituencies for the Scottish Parliament on 14 February 2008 followed by a consultation period of one month during which representations concerning the proposals are invited.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A(52) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to considering all matters relating to any alteration in the boundaries of the Council Area of electoral divisions.
- 1.3 This report is submitted to the Policy Committee as the next meeting of the Full Council on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2008 does not fall within the Boundary Commission consultation deadline of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **The Committee is invited to note the publication of the Boundary Commission for Scotland's provisional proposals for revised constituencies for the Scottish Parliament and consider any representations it may wish to make concerning the proposals.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Notification has been received from the Boundary Commission for Scotland informing of its provisional proposals for revised constituencies for the Scottish Parliament followed by a consultation period of one month (defined in statute) during which representations concerning the proposals are invited.
- 3.2 Copies of the Statutory Notice and associated maps concerning the provisional proposals have been published in the Press and Journal and the Northern Scott and have also been made available to the public at the Access Point within the Council Building in Elgin and the Keith Access Point. A set of the maps will also be available at the rear of the Chambers on the day of the Committee and a further set will be displayed within the Members Lounge.
- 3.3 The review of Scottish Parliament boundaries was announced on 3 July 2007, and is taking place as required by the Scotland Act 1998 as amended by the Scottish Parliament (Constituencies) Act 2004. The review covers all of Scotland apart from Orkney and Shetland, where the Act specifies that each will be a separate constituency. The legislation provides that there will be 71 constituencies for the Scottish Parliament apart from Orkney and Shetland,

and also determines the rules which the Commission follows when proposing constituencies. Those rules include a requirement to have regard to the boundaries of local authority areas, and to design constituencies where the electorate is as close to the electoral quota as is practical. The electoral quota is the average electorate per constituency at the start of the review.

- 3.4 The current constituencies for the Scottish Parliament were defined in 1995, and changes in the distribution of population, as well as changes to local government areas since then, have led the Commission to conclude that a comprehensive review is required.
- 3.5 On the basis of the Electoral Register in force at July 2007, the Commission established that the electoral quota for the Review is 54,728. That figure is calculated by taking the number of local government electors on the Electoral Register in Scotland at the review start date, excluding electors in the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and dividing it by 71. The quota is fixed and is used throughout the life of the review.
- 3.6 The Commission is required to consider any representations concerning its provisional proposals made within a limited period of one month from the date of publication of the Statutory Notice, making the expiry date 14 March 2008. However due to a publishing error relating to the Boundary Commission's Statutory Notice in regard to the Angus Constituency area, an extension to this period has been granted until 21 March 2008.
- 3.7 The Commission is required to report on the review for the whole of Scotland by 30 June 2010 in a report to the Secretary of State for Scotland. It is the Secretary of State for Scotland's duty to lay the Commission's report before the UK Parliament together with a draft Order in Council giving effect to the recommendations. The draft Order is submitted to both Houses of Parliament for approval and the new constituency boundaries take effect at the next general election to the Scottish Parliament following the making of the Order. A copy of the Commission's report must also be laid before the Scottish Parliament.

### **Implications of the Proposals**

- 3.8 The proposed changes to the current Scottish Parliamentary boundaries in Moray are as follows:
  - Under the proposals no part of the Gordon Constituency will fall within the Moray Council local government area;
  - A new Constituency called "Buchan Coast" will be created which will fall within part of Aberdeenshire and the West Moray Coastal area;
  - That Part of Ward 1, which is currently in the Gordon Constituency will fall solely within the Moray Constituency;

- That part of Ward 2 (including Keith) which is currently in the Gordon Constituency will fall within the Moray Constituency, however part of Ward 2 (Grange, Deskford, Cullen & Rathven, Portknockie and Rothiemay) will remain split between the new "Buchan Coast" Constituency and the Moray Constituency;
- Ward 3 Buckie in its entirety will move from Moray Constituency into "Buchan Coast" Constituency, and
- A small part of Ward 4 Lhanbryde Fochabers (known as Forgie) which is in Gordon Constituency will now fall solely within the "Moray" Constituency.

3.9 In summary there are currently 10 Moray polling districts within the Gordon Constituency, under the new proposals 3 of these will move to the new Buchan Coast Constituency and 7 back into Moray. However, 9 other polling districts currently within Moray will move into the new Buchan Coast Constituency. **See Appendix 1.**

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

**(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**

None

**(b) Policy and Legal**

None

**(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

There are no resource implications.

**(d) Consultations**

None

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 The Boundary Commission for Scotland's provisional proposals for revised constituencies for the Scottish Parliament have implications for the Moray electorate as detailed in paragraph 3.8 above.**

**5.2 The Committee may wish to consider any response to the proposals in light of the implications as detailed in the report.**

ITEM:

PAGE: 4

Author of Report: Moira Patrick, Principal Committee Services Officer  
Background Papers: Boundary Commission for Scotland letter dated 7  
February 2008 and Statutory Notice concerning  
provisional proposals for revised constituencies for the  
Scottish Parliament

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