

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL27 May 2015Report by Chief ExecutiveFIFTH REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS
LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's (LGBC) proposals for wards in East Renfrewshire Council as part of the Fifth Review of Electoral Arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The LGBC presents the Council with a proposed electorate arrangement for 18 councillors representing 2 3-member wards and 3 4-member wards reducing the number of wards in the East Renfrewshire area by 1 and the number of councillors by 2.

3. It is suggested that the Council: -

- **reject the Local Government Boundary Commission proposal** for re-design of wards based on 18 councillors; and
- **seek to maintain the status quo** and reiterate the Council's fundamental opposition to a reduction in the numbers of elected members as per our previous response of 14 May 2014.
- note the Council Officers' intention to **seek further evidence** from the Local Government Boundary Commission for using deprivation as a factor and, dependent upon the outcome, the possibility of legal challenge of the Commission's methodology and effectiveness of their proposals.

BACKGROUND

4. In terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (the 1973 Act) the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBC) is required to conduct electoral reviews of each local authority at intervals of 8 to 12 years.

5. The LGBC set a deadline of 19 May 2015 for all Councils to respond to their proposals. However the Council has been granted additional time to consider the proposals due to the UK General election falling within the consultation period. The Council must respond to the proposals by 31 May 2015. A 12 week public consultation period will take thereafter between July and October 2015. The LGBC develops their final recommendations before submitting their Reports to Scottish Ministers anytime between October 2015 and May 2016 for changes to be introduced for the Scottish Local Government elections in 2017 (LGBC timetable Appendix 4 of this report).

6. On 19 March 2015, the Council received confirmation from the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) on the proposed changes to wards and the reduction in the number of councillors from 20 to 18. **The LGBC present an electorate arrangement for 18 councillors representing 2 3-member wards and 3 4-member wards reducing the number of wards in the East Renfrewshire area by 1** (Appendix 1 provides the LGBC proposed ward changes).

REPORT

Status quo

7. If the methodology for determining councillor numbers had remained the same as previous reviews, the Council would have retained 20 councillors. The current ward boundaries are shown in table 1 together with the forecast electorate figures produced by the Local Government Boundary Commission. The figures show that maintaining councillor numbers at the current level would ensure all areas are represented adequately and the areas which are predicted to increase significantly in population (Barrhead and Newton Mearns South) have additional capacity under this scheme to deal with additional electorate.

Status quo- Existing ward boundary electorate counts (with 20 councillors)

Ward no	Ward name	Cllr nos.	Forecast electorate 2019*	Forecast variation from parity	Electorate per councillor
1	Neilston, Uplawmoor and Newton Mearns North	4	14,543	4%	3,636
2	Barrhead	4	13,143	-6%	3,286
3	Giffnock and Thornliebank	3	10,933	4%	3,644
4	Netherlee, Stamperland and Williamwood	3	10,121	-3%	3,374
5	Newton Mearns South	3	10,282	-2%	3,427
6	Busby, Clarkston and Eaglesham	3	10,803	3%	3,601
	Totals	20	69,825	4%	3,491

Table 1 –current scheme with proposed wards' electorate counts from LGBC *constrained by 2012 NRS projections

8. Maintaining the status quo of 20 councillors is not presented by the LGBC as a valid option. The explanation for this is the change in methodology in determining councillor numbers incorporating deprivation data. This results in the transfer of councillor numbers from the more rural council areas and from those areas with the lowest levels of deprivation and dispersion to those areas with higher levels of deprivation. The Council is now placed into the category named "Less than 30% living outwith settlements 3000+ and less than 15% living in the most deprived areas". This category has an electorate ratio of 1 councillor to every 3,800 electorate as opposed to the existing category which is 1 councillor to every 3,500 electorate. In table 1, the overall ratio is just short of 1:3,500 which is likely to be deemed unacceptable by the Local Government Boundary Commission under their new categorisation which demands a ratio of 1:3,800.

Change in methodology

9. The methodology used by the Local Government Boundary Commission to carry out electoral reviews is discussed and agreed at an early stage (often several years in advance) of the actual review. For this fifth review, consultation on the proposed methodology for calculating elected member numbers was undertaken in 2011 and the results of the consultation supported the continued use of the current methodology based on using the

same factors to determine councillor numbers. However in 2013, the LGBC Board agreed to **introduce a significant change to the methodology** for calculating councillor numbers. This new methodology replaced population density with **deprivation (SIMD)**.

10. The initial phase of the LGBC review was to determine the number of Councillors that they propose to recommend for a Council. To do this, they categorised each Council area, based on deprivation and population distribution. For each category, they assigned a ratio of Councillors to electors in order to calculate the appropriate number of Councillors for each Council. East Renfrewshire Council was included in Category 3, with a proposed ratio of 1 Councillor to 3,800 electors changing from the current ratio of 1 Councillor to 3,500 electors.

11. COSLA and SOLACE have both asked the Local Government Boundary Commission for the evidence to support the use of deprivation as a factor in determining councillor numbers. It was COSLA's view that if the LGBC is going to move away from its more objective criteria of population numbers and geography, before it does so a fundamental review of the potential criteria that could determine the need for representation should be carried out. The evidence to support this change in methodology has not yet been provided. The LGBC announced in October 2014 that it was commissioning research into the role and workload of councillors to provide further evidence on the inclusion of deprivation and other factors but that this research would not be available in time for this fifth review.

12. When local authorities were invited to comment in April/May 2014, 17 Councils did not agree with the changes to councillor numbers. Fourteen councils objected on the basis that the new methodology (using deprivation as a key factor) was flawed.

LGBC PROPOSAL (18 councillors)

13. The LGBC present an electorate arrangement for 18 councillors representing 2 3-member wards and 3 4-member wards reducing the number of wards in the East Renfrewshire area by 1 (Appendix 1 provides the LGBC proposed ward changes).

14. In their submission to the Council, the LGBC states that their proposals:
- link Uplawmoor with Barrhead, and Eaglesham with Newton Mearns
 - adopt the M77 motorway and railway lines as easily-identifiable boundaries;
 - avoid any new division of settlements between wards; and
 - take into account community council area geographies.

LGBC Proposed ward boundary electorate counts (based on 18 councillors)

Ward no	Ward name	Cllr nos.	Forecast electorate 2019*	Forecast variation from parity	Electorate per councillor
1	Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor	4	13,944	-10%	3,486
2	Newton Mearns North and Neilston	3	11,647	0%	3,882
3	Giffnock and Thornliebank	3	12,461	7%	4,154
4	Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood	4	15,674	1%	3,919
5	Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham	4	16,100	4%	4,025
	Totals	18	69,826	5%	3,879

Table 2 –proposed wards' electorate counts from LGBC, **constrained by 2012 NRS projections

COUNCIL ANALYSIS OF THE LGBC PROPOSAL

15. It is the lack of empirical evidence for use of deprivation as a key factor in determining councillor numbers that is of greatest concern. This change in methodology has resulted in a reduction of 2 councillors and the need for ward redesign. **However, is it felt that the proposed LGBC scheme of 18 councillors would not effectively support the democratic needs of residents across East Renfrewshire.**

16. In the response given to LGBC in May 2014, the Council stated that East Renfrewshire has an increasing population and there is no reduction in the responsibilities and workload of councillors. The LGBC considered the Council's representations but decided to proceed with the proposals for a decrease in councillor numbers. There is no good reason to increase the burden on councillors by increasing the average number of electors whom they have to serve. It is also argued that how engaged the electorate is in the political process should be reflected in the number of councillors allocated to a Council. East Renfrewshire had the second highest turnout in Scotland (and possibly second highest in the UK) at the 2015 election (81.2% as opposed to the UK average of 66%). Any potential redrawing of ward boundaries is unhelpful in an area which is still growing in population.

Population growth not adequately reflected in LGBC scheme

17. The fundamental problem with the LGBC proposal is the use of the 2012 NRS population projections to constrain future electorate figures. The NRS 2012 figures fail to take into account the significant increases in population which are currently being realised (4th highest percentage increase in Scotland). In the latest NRS publication (April 2015), it said "Among Council areas, the largest percentage population increases occurred in Midlothian (+1.8 per cent), Aberdeenshire and Edinburgh City (both +1.1 per cent) and **East Renfrewshire (+1.0 per cent).**" In addition, the housebuilding programme in East Renfrewshire is due to accelerate each year over the next 10 years.

Population	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
2012 Projections (NRS)	91,030	91,089	91,198	91,305	91,430	91,556	91,701	91,841	92,003	92,154	92,313
Mid Year Estimates (NRS)	91,030	91,500	92,380								
Projected mid year estimates (Council)*			92,380	93,055	93,730	94,405	95,080	95,755	96,430	97,105	97,780
NRS Projections rebased to 2014 Mid Year Estimates (Council)			92,380	92,487	92,612	92,738	92,883	93,023	93,185	93,336	93,495

Table 3 –increasing disparity between population estimates and the projection used by LGBC. *Council projected mid- year estimates based on previous 2 year migration trends.

18. Therefore as shown in table 3, the mid-year estimate for East Renfrewshire at 92,380 is a figure that the 2012 projections predicted we would not reach until after 2022. It is evident therefore, that to base councillor numbers on the constrained 2012 population figure will result in an under representation for the East Renfrewshire electorate.

19. There is also an inconsistency in the LGBC approach which uses 2013 electorate figures to determine numbers of councillors but 2017 projected electorate combined with the Council's residential land programme to establish electoral parity calculations.

Community links and autonomy will be compromised

20. Barrhead has always been a single community council area. It is an area of distinct character with its own history and strong community spirit. Between 1895 and 1975,

Barrhead even had its own town Council. The LGBC proposal requires Barrhead to include the rural area north of Neilston along with Uplawmoor. However, Uplawmoor is nearest to Neilston town and it has the strongest community links with this area. Neilston town is included within the Newton Mearns North ward.

21. The reason that the LGBC proposal expands Barrhead to include parts of Neilston and Uplawmoor is to raise the level of electorate. However Barrhead South is due to grow in population with significant building planned as part of the Barrhead South Master Plan. This means that the electorate will increase naturally without the need for an artificial expansion. This proposal would be confusing for residents living in these areas. It would be better to maintain current ward boundaries between Newton Mearns, Neilston and Uplawmoor.

22. The LGBC proposal removes Eaglesham from the Busby and Clarkston ward and moves it into the Newton Mearns South ward. Eaglesham has always been associated with Clarkston and there are strong community links in place. The links that Eaglesham has with the local community are reflected in the North / South transportation routes, with the Park and Ride rail station in Clarkston, and the bus routes into Glasgow all going down the Eaglesham Road through Clarkston and Netherlee.

23. The proposed boundary between Newton Mearns North and South follows the Ayr Road south west, and then continues North West along Barrhead Road, before reaching the M77 Motorway. The communities of Westacres, Mearns Village and St Vigeans have been included in the Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham ward **which does not create a natural boundary**. The boundary also now includes the entire Maidenhill Master Plan Area within the Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham ward. Placing the entire site within one ward will result in longer term under-representation of electorate as the population increases.

New housing designations- Hillfield should form part of Newton Mearns

24. The Newton Mearns Settlement Boundary no longer follows the line of the Glasgow to Neilston Railway Line. The new housing site at Hillfield, Newton Mearns is north of the Glasgow to Neilston Railway Line, however it is part of the Newton Mearns urban area. The existing boundary follows this railway line, and the area is currently within the Giffnock and Thornliebank Ward. This boundary line would, however, be required to be amended to ensure that the Newton Mearns development at Hillfield is retained in a Newton Mearns Ward (Appendix 2).

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

25. If the number of East Renfrewshire councillors is reduced to 18 as per the Commission's proposals, this is the minimum level set by the Commission. A reduction in councillor numbers may present the Council with challenges in the effective discharge of its duties. With an increasing and highly engaged electorate, there is no reduction in the responsibilities and workload of councillors, as was argued in the Council's previous response in May 2014 (Appendix 3).

CONSULTATION

26. The Council worked closely with the LGBC to clarify the figures used for their calculations. Staff in democratic services, planning and legal worked closely to analyse the LGBC proposals. The Council must respond to the Local Government Boundary Commission on its proposals by 31 May 2015. A 12 week public consultation period will take thereafter between July and October 2015. The LGBC develops their final

recommendations before submitting their Reports to Scottish Ministers sometime between October 2015 and May 2016 for changes to be enforced for the Scottish Local Government elections in 2017.

27. The implementation of the LGBC proposals is ultimately in the hands of Scottish Ministers. Once LGBC publish their final recommendations, Scottish Ministers can implement them with or without modifications, decide not to implement them at all or ask LGBC to undertake another review of the area involved. There is therefore scope to lobby Scottish Ministers to convince them of any perceived defects in the proposals.

28. Council officers will seek further evidence from the Local Government Boundary Commission for using deprivation as a factor to determine councillor numbers. Upon receipt of this information, officers will report back on whether to proceed with a legal challenge of the Commission's methodology and effectiveness of their proposals.

CONCLUSION

29. After analysis of the LGBC proposal, it is suggested that the Council **reject the proposal** due to the following reasons:

- The rationale behind the change in the methodology used to determine councillor numbers by including deprivation as a factor has not been evidenced by the LGBC. This change led to a reduction from 20 to 18 councillors and subsequently the need to reduce and redesign wards.
- The figures used by the LGBC to determine the number of councillors required to represent electorate are restrained by population projections which underestimate the future population. This proposed scheme is **unsustainable** due to the significant increase in population and the high amount of housebuilding planned from now until beyond 2021 within East Renfrewshire especially in the areas of Barrhead and Newton Mearns South;
- The LGBC proposals for ward design would break community ties and create artificial links between Barrhead, Neilston and Uplawmoor and between Eaglesham and Newton Mearns.
- The boundary line would be required to be amended to ensure that the Newton Mearns development at Hillfield is retained in a Newton Mearns Ward.

However, the following option would continue to deliver effective and convenient local government:

- Maintaining the status quo. This would enable suitable electoral representation for a growing population (4th highest increase in Scotland over past year). With significant housebuilding planned for Barrhead South and Newton Mearns over the next few years, this approach would ensure councillors continue to deliver effective and convenient government duties. This option is less disruptive for residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS/...

RECOMMENDATIONS

30. It is suggested that the Council: -

- **reject the Local Government Boundary Commission proposal** for re-design of wards based on 18 councillors; and
- **seek to maintain the status quo** and reiterate the Council's fundamental opposition to a reduction in the numbers of elected members as per our previous response of 14 May 2014.
- Note the Council Officers' intention to **seek further evidence** from the Local Government Boundary Commission for using deprivation as a factor and, dependent upon the outcome, the possibility of legal challenge of the Commission's methodology and effectiveness of their proposals.

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive

Report Date – 20 May 2015

BACKGROUND PAPERS

KEY WORDS

This report provides the Council with the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's (LGBC) proposals for ward design in East Renfrewshire Council as part of the Fifth Review of Electoral Arrangements.

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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements

East Renfrewshire Council Area

Proposals for wards



March 2015

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Chairman: Mr Ronnie Hinds

Deputy Chairman: Mr William Magee

Commissioners: Mr Roland Bean

Prof. Ailsa Henderson

Dr Susan Walker

Secretary to the Commission: Dr Hugh Buchanan (to October 2014)

Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray (from October 2014)

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Introduction

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is an independent, non-political body whose purpose is to make recommendations for local government administrative and electoral boundaries in Scotland.
2. We are tasked by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to undertake reviews of local government electoral arrangements in Scotland. These reviews are our fifth periodic reviews of local government electoral arrangements in Scotland since we were first established in 1973. We intend to submit a report containing our recommendations for electoral arrangements for each council area in Scotland to the Scottish Ministers by May 2016, in time for implementation for the next local government elections in May 2017.
3. This booklet contains a summary of our proposals for Scotland as a whole and our proposals for wards in East Renfrewshire council area, and information on how to participate in our consultation with councils **from 19 March to 19 May 2015**.

The reviews

4. In 2011 we consulted the public on our methodology for determining councillor numbers. The results of that consultation can be found on our website www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk
5. We formally began the current reviews on 21 February 2014. We consulted councils and the public on our proposals for councillor numbers for each council between February 2014 and August 2014. We have now considered all the submissions received during these consultations. We have reached a decision on councillor numbers and the associated ward designs and are now presenting our proposals for wards for further consultation. The meeting papers that informed our deliberations and the minutes of our meetings are referenced on page 4. Details of how to participate in the consultation are given below.
6. For each electoral ward, we make recommendations about its boundary, its name and the number of councillors to represent the ward (legislation restricts this to either 3 or 4 councillors).
7. When reviewing electoral arrangements the legislation requires us to take account of the following factors:
 - the interests of effective and convenient local government;
 - within each council, that each councillor should represent the same number of electors as nearly as may be;
 - local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary;
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable; and
 - special geographical considerations.
8. For further information on the policies and procedures we have adopted to underpin these reviews and the legal requirements for ward design, please refer to our *Guidance Booklet*, which is available on our website http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/resources.asp or on request.

Our proposals for wards in Scotland

9. We developed our proposals using electorate data from 1 September 2013. The number of electors registered in each council electoral ward on that date can be found on our website. In developing our proposals for wards, we have had regard to the likely changes in the number of electors by considering forecast electorate counts in 2019. The methodology we have used to forecast electorates can be found on our website. Whilst the dataset does not include 16 and 17 year olds, we have considered the impact their inclusion on the electoral register would have and are content that this would not affect our proposals.
10. Our proposals use population size to set councillor numbers. In keeping with past reviews we have created categories of similar councils to set ratios of councillors to electors. In doing so, we have used population distribution and levels of deprivation to group councils together. Population size, however, remains the biggest determinant of councillor numbers and the design of wards.
11. We consulted on proposals for councillor numbers in 2014. In 5 council areas, we have changed the number of councillors proposed for the area from our original proposals for councillor numbers because it allows us to take better account of the factors in the legislation during ward design. Overall, our proposals provide for 1,217 councillors representing 351 wards in Scotland: a decrease of 6 councillors and 2 wards from existing electoral arrangements.
12. Our proposals for wards include unchanged electoral arrangements in 2 council areas and minor changes in 2 other council areas.
13. Nationally, over 96% of proposed wards are forecast to be within 10% of parity for the council area. At present 17% of existing wards are 10% or more from parity. Only 2 proposed wards are forecast to be more than 15% from parity, compared to 19 existing wards.
14. Our proposals improve parity between councillors in terms of the number of electors they represent (the forecast average variation from a council area's parity per councillor improves from 6.0% for existing wards to 4.6% for proposed wards).
15. In general we have sought to construct wards from complete local sub-geographies such as community council areas. In our proposals for wards almost 80% of community council areas are wholly within wards. In a few council areas, we have adopted ward designs that recognise other locally-significant boundaries such as community planning areas, neighbourhoods or natural communities.

Consultation on our proposals for wards

16. The legislation provides that we must first of all consult on our proposals with councils. This consultation on our proposals for wards runs from 19 March 2015 until 19 May 2015. After consideration of responses to this consultation with councils, we intend to conduct a 12-week public consultation on our proposals for wards between July and October 2015. Depending on the outcome of the consultation, we may further develop and consult on our proposals later in 2015. We expect to submit our reports containing our final recommendations to the Scottish Ministers by May 2016.
17. Further copies of this booklet are available on request.

18. We welcome all comments on our proposals to help inform our deliberations. Comments can be made in the following ways:

in writing to: Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh EH12 5HD

by email to: comments@scottishboundaries.gov.uk

19. All comments we receive in response to this consultation will be available to view on our website in due course. For further information, please visit our website.
20. Where comments contain objections to our proposals, it would be helpful if they could be accompanied by alternative proposals that take account of statutory requirements and consider the consequences on the council area as a whole.

Proposals for wards in East Renfrewshire council area

21. The maps on the following pages illustrate our proposals for wards in East Renfrewshire council area. We present an electoral arrangement for 18 councillors representing 2 3-member wards and 3 4-member wards, reducing the number of wards in the area by 1 and reducing councillor numbers by 2.

22. Our proposals for the council area:

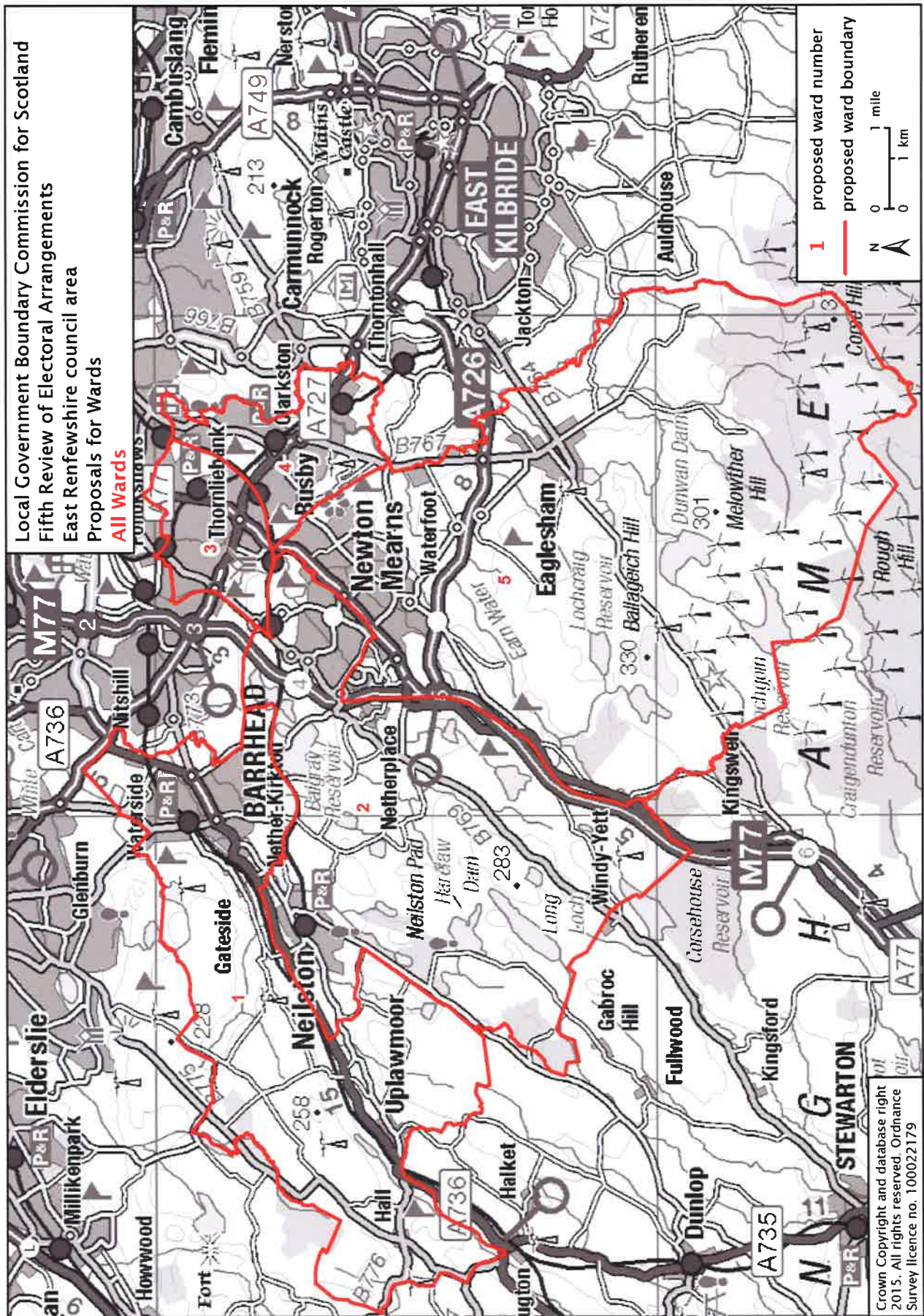
- link Uplawmoor with Barrhead, and Eaglesham with Newton Mearns;
- adopt the M77 motorway and railway lines as easily-identifiable boundaries;
- avoid any new division of settlements between wards; and
- take into account community council area geographies.

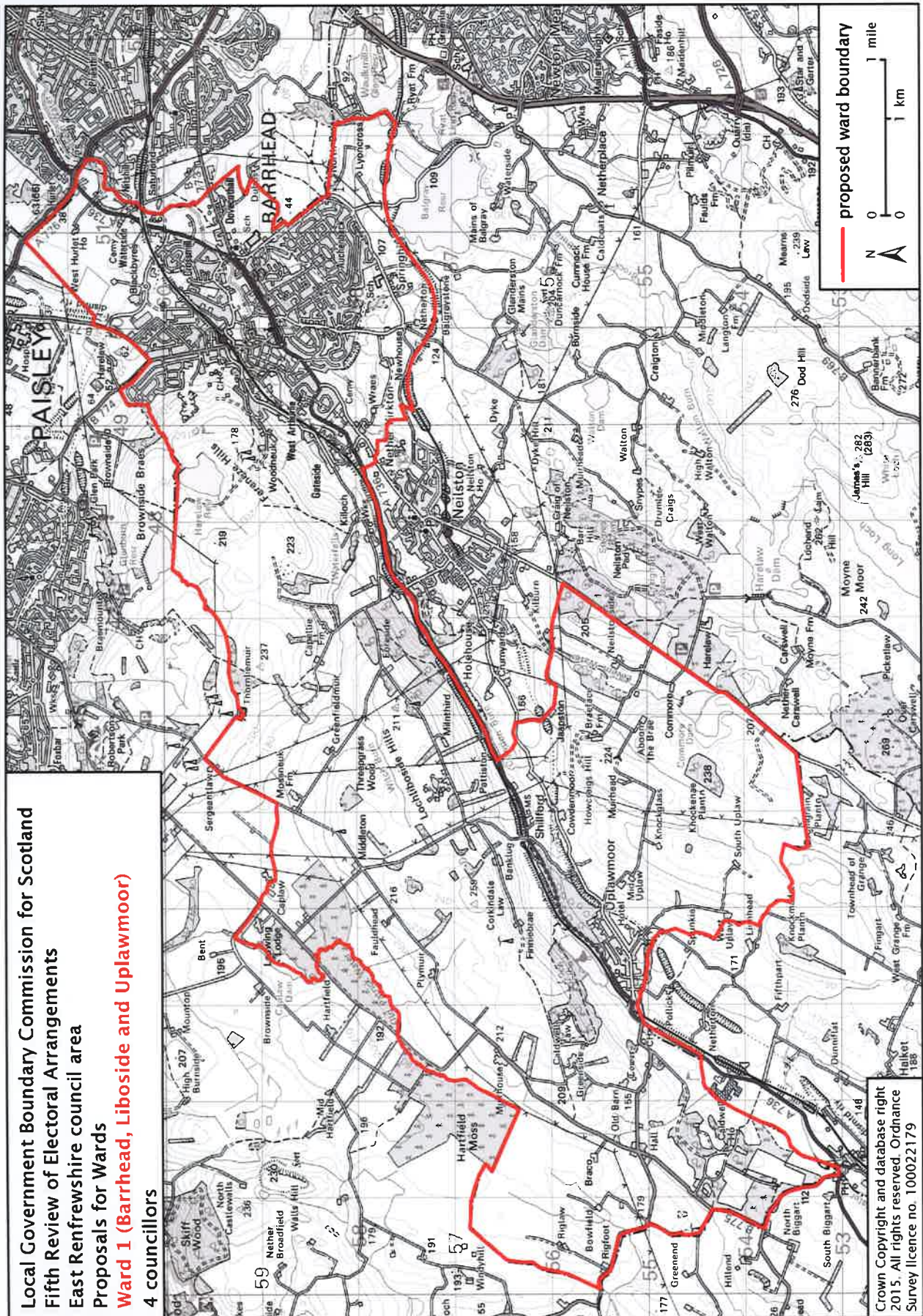
23. We discussed the proposals for East Renfrewshire council area at our meetings of 10 September 2014, 7 October 2014 and 23 October 2014 (see LGBCS Paper 2234/14 and 2246/14). We decided on our proposals at our meetings of 3 February 2015 and 3 March 2015 (see LGBCS Paper 2276/15).

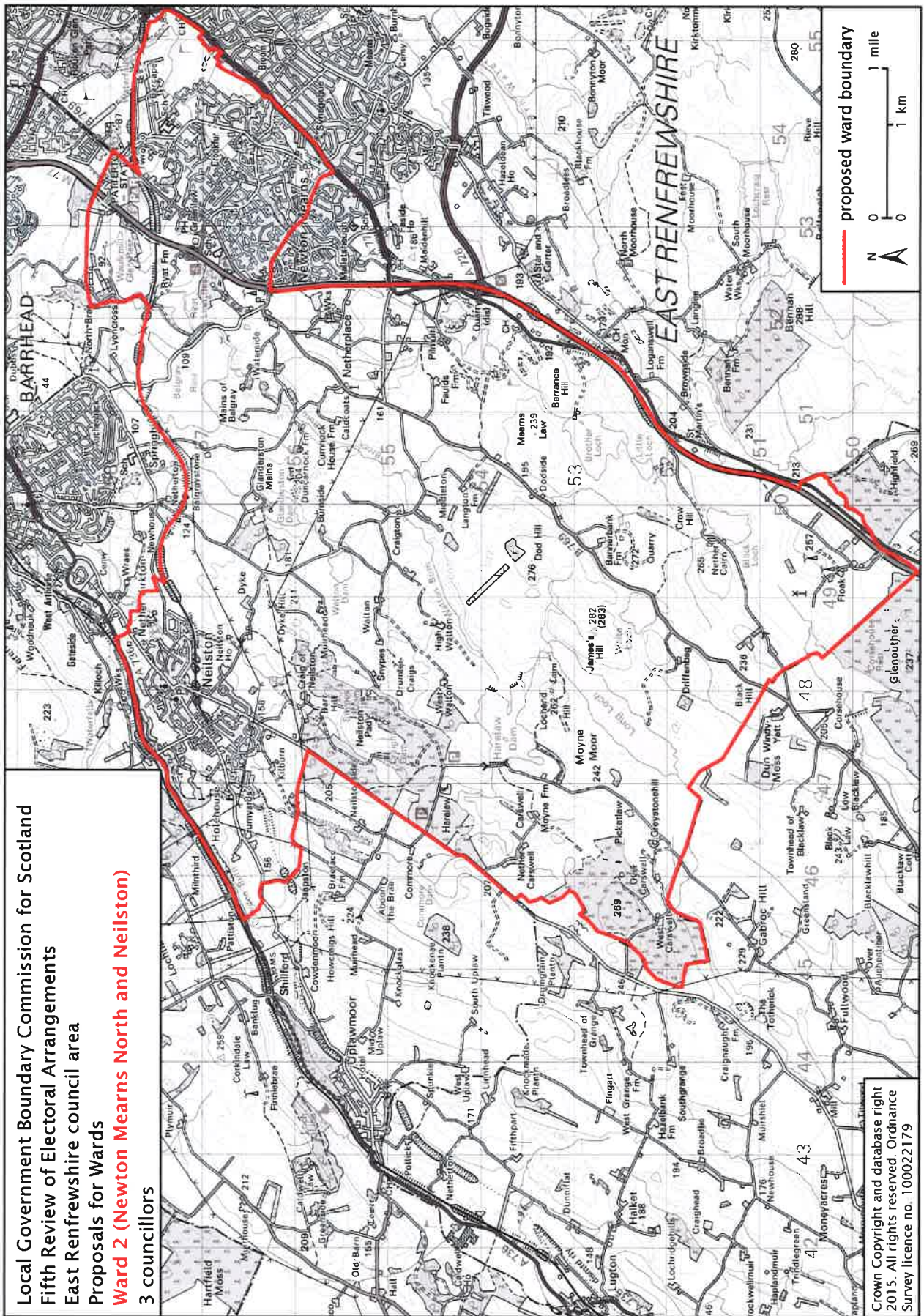
24. Table 1 below details the electorates and associated variation from parity of the proposed wards:

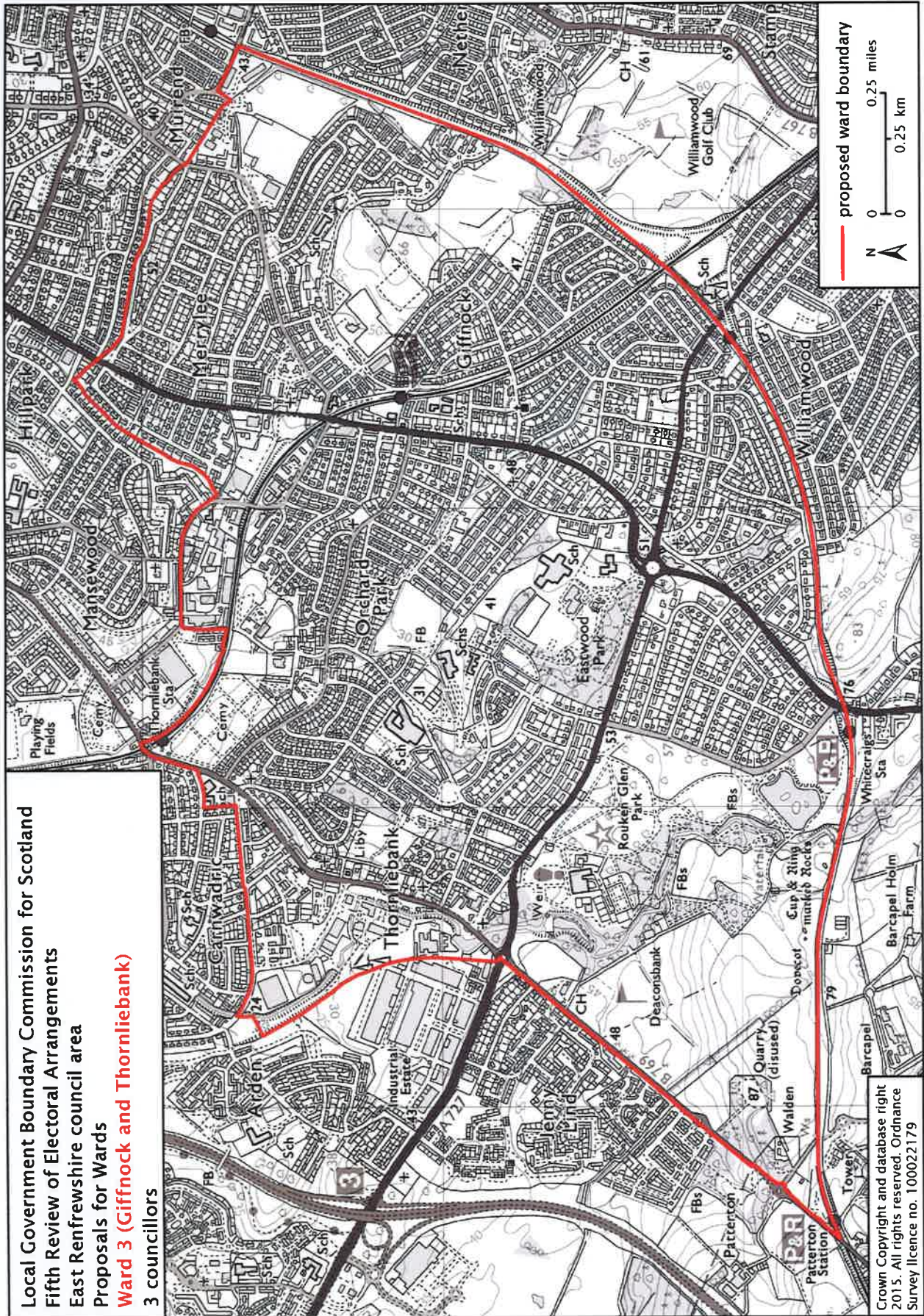
ward no.	ward name	cllrs	electorate Sept 13	actual variation from parity	forecast electorate 2019	forecast variation from parity
1	Barrhead, Liboside and Uplawmoor	4	13,779	-11%	13,944	-10%
2	Newton Mearns North and Neilston	3	10,818	-6%	11,647	0%
3	Giffnock and Thornliebank	3	12,706	10%	12,461	7%
4	Clarkston, Netherlee and Williamwood	4	15,938	3%	15,674	1%
5	Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham	4	16,081	4%	16,100	4%
Totals		18	69,322	7%	69,826	5%

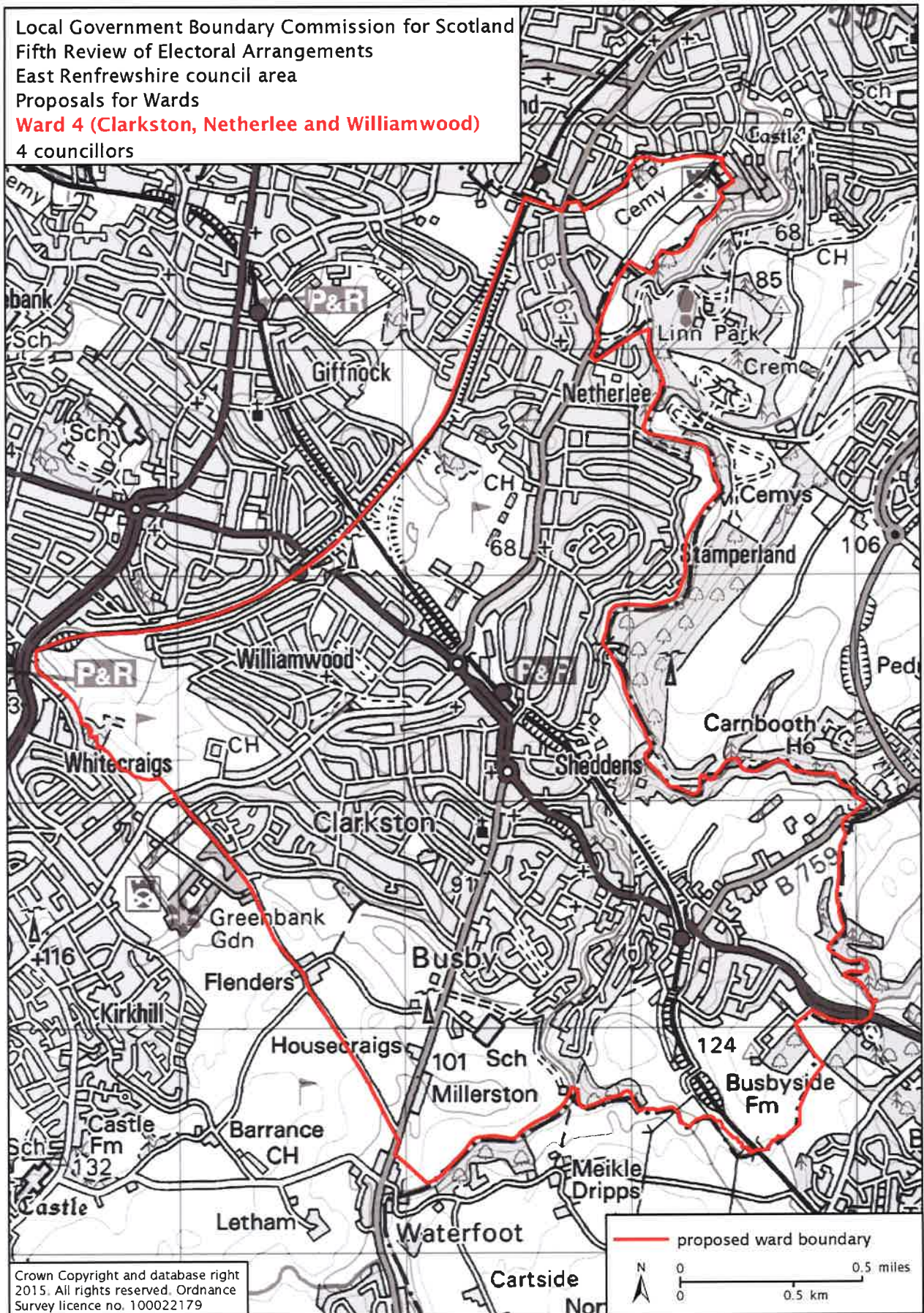
Table 1 - proposed wards' electorate counts.



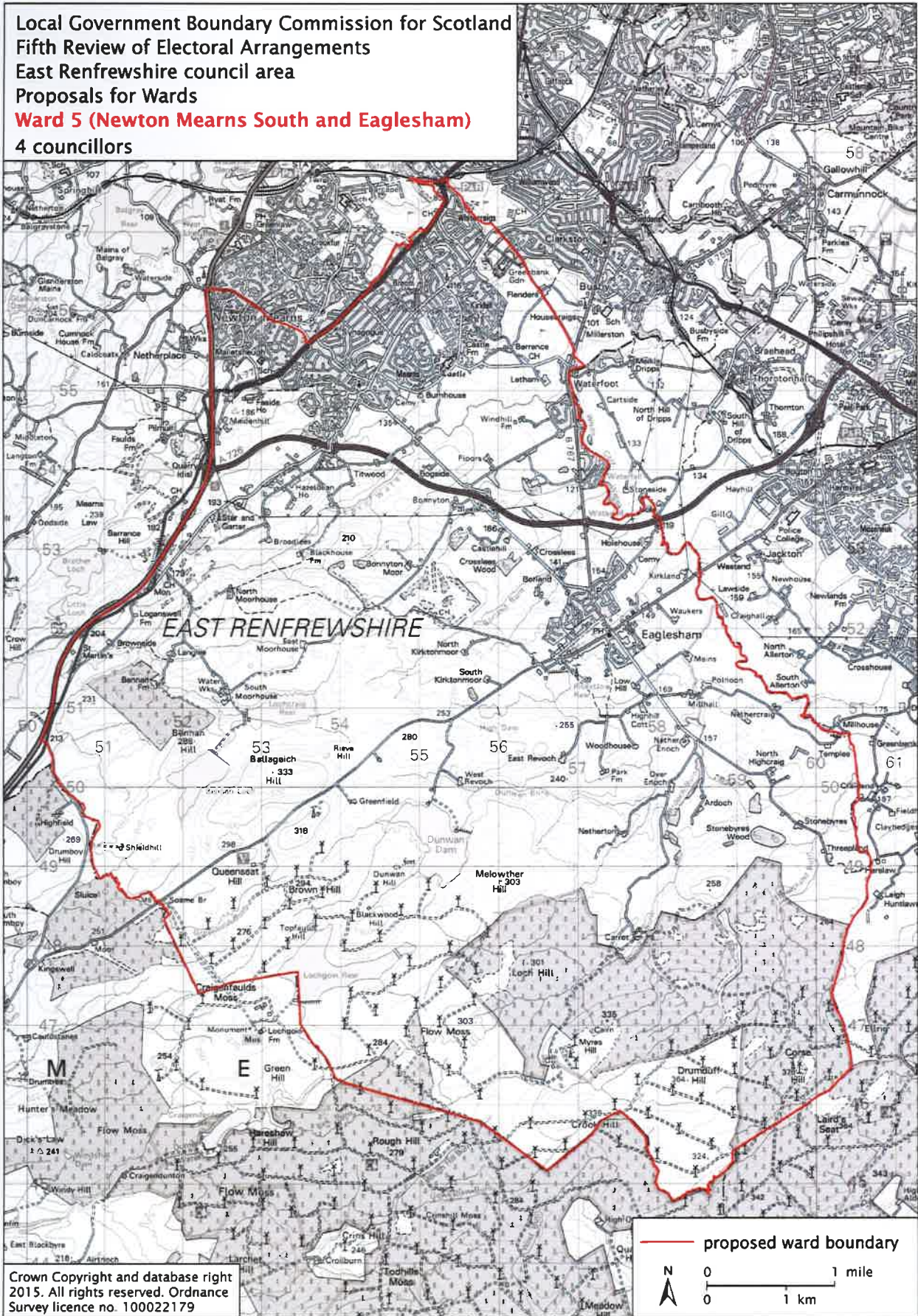








Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Fifth Review of Electoral Arrangements
East Renfrewshire council area
Proposals for Wards
Ward 5 (Newton Mearns South and Eaglesham)
4 councillors



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— proposed ward boundary
N
0 1 mile
0 1 km

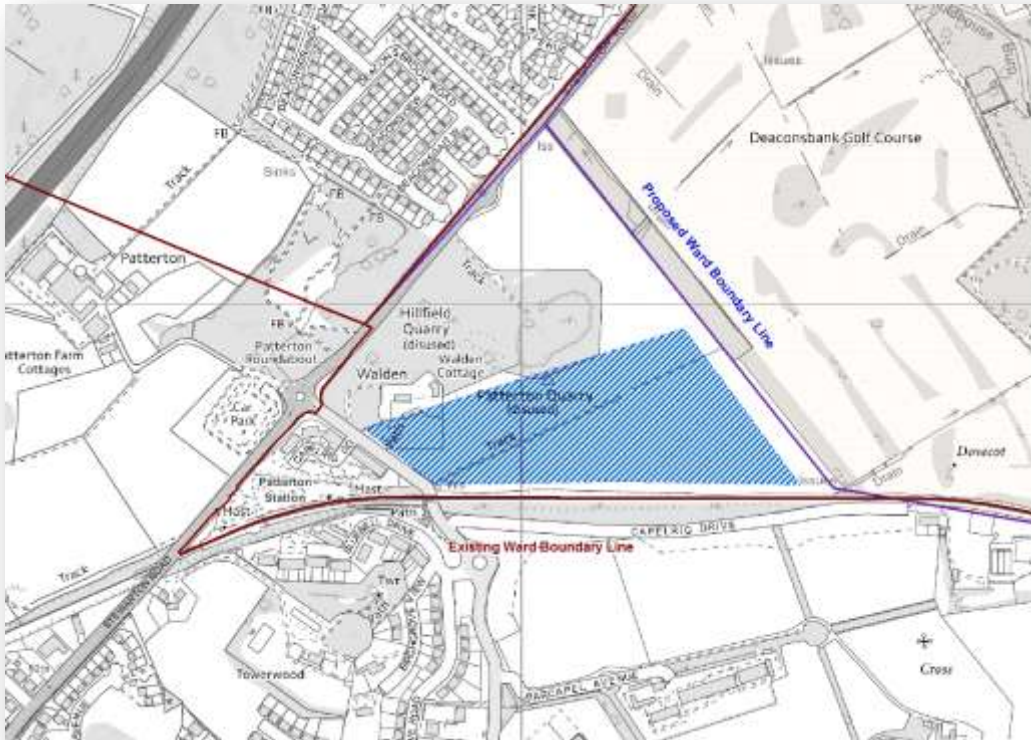


Appendix 2

Hillfield Site

The new housing site at Hillfield, Newton Mearns is north of the Glasgow to Neilston Railway Line, however it is part of the Newton Mearns urban area. The existing boundary follows this railway line, and the area is currently within the Thornliebank Ward.

Figure 5:- Alteration of Boundary at Hillfield, Newton Mearns



The proposal is to change the boundary at this location to follow the southern edge of Deaconsbank Golf Course. This is in line with the proposed Community Council boundary, which has also been changed at this location. This would result in all the new housing being part of the Newton Mearns Wards, and Community Council areas.

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Hugh Buchanan
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Dear Hugh

**FIFTH REVIEWS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS –
 PROPOSALS FOR COUNCILLOR NUMBERS**

I refer to the consultation exercise relative to the Commission's proposals for councillor numbers in Scottish local authorities, as part of the review of local government election arrangements.

You will be aware that following the meeting between representatives of the Commission and the Council on 6 March some preliminary comments were submitted on behalf of the Council.

Please now find enclosed for your attention a copy of the final response from East Renfrewshire Council.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

EAMONN DALY
 DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

Enc (1)



LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND
FIFTH REVIEWS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS
PROPOSALS FOR COUNCILLOR NUMBERS
RESPONSE FROM EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

East Renfrewshire Council is disappointed that the Commission's proposal for the area is that the number of councillors is reduced by 2.

In respect of the proposals the council would offer the following comments:-

Firstly, with regard to the proposals to increase in the number of electors per councillor, in surveys carried out by the Scottish Local Authorities Remuneration Committee many councillors have already highlighted the significant number of hours they have to work as a councillor. Increasing the ratio of electors to councillors will only add to councillor workload. Therefore the proposal to increase the ratio is not supported.

Secondly, in carrying out the review, legislation states that the electorate figure should be used to determine councillor numbers. However this fails to recognise that a significant part of a councillor's workload can relate to the provision of services for those local residents not of voting age. Councillors represent all people within their ward, and East Renfrewshire has a high number of families with children. Whilst the Commission is unable to deviate from the use of elector numbers to use population numbers instead, this is something that Scottish Ministers should be asked to reconsider in future.

In terms of the calculations that have been made to establish councillor numbers, it is argued that the use of the September 2013 electorate to determine councillor numbers in 2017 is a fundamental flaw in the exercise. It is suggested that the number of councillors to be elected in 2017 should be based on the proposed future electorate at that time, not the existing electorate.

If the potential future electorate can be calculated using a combination of NRS population projections and the Council's residential land programme, and this is to be used in terms of establishing electoral parity in Phase 2 of the review exercise, it is argued that this figure should also be used in determining the number of councillors. It is suggested that the as yet unpublished 2012 NRS Population Projection figures be used. These take into account the 2011 Census Population data and the newest migration assumptions. It is understood that these figures are due to be published on 14 May 2014.

Looking further at the use of the September 2013 eligible electorate figure (69,325) based on the 1:3,800 ratio the number of councillors for East Renfrewshire is calculated at 18.24. Whilst in mathematics, figures below 0.5 are rounded down, the determination of councillor numbers is not simply a mathematical exercise. If it is calculated that for the electorate of East Renfrewshire to be properly represented, 18.24 councillors are required, then rounding that number down in effect means that East Renfrewshire is underrepresented. It is argued that the only course of action open is for the number to be increased to 19. It should be noted that using the existing 1:3,500 ratio would see a requirement for 19.8 councillors.

Average/...

Average Electorate per household

The current number of households in East Renfrewshire is 37,225 (2011 Census). Using the September 2013 electorate figure, this equates to 1.86 electors per household. This is considered to be an appropriate figure to use in projected electorate calculations. It should be noted that this figure was as high as 71,547 in November 2013 but following the annual canvass has dropped to 68,883 as at April 2014. It is anticipated that this figure will rise throughout this year as more people register to make sure they are able to vote in the Referendum in September.

Projected Electorate

The Housing Land Audit shows 1,360 programmed completions scheduled before 2018. Using the calculated number of electors per household (1.86) this new build would result in an additional 2,530 voters, giving a projected elector number at 2018 of 71,854. Using the 1:3,800 ratio would result in a requirement for 18.9 councillors, to be rounded up to 19. Using the existing ratio would see a requirement for 20.52 councillors, to be rounded up to 21.

Whilst 2018 is beyond the current review period, the figures shown clearly demonstrate that to reduce councillor numbers in East Renfrewshire now whilst not taking account of a clearly identifiable increase in elector numbers in the medium term, in the period before the subsequent review will be carried out, will lead to a democratic deficit in East Renfrewshire.

It is also argued that how engaged the electorate is in the political process should be reflected in the number of councillors allocated to a council. For example, in simple percentage terms, the turnout in the 2012 local elections in East Renfrewshire was 48.6%. This compared to a turnout of 42.7% in Renfrewshire and 32.4% in Glasgow.

Using Renfrewshire Council as a comparator, based on the 2012 turnout, the ratio of councillors to electors who voted in East Renfrewshire stands at 1:1,669 whilst in Renfrewshire it 1:1,361.

Under the Commission's proposals, still using the 2012 figures, the ratio in East Renfrewshire goes up to 1:1,854 whilst in Renfrewshire it actually goes down to 1:1,266.

This demonstrates that East Renfrewshire residents who participate in the electoral process are already underrepresented when compared to their neighbouring authority, a situation which will get worse if the proposed reduction in councillor number goes ahead.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

In the Commission's 2011 consultation, although the nature of some of the questions may have led to it, no reference was made to proposals to introduce the use of SIMD in determining councillor numbers. As the Council was generally satisfied with the existing categories and ratios, no comment was made at that time. It is only now that the proposed new ratios and the use of SIMD have been brought forward.

The Council disagrees with the use of the Index. It appears that an assumption has been made that councillors that represent an area that does not score highly in terms of SIMD, do not/...

not have as large a workload as those that do. This assumption is strongly disputed. Whilst it is recognised that councillors in wards that do not feature on SIMD may have different issues to deal with, this does not mean their workload is any less.

At the preliminary meeting that was held between representatives of the Commission and the Council, none of the councillors present represented an area of East Renfrewshire with high SIMD scores. However they were able to provide clear examples of the variety of issues that they have to address. The electorate in East Renfrewshire are both well educated and vocal, and it is this, rather than being resident in an area of multiple deprivations, that can lead to councillors having high workloads.

In addition it is argued that the effectiveness of using SIMD is questionable. By way of example, Glasgow has the most extensive areas of deprivation and by virtue of the categorisation ratios applied has a councillor/elector ratio of 1:2,800. Were this to be properly applied this would lead to a significant increase in the number of councillors in that area. However by virtue of both the cap and the 10% rule, the proposals only result in an additional 6 councillors for Glasgow. It is argued that if SIMD is not going to be used correctly then it should not be used at all.

Furthermore, as the councillor to electorate ratio applies across a whole council area, the increasing councillor representation on authorities with high levels of deprivation would similarly apply across the entire council area – not only in those wards which have significantly high levels of deprivation. Affluent areas in such authorities would therefore have the same higher ratio of councillors to electorate than those deprived areas. Therefore using SIMD does not really address the perceived problem.

Such areas of deprivation already receive significant focus from councils, through Single Outcome Agreements, regeneration projects and the like. One such example in East Renfrewshire is the Early Years Collaborative being taken forward in Auchenback, one of the Council's areas that feature in the SIMD. This project aims to give young children the best start in life through collaborative working between different agencies. It is such policy and project action that will help to address such issues - not necessarily additional councillor representation.

It is argued that the best way for deprivation to be tackled is through council SOAs and other targeted local action, not through additional representation which in any case cannot be targeted at specific areas due to the need for electoral parity.

Appendix 4

Fifth Electoral Reviews – Timetable (from Local Government Boundary Commission website)

http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/timetable.asp

We started our Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements on 21 February 2014. For the Fifth Reviews we expect to follow the timetable laid out below:

Stage	Description	Start (* indicates approximate)	Finish (* indicates approximate)
	Reviews commence	21 Feb 2014	
1	Commission meets separately with all 32 councils to provide a background to the Reviews	25 Feb 2014	2 April 2014
1A	2 month statutory consultation period with councils on councillor numbers	21 Feb 2014	23 April 2014
1B	12 week public consultation period on councillor numbers	29 May 2014	21 Aug 2014
2A	Commission considers responses and agrees on councillor numbers	September 2014	January 2015
2B	Commission develops proposals on ward boundaries	September 2014	January 2015
3A	2 month statutory consultation period with councils on ward boundaries	19 March 2015	19 May 2015
3B	12 week public consultation on ward boundaries	July 2015*	October 2015*
4A (Optional)	<i>Development of Revised Proposals for wards</i>	<i>November 2015*</i>	<i>November 2015*</i>
4B (Optional)	<i>Consultation of Revised Proposals for wards, local inquiry</i>	<i>December 2015*</i>	<i>February 2016*</i>
5	Commission considers all representations and develops its final recommendations before submitting its Reports to Scottish Ministers	October 2015*	May 2016*