

Third Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements

North Lanarkshire Council Area

Report to the Secretary of State for Scotland

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Report Number E98010
September 1998

Third Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements North Lanarkshire Council Area

Introduction

1. The Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 determined that on and after 1 April 1996, Scotland should be divided into local government areas as named and described in Schedule 1 to the Act and that, for each area, there should be a council consisting of a convener and councilors. It further determined that each council should have all the functions exercised immediately before 1 April in relation to their area by any existing regional, islands or district council.

2. On 1 April 1996 all local government areas existing immediately before that date which were regions and districts and all regional and district councils ceased to exist.

3. Schedule 2 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 also established that every local government area (other than areas of the old islands councils) should be divided into such electoral wards as may be specified in a direction made by the Secretary of State after carrying out such consultations as he considered appropriate. Those wards were to apply for the purpose of any election of councillors held before 'the relevant year of election' (defined as meaning the first year of ordinary election of councillors for the area in question occurring after the making of an order constituting the new electoral wards of that local government area in consequence of the review currently being undertaken by the Commission). In accordance with procedures that applied prior to the reorganisation in 1975, the views of councils were invited. Thereafter, the Secretary of State determined that, for the purpose of any election of councillors before the relevant year of election, 69 electoral wards were appropriate for North Lanarkshire local government area. Additionally, the proposed wards should be as described in the reports of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland to the Secretary of State for Scotland on its second statutory review of electoral arrangements for:

Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District dated 17 August 1994 (15 Wards);

Monklands District dated 29 August 1994 - (20 Wards);

Motherwell District dated 17 September 1994 (30 Wards).

A further 4 wards were described in the Schedule 2 to the Direction.

Origin and Commencement of the Review

4. The Commission has a statutory duty under section 14 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to undertake periodic reviews of local authority electoral arrangements. The Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 amended section 20 and schedule 5 of the 1973 Act, directing that:

as soon as practicable after 1 April 1996, the Boundary Commission shall-

review the electoral arrangements for all local government areas for the purpose of considering the future electoral arrangements for those areas; and

formulate proposals for those arrangements.

5. This, therefore, is one of the statutory reviews required in terms of section 16(2) and Schedule 5 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended.

6. On 22 March 1996, the Scottish Office Development Department gave local authorities advance notice of the intention of the Commission to carry out a third statutory review of electoral arrangements. On 29 March 1996, we wrote to all councils to announce the commencement of the third statutory review of electoral arrangements and to explain the procedures to be followed. We also gave notice of the commencement of the review to all Community Councils, Electoral Registration Officers, Members of Parliament with a constituency interest and the Scottish headquarters of the political parties. In addition, public notice of the commencement of the review, which included an invitation to interested parties to apply to us for a copy of our consultation letter to councils, was given in newspapers.

Background

7. During the passage through Parliament of the 1994 Act, there was cross-Party understanding that we would review the number of councillors and boundaries of electoral wards for each council in time for changes to be implemented for the 1999 local elections. This was seen to be important because at the time of reorganisation, as mentioned above, the Secretary of State defined the electoral wards for the new councils and to a great extent based these on existing district wards. It was, however, recognised that using the existing district wards led to some councils being significantly over-represented in relation to other areas. Further, it also led to councillors within the same local authority areas representing wards with significantly different numbers of electors. Accordingly, our review was seen as important to ensure equity in representation across and within all local authorities. Further, the new authorities were now responsible for the provision of the full range of all services and, accordingly, consideration had to be given to determining an appropriate number of councillors for service provision to be effectively managed.

8. This review is, therefore, the first conducted by us which sets out to determine the appropriate number of councillors required for councils to operate efficiently and to establish the boundaries of electoral wards. To achieve both objectives our review was conducted in 2 main stages:

identification of a suitable methodology for determining numbers of councillors which, applied across all local authority areas, would be seen to be equitable and consistent; and

the division of each local authority area into the appropriate number of electoral wards in accordance with the statutory rules.

9. A copy of the statutory rules to be employed by us and the Secretary of State in considering proposals for electoral arrangements is provided at Appendix A.

Number of Councillors

10. In formulating proposals for the number of councillors we have been guided by two main principles:

effective management of councils; and

equity amongst electors.

11. We recognised that the number of councillors is crucial because there is, undoubtedly, some number below which it would be impossible for a council to discharge its duty to deliver services to its population and, conversely, there is also some number above which a council becomes unwieldy and cumbersome. We were influenced in this respect by the prior considerations of two other bodies.

12. The Royal Commission on Local Government In Scotland 1966-69, under the Chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Lord Wheatley, provided a basis by which the number of regional councillors and the size of constituency to be represented might be determined by taking into account the fact that population density varies widely in Scotland as a whole and within regions. The then accepted view was that council size should not generally exceed 75 members. In England and Wales the Redcliffe-Maude Commission, which reported to Parliament in 1969, also drew attention to the management problems of large councils and endorsed the recommendation of The Committee on the Management of Local Government that a maximum number of 75 councillors should be set.

13. After careful consideration we concluded that, in the Scottish context and to provide additional flexibility, an upper limit of 80 councillors should be set. We also concluded that a

minimum number of councillors should be set, recognising that even the smallest local government areas are now responsible for a wide range of functions. Accordingly, we decided that the minimum number of councillors should be 18. Further, these limits should apply to all councils.

14. Regarding equity as between voters, we considered that ideally each elector's vote should possess the same weight and significance in local government elections throughout the country; furthermore, ideally, there should be similar mutual accessibility between electors and councillors. However, since Scotland is a country of great diversity, both geographically, and demographically, a fact reflected in the areas for which councils created by the Act of 1994 are responsible, and since we are satisfied that, in the interests of good local government, the number of councillors in any council must fall within certain limits, we concluded that these ideals are unattainable in practice. In this situation, recognising that a fair degree of homogeneity exists within certain groups of councils, which exhibit broadly similar geographic and demographic characteristics, we resolved to strive for equity in the senses mentioned within these groups, so far as that is possible within the constraints of the legislation under which we operate.

15. We, therefore, proposed a methodology which initially categorised council areas by density and distribution of population using data available from the 1991 Census of Population. Having classified council areas according to these criteria and adjusted the ratio of electors to each councillor to take account of similar characteristics, we have been able to achieve a broad equity of electorate across and within all council areas.

16. In our letter of 29 March 1996, all councils were informed of the proposed methodology and future pattern of representation for their council area. Councils were requested to make any representations they wished on numbers of councillors by 29 April 1996 so that a meeting could be arranged with the Deputy Chairman and Secretary to discuss the pattern of representation and any matters regarding our review that the Council wished to raise. Following visits to all councils by the Deputy Chairman and Secretary to discuss the proposed methodology and to consider alternatives which could be applied across Scotland, no alternative methodologies were offered but a number of councils suggested that the underlying classification should be amended to include an additional category.

17. At our meeting of 17 June 1996, we re-examined the criteria to be used to categorise mainland councils with similar characteristics in light of the representations made by a number of councils. We concluded that there should be 6 rather than 5 categories. The final categorisation of similar mainland councils was then agreed as follows:

- Category 1 Large Cities Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- Category 2 Cities Aberdeen and Dundee.
- Category 3 Authorities with less than 60% of the population living outwith settlements of 10,000 or more persons **AND** an overall population density of one person or more per hectare.

- Category 4 Authorities with **EITHER** 60% or more of the population living outwith settlements of 10,000 or more persons **OR** an overall population density of less than one person per hectare.
- Category 5 Authorities with 60% or more of the population living outwith settlements of 10,000 or more persons **AND** an overall population density of less than one person per hectare.
- Category 6 Authorities 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.

18. In addition to the 6 categories we then determined the ratio of councillors to electorate for mainland councils that would allow for efficient management and appropriate representation, as set out in paragraphs 11 - 14 above, and considered that the following would be appropriate:

• Category 1	1:6,000
• Category 2	1:4,000
• Category 3	1:3,500
• Category 4	1:3,000
• Category 5	1:2,500
• Category 6	1:2,000

19. On 20 June 1996 we wrote to all mainland councils informing them of the revised criteria for determining councillor numbers and inviting them to prepare a draft scheme of electoral arrangements for their Council area. Following upon that, Aberdeen City Council brought a petition for Judicial Review of the decision taken by us at our meeting of 17 June, 1996 in the Court of Session. In it they sought a decree of declarator that that decision in relation to them was unlawful, ultra vires and null and void; they also sought a decree of reduction of the decision in relation to them and certain ancillary remedies. We resisted this petition, which was dismissed by the Court on 20 December 1996 after a hearing.

20. We considered the ratio of councillors to electors for the 3 islands councils at our meeting of 26 August 1996 and concluded that the appropriate ratio would be 1:750. On 28 August 1996 we wrote to these councils informing them of our decision.

21. On 2 July 1996, North Lanarkshire Council noted the level of representation for their area and confirmed that they would submit a draft scheme of electoral arrangements for 70 wards.

North Lanarkshire Council's Proposals

22. The Council submitted a scheme of electoral arrangements for 71 wards on 6 March 1997. A revised scheme for 70 wards was forwarded on 20 May 1997. The Council advertised its scheme in local newspapers giving notice of where the proposals could be inspected and inviting interested persons to send their comments directly to the Commission.

23. Our initial analysis of the Council's draft scheme suggested that the overall forecast of electorate at 2001 for the Council area had been overstated and we asked the Council to provide details of the methodology which had been used. Following discussions with our Secretariat, the Council revised its forecast of electorate at 2001. We were content that the revision was acceptable and broadly in line with our own forecast.

24. We noted that a number of representations we received referred to a draft scheme prepared by Council officials, which some considered more appropriately reflected electoral parity and community considerations in the Council area. The Council advised that it was an early draft and that the electorate data had not been thoroughly checked. Revised electorate data was provided to us. We considered the draft scheme provided by the Council together with the revised early draft mentioned above. Whilst we recognised that there were merits in both schemes, we concluded that the draft scheme formally submitted by the Council on 20 May 1997 should form the basis of our further considerations.

25. We also received representations from organisations which objected to the Council's proposals but did not provide alternatives. Although we asked that details be provided, no further information was forthcoming.

26. A letter was received regarding the proposed boundary which split Chapelhall. It was suggested that Chapelhall and Dun Alister should form Ward 51 and that Brownsburn, Gartness, Mull and Moffat Mill should form Ward 52.

27. Chapelhall Community Council wrote to oppose the proposals which split the village and enclosed a petition of 1,606 signatures and a copy of the objections it had submitted earlier to the Council. The Community Council proposed that the area covered by its boundaries would form an appropriate ward.

28. The Mossend Branch of the Scottish National Party wrote to object to the Council's proposals for Mossend and suggested a revised area which it believed met with the requirements of parity. It supported proposals which it understood were being submitted by Councillor McAlorum for 30 wards in the former Motherwell District, subject to amendments with regard to Mossend.

29. Condorrat Community Council wrote to say that it felt strongly that Cumbernauld should not lose a ward since the area had the largest population and should have a proportionate number of Councillors.

30. Balloch and Eastfield Community Council wrote to say that whilst it accepted that changes were inevitable it wished to maintain its position, at the time of the second statutory review, to Balloch North and Craigmarloch, and Balloch South and Ravenswood Wards, which used the Balloch Loop as the boundary. It believed also that Blackwood and Condorrat Ward should remain unchanged.

31. A resident of Moodiesburn forwarded a petition of 135 signatures requesting no change to the existing ward boundary.

32. Councillor Carmichael wrote to say that he had received no notification of the proposals which he believed had been altered by the ruling Group and asked that we reject these in favour of proposals prepared by Council officials which we mention above.

33. Castlecary Community Residents' Association wrote to say that it wished to remain in the same ward as Cumbernauld Village.

34. A letter was received which stated that there was no need to alter the boundaries of wards in the Village and Westerwood areas of Cumbernauld.

35. Blackwood and Craiglinn Community Council wrote to say that it believed Cumbernauld and Kilsyth was still an expanding town and that it would be able to raise sufficient electorate to meet electoral parity. Uprooting the Condorrat and Blackwood communities would have serious long term effects on future relationships. To divide the Blackwood Community was undesirable and unacceptable to the people of Blackwood and Moodiesburn and there was no geographical, sociological or transport connection between the two areas. Cumbernauld and Kilsyth should continue to have 15 wards. The Community Council preferred the status quo with minor adjustments where necessary.

36. Councillor Lyle JP wrote to say that he had various experiences of boundary changes and that, during this exercise, the boundaries had been politically gerrymandered by the Labour Group. The Councillor wished to ensure that boundaries were set by officials, not by political parties, and he asked for a meeting so that full details could be given.

37. The Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Constituency Branch of the Scottish Labour Party strongly objected to the Council's proposals. It believed that there should be 15 wards within the Parliamentary boundary of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth on the grounds that Cumbernauld was the largest area of expansion in North Lanarkshire. Further, Blackwood and Moodiesburn would not welcome the proposed forced link which would be to the detriment of an effective and recognised community. We were asked to conduct a public enquiry.

38. Councillor Murray JP wrote to say that the original scheme prepared by Council officials was preferred to the draft which had been submitted to the Commission. It was important that Ward 54 remained as Council officials had intended. The position was supported by Community Councils, Residents' Association, the Parish Church, the local school board and Senior Citizens' Association. Residents who were zoned to the Village School, and those who were not zoned, were anxious to maintain the connection. An alternative scheme based on 15 wards for the area was provided. The Councillor also expressed concerns with the Council's internal consultation procedures and queried the electorate data used by Council.

39. A letter was received which stated that the proposals to incorporate Longriggend in Ward 52 seemed to have no regard for traditional ties and that the relatively small number of electors involved would more suitably be retained in Plains and Caldercruix Ward.

40. Seafar and Ravenswood Community Council asked that we re-examine the Council's proposals because the proposed change which created Ward 64 resulted in consequential changes to all other adjoining wards in the south. We were asked to add another ward to North Lanarkshire, thus causing much less disturbance.

41. Councillor McAlorum forwarded a petition from 658 residents of Mossend who objected to the Council's proposals. A map illustrating an alternative arrangement was included.

42. Coatbridge and Chryston Constituency Labour Party wrote to register its opposition to the Council's proposals as they affected the constituency of Coatbridge and Chryston asked that they be given permission to attend any public enquiry so that objections could be submitted in detail.

43. The Central 4 Labour Branch wrote to say that its members unanimously opposed boundary changes which would see part of Coatbridge lumped in with Airdrie when it was their understanding that Coatbridge could support 10 council seats on its own.

44. The Council informed us that it had considered the representations received in response to the public consultation exercise and had endorsed its draft proposals at its meeting of 13 August 1997. We noted that, in a few instances, revisions had been incorporated into the Council's draft scheme.

45. We carefully considered all of the representations received which requested amendments to ward boundaries and, where it was possible and practicable within the statutory rules to make amendments to the Council's draft scheme, we adopted the changes proposed. In a number of areas we were not able to adopt the revised proposals submitted to us because of the impact such changes would have across the wider Council area, particularly when consequential changes affected areas from which no representations had been received. In some areas it was clear from electorate data provided by the Council that revising boundaries in the manner suggested would lead to significant deviations from electoral parity which we were not prepared to accept.

Publication of Commission's Provisional Proposals

46. Public notice was given of the publication of our provisional proposals on 18 February 1998. North Lanarkshire Council was asked to make available for inspection at its offices copies of the electoral ward boundary descriptions, electoral statistics and illustrative maps. Additionally, copies of our proposals were sent to all who had received our consultation letter or had expressed an interest. We asked that any comments should be made to us by 18 March 1998.

Consideration of Representations

47. Seven hundred and nine representations were received:

- **North Lanarkshire Council** wrote to recommend a modification which transferred properties in Whitehill Terrace and Whitehill Farm from Ward 33 to Ward 68. The Council had no formal objection to our provisional proposals but noted that these would be reviewed in the light of representations received.
- We accepted the Council's proposed modification to the boundary between Ward 33 and Ward 68.
- **Councillor Ross** felt it was imperative to raise the most profound objections to our proposals for Ward 1. The sheltered housing complex at Ladywell Road was being transferred to Ward 4, although it had been in Ward 1 in the Council's draft scheme. The residents were predominantly from the Ladywell area and had no connection with North Motherwell. The complex formed part of the social fabric of Ladywell, residents being closely connected to the primary school and other groups. Moving the complex into Ward 4 would mean a journey of over 1.5 miles to the polling station and, for the elderly, frail residents, this would be a diminution of franchise.
- A letter was received which wished to appeal against moving sheltered housing from Ward 1 to Ward 4 because the residents had no connection with the latter area. The signatures of thirty-five residents of the sheltered housing were appended to the request.

We carefully considered the proposed amendment and noted that the proposed revision had little impact on electoral parity in Ward 1 and Ward 4. Accordingly, we agreed to adopt the change in our final recommendations.

- **Chapelhall Community Council** wrote to restate concerns at our proposals which split the village into two wards. A copy of the 1996 Electoral Register was

enclosed which the Community Council indicated contained 3,352 electors in Chapelhall which it believed could be retained as a single ward.

- **Airdrie and Shotts Conservative and Unionist Association** submitted alternative proposals for Wards 41 - 52. The Association believed that Cairnhill should not be split because it had been an electoral ward for 70 years and that the village of Chapelhall should not be divided.
- **Airdrie and Shotts Constituency Labour Party, Chapelhall Branch** objected to our proposals which split the village of Chapelhall. Whilst recognising that it was a popular place to live and that increases in electorate would mean that the village would be too large, the Branch did not think that our proposals were the only way forward. It considered that the existing village could be retained as a single ward and that new houses could be added together with other wards to comply with the legislation. We were asked to reconsider our proposals.
- Two hundred and twelve proforma letters were received registering objections to our proposals which split Chapelhall and, it was claimed, resulted in a breakage of social ties.
- A letter was received which stated that the residents of Shapeable had put forward an excellent case objecting to the Council's proposals and we should reconsider our provisional proposals. Further, the provisional proposals made no mention of earlier representations expressing concern. Attention was drawn to the statutory rules concerning local ties.

We carefully considered the various alternative proposals which were submitted in respect of Chapelhall and the surrounding wards. We consulted the Council and were informed that, if adopted, the various alternative proposals would result in wards which deviated significantly from electoral parity. However, we concluded that there were possible solutions which might go some way to satisfying the representations received whilst maintaining acceptable electoral parity. Electorate data were provided by the Council and we agreed to revise the boundaries of the wards surrounding Chapelhall in our final recommendations.

- **Councillor Lyle JP** wrote to say that it had been his understanding at the last boundary change that Ward 24, which was currently held by the Labour Group leader, would take on board part of his ward. He now found that a colleague, Councillor McAlorum had been allocated this section of his ward. The Councillor, therefore, wished to object again to the redrawing of ward boundaries in the Bellshill area, which he considered were politically motivated, and asked that a Commissioner independently look at the proposals which had been submitted by the Council.

We carefully considered the Councillor's representation but concluded that we were not prepared to amend our provisional proposals in this area because adjustments to boundaries would require significant consequential changes to adjacent wards.

- **Councillor McAlorum JP** objected to our proposals and asked that her previous submission for the former Motherwell District be adopted. The Councillor could not believe that the Commission could study the well-reasoned and well-stated cases, which Community Councils and others had taken the time and trouble to submit, and ignore them. She believed that the machinations which gave birth to the proposals were born of political malice, were ill-considered and should be further reviewed.

We noted that the proposals submitted by Councillor McAlorum had been carefully considered at an earlier stage in the review process and were not prepared to amend our provisional proposals.

- **The Scottish National Party, Mossend Branch**, wrote to appeal against our proposals for Mossend, which were believed to be unnecessary and were being done for the wrong reasons. We were requested to reconsider and possibly hold a public enquiry.

We noted the views expressed but were not prepared to amend our provisional proposals in this area.

- **Councillor Cefferty** requested that the boundary of Ward 20 be altered to include the community of Greenrigg and that, to compensate, Dykehead should be transferred to Ward 18.

We noted that the proposal for Ward 20 would involve an administrative change to North Lanarkshire Council's boundary with West Lothian Council area which we considered was outwith the scope of this review of electoral arrangements.

- **Dullatur Community Council** wrote to object to the Commission's proposals and to support the alternatives submitted by Councillor Murray. It stated that it had always maintained strong links with Cumbernauld Village for schooling and our proposals would lead to local children attending schools outwith Cumbernauld.
- **Condorrat Community Council** wrote to say that it opposed the proposed boundary changes which meant the loss of a ward and supported the status quo in Cumbernauld. It believed that retaining Condorrat and Blackburn Ward, as it presently existed, allowed for the expansion of Blackwood whilst keeping it wholly within the Cumbernauld area where it belonged. It was stated that the division of Blackwood removed part of Cumbernauld from the Cumbernauld Area

Committee which makes decisions which affect that area. Cumbernauld had been forced to expand to the North of the A80 by previous boundary changes but had never taken in Mollinsburn or Moodiesburn. Administratively, the Health Board used the former boundary between Cumbernauld and Kilsyth District and Strathkelvin District so there had never been a history of involvement between these two areas. The local boundary had always been the Glasgow/Edinburgh railway line. Cumbernauld would continue to grow and Blackwood and Condorrat West would have sufficient electors in the future to meet electoral parity. Blackwood relied on Condorrat for its amenities, so there was a feeling of involvement between the two parts of the ward. Mollinsburn/Moodiesburn had no amenities and did not have easy access. The greater part of Blackwood was private development with only a small amount of rented accommodation. The latter formed the area being transferred into Moodiesburn thereby dividing an association which had come together despite the mix of housing. More generally, the Commission's proposals for Cumbernauld broke up the community spirit. While the reason for the boundary changes was to create more balanced wards, they did not make a more balanced Council. Cumbernauld had the biggest population in North Lanarkshire but now had only 14 of the 70 wards.

The Community Council believed that a Council statement which said ward boundary changes were for electoral purposes only and made no differences to services etc. was not true. People would not be allowed representation on the decision-making Committee for their area and would be left in an area which did not want them and in which they did not want to be. The people of Cumbernauld were used to the existing wards and they worked well. The new wards would, in at least two cases, have people living in them who would not be represented on the Cumbernauld Area Committee. We were asked to reconsider our proposals. A public enquiry was requested.

- **Village and Castlecary Community Council** wrote to reject our proposals and to demand a public enquiry.
- **Councillor Murray** wrote to say that there were objections to our proposals for the new electoral boundaries in Cumbernauld. He was particularly concerned with the proposals for Wards 54 and 57. In our proposals the existing Village and Westerwood Ward had been detached from the hinterland which it served. All local organisations objected to the split. He intended to raise queries regarding the basis for calculating ward sizes with the Council and formally requested a public enquiry. Councillor Murray later provided a plan for revised boundaries for Wards 54, 55 and 57 which he believed produced better electoral parity whilst maintaining communities. He repeated his call for a public enquiry which he said had been endorsed by the Cumbernauld North East Branch of the Scottish National Party of which he was Chairman.

- **Blackwood Action Group** stated that it opposed the provisional proposals. Blackwood was an area with its own easily identifiable boundary which was recognised by the Community as a whole. Whilst the area was mainly a private residential area, there were a number of Housing Association houses and this section of the community would be worst affected by our proposals. Dividing Blackwood into two wards would create divisions within the community and irretrievably damage community spirit. The proposals did not recognise that Condorrat was closer to Moodiesburn in terms of road links. The forecast of electorate at 2001 did not properly reflect the existing and growing population in Blackwood and should not be used. The consultation maps did not show details of housing or of proposed new build. The heart of Blackwood was a loch which acted as a focal point for the residents of Cumbernauld as a whole and which encouraged developers. The name Blackwood was synonymous with Broadwood Stadium and vice versa. The Group wished the status quo to remain and considered that, if the proposals were enforced, they would split a growing community, break up a long established voting process, result in the loss of a Councillor and an MP and would involve cost implications of further boundary changes with the introduction of a Scottish Parliament. The Commission should also consider the lack of public transport and the objection submitted by Moodiesburn Community Council in May 1997. Further, it did not believe that a community should be disorganised for reasons of electoral parity. A public enquiry was requested.
- **Castlecary Community Resident's Association** wrote to say that a recent meeting had unanimously agreed to oppose any changes to the existing electoral boundaries. The village had a strong and long association with Cumbernauld dating back 600 years and the present links with the village should not be broken. The Association asked where people would vote if they were separated from Ward 54 as there was no bus service to the Westerwood area from Castlecary. They supported alternatives submitted by Councillor Murray and asked for a public enquiry.
- **The Session of Cumbernauld Old Parish Church** wrote to voice objection to the proposals. It contended that the Village had no natural connection with Seafar and that the geography of the area created a natural barrier. Traditionally, ward boundaries had virtually mirrored the old parish boundaries and the Commission was asked to consider reinstating the system which had worked well for many years.
- **The Senior Citizens of Cumbernauld Village** forwarded a petition with 54 signatures rejecting the proposals and demanding a public enquiry.
- **Binniehill Road, Broomknowe and Logan Drive Resident's Association** wrote to object strongly to the unnecessary division in its area. A plan was forwarded

which illustrated alternative proposals which preserved communities, related to existing polling stations and requested.

- **The Scottish Labour Party, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Branch** wrote to say that it believed the statutory rules had been breached. It considered that the area, particularly that formerly designated as a new town, was the only one within the Council to have an expanding population and it expected that within a few years the population would be sufficient to allow an electoral parity of 3,500 within the existing wards. The previous review had taken account of the

The provisional proposals for Ward 67 breached the Parliamentary Constituency boundary, was unacceptable and caused a great deal of concern amongst residents of the Blackwood area. The boundary was ill-defined and the community had no local ties. The Branch believed that the status quo should remain and that the formation of the Scottish Parliament, the intention to review parliamentary Constituency boundaries and the decision to set up a Commission on Local Government all served to confirm that the review was unnecessary

- Four hundred and sixty-four signed proforma letters were received which stated an objection to the reduction in the number of Cumbernauld Wards and, in particular, to the inclusion of part of Blackwood with Moodiesburn in Ward 67 which was thought to ignore community ties. It was also considered that the existing wards in Cumbernauld could be reorganised without any detrimental effect on electoral parity.
- Eleven proforma letters were received which opposed our proposals for Blackwood and asked for no changes of boundaries until after the introduction of a Scottish Parliament in 2000. Concern was expressed for the long term implications for Blackwood.
- A letter was received which objected to the proposals for Cumbernauld, as they were of no benefit to the area. A copy of proposals drawn up by Councillor Murray was forwarded, with which the correspondent agreed.

We carefully considered the various representations which were received in respect of the Cumbernauld area. We noted that a number of correspondents had asked for a public enquiry but we concluded that there were no justifiable grounds to conduct a public enquiry and that sufficient information was available to allow us to consider fully representations and counter-proposals. We noted also that a number of representations suggested that the existing wards in Cumbernauld could be retained with some adjustments to comply with parity requirements. An examination of the electorate data, however, suggested that this proposal was not possible because it ignored the impact on adjacent areas and consequential changes across the whole of the Council area. We concluded, therefore, that

retaining 15 wards in the Cumbernauld area, with some internal boundary reorganisation, was not a practical solution.

We noted concerns that our proposals crossed Parliamentary Constituency boundaries but concluded that our consideration of local election arrangements could not be constrained by boundaries determined by other bodies, particularly where there would be an adverse impact on electoral parity. We noted also that the Boundary Commission for Scotland would initiate a review of Parliamentary Constituency boundaries in the near future. We noted also the view that the formation of a Scottish Parliament and the setting up of the Commission on Local Government indicated that the review was unnecessary. As we mention elsewhere in this report, the Commission was directed by Parliament to conduct a review of electoral arrangements in all Council areas in Scotland.

We considered the alternative proposals submitted by Councillor Murray and the representations wishing to retain the Blackwood area in a single ward. We consulted the Council with regard to the rationale behind its original proposals. After considering the proposals offered by Councillor Murray and bearing in mind the Council's views regarding the area, we concluded that the provisional proposals offered the best practical solution. Accordingly, we were not prepared to revise our proposals in this area.

Final Recommendations

48. Having conducted the third statutory review of electoral arrangements for North Lanarkshire Council area in accordance with the procedures described above, **we recommend** that future electoral arrangements for the said Council should provide for a Council of 70 members.

49. The designation of the electoral wards that we recommend for North Lanarkshire Council, together with information which we have received from the Council as to the 1996 electorate and forecast 2001 electorate of the proposed wards, are set out at Appendix B to this report

50. The boundaries of the proposed electoral wards are described in Appendix C and the following illustrative maps accompany this report:

Map	Area	Scale
1	North Lanarkshire Council area	1:50,000
2	Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	1:10,000
3	Stepps, Muirhead, Moodiesburn, Townhead etc.	1:10,000

4	Airdrie	1:10,000
5	Coatbridge, Bellshill, Motherwell	1:10,000
6	Motherwell, Wishaw	1:10,000
7	Dykehead	1:10,000

Appendix B

North Lanarkshire Council Area Proposed Electoral Wards

Electorate Number	Name	1996 (Actual)	2001 (Estimated)
a	b	c	d
1	Ladywell	3,675	3,597
2	Calder Valley	3,691	3,477
3	Forgewood	3,282	3,486
4	North Motherwell	3,879	3,614
5	New Stevenston and Carfin	2,890	3,460
6	Craigneuk	3,239	3,433
7	Belhaven	3,309	3,513
8	Stewarton	3,374	3,540
9	Cambusnethan	3,496	3,491
10	Coltness	3,590	3,497
11	Watsonville	3,717	3,609
12	Knowetop	3,514	3,569
13	Muirhouse and Netherton	3,555	3,520
14	Pather and Gowkthrapple	3,738	3,557
15	Garrion	3,588	3,491
16	Newmains	3,403	3,625
17	Stane	3,785	3,565
18	Dykehead	3,599	3,462
19	Cleland	3,672	3,580
20	Benhar	3,479	3,389
21	Tannochside	3,797	3,724
22	Fallside	3,889	3,717
23	Viewpark	3,969	3,739
24	Bellshill	3,626	3,671
25	Orbiston	3,747	3,663
26	Mossend West and Thorndean	3,890	3,664
27	Holytown	3,867	3,643
28	Mossend East and New Stevenston North	3,203	3,631
29	Newarthill	3,866	3,642
30	Hattonrig	3,754	3,641

31	Townhead	3,764	3,546
32	Blairpark	3,706	3,491
33	North Central and Glenboig	3,779	3,644
34	Coatbridge Central	3,413	3,519
35	Sikeside and Carnbroe	2,985	3,654
36	Bargeddie and Langloan	3,576	3,459
37	Kirkwood	3,715	3,500
38	Kirkshaws	3,550	3,564
39	Shawhead	3,560	3,638
40	Old Monkland	3,401	3,620
41	Whinhall	3,683	3,469
42	Academy	3,475	3,626
43	Airdrie Central	3,802	3,581
44	Clarkston	3,232	3,394
45	New Monkland West	3,719	3,563
46	Plains and Caldercruix	3,716	3,655
47	North Cairnhill and Coatdyke	3,630	3,419
48	South East Cairnhill and Gartlea	3,561	3,479
49	Craigneuk and Petersburn	3,402	3,541
50	Calderbank	3,037	3,392
51	Chapelhall	3,522	3,318
52	Salsburgh	2,776	3,484
53	Kildrum and Park	3,611	3,459
54	Seafar and The Village	3,724	3,587
55	Balloch East and Ravenswood	3,749	3,586
56	Balloch West, Blackwood East and Craigmarnloch	2,678	3,547
57	Westerwood, Carrickstone and Dullatur	1,944	3,440
58	Abronhill South	3,672	3,459
59	Abronhill Central and North	3,865	3,661
60	Carbrain East	3,766	3,548
61	Carbrain West and Greenfaulds	3,694	3,559
62	Condorrat Central	3,818	3,597
63	Condorrat North and Westfield	3,637	3,579
64	Croy Kilsyth South and Smithstone	2,972	3,496
65	Queenzieburn and Kilsyth West	3,546	3,430
66	Banton and Kilsyth East	3,232	3,457
67	Moodiesburn East and Blackwood West	2,959	3,558
68	Moodiesburn West and Gartcosh	3,191	3,440
69	Chryston and Auchinloch	3,317	3,449
70	Stepps	3,453	3,604
	Total	247,911	250,223