

Mr David Flear
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Secretariat
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Your Ref: DSG(2015)C037.
Our Ref: 1144645
Date: 20 May, 2015

Dear Mr Flear

**Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements Highland Council Area – Proposals for Wards**

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April, 2015 in connection with the above in which you made a number of observations in relation to the Commission's proposals for the Caithness wards.

I can advise you that at the Council meeting on 14 May, 2015 consideration was given to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's (LGBCS) proposals for ward boundaries in the Highland Council area.

In relation to the Commission's proposals for the Caithness wards, the Council felt that the Commission's proposals would result in a disproportionate reduction in elected representation and that insufficient weight had been given to both the geography of Caithness and the areas of deprivation that exists in parts of Caithness.

It was therefore unanimously agreed to recommend to the Commission the creation of three wards with three members for Caithness instead of the Commission's proposals of two wards of four members.

In order to create three wards with three members in Caithness whose electorate totals would be as close as possible to the 10% of parity figure, the following was proposed to the Commission.

- Polling Districts C04I, C04J and C04K would be moved from Landward Caithness to Wick, increasing Wick's electorate from 5,692 to an estimated 6,490.
- Polling Districts C04B and C04N would be moved from Landward Caithness to Thurso, increasing Thurso's Electorate from 6,294 to an estimated 7,483.
- In consequence, Landward Caithness's Electorate would decrease from 8,600 to an estimated 6,613.

The Council has now submitted these suggestions to the Commission for their consideration.

You may also wish to note that the Commission will be undertaking a 12 week public consultation between July and October, 2015 on their proposals.

I do hope my reply is of help.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SB' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Steve Barron
Chief Executive