

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES  
COMMISSIONER FOR THE PROPOSED DISTRICT OF  
MID AND EAST ANTRIM**

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## Section One: **Background and Statutory Framework**

### **Background**

- 1.1 The commencement of the current Review of Local Government Boundaries in Northern Ireland was announced in a Public Notice on 03 February 2021 which explained the role and remit of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner and advised that in due course the Commissioner would publish Provisional Recommendations and may cause a public hearing to be held in each of the current eleven Local Government Districts. The Notice and a subsequent information video placed on the Commissioner's website ([www.lgbc-ni.org.uk](http://www.lgbc-ni.org.uk)) explained the process and the opportunities for participation in the consultation on the Provisional Recommendations.
- 1.2 The terms of the Review are set out in Article 50 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 1972 as amended. Copies of the legislative framework are available on the Commissioner's website.
- 1.3 The Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations with proposed boundaries and names of 11 Districts and their 462 constituent wards were published on the Commissioner's website on 27 July 2021 and announced by way of Public Notice, inviting comments on the proposals made. The consultation was launched on Citizen Space to enable ease of public inspection and maximum public participation. Accessibility points for online access to the Proposals and the consultation portal was facilitated at public facilities including Council premises and public libraries by the Commissioner's team in partnership with local councils and with Libraries Northern Ireland. Hard copies of any part of the Proposals or the associated maps as required by any person were made available on request. Other accessibility requirements were promoted on the Commissioners website including language translation, braille and sign language.
- 1.4 The consultation portal was open for 8 weeks and closed on 21 September. Details of the programme of public hearings was notified by press release, social media channels and on the Commissioner's website in September 2021.
- 1.5 The Commissioner received 10 representations in respect of the proposals for the District of Mid and East Antrim, two of which were from Mid and East Antrim Council. All representations received were acknowledged and have been made available for inspection on the Commissioner's website.
- 1.6 I was appointed as an Assistant Commissioner by The Department of Communities on 01 August 2021. My task is to gather, assess and report on the representations made in relation to this proposed District of Mid and East Antrim and to submit a report to the Commissioner including my conclusions

and recommendations, within four weeks of the end of the relevant public hearing. I conducted a public hearing in this proposed District at Adair Arms Hotel, Ballymena on 14th October 2021.

- 1.7 The Public Hearing was staged under the requirements of government guidance and observance of public health recommendations in respect of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Numbers in the room at any one time was limited to 20 persons with alternative participation facilitated by a simultaneous online interactive platform.

### **Written Representations**

- 1.8 Written representations of relevance to this District are listed in Section Seven of this report. All written representations were considered by me in advance of the public hearing and in anticipation of the preparation of this Report.

### **Public Hearing**

- 1.9 The Public Hearing on the Provisional Proposals was attended by one person. There were no participants in attendance via online platform. The hearing was facilitated in an informal and accessible manner where all participants were afforded the opportunity to give their views and to question the submissions and viewpoints expressed by others. Participants were asked to either identify as individuals or representatives of an organisation. The list of organisations represented is at Section Seven, Part Two.

### **My Report**

- 1.10 This report presents and addresses the written and oral views of interested parties in respect of the Commissioner's Provisional Recommendations for the proposed District of Mid and East Antrim. In particular it addresses the relevant local information and opinion about the boundaries and names of the District and its wards. I have set out details of support of the Commissioner's proposals and objections and/or counter-proposals. I have also set out my conclusions on the issues raised which are permissible matters for consideration under the legislative framework of this Review. Any matters submitted that are not relevant or permissible considerations under the legislative parameters of the Review have been outlined in this report as having been submitted, but those issues will not have formed part of my deliberations.
- 1.11 As part of my research for this report I have studied and tested any areas of the District where alternative boundaries have been proposed by use of GIS mapping systems of the Land and Property Services of Northern Ireland. This has been facilitated by the staff of Ordnance Survey Northern Ireland and I am indebted to their technical assistance.

## Section Two: **District Boundaries**

- 2.1 The Commissioner's approach in her Recommendations is only to intervene in the District Boundary line if there is compelling reason to do so.
- 2.2 In the case of Local Government District boundary line for Mid and East Antrim, there are several minor issues, including that of defacement, noted below:

### **Farm Lodge Stables Road, Greenisland**

- 2.3 At this point of the boundary between Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Mid and East Antrim, there is an issue of defacement of the existing line caused by new housing. The Commissioner feels this meets the test of compelling reason and has redrawn the line in this area.
- 2.4 This issue was highlighted in writing by the Chief Executive for Mid and East Antrim Council, and several additional written submissions were received supporting this change to the boundary.
- 2.5 There have been no objections to this approach in this District and so I recommend that the Commissioner's proposal for the District line at Farm Lodge Stables Road is affirmed.

### **4 Tullykittagh Road, Cloughmills**

- 2.6 A detailed written representation was received from Mid and East Antrim Council in relation to this address, which had been included in the Loughguile and Stranocum ward of Causeway Coast and Glens, rather than Glenravel Ward, Mid and East Antrim, despite receiving services from Mid and East Antrim Council. Although organisation of council services is not something that the Commissioner can consider under the legislation, it is evident from the information provided by Mid and East Antrim Council that there is a historical boundary anomaly that predates the construction of this property.
- 2.7 The Commissioner feels that to address this anomaly by changing the boundary for this property meets the test of compelling reason and has redrawn the line in this area.
- 2.8 There have been no objections to this approach and so I recommend that the Commissioner's proposal for the District line at 4 Tullykittagh Road is affirmed.

### **17 Whitesides Road, Randalstown**

- 2.9 A written representation was received from Mid and East Antrim Council in relation to this address, which had been split by the district boundary, with the residential property within the boundary of Mid and East Antrim, and the shed/garage belonging to the property within the boundary of Antrim and Newtownabbey.
- 2.10 The Commissioner feels that to address this anomaly by changing the boundary for this property meets the test of compelling reason and has redrawn the line in this area.
- 2.11 There have been no objections to this approach and so I recommend that the Commissioner's proposal for the District line at 17 Whitesides Road be affirmed.

### **Maboy Road, 3 properties (17a, 17b and 19)**

- 2.12 An additional, later representation was received from the Council requesting a change to the boundary at 19 Maboy Road, and an oral submission in support of this letter was received at the public hearing, noting that the issue affects more than one property. There are in fact, three properties on the Maboy Road currently identified as within the Causeway Coast and Glens ward of Rasharkin, but receiving services from Mid and East Antrim (at Maine ward).
- 2.13 Although organisation of council services is not something that the Commissioner can consider under the legislation, it is evident from the information provided by Mid and East Antrim Council and Ordnance Survey NI that there is a boundary anomaly in relation to the properties 17a, 17b and 19 Maboy (or Moboy) Road. The property 19E, which was also highlighted at the public hearing, is clearly in Mid and East Antrim. A map of this area is provided at **Appendix 1a**.
- 2.14 Further to consideration of the issues for these properties, and noting the impact on the townland boundary, I believe that to address this anomaly by changing the boundary for these properties would meet the test of compelling reason. I therefore recommend that the Commissioner should reconsider the line as it affects 17a, 17b and 19 Maboy (or Moboy) Road, bringing the properties impacted, into the Maine ward of Mid and East Antrim. I believe that this could be done with minimum impact on the townland boundary, by moving the boundary to a suitable field/hedge boundary to the rear of 19 Maboy (Moboy) Road. A partial map of this counterproposal is provided at **Appendix 1b**.
- 2.15 This counterproposal is achievable under the required balancing of electors within each ward as being 'substantially the same' and has merit as a readily identifiable boundary. In this instance, an impact on the townland boundary is unavoidable, but can be kept to a minimum. I therefore recommend that the Commissioner should reconsider the line situated at 17a – 19 Maboy (Moboy) Road.

## Section Three: **Ward Boundaries**

3.1 An oral submission was made at the public hearing outlining an issue on the border of Glenwhirry and Ballee & Harryville wards, where a number of houses on Ross Park, backing on to the Lisnevenagh Road, would have their community identity and a more natural affinity with the Ballee and Harryville ward, rather than Glenwhirry.

A map of this area is provided at **Appendix 2**.

3.2 A counterproposal was explored, with information provided by OSNI and PRONI, to include these houses in Ballee & Harryville rather than Glenwhirry.

3.3 Option 1: A readily identifiable boundary is available if Ross Park is used as the boundary rather than Lisnevenagh Road, however if this is used, the community there will be split with one side of the road in a different ward from the other. To move the boundary from Lisnevenagh Road to Ross Park would have the effect of moving 24 electors from Glenwhirry ward into Ballee and Harryville ward.

3.4 Option 2: Alternatively, it seems preferable to revert to use of the historical Ballee townland boundary, as it runs from Ballee Road East to where it meets Lisnevenagh Road. To align the ward boundary to the historical townland boundary would have the effect of moving 32 electors from Glenwhirry ward into Ballee and Harryville ward.

3.5 Both of these counter proposals have merit in terms of a 'readily identifiable boundary' and are achievable under the required balancing of electors within each ward as being 'substantially the same', but my preference would be for Option 2, reverting to use of the historical townland boundary.

3.6 I therefore recommend that the Commissioner should reconsider the line between Ballee & Harryville and Glenwhirry situated at Lisnevenagh Road and suggest reverting to use of the historical townland boundary.

### **The Paddock, between Galgorm Road and Oldpark Road Ballymena**

3.7 The participant in the public hearing expressed support for the Commissioner's proposed change to the boundary line between Academy and Galgorm wards at The Paddock. There being no objections to this approach I conclude that the Commissioner's proposed line is preferred and recommend that it should be affirmed.

## Section Four: **Names of District and/or wards**

- 4.1 There were no specific issues raised in this District regarding the naming of the District or any of its wards. I therefore have no recommendations to make in relation to naming of the District or Wards. I am aware that there has been a wider representation across the whole Review in terms of the adoption of a bilingual or trilingual naming policy for the whole map of the Local Government Districts and Wards in Northern Ireland. This is a matter for wider consideration by the Commissioner rather than a local or District-specific issue.



## Section Five: **Other Issues**

5.1 No other issues were raised at the public hearing.

### **The impact of ward boundary delineation on DEAs (District Electoral Areas).**

- 5.2 It is noted that a detailed written submission was received by the Commissioner in terms of the DEAs at Ballee and Harryville.
- 5.3 DEAs are important to council strategy but they will be subject to their own Review process immediately following the settlement of new Ward Boundaries.
- 5.4 Once the Review is complete it is a matter for the Department to take forward the Final Recommendations into legislation and the Commissioner has no role after her report is submitted. Once the new wards are legislated by DfC, the NIO is responsible for instigating the DEA Review process under Electoral Law as it is a non-devolved issue.
- 5.5 The Commissioner's provisional recommendations do not relate to the current DEAs.

## Section Six: **Summary of Conclusions**

### **District Boundaries**

6.1 In the case of Local Government District boundary line for Mid and East Antrim, there are several minor issues, including that of defacement, noted below:

#### **Farm Lodge Stables Road, Greenisland**

6.2 I recommend that the Commissioner's proposal for the District line at Farm Lodge Stables Road is affirmed.

#### **4 Tullykittagh Road, Cloughmills**

6.3 I recommend that the Commissioner's proposal for the District line at 4 Tullykittagh Road is affirmed.

#### **17 Whitesides Road, Randalstown**

6.4 I recommend that the Commissioner's proposal for the District line at 17 Whitesides Road is affirmed.

#### **Maboy Road, 3 properties (17 – 19)**

6.5 Based on information received from Mid and East Antrim, a participant in the public hearing and using information provided by OSNI and PRONI, I recommend that the Commissioner considers a counterproposal to her proposed line at Nos 17 – 19 Maboy (Moboy) Road, moving the boundary to a suitable field/hedge boundary to the rear of 19 Maboy (Moboy) Road.

6.6 This counterproposal is achievable under the required balancing of electors within each ward as being 'substantially the same' and has merit as a readily identifiable boundary. In this instance, an impact on the townland boundary is unavoidable, but can be kept to a minimum.

### **Ward Boundaries**

#### **Ross Park – boundary of Glenwhirry and Ballee & Harryville wards**

6.7 I recommend that the Commissioner should reconsider the line between Ballee & Harryville and Glenwhirry situated at Lisnevenagh Road, reverting to use of the historical townland boundary.

#### **The Paddock, between Galgorm Road and Oldpark Road Ballymena**

6.8 Support was expressed for the Commissioner's proposed change to the boundary line between Academy and Galgorm wards at The Paddock. I therefore conclude that the Commissioner's proposed line is preferred and recommend that it should be affirmed.

### **Other**

6.9 No issues were raised in terms of names of district and/or wards, and no other issues were raised, within the scope of this review.

## Section Seven: **References and List of Submissions**

### Part One: **List of Written Submissions**

1. Mid and East Antrim Councillor
2. Mid and East Antrim Councillor
3. Committee for the Administration of Justice and Conradh na Gaelige
4. Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim District Council
5. Mid and East Antrim Councillor
6. Individual
7. Individual
8. Individual
9. NI Placename Project
10. Chief Executive, Mid and East Antrim District Council

### Part Two: **Oral Submissions at Public Hearing**

1. Mid and East Antrim Councillor, TUV

## Section Eight: **Appendices**

Appendix 1a – Maboy Rd Provisional Recommendations

Appendix 1b - Maboy Rd suggested counterproposal (partial)

Appendix 2 – Ross Park with Townland boundaries identified

Appendix 1a – Commissioner’s Provisional recommendation - Moboy Road:

Light pink = Townlands | Blue = Wards 2012



# Appendix 1b - Maboy (Moboy) Road = Suggested counterproposal (partial) identified in green

Moboy Road: Light pink = Townlands | Blue = Wards 2012



Appendix 2 - Ross Park, Ballymena

Ballymena: Light pink = Townlands | Blue = Wards 2012 | 24 electors heightened in light blue

