

**Tracey Logan
Chief Executive**

Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray
Secretary
Local Government Boundary Commission
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ask for:
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*Ms Jenny Wilkinson
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28 May 2015*

Dear Ms Drummond-Murray

**Fifth Review of Local Government Electoral Arrangements – Proposals for Wards in
Scottish Borders Council area
Response to consultation from Scottish Borders Council**

I refer to your letter of 18 March 2015 to the Chief Executive, giving details of the Commission's proposals for Wards for the Scottish Borders Council area. While it was acknowledged that the consultation period for this first stage of the Review would close on 19 May 2015, the Council was not scheduled to meet until 21 May 2015, and the Commission was advised that a response would be made by the Council after this meeting.

At its meeting held on 21 May 2015, Scottish Borders Council made the following decision:

- (a) to support the Commission's proposal to move Charlesfield (approximately 80 electorate) from the Jedburgh & District Ward into the Selkirkshire Ward, with no change proposed for the houses lying within the settlement boundary of St Boswells;
- (b) not to support the new Jedburgh, Denholm & Hermitage Ward or the Hawick Ward as detailed in the Commission's proposals;
- (c) to propose to the Commission that the area to the south of Hawick, including Newcastleton, be included in a new Ward 10 (Hawick & District Ward) with 4 Councillors (see attached plan). The new Ward electorate would be 12,436 (at September 2013 level) which would be 11% above parity, but this would reduce in the forecast electorate in 2019 to 12,132, which is a variation of 8% above parity. This would then reflect the same variation from parity (-8%) of the existing and proposed Tweeddale West Ward. The new Ward would cover an area of 618 km², the same area as that of the Mid-Berwickshire Ward;
- (d) to propose to the Commission that Wilton Lodge Park, Galalaw Business Park and a further small industrial area, which have postcodes which currently place them out-with the new Hawick Ward, are included within this new Ward as they lie within the settlement boundary of Hawick, albeit containing no houses;

- (e) to propose to the Commission that the area to the north and east of Hawick (out-with those areas mentioned above), including Denholm, be included in a new Ward 9 (Jedburgh & Denholm Ward) which would also retain the change in boundary between Kelso & District and Jedburgh as proposed by the Commission, and would be served by 3 Councillors. The new Ward electorate for Jedburgh & Denholm would be 8,523 based on 2013 figures (1% above parity) with a minor increase forecast for 2019. The new Jedburgh & Denholm Ward would cover an area of 584 km², as opposed to the Commission's proposal for a Jedburgh Ward covering 868 km²;
- (f) to support two small further amendments to Wards to correct previous anomalies:
 - (i) to move all of the property at New Horndean Farm into the Mid-Berwickshire Ward – currently the farm is split between Mid and East Berwickshire Wards; and
 - (ii) to move the properties at Stichill Home Farm and Stichill Stables from Mid-Berwickshire Ward into the Kelso & District Ward. While this move will result in an increase of about 40 electors in the Kelso & District Ward, bringing the total electorate in 2019 to approximately 9% above parity, this is still within the Commission's baseline of 10%

Council also decided to submit as part of its response to the Commission further information. In terms of linkages within the new Wards, Newcastleton is a geographically remote village, located just over 21 miles south of Hawick, with a driving time of approximately 56 minutes. There is a direct public transport link between Newcastleton and Hawick. There are existing links between Newcastleton and Hawick in terms of school catchment area, social work services and health services. Newcastleton is located approximately 27 miles from Jedburgh, with a driving time of approximately 1 hour and 8 minutes and has no direct public transport link (public transport link is via Hawick). There are no specific links either socially, currently or historically between Newcastleton and Jedburgh.

Denholm is located just under 5 miles from Hawick and just under 6 miles from Jedburgh, almost equidistant, and there is a direct public transport link to both Hawick and Jedburgh. Denholm lies within the school catchment area of Hawick High School, but some parents have chosen to send their children to secondary school in Jedburgh – this varies year on year. While some members of the Denholm community would have a more natural affinity with Hawick, there are existing links with Jedburgh. This change in boundaries should have no impact on the social and cultural relationships which currently exist between Denholm, Hawick and Jedburgh.

With regard to Community Council areas, the Scottish Borders currently has 69 Community Councils, a number of which are split across existing Wards e.g. Hawick Community Council and Hobkirk Community Council areas are split between the current Hawick & Denholm and Hawick & Hermitage Wards. The proposed new Kelso & District Ward and Jedburgh & Denholm Ward boundary would see Heiton & Roxburgh Community Council split between the 2 Wards, with the majority of the Community Council area in the Kelso & District Ward. Crailing, Eckford & Nisbet Community Council area would also be split between these Wards. Denholm and Southdean Community Council areas would be wholly included in the new Jedburgh & Denholm Ward.

At the Council meeting, while there was discussion on the historic significance of the Hornshole Memorial site to the people of Hawick, no decision was taken regarding this at the time. Subsequent to the Council meeting, officers were asked by Councillors to check on whether this site could also be included within the new Hawick & District Ward being proposed by the Council, moving the minimum number of electors. Officers confirmed this was possible as it would only impact around 10 electors. This information was circulated to Councillors as a proposed change to the boundary. This change has received unanimous support from all Councillors informally but this

will require formal Council approval. It is therefore further proposed that the Hornshole Memorial site be also included within the new Hawick & District Ward boundary – this site is of major historic significance to the people of Hawick who have made strong, vociferous opposition to its exclusion. This would adjust the Commission's proposed boundary line for Hawick & District Ward by changing that line from just short of the Memorial to now include the landscaped triangle where the Memorial stands, following the unnamed road north-west to the T junction, then turning south-west following that unnamed road back into Hawick, taking account of Cocklecooty Cottage, Coille, and Bucklands (see attached delineation plan). It is anticipated that this further proposal will be homologated at the next Council meeting on 25 June 2015. I will write to confirm the position after that meeting.

Attached to this letter are details of the electorate numbers for each of the Wards proposed by the Council (page 1); a map showing the Ward boundaries proposed by the Council (page 2); a delineation plan showing the proposed northern Hawick boundary line, taking Wilton Lodge Park, industrial/ commercial areas and Hornshole into account (page 3); a delineation plan showing the area around Hornsole being included in the Hawick & District Ward (page 4); a map showing the New Horndean Farm move from East to Mid Berwickshire Ward (page 5); and a map showing the move of Stichill Home Farm and Stichill Stables to the Kelso & District Ward, which follows the boundary line of Ednam, Stichill & Berry Moss Community Council area (page 6). Also attached are the relevant data files for each proposal.

If you have any questions or require further explanation or information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Wilkinson
Clerk to the Council

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