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| MAB/SW20 October 2015Ms Isabel Drummond-MurraySecretaryLocal Government Boundary Commission for ScotlandThistle House91 Haymarket TerraceEDINBURGHEH12 5HD | The Atrium137 Glover StreetPerthPH2 0JBTel: 01738 475000 Email: mbarnacle@pkc.gov.uk[www.pkc.gov.uk](http://www.pkc.gov.uk)MoorendWaulkmill RoadCrook of DevonKINROSSKY13 0UZTel: 01577 840516**An Independent Councillor** | Councillor Michael Barnacle |

Dear Madam

**Fifth Statutory Review of Local Government Electoral Arrangements in Scotland – Public Consultation on Proposals for Wards in Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) Area**

I am writing to object to the Commission’s (LGBC) proposals to reduce PKC elected members from 41 to 40 by reducing the size of the Kinross-shire Ward 8 and its councillors from four to three.

I have been an elected member for the Kinross-shire Ward 8 since 6 May 1999, having been re-elected on three more occasions since, an area I am proud to represent. PKC, at their meetings on 13 May 2015 and 7 October 2015, unanimously decided to oppose the reduction of elected members, oppose the reduction in size of the Kinross-shire Ward 8 and suggested the inclusion of the complete parish of Arngask in Ward 8, whilst retaining that Ward’s councillors at four. This supports the position of the local elected members and all the community councils of the ward, along with, in my estimation, a significant proportion of Kinross-shire’s people.

I ask the LGBC to reconsider their proposals for the following reasons viz:

**PKC Area**

I fail to see any justification to reduce the PKC elected members by one when our area continues to be one of the fastest growing in Scotland. Tayplan has adopted the GROS 2006 projections and, despite the recent economic downturn, a population growth of 22% to 2031 (as per our Single Outcome Agreement) continues to be the basis of our Local Development Plan (see attached map).

The precedent set in respect of the LGBC’s response to Moray Council, whereby they agreed to retain the same number of councillors when their methodology suggested a decrease of one, despite that authority’s voter to councillor ratio being lower than that for PKC. I suggest this is contrary to guidance given out by the LGBC and calls into question the methodology used to project voter numbers. I note that current proposals give PKC the highest voter/councillor ratio for any Category 4 Authority Area.

**Kinross-shire Ward 8 Area**

Kinross-shire is an ancient county dating back to an Act of Parliament in 1685; the current ward boundaries reflect this history with the addition of Glenfarg, whose services and school catchment lie in Kinross-shire. There is a strong sense of local identity that will be broken by the LGBC’s proposals. In fact, Arngask parish shares Glenfarg’s position in relation to Kinross-shire, hence PKC’s suggestion of its inclusion in Ward 8. All the communities to the south of the present ward boundary, along the ridge of the Ochil Hills, take services from Kinross and Milnathort and the local authority administration of the existing ward is run from Lochleven Community Campus. The LGBC’s proposals fail to take account of these local ties with the suggested boundary change, contrary to guidance in the 1973 Local Government (Scotland) Act.

The current ward boundary is easily identifiable, following the ridge line of the Ochil Hills down to Glenfarg. The new boundary proposed is extremely hard to follow and cuts through communities such as Meikle Seggie and Craigow; this is contrary to LGBC guidance in the 1973 Act of the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and remain easily identifiable.

Kinross-shire sits in a bowl of hills with Lochleven surrounded by the Cleish, Lomond and Ochil Hills and should be treated as a special geographic area, in accordance with the 1973 Act. It has the highest rate of new build within PKC and has strong pressure for development because of its proximity to the central belt of Scotland; hence planning is a major consideration, with approximately one third of the applications that come before PKC’s committee. The 1973 Act allows for special geographic considerations but the LGBC have ignored this. Rural Kinross-shire currently has 50-55% of total house completions that are windfall sites. Developments of less than five houses do not form part of PKC’s land supply figures. As a result, the effect of only accounting for larger sites is to seriously underestimate the projected number of voters in 2019 for Kinross-shire. Many houses being built in Kinross-shire are large and attract interest from the Edinburgh property market; hence our voter per dwelling ratio is much higher than Perth City Centre. Using the PKC area averages rather than ward-based figures has the effect of distorting the number of projected voters in each ward by a significant margin and in Kinross-shire’s case it underestimates the projected electorate in 2019 by approximately 12%. The LGBC’s methodology in this regard is questioned.

The main reasoning behind the LGBC’s proposals appears to centre on voter parity for all wards in the authority area.

Examination of the figures by ward shows that in Highland and Carse of Gowrie the number of voters per councillor is 2,490 and 2,609 respectively; in Kinross-shire it is 3,194 so the LGBC’s proposals are reducing voter power. When one takes account of my earlier comments on windfall sites and projected voters in each ward, it is clear that in Kinross-shire our representation at PKC will be reduced. When one considers that Kinross-shire was a county in its own right up to the mid 1970’s when it merged with Perthshire and the population then was smaller than it is now, it is clear that there is no justification for reducing our councillor representation up at Perth from four to three. In fact, I believe PKC’s proposal for the retention of the existing ward and the addition of Arngask parish would produce better voter parity and ask the LGBC to seriously re-examine their proposals, in the context of the 1973 Act.

I would like to draw the LGBC’s attention to my colleague, Councillor Dave Cuthbert’s submission on this Review, commending his detailed analysis of what I believe is a flawed methodology that the LGBC employed in reaching this extraordinary and illogical boundary proposal.

I would urge the LGBC to reconsider their proposals for the PKC area and ask that the arguments I’ve outlined above, along with many others they have no doubt received, be taken into account in order that PKC retain 41 councillors, the Kinross-shire Ward retains 4 councillors and its existing historic boundaries are respected and retained.

Yours faithfully



Cllr Michael Barnacle

Independent Member for Kinross-shire

Circulation list: Kinross-shire Ward Community Councils

 Councillor Dave Cuthbert, Kinross-shire Ward

 Councillor Joe Giacopazzi, Kinross-shire Ward

 Councillor Willie Robertson, Kinross-shire Ward

 Roseanna Cunningham, MSP, Perthshire South & Kinross-shire

 Willie Rennie, MSP. Mid-Scotland & Fife

 Dr Richard Simpson, MSP, Mid-Scotland & Fife

 Elizabeth Smith, MSP, Mid-Scotland & Fife

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