

## **ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL**

**WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 6 MARCH, 2008**

**Present:** Councillors W A Agnew, H L Al-Kowarri, Amanda J Allan, Anne M Allan, P J Argyle, P W Bellarby, A S Buchan, G W Carr, P J Chapman, G J Clark, K L Clark, L Clark, S Coull, R Cowling, J B Cox, M P Cullen, A J C Cullinane, I Davidson, J B Dick, A C Duncan, J G Duncan, T A Fleming, M A Ford, J N Gifford, A S Grant, I W Gray, A Hendry, F C P Hood, W Howatson, A G Howie, J M M Humphrey, M F Ingleby, P K Johnston, M C Kitts-Hayes, S M Lonchay, J K Loveday, B J Luffman, C R McKail, F McRae, J A Mair, S Mair, P J Melling, R J Merson, I J Mollison, C H Nelson, G L Owen, S W Pratt, M J Raeburn, A M Ritchie, E A Robertson, D A Ross, G S Saluja, N J Smith, S W Smith, D M Storr, J J Strathdee, S Stronach, B H Stuart, M J D Sullivan, R H Thomas, B A Topping, M Watt and J Webster.

**Apologies:** Councillors A A Bews, A K Norrie, R C Stroud and I S Tait.

**Officers:** Chief Executive, Directors of Finance, Education, Learning and Leisure, Housing and Social Work, Personnel and ICT, Planning and Environmental Services, Transportation and Infrastructure, Area Manager (Garioch), Head of Law and Administration (Mr Davidson), Legal Manager (Mr Buchan) and Elections Co-ordinator.

### **CHAIRMAN**

Councillor W Howatson, Provost of the Council, presided.

### **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

The Provost asked Members if they had any interests to declare in terms of Standing Order 2 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were intimated.

### **5. BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR SCOTLAND - FIRST PERIODICAL REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CONSTITUENCIES**

A report dated 18 February, 2008, by the Chief Executive/Returning Officer had been circulated advising of proposals by the Boundary Commission for Scotland to review the Scottish Parliament constituencies and, in particular, commenting on the impact of the Boundary Commission's proposals on the Aberdeenshire Council area. The report requested the Council to approve a response for submission to the Boundary Commission by 21 March, 2008.

The Chief Executive introduced the report and advised that officers had produced alternative proposals which sought to retain, as far as possible, the existing constituencies. As these proposals had not found favour with members, he wished to withdraw them from discussion, and suggested that the Council instead seek to agree a number of points of principle which they would want to see retained in any new electoral boundaries.

During discussion, members made a number of suggestions for points of principle and some specific points relating to naming of constituencies. These are summarised as follows:-

- The names for Scottish Parliament constituencies should not be the same as those for the Westminster Parliament.
- The proposed constituency names of 'East Aberdeen' and 'West Aberdeen' and 'East Aberdeenshire' and 'West Aberdeenshire' had the potential to create confusion and should be avoided.
- Constituencies which crossed Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council areas should not have either Aberdeen or Aberdeenshire in their names.

- Constituency boundaries should place less emphasis on electorate numbers and more on the traditional local community, cultural and transport links.
- Radical changes had the potential to create confusion for the electorate and should be avoided, as recommended by the Gould report.
- Local authority boundaries should be respected as far as possible.
- Westhill and Portlethen should not be included in any Aberdeen City constituency.
- The constituency proposed to be called Buchan Coast should be called Buchan and Banffshire Coast.
- The constituency proposed to be called East Angus and Mearns should be called East Angus, Kincardine and Mearns.

The Council **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the proposals made by the Boundary Commission for Scotland for the review of Scottish Parliamentary constituencies within the Aberdeenshire Council area,
- (2) to request the Chief Executive to submit a formal Aberdeenshire Council response to the Boundary Commission's proposals, taking into account the comments made by members during the discussion, and
- (3) to request the Boundary Commission to hold a local inquiry into the proposals.