REPORT OF ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
PAUL DOUGAN
ON THE
DISTRICT ELECTORAL AREAS COMMISSIONER’S
PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR
ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEEY DISTRICT

September/October 2013
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1. Introduction

The new Northern Ireland Local Government Districts

1.1 Following a review of local government wards and districts in 2008/9 the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012 was made on 30 November 2012 establishing the boundaries and names of 11 new local government districts for Northern Ireland and their constituent wards. The new districts, as set out in the 2012 Order, are:¹

- Antrim and Newtownabbey
- Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon
- Belfast
- Causeway Coast and Glens
- Derry and Strabane
- Fermanagh and Omagh
- Lisburn and Castlereagh
- Mid and East Antrim
- Mid Ulster
- Newry, Mourne and Down
- North Down and Ards

1.2 The Belfast local government district comprises 60 wards; Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon district and Newry, Mourne and Down district both contain 41 wards; and the remaining eight districts have 40 wards each.²

Review of District Electoral Areas

1.3 The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP, appointed Richard Mackenzie, CB, as District Electoral Areas Commissioner for Northern Ireland with effect from 21 January 2013. His task was to make recommendations for the grouping together of the wards in each of the eleven new local government districts into District Electoral Areas (“DEAs”) for the purpose of local government elections.

Legislation

1.4 The legislative provisions concerning the appointment and function of the Commissioner, the procedures to be followed in reviewing DEAs

¹ Article 2(1); listed in Schedule 1
² Article 2(3); listed in Schedule 2
and the rules in accordance with which recommendations are to be made are contained in the District Electoral Areas Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Order 1984 ("1984 Order"), as amended\(^3\).

1.5 Schedule 3 to the 1984 Order, as amended, prescribes four rules in accordance with which recommendations of the Commissioner are to be made. These are:-

1. No ward shall be included partly in one electoral area and partly in another.
2. Each electoral area shall consist of not less than five, and not more than seven, wards.
3. Each ward in an electoral area shall have at least one boundary in common with another ward in that area, except where the ward consists of an island.
4. A name shall be given to each electoral area.

1.6 In publishing his Provisional Recommendations in May 2013, the Commissioner noted that the 1984 Order does not provide any guidance as to the factors which can or should be taken into account in formulating proposals for DEAs or whether the number of wards to be included in any electoral area should be five, six or seven. In the absence of such guidance, and for the reasons set out at paragraph 3.2 to 3.7 of the Provisional Recommendations report, he considered it reasonable to establish a range of factors which would inform his approach to the grouping of wards as DEAs. The approach which he adopted was, where possible, to have regard to the following:

- the use of physical features such as loughs, estuaries, rivers, hill ranges, and major roads as DEA boundaries;
- the creation of distinct urban and rural DEAs;
- the inclusion of complete settlements within a DEA;
- the creation of geographically compact DEAs;
- the creation of DEAs where the ratio of electorate to each councillor is not more than 10% from the overall ratio for the district as a whole.

The Commissioner also felt it would be unreasonable to ignore the existing DEA framework altogether, since it has been in place for many years. However, he recognised that there has been a substantial

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\(^3\) by the District Electoral Areas Commissioner (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Orders of 2007 and 2009 and the District Electoral Areas Commissioner (Northern Ireland) Order 2012
change in the ward architecture of Northern Ireland as a result of the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2012.

1.7. The procedure to be followed in a review of District Electoral Areas (DEAs) is set out in Schedule 2 to the 1984 Order, as amended, and provides among other things for:

- an eight week public consultation period for the submission of written representations with respect to the Commissioner's provisional recommendations for electoral areas in a district; and

- the holding of a public inquiry where representations are received objecting to the Commissioner's provisional recommendations for a district. If a district council or not less than 100 electors make an objection, an inquiry must be held, otherwise inquiries may be held at the Commissioner's discretion.

Provisional Recommendations

1.8 The Commissioner's provisional recommendations for the grouping of wards into District Electoral Areas, together with his recommendations for their names, were published on 2 May 2013 for an eight week public consultation period ending on 27 June 2013. A total of 30 representations were received in relation to his proposals. The Commissioner's provisional recommendations, including maps, and the representations received may be viewed on his website.

Public Inquiries

1.9 On the basis of the representations received, the Commissioner decided that nine public inquiries should be held to consider objections to his proposals. No representations were received in relation to the Causeway Coast and Glens district and the only objections to the proposals for Derry and Strabane district were to the proposed name of the Rosemount DEA. No public inquiries were deemed necessary in those districts. Details of the nine public inquiries were published in advance in a number of daily and provincial newspapers as well as on the Commissioner's website.

Appointment of Assistant District Electoral Commissioners

1.10 The legislation provides that the Commissioner may ask the Secretary of State to appoint one or more Assistant Commissioners to inquire into, and report on, such matters as the Commissioner thinks fit. Accordingly, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt. Hon.
Theresa Villiers MP, appointed me as Assistant Commissioner on 2 July 2013.

1.11 I was directed by the Commissioner to preside over the public inquiry into objections to his provisional recommendations for the DEAs for the Antrim and Newtownabbey District. The inquiry was held in the Dunadry Hotel, Dunadry on 17 September 2013. Two written representations were received during the consultation period and oral representations were made by two people, neither of whom had submitted views in writing during the consultation. The participants were given the opportunity to give their views fully and to comment on the views expressed by others. A list of the written representations received is at Appendix A of this report. Details of those who made oral submissions are at Appendix B. A transcript of the inquiry can be viewed on the Commissioner’s website.

Content of Report

1.12 This report considers the written and oral representations received in relation to the proposed groupings of wards into DEAs for the Antrim and Newtownabbey district and on the recommended names for the DEAs. It details support for, objections to and counterproposals made in relation to the Commissioner’s provisional recommendations and presents my conclusions and recommendations.
2. **DEA Ward Groupings**

Before I comment upon the specific representations submitted during the consultation period in respect of each DEA within the Antrim and Newtownabbey district, it should be noted that a number of the written representations dealt with multiple local government districts. In terms of this district, the DUP submitted it was willing to accept the provisional proposals; no one from the DUP attended the public inquiry. The SDLP advised that it was not making a written submission in relation to this district. The Alliance Party made a written representation and party representatives made oral presentations during the public inquiry.

2.1 **Dunsilly**

The Alliance Party was the only participant to submit written representations specific to this local government district. I have already recorded in my preamble to this section that the DUP indicated its willingness to accept the provisional proposals and no other objector expressed a view, one way or another, to the provisional recommendations. In its representation, Alliance records that it is “broadly content” with the proposed grouping of wards in regards the four northerly DEAs including Dunsilly.

At the public inquiry, Sam Nelson, on behalf of the Alliance Party acknowledged that, in general terms, the grouping of the wards [for the four northerly DEAs] was “a good attempt to consider local infrastructure and electoral identity”. He recognised that the reduction in ward numbers had an inevitable effect on the existing electoral area architecture and acknowledged the need to “move one of the wards out of the Antrim Town DEA [Springfarm], or the current Antrim South East DEA [Parkgate] to make up” the ward numbers in Dunsilly DEA. Nevertheless he stressed the importance of keeping “Antrim Town” together as an electoral area and perforce Parkgate should transfer.

**Conclusion**

It is noteworthy that, with regards this DEA and the other Antrim and Ballyclare DEAs, no dissenting voice was heard against the Commissioner’s provisional recommendations. I did remark to Mr Nelson at the inquiry that his party’s written representation and oral presentation recording “broad support” was not necessarily an overwhelming endorsement of the Commissioner’s proposals. He agreed, and explained that the reduction of ward numbers had tempered the initial response to the proposed ward groupings. During the course of the inquiry, however, he acknowledged that the proposed
Dunsilly DEA includes all surviving (four) wards from the existing Antrim North West electoral area. He also recognised that at least one additional ward is required to ensure Schedule 3 compliance\(^4\) and took no issue with Parkgate ward coming from the existing Antrim South East to complete this DEA. No contrary view or counter-proposal emerged either from the consultation or the inquiry. There is no basis for me to suggest any departure from the provisional recommendations.

**Recommendation**

Consequently, I recommend no change to the Commissioner’s proposals.

2.2 **Antrim**

The sole written representation received from the Alliance Party makes no specific reference to the ward groupings proposed for this DEA save as to endorse the general preservation of “the current pattern of DEAs across…..Antrim.” However Mr Nelson specifically commended the proposal “to keep Antrim Town together as a DEA.”

**Conclusion**

It would appear that the amalgamation of the Balloo and Massereene wards into the new Antrim Centre ward by the Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2012 has reduced the traditional urban wards to six. The Commissioner’s stated approach to the grouping of wards was to have regard, where possible, to, *inter alia* “the inclusion of complete settlements within a DEA”; and the existing DEA framework.\(^5\) Mr Nelson, with good reason, endorses this approach, as do I. No objections or contrary submissions were raised.

**Recommendation**

I make no change to the provisional recommendations.

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\(^4\) Schedule 3 to the District Electoral Areas Commissioner (NI) Order 1984 prescribes, *inter alia* “Each electoral area shall consist of not less than five, and not more than, seven wards.”

\(^5\) See paragraphs 3.7-3.8 of Provisional Recommendations report (page 6)
2.3 Airport

No objector submitted any specific written representation in relation to this DEA at all and the *prima facie* acceptance of the Commissioner’s ward groupings was subsequently confirmed by Mr Nelson at the inquiry on behalf of the Alliance Party. He acknowledged that the DEA required at least one additional ward to satisfy the statutory minimum (ward numbers) and he therefore endorsed the inclusion of Mallusk ward on the basis of its “local road networks and historical ties.”

Conclusion

For similar reasons to those outlined in the preceding paragraphs I have concluded that the proposed ward groupings within this DEA are fair and reasonable and consistent with the Commissioner’s general approach; and the inclusion of Mallusk ward in addition to the existing Antrim South East wards ensures the DEA meets the statutory minimum for ward numbers.

Recommendation

I recommend no change to the grouping of these wards as proposed by the Commissioner.

2.4 Ballyclare

Once again, the consultation period yielded no adverse response to the provisional recommendations. Sam Nelson succinctly observed “it’s very little change so we accept that.” No one else made any comment in respect of this DEA.

Conclusion

The Commissioner has grouped these wards, as far as was possible, having regard to the existing DEA framework. This is entirely reasonable and consistent with his general approach.

Recommendation

I recommend no change to the five wards as proposed by the Commissioner.
2.5 **Three Mile Water**

In its written representation Alliance envisage “a coherent seven seat DEA” by including the Mossley and Carnmoney Hill wards with the five wards as proposed. It is submitted that the majority population of Mossley ward is located in its south eastern corner, and so this ward “fits well” with this electoral area. The submission recognises that as Mossley ward is presently grouped within the current “University DEA” it commends itself to be included in a reconfigured Three Mile Water DEA.

Supplemental oral evidence on this issue was provided during the inquiry, again by Sam Nelson who reminded me that Mossley ward has, “almost continuously,” been part of a university based DEA since 1973. The evidence of John Blair, an Alliance Party local councillor since 1988 “with some history of elections in Newtownabbey and the boundaries associated with those elections,” was to like effect. Mr Nelson cited the local footpath and cycle routes and the fact that the Three Mile Water walk itself connects Mossley with the current electoral area as evidence of the ward’s compatibility in the Three Mile Water DEA. Councillor Blair added that the Three Mile Water River flows through Mossley, down into Monkstown and into Belfast Lough.

In terms of Carnmoney Hill ward, Mr Nelson candidly acknowledged that this ward “does not sit particularly well with any DEA,” [a recognition of the difficult task of grouping wards.] However, he contended that, as the ward’s northerly and westerly population share significant ties with the University of Ulster (Jordanstown), it should be grouped in this DEA.

As an alternative to Carnmoney Hill, Mr Nelson also made a case for Abbey “moving in with the University DEA” to complete the seven ward construct. He asserted that the Shore and Circular Roads provided evidence of a physical connection between Abbey ward and this DEA.

Councillor Blair endorsed the submissions made by his party suggesting the alternatives of either Abbey or Carnmoney Hill to complete the seven ward configuration, but without making any specific submission in support of either. He reminded me, on a number of occasions that his “absolute priority” was the “Glebe and Mossley wards issue”.

**Conclusion**

Before I discuss my recommendations specific to this DEA it is necessary to make some general observations at this point, as the decision I have taken with regards the Macedon DEA (see 2.6 *infra*) has a ripple effect on these three southerly DEAs.
These remaining DEAs generated the greatest discourse during the public inquiry. The common thread throughout the discussion was the grouping of Glebe ward (proposed in Macedon DEA) and both speakers were unequivocal in arguing for this ward to be transferred from its proposed DEA to Sandyknowes DEA. This argument was persuasive. For reasons that will become apparent at 2.6 and 2.7 infra, I recommend that Glebe ward is grouped within the proposed Sandyknowes DEA. As a consequence and having so concluded, I **must** recommend *de facto* changes to the Three Mile Water, Macedon and Sandyknowes DEAs, because as I pause to remind myself, “the statutory requirement that a DEA must contain five, six or seven wards is a constraint in the consideration of which factors can be applied in particular circumstances.”

I will now provide my conclusions specific to Three Mile Water DEA.

To accommodate Glebe ward transferring into the Sandyknowes DEA it must yield a ward in return. The objectors, on this issue, have proposed the wards of Mossley, Carnmoney Hill or Abbey. What factors can be applied to ensure that grouping any of these wards within the Three Mile Water DEA is consistent with the Commissioner's overall approach?

The existing DEA framework emerges as a strong factor favoured by the objectors. As the Commissioner indicates in his report, it “would be unreasonable to ignore this framework altogether, since it has been in place for many years.” Both the Carnmoney and Mossley wards have been grouped in the University DEA for some time. Abbey ward has, however, traditionally been within a Macedon electoral area. Mr Nelson submitted that “it [Abbey] is an odd shaped ward and the easterly area….traditionally sits within the university area; it’s connected by road networks, the Shore Road and the Circular Road.” I am not convinced that the road network argument linking wards is as strong an argument as it might be in other districts. In fact, in a neighbouring DEA I will illustrate that the major road (Prince Charles Way) should be used as a *de facto* DEA boundary. As Abbey ward is currently part of the existing Macedon electoral area, and if I am to show any deference to the existing architecture (as the Commissioner has done), then it would be somewhat inconsistent to suggest that Abbey ward be transferred to Three Mile Water. I therefore discount this argument and recommend Abbey remains within the proposed Macedon DEA.

Carnmoney Hill ward is more problematic, not least because of its shape and boundaries. This apparent incongruity is caused by its central open space feature set within an urban area.7 Although Mr

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6 See paragraph 3.7 of the Provisional Recommendations report (page 6.)

Nelson asserts that “north westerly sections of the ward would mostly be tied to the university area”, I do not believe this is a sufficiently compelling argument to depart from the groupings proposed by the Commissioner. I have examined the OSNI map for this area and note the geographical feature which is Carnmoney Hill itself, and in particular its north westerly side, which I suggest provides a ready made physical feature to act as a DEA boundary. From the OSNI map the [Carnmoney] hill “fits” as a logical (potential) boundary and, as such, is consistent with the range of factors identified by the Commissioner to approach the task of grouping wards. No one challenged the range of factors identified or suggested alternative factors that he ought to have considered.

In summary, I have concluded that neither Abbey nor Carnmoney Hill should be grouped within this DEA; Mossley ward, however, should. In fact it must, if Glebe ward is to be grouped in Sandyknowes as I have said. To reinforce my decision, I conducted a site visit to Mossley ward to witness for myself the factors to justify its inclusion. I observed the area around Mossley Mill, the current Newtownabbey Council headquarters and the Three Mile River. I have concluded there is nothing inconsistent with the range of factors established by the Commissioner to prevent me from recommending the grouping of Mossley ward in this DEA.

**Recommendation**

I recommend that this DEA increases in size to become a six ward electoral area with Mossley ward added to the five wards as proposed.

2.6 Macedon

In its written representation, Alliance observe that the proposed Macedon DEA is larger than its predecessors (by one ward) and, should, at a minimum lose Glebe ward to Sandyknowes. In addition, Carnmoney Hill ward should transfer to Three Mile Water.

Mr Nelson, in his oral presentation argued that this DEA should reduce to five wards, loosing Glebe ward (to Sandyknowes) and either Carnmoney Hill or Abbey wards (to Three Mile Water.) Glebe ward has “little local ties” to Macedon DEA and “there has never been a Glengormley area that hasn’t included Glebe.” As I have already discussed at 2.5 *supra*, Carnmoney Hill is deemed to be ill-fitted to any DEA, and suggested it would be more suited to Three Mile Water. Abbey ward, as an alternative, has close links to the university and so Mr Nelson envisaged this ward in Three Mile Water as another configuration.

Councillor Blair opened his oral presentation with “an appeal” not to place Glebe ward within this DEA. With well marshalled argument he
identified specific addresses and locations to demonstrate the disconnect from Glengormley should Glebe ward remain part of the Macedon DEA. He concluded his presentation thus;

"My final thought on it is that it’s simply inconceivable that a residential area so closely associated and geographically linked to the main hub of the village would be split into two different electoral areas and grouped with established populations which are really quite separate and geographically further away." (my emphasis)

**Conclusion**

To explain my reasoning for including Mossley ward in the Three Mile Water DEA I have already alluded to my conclusion that Glebe ward should not be grouped within the Macedon DEA. During the inquiry much time was spent analysing the Macedon DEA boundary line as appeared on the map; and all the participants viewed a range of available maps to explain and amplify their submissions. The DEA boundary as proposed includes the ward boundary between the Glebe and Glengormley wards. It was suggested that the more appropriate DEA boundary line should be the ward boundary line between the Glebe and Carnmoney Hill wards. This boundary runs along Prince Charles Way, a major thoroughfare in this local government district.

To satisfy myself with the topography of the area and to visualise the landmarks and addresses identified by Councillor Blair in his presentation, I conducted a site visit, surveying Glengormley village and its connecting streets and then travelled the DEA boundary, and also the Glebe ward boundary.

Prince Charles Way is instantly identifiable as a major road and, to my mind, should be part of the DEA boundary. Elmfield Road appears to be part of the Glebe ward boundary adjoining Glengormley ward. As I travelled along this residential area I was reminded of Councillor Blair’s submission that a residential area “would be split in two”; and in this instance the even numbered houses would be part of the Sandyknowes DEA whilst those neighbours across the road, in the odd numbered houses, would be in Macedon. What constitutes the ward boundary is beyond my remit. However, the DEA boundary should, in my view, follow Prince Charles Way, which would bring Glebe ward into the Sandyknowes DEA. In so doing I have concluded that this configuration satisfies a number of the range of factors identified in the Commissioner’s report, viz; the use of major roads as DEA boundaries; the inclusion of complete settlements within a DEA; and an acknowledgement of the existing DEA framework.

I have already explained that the hill of Carnmoney is intrinsic to this ward [Carnmoney Hill ward] and provides a natural (albeit partial) DEA boundary. To suggest, as Mr Nelson does, that Carnmoney Hill ward should transfer to Three Mile Water DEA would remove this natural
physical boundary between the Macedon and Three Mile Water DEAs. In fact Three Mile Water DEA would stretch to O’Neill Road which would become the de facto boundary.

As proposed, Carnmoney Hill ward’s position, bounded by Prince Charles Way represents a natural geographical divide between the southerly DEAs of Sandyknowes, Macedon and Three Mile Water. Grouping Carnmoney Hill within Macedon DEA is consistent with the range of factors identified by the Commissioner to approach his task. I pause to observe (and repeat) that no one challenged his approach or the range of factors he identified; neither did anyone suggest alternative factors that he ought to have considered to discharge his function of grouping wards. I have already concluded at 2.5 supra that Abbey ward should remain within this DEA and I make a similar conclusion in respect of Carnmoney Hill ward.

**Recommendation**

I recommend that Glebe ward should transfer to Sandyknowes DEA and thereby reduce this electoral area to six with the remaining wards as proposed.

2.7 **Sandyknowes**

Alliance, in its written representation proposes that the DEA should take in Glebe ward (from Macedon) and lose Mossley ward (to Three Mile Water.) Glebe ward, has, since 1973 been part of a Glengormley based DEA. Mr Nelson supplemented this argument with his oral presentation asserting that Glengormley town centre represents the main centre of the proposed DEA and Glebe ward should be part of that.

To facilitate the inclusion of Glebe ward within this DEA, Mr Nelson reaffirmed that Mossley should naturally give way and transfer to Three Mile Water, where again, that ward too has been part of a university based DEA since the early 1970s.

Councillor Blair was resolute in his argument that to place Glebe ward in any electoral area other than one centred around Glengormley village was “inconceivable.” He provided me with a plethora of examples, landmarks and residential areas to illustrate his point; I observed many of these examples at first hand during my subsequent site visit. He too suggested that “Mossley [ward] goes to Three Mile Water” commenting that Mossley is an important part of the Three Mile Water River.
Conclusion

Dr Maurice Hayes, a previous District Electoral Areas Commissioner observed that “the drawing of boundaries is not an exact science.”

Councillor Blair, in his oral submissions before me articulated with great effect the tangible impact boundaries can have on a community;

“there are members of Glengormley Community Group who live on either side of Glebe Road West and it’s so impractical to me that they would not have the same group of councillors when they’re working on very important local issues. …..that it’s simply inconceivable that a residential area so closely associated and geographically linked to the main hub of the village would be split into two different electoral areas and grouped with established populations which are really quite separate and geographically further away.”

I have explained why the argument is well made to include Glebe within this DEA and to transfer Mossley (to Three Mile Water) to ensure legislative compliance. In so doing, the inclusion of Glebe ward in this DEA is consistent with the range of factors established by the Commissioner and in particular, the creation of complete settlements within a DEA. I am satisfied that my recommended ward substitution provides coherence to the Glengormley settlement and makes effective use of the major road (Prince Charles Way) as a DEA boundary.

Recommendation

I recommend this remains a seven ward DEA but that Glebe ward transfers in (from Macedon) and Mossley ward moves to Three Mile Water.

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8 Report by the District Electoral Areas Commissioner – December 1992 (paragraph 10.2)
3. DEA Names

3.1 Dunsilly

In its written representation Alliance argue that this DEA name has “little identity” with much of this area and the existing name “Antrim North West” should be retained.

As part of his oral presentation Sam Nelson submitted that the current names should remain the same or as similar as possible to the existing electoral area names. With the addition of Parkgate to this DEA, he proposed the name “Antrim North.”

Councillor Blair did not make any submission in respect of this DEA name.

Conclusion

I have concluded, based on the evidence provided during the public inquiry that the only names in contention are “Dunsilly”, “Antrim North West” and “Antrim North.” Whilst the ward groupings are broadly similar, the proposed inclusion of Parkgate ward from the current Antrim South East electoral area does alter the geographical spread of the proposed Dunsilly DEA. No one objected to Parkgate ward’s inclusion in this DEA. There is therefore a difference between the old and new DEA.

The Commissioner indicates in his report that, where he proposes a new name, it has a resonance with the locality concerned by reference to place names or geographical features.9

Dunsilly is a townland and, *ipso facto*, a place name that has a resonance with the area. As this DEA is more rural in character than other DEAs in this district the proposed name distinguishes the electoral area from the other urban centred DEAs. The proposed name is consistent with the factors agreed by the Commissioner to inform his decision.

Recommendation

I recommend no change.

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9 See paragraph 3.9 of provisional recommendations report.
3.2 Antrim

The written representation from Alliance suggests a modest change; “Antrim Town” is proposed. There is no substantive discussion on the DEA name during the oral submissions at the public inquiry.

Conclusion

In this instance, the difference between the old and new DEA is less significant than at 3.1, if at all. It is appropriate (and consistent with the Commissioner’s agreed approach) to retain the “Antrim” name. With the old DEA names it was logical to distinguish between Antrim North West and Antrim Town etc. The names proposed in the Commissioner’s report do not require this distinction. This DEA is the only DEA to bear “Antrim” in its name.

Recommendation

I recommend no change.

3.3 Airport

In similar terms to the representation at 3.1 supra, Alliance suggest that the name proposed has little identity with much of the area and argues that the current name of “Antrim South East” is retained. Mr Nelson furthered this argument commenting that, the naming of DEAs after “infrastructure landmarks” fails to “capture the character and mix of the areas.” Specifically, he asserted that the Mallusk ward would have little “connection” with the airport. However, in contrast, he highlighted a historical connection with Templepatrick and Mallusk; this link “runs around the current boundary and represents well the area.” The name “Antrim South East”, preserves the notion of the current boundary whereas those from Mallusk ward would not consider themselves living in an airport area.

Conclusion

For reasons similar to 3.1 supra, the addition of Mallusk ward (from the current Antrim Line electoral area) brings an historical Newtownabbey based ward into an Antrim area ward, even though the former was named “Antrim Line.” Nevertheless, this district is the Antrim and Newtownabbey District and it is important that individual identities are reflected across the district. The airport is a significant feature of this area and is, in many respects, as easily identified as some
geographical features on the OSNI map. I have concluded that the DEA names help to distinguish between the rural and urban DEAs of this part of the district.

**Recommendation**

I recommend no change.

3.4 **Ballyclare**

The consensus from the consultation and the public inquiry was to retain the existing name. The wards are grouped in a manner consistent with preserving the Ballyclare settlement.

**Conclusion**

This requires no further explanation.

**Recommendation**

I recommend no change.

3.5 **Three Mile Water**

The Alliance Party’s written representation provides no reasoning to explain why the existing name “University” should be retained. However, Mr Nelson conceded that the proposed name was not “a wholly objectionable name” subject to whatever wards move into this DEA.

Councillor Blair observed that the name is taken from a local landmark and, expressing his personal opinion, suggested it was an opportune time to move away from the university association given the future plans for the Jordanstown campus site. He noted that the river itself flows through the area, and if Mossley ward was transferred to this DEA, the connection between the river and Mossley Mill would be self evident.

**Conclusion**

Geographical features have been identified as a reference point for the naming of DEAs, in particular with new names. The Three Mile River is a significant geographical and physical feature in this area and has a
clear resonance with the locality and more so, given the proposed ward groupings. The river is indigenous to the area. If future plans for the University of Ulster involve a restructuring of the current campus at Jordanstown then the significance and the resonance of the name “University” to the locality may become reduce.

**Recommendation**

I recommend no change.

### 3.6 Macedon

I make the same observations as at 3.4 above.

**Conclusions**

I repeat the commentary as at 3.4 above.

**Recommendation**

I recommend no change.

### 3.7 Sandyknowes

In its written representation the Alliance Party submits that the existing DEA name “Antrim Line” should remain. At the public inquiry Mr Nelson developed this objection, for reasons similar to those advanced in respect of the Airport DEA. He asserted that the proposed name “Sandyknowes” was synonymous with a local roundabout and, as with Airport DEA, such infrastructural “landmarks” fail to “capture the character and mix” of the area. Specifically, he disputed whether the residents of Collinbridge ward would have much connection with Sandyknowes; whereas the existing “Antrim Line” name “encapsulates” the main Antrim Road thoroughfare with resonance as a Newtownabbey based area.

Councillor Blair was phlegmatic about the existing DEA name, and submitted there were “better and more legitimate local identities than that.” Regarding the proposed name, he believed it was “verging on the inconsistent” to name the DEA based around the Glengormley settlement (assuming Glebe was included in the DEA) after a roundabout when the neighbouring DEAs took their names from local landmarks or population centres. He proposed Glengormley as an
appropriate DEA name on the basis that it is the town around which the electoral area is based.

Conclusions

The most significant difference between the existing and proposed ward configuration is the transfer out of the Mallusk ward. No objection was raised to its inclusion in the Airport DEA. However, the Antrim Line DEA without Mallusk reflects an electoral area that is localised around Glengormley. Where once, the Antrim Line could be traced through the ward groupings; now, absent Mallusk, the line stops, literally at Sandyknowes roundabout. I therefore do not consider that the existing name is reflective of the electoral area envisaged by the Commissioner’s proposals.

The proposed name of Sandyknowes, leaving aside the flippant connotations with a roundabout, reflects the townland around which some of these wards are grouped. It is not without some irony that I read that the original Glengormley settlement grew up around a junction of the roads linking Belfast with Antrim and Ballyclare. That said, if I was minded to keep the ward groupings as proposed, the proposed name may have commended itself to me.

However, I have recommended that Glebe ward is included within this DEA at Mossley ward’s expense. The DEA reflects the complete Glengormley settlement. As with other DEAs within this local government district which are centred around complete settlements, the settlement itself provides the name for the DEA. On the basis of maintaining a consistent approach and to ensure beyond peradventure a resonance with the locality concerned, I recommend this DEA be named Glengormley.

Recommendation

I recommend this DEA is named Glengormley.
4. **Summary of Recommendations**

4.1 I make no change to the ward groupings or name as proposed for the Dunsilly DEA.

4.2 I make no change to the ward groupings or name as proposed for the Antrim DEA.

4.3 I make no change to the ward groupings or name as proposed for the Airport DEA.

4.4 I make no change to the ward groupings or name as proposed for the Ballyclare DEA.

4.5 I make one change to the ward groupings for the Three Mile Water DEA and add Mossley ward to the five wards proposed. I make no change however to the DEA name as proposed.

4.6 I make one change to the ward groupings for the Macedon DEA and remove Glebe ward from the six remaining wards proposed. I make no change however to the DEA name as proposed.

4.7 I make two changes to the ward groupings for the Sandyknowes DEA and replace Mossley ward with Glebe ward; thereafter the remaining wards as proposed are unchanged. I also recommend the name of this DEA is changed to Glengormley DEA.
5. **General Issues**

No objections were raised to the range of factors established by the Commissioner and set out in his report which informed his approach to the grouping of wards as DEAs.

No alternative factors were submitted either in the written representations or during the public inquiry. I have based my recommendations on the same range of factors that the Commissioner established as no evidence was presented to me to suggest I should depart from those identified factors.
6. Conclusion

6.1 I should like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all those who participated in the public consultation and the public inquiry. I wish to acknowledge the assistance I derived from their carefully prepared oral and written submissions and their willingness to engage in the proceedings.

6.2 My thanks go also to each of the members of the DEAC secretariat who supported me in conducting the public hearing and in preparing this report.

Paul Dougan
Assistant District Electoral Areas Commissioner
14th October 2013.
Appendix A – Written Representations

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<th>Representation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alliance Party</td>
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<td>Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)</td>
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Appendix B – Oral Submissions

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<th>Submission</th>
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<td>Councillor John Blair (Alliance)</td>
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<td>Sam Nelson (Alliance)</td>
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