

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (BOUNDARIES) (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2006

S.I. 2006 No. 1253 (N.I. 8)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

COMMENTARY ON ARTICLES

8. A commentary on the provisions follows below (comments are not given where the wording is self-explanatory).

Article 3 – Local government districts and wards

9. This Article makes provision for the establishment of 7 new local government districts in Northern Ireland by reference to the current 26 local government districts and for the districts to be divided into wards. These new districts will be the starting point for the review of local government boundaries.

Article 4 – Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

10. This Article substitutes a new section 50 to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) to provide that a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner shall be appointed in 2006 and, following this initial review of local government boundaries, a Commissioner shall be appointed 8-12 years from the date when the previous Commissioner submits his final report. Article 50, as substituted, sets out the functions of a Commissioner and provides that the Commissioner shall submit his final report within such period as the Department may direct. It also provides that the Commissioner shall regulate his procedure and make his recommendations in accordance with Schedule 4 to the 1972 Act.

Schedule 1 – Schedule 4 to the Principal Act, as substituted

11. This Schedule substitutes a new Schedule 4 to the 1972 Act. It makes provision about the appointment of a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners and assessors and sets out the procedures to be followed by a Commissioner in carrying out the initial review of local government boundaries, subsequent periodic reviews of boundaries and reviews to consider proposals by councils or the Department. Schedule 4, as substituted, also sets out the rules in accordance with which a Commissioner should make his recommendations and, in particular, provides that a local government district should be divided into 60 wards. It also gives the Commissioner flexibility to divide a district into between 55 – 65 wards, if he considers it desirable, taking account of the size, population and physical diversity of the district and the representation of the rural and urban electorate within the district.