

These notes refer to the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 23 May 2008

Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

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

Section 1 – Local government districts and wards

Section 1 makes provision for the establishment of 11 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.

Section 2 – Local Government Boundaries Commissioner

Section 2 amends subsections (1) and (2) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (“the 1972 Act”) to provide that a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner shall be appointed in 2008 and, following this initial review of the new local government boundaries, a Commissioner shall be appointed 8-12 years from the date on which the previous Commissioner submits his final report. It also sets out the functions of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner.

Section 2 amends paragraph 18 of Schedule 4 to the 1972 Act to provide that the district of Belfast should be divided into 60 wards with each of the other ten districts being divided into 40 wards. It also gives the Commissioner flexibility to increase or decrease the number of wards per district by up to 5, 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.

Section 5 - Commencement

For the purposes of:

- the Department appointing a Local Government Boundaries Commissioner and for that Commissioner to carry out a review of the boundaries of the 11 new local government districts and wards into which they are to be divided, and

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- the Secretary of State appointing a District Electoral Areas Commissioner and for that Commissioner to group wards into district electoral areas,

section 1 comes into operation one week after the Act receives Royal Assent, and for other purposes on a day or days to be appointed by commencement order.

Sections 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the Act come into operation upon Royal Assent.

The repeal, by Section 3(2) and the Schedule, of the provisions of the Local Government (Boundaries) (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 specified in column 2 of the Schedule comes into operation upon Royal Assent.

Section 3(1) and the repeal, by section 3(2) and the Schedule, of the Local Government (Boundaries) Act (Northern Ireland) 1971 shall be brought into operation on a day or days to be appointed by commencement order.