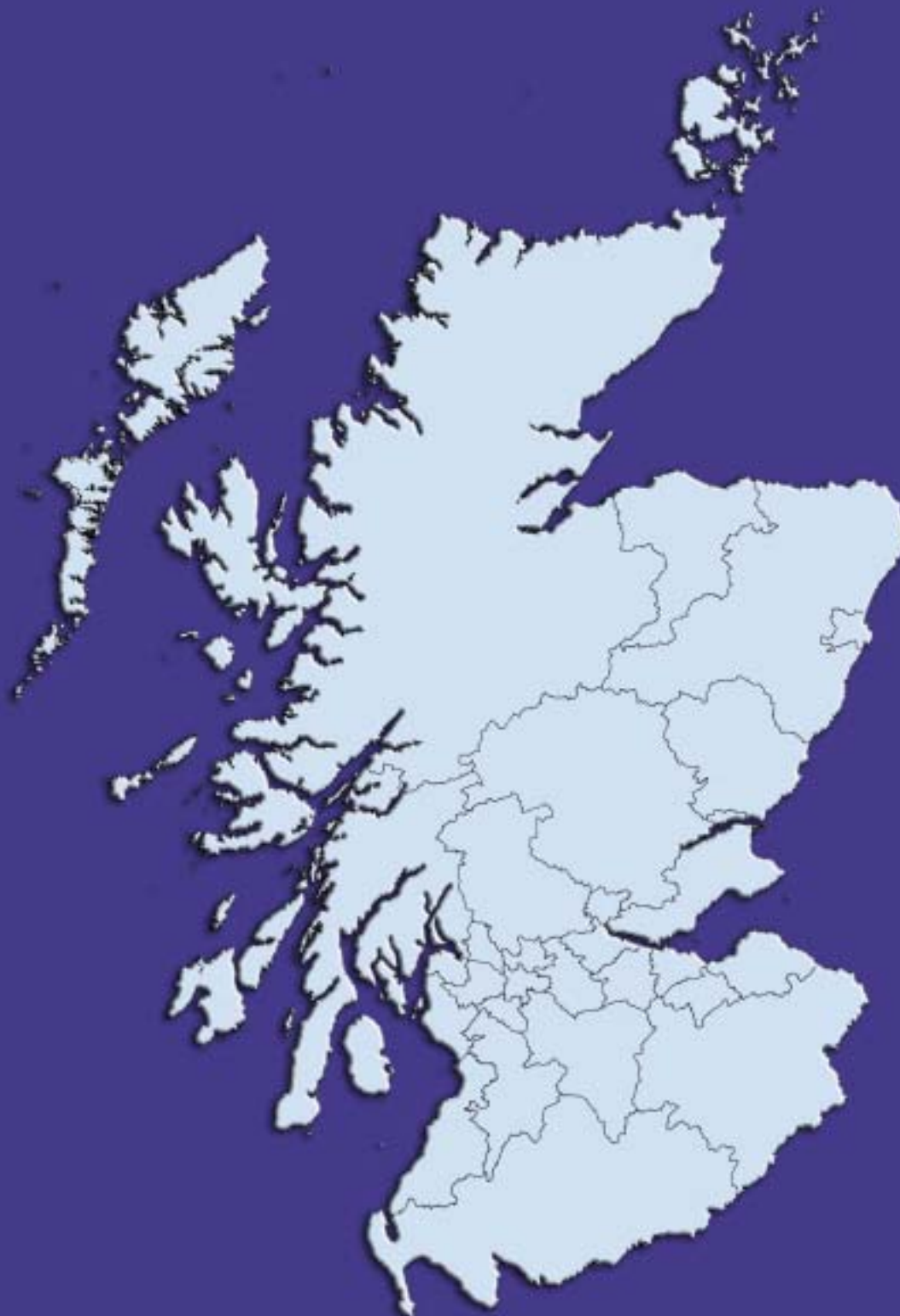


Fourth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements

Highland Council Area



Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Fourth Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements

Highland Council Area

Constitution of the Commission

Chairman: Mr John L Marjoribanks
Deputy Chairman: Mr Brian Wilson OBE

Commissioners: Professor Hugh M Begg
Dr A Glen
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Mr R Millham

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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Mr Tom McCabe MSP
Minister for Finance and Public Service Reform

We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, present our proposals for future electoral arrangements for Highland Council area resulting from our review of local government electoral arrangements as required by section 4 (1) of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004.

In accordance with the provisions of section 18(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, copies of our report, together with illustrative maps, are being sent to The Highland Council with a request that the report and maps are made available for public inspection at their offices. In addition copies of our report and maps in the form of PDF images on CDROM are being sent to those who received a copy of our consultation letter. Further, those who made representations during the 12-week public consultation exercise have been informed that the report has been published.

Notice is being given in newspapers circulating in Highland Council area that the report has been made and that interested parties may inspect the report and maps at offices designated by the Council throughout its area or by accessing these documents on our web site.



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August 2006



Summary

The review was called for by section 4 of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004.

Part 1, paragraph 1

The first Commencement Order, which signalled the start of the review process, was dated 20 August 2004.

Part 1, paragraph 5

Directions from the Scottish Ministers were issued to the Commission on 30 August 2004.

Part 1, paragraph 6

Our review of electoral arrangements was announced in a letter dated 6 September 2004 sent to each Chief Executive of the 32 Councils.

Part 1, paragraphs 10 – 16

The ward boundaries proposed by our review are based on topographical identifiers contained in the Ordnance Survey MasterMap large-scale digital plans.

Part 1, paragraphs 19 – 24

The July 2004 electoral register provided the base electorate for the review.

Part 1, paragraphs 25 – 26

Our first meeting with The Highland Council took place on 10 November 2004 at the Council headquarters in Inverness.

Part 2, paragraphs 1 – 3

The concluded view of the Council following our first meeting was received by us on 2 December 2004.

Part 2, paragraphs 4 – 6

We provided the Council with our initial proposals for 23 wards in Highland Council area on 8 March 2005 and asked that a response be made within 2 months.

Part 2, paragraphs 22 – 23

The Highland Council response to our initial proposals was received on 5 May 2005.

Part 2, paragraphs 24 – 29

We published our provisional proposals for 22 wards electing 80 Councillors on 21 July 2005 and asked that representations be made to us by 13 October 2005.

Part 2, paragraphs 37 – 41

We received 104 representations during the statutory consultation period of 12 weeks.

Part 2, paragraph 42

Our consideration of representations.

Part 2, paragraphs 43 – 59

We published our revised proposals for Wards 6, 12, 20 and 21 on 12 January 2006 and asked that representations be made to us by 9 February 2006.

Part 2, paragraphs 60 – 61

We received 3 representations during the statutory consultation period of 4 weeks.

Part 2, paragraph 62

Our consideration of representations on revised proposals.

Part 2, paragraph 63 – 64

We recommend 8 x three member wards and 14 x four member wards for Highland Council area thereby returning a total of 80 elected members.

Part 3, paragraph 1

Part 1 Background

Origin of the Review

1. The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced proportional representation for local authority elections. As a consequence, we were required to review electoral arrangements for all local authorities in Scotland for the elections due to take place in May 2007. This Report presents our findings and recommendations resulting from the review of Highland Council area called for by section 4(1) of the 2004 Act.

The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004

2. The 2004 Act made a number of changes to the existing legislation, the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended. These changes are set out at Appendix A. However, some of the changes have a particular impact on the review process and it is perhaps worth noting the following provisions:

- at least 2 months before taking any steps to inform other persons of our draft proposals, or any interim decision not to make proposals, we should inform the Council of our proposals (or any decision not to make proposals); and
- before informing any other person of our initial draft proposals, we should take into consideration any representation made by the Council during the period of 2 months beginning on the day on which the Council was informed of our initial draft proposal.

3. Schedule 6 to the 1973 Act, as amended, was further amended by the 2004 Act so that:

- at 1(2), the number calculated by dividing the number of local government electors in each electoral ward of a local government area by the number of councillors to be returned in that ward shall be, as nearly as may be, the same; and
- at 1(3)(b), any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular boundary but if, in any case, there is a conflict between those criteria, greater weight shall be given to the latter.

4. The full text of the Schedule 6 rules as amended is set out at Appendix D.

Commencement of the 2004 Act

5. The Minister for Finance and Public Services signed the first Commencement Order in relation to the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 on 19 August 2004. As a consequence, Sections 4(1) to (4), 5(a) to (c) and (f) (Reviews of electoral arrangements) and Section 6 (Interpretation of Part 1) of the 2004 Act came into force on 20 August 2004. The Commencement Order also stated that, in exercising the functions conferred under the provisions referred to above, Scottish Ministers and the Commission should act on the assumption that the provisions of Part 1 of the 2004 Act are in force for all purposes.

Directions from Scottish Ministers

6. On 30 August 2004, Scottish Ministers issued Directions to us in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 18(2A) and 18(2B) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended. The Directions apply during the current review to any consultation conducted by us in accordance with Section 18(2)(a) of the 1973 Act, with the Council of any local government area affected by a review under Part II of that Act. A copy of these Directions is at Appendix B.

7. Amongst other things, the Directions required us to inform each Council, within 14 days of the date of the Directions, in writing, in a letter sent by recorded delivery addressed to the Chief Executive, of the:

- timetable we proposed for the consultation;
- timetable we proposed for the review;
- general approach we proposed to adopt in formulating proposals for ward boundaries;
- information we would like to have available to use in formulating our proposals;
- assistance which each Council would be asked to render to us in the process of review; and
- such other matters we felt appropriate.

8. On 30 August 2004, Scottish Ministers similarly issued Directions to Councils that they should cooperate with us in the conduct of our review and, in particular, that they should:

- establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue which, where appropriate, may include meetings with us;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that any views expressed, or purporting to be expressed, by or on behalf of the Council to us are accurate;
- provide us with all such information as we may reasonably request; and
- provide us with all such information that the Council considered relevant, including any proposals or ideas a Council may have in relation to new ward boundaries, or otherwise in relation to the formulation of our proposals.

9. A copy of the Directions to Councils is set out at Appendix C.

Announcement of our Review

10. We announced the start of our review of electoral arrangements in a letter to the Chief Executive of The Highland Council dated 6 September 2004. With regard to our initial consultation, we informed the Chief Executive that paragraph 7 (subject to paragraph 9) of the Ministerial Directions to us mentioned above stipulated that we should meet with the Council no later than 12 weeks from the date of our letter. We were required to offer each Council two dates for such a meeting and that such a meeting should take place during the Council's ordinary working hours.

11. We proposed that our meeting with The Highland Council should take place on either 29 September 2004 at 14:00 hrs or 30 September 2004 at 14:00 hrs. We asked the Council to inform us of any other dates within the 12-week period determined by the Directions which should be avoided in the event of our initial dates being unsuitable. We noted that we expected that meetings would be held at the Council's offices but offered, if necessary, to accommodate a meeting at our offices in Edinburgh.

12. With regard to the proposed meeting, we informed the Chief Executive that we would be represented by a Commissioner accompanied by a member or members of our Secretariat. We asked for facilities to be made available which would allow us to make a short presentation to provide background information and to illustrate how we proposed to undertake the review.

13. With our letter we enclosed an outline timetable (Appendix E) which set out the main stages for our review. We also set out details of the general approach which we intended to adopt in considering how revised electoral wards suitable for returning 3 or 4 elected members might be constructed within the terms of the statutory rules, whilst seeking better to reflect local perceptions of natural communities where possible and practicable to do so. We set out our proposal to use information from the July 2004 electoral register as the base electorate for our review and our intention to make available to the Council geographic information systems (GIS) data files containing counts of electors for each postcode within the Council area which would facilitate spatial analysis of these data.

14. Bearing in mind the importance we attached to perceptions of community focus and our concept of the contribution that this focus might make to the delineation of more stable boundaries in the longer term, we asked the Council to identify and map what it considered to be the boundaries between communities within its area. We made it clear that we were particularly interested in such boundaries being identified within contiguous built-up areas, such settlements, or groups of settlements, being likely to merit more than one multi-member ward. We also asked for information which would allow us to make a forecast of the electorate within the Council area at 2009, as required by the legislation.

15. We asked the Council to nominate an official as the recognised point of contact so that the close working relationship necessary to conduct a successful review could be established. We asked if the Council would confirm whether the locations used at the last review in 1996/1998 to deposit material for public consultation remained appropriate and if they would provide details of alternatives where necessary. We also asked for a list of the newspapers circulating within the Council area normally used for the publication of Statutory Notices.

16. We asked the Chief Executive if, prior to our proposed meeting, we could be informed of any particular issues that the Council might wish to discuss with us.

General Issues

17. Three developments have made it possible for us to reconsider the process and practices of reviewing local government electoral arrangements and of accurately defining the boundaries of proposed wards. Firstly, the availability of computer-based geographic information systems (GIS) provides us with the ability to analyse a variety of localised data and then to develop and explore options for revised electoral ward geography. Secondly, the GIS technology, used in conjunction with Ordnance Survey (OS) large-scale digital data also allows for the boundaries of wards to be more precisely defined than has hitherto been possible – thus obviating the need for written boundary descriptions. Thirdly, the Representation of the People (Scotland) (Amendment) Regulations 2002 provide us, for the first time, with formal access to information contained in electoral registers and,

importantly, allow us to obtain that information in an electronic format which can be managed and spatially examined by means of our GIS facilities.

18. Use of the GIS technology, large-scale digital mapping and electoral register data in examining, reviewing and defining ward boundaries is outlined below.

Definition of Electoral Ward Boundaries

19. Defining ward boundaries can raise particular difficulties in areas where changes to the built geography are not reflected on available paper maps. In many parts of Scotland such changes are now occurring more rapidly than in the past, with considerable consequences for our boundary review work.

20. The introduction of OS MasterMap® large-scale digital mapping affords the opportunity for the first time for electoral ward boundaries to be defined by means of unique topographical identifiers (TOID®s) which accurately identify the position of the natural and built features depicted by the large-scale digital data. Accordingly, it is possible to identify the boundaries of electoral wards electronically by directly linking the line of any boundary to, for the most part, the OS TOID®s.

21. All Councils in Scotland now have full access to OS MasterMap®, as do all central government bodies, agencies and government-sponsored organisations with GIS facilities. Generally, all such bodies using large-scale digital mapping have a preference for boundary information to be defined against that background.

22. As a consequence:

- all of the proposed ward boundaries we recommend are directly related to digital information contained in the Topography layer of OS MasterMap®, which was supplied to us by OS in July 2004, except where circumstances demand that a line between 2 unconnected TOID®s is necessary, for example, in crossing a road or river;
- where part of a ward boundary and the boundary of the Council area are coterminous, that part of the ward boundary is the boundary of the Council area as depicted in the Administrative Boundaries theme of the Topography Layer of OS MasterMap® as supplied to us by OS in July 2004; and
- where applicable, the coastal boundary of a ward is defined by means of the low water mark springs as depicted in a large-scale digital data set (prepared on our behalf by OS from its large-scale digital information) except in areas where, historically, all or part of the Council's seaward boundary presently has a recognised off-shore definition.

23. We are aware that, at the time of this review, OS is undertaking a Positional Accuracy Improvement initiative (PAI) and that it does not expect to complete this work in Scotland until March 2006. Further, the results of the PAI will not be fully incorporated into the OS large-scale digital maps until later in that year. Even after this detailed work by OS, the position of residential property existing at the time of our review will remain within the ward as defined by our review. This provides better long-term accuracy than would be provided by written boundary descriptions.

24. Drawing these matters together, we have worked on the reasonable assumption that the boundaries of wards will be more accurately defined than has been possible at previous reviews

and that any future dispute over the line of a particular boundary will be capable of resolution by reference to deposited copies of the ward boundaries in digital form in conjunction with deposited copies of the OS MasterMap® data (Topography layer and Administrative Boundaries theme of the Topography layer and coastline data) mentioned at paragraph 22 above.

Electorate Data used in the Review

25. As mentioned at paragraph 17 above, in preparation for this review, we investigated and tested the potential offered by GIS technology in the preparation of proposals for revised electoral arrangements. To make fullest use of GIS systems in our review activities it is necessary to have the basic numerical data, for the most part electorate information, in a format which allows them to be directly associated with digital mapping showing the underlying geography to which it relates. Ideally, our preference would have been to link addresses in the electoral register directly to the background geography by means of a geo-referenced address database. However, in the absence of a definitive national address database, and being aware of the shortcomings of available address-based GIS databases, we researched the potential for making use of postcode geography maintained by the General Register Office for Scotland (GRO(S)) as a means of identifying the number of electors on the electoral register at a level of resolution low enough for us to develop and consider proposals for the boundaries of revised electoral wards. Initial tests, involving matching the postcodes for addresses on the electoral register with the GRO(S) postcode geography files, indicated that we could successfully identify electors on the electoral register at the small-user postcode which contained their address and, as a consequence, establish accurate counts of electorate for these postcodes.

26. The availability of up-dated electoral register information on a monthly basis allowed us to associate information on the electoral register at July 2004 with the most up-to-date postcode geography available from GRO(S) (August 2004) thus minimising the potential for mismatches between the two data sets. As a consequence, at the start of our review in the Highland Council area, of the 167,523 electors on the register at July 2004, 167,490 (99.98 percent) could be identified within the postcode geography held in our GIS. The residual number of 33 electors were contained in 12 postcodes which, as far as we could ascertain, were newly allocated by the Post Office and, as such, had not yet appeared in the latest Post Office Address Files which GRO(S) uses to update and maintain its postcode geography system. We were, therefore, confident that postcoded electorate data for the Highland Council area could be used as the initial building blocks for reviewing electoral arrangements in that area.

Part 2 The Review in Highland Council Area

Meeting with The Highland Council

1. Our initial meeting with The Highland Council took place on 10 November 2004 at the headquarters offices of the Council at Inverness. We were represented at that meeting by Dr Ann Glen who was accompanied by Bob Smith from our Secretariat.
2. We made a short illustrated presentation which set out the background to the review and the nature of our GIS systems, which provided us with the facility quickly and accurately to prepare proposals and examine alternatives. We demonstrated that the GIS allowed us to look closely at relevant matters such as the geography and topography, settlement patterns and communication links within Council areas. We explained that, as required by the Schedule 6 Rules, we needed information from the Council on house building, demolitions and known institutional development for the 5-year period to 2009 in order to form a view on the number of electors in the Council area at that time. We also invited Councils to provide information which would help us define areas recognised locally as communities. We set out our proposed timetable for the review, which envisaged 7 stages with completion by August 2006. A copy of the outline timetable is set out at Appendix E.
3. Following our presentation, we answered some general questions on matters relating to the review process. We also invited, and took careful note of, various views expressed in relation to the review in the Council area.

Concluded View of the Council

4. The Ministerial Directions (Appendix B) issued on 30 August 2004 stated that each Council should, if it so desired, submit its concluded views on review matters to the Commission within one month of the date of our initial meeting. The Highland Council submitted its concluded view to us on 2 December 2004.
5. The Council requested that the Commission recognise the need for departures from parity better to recognise natural communities, geographic size and areas of dispersed population. In its peripheral areas, large wards would make it difficult to retain community identity and would require substantial travel for elected members. As far as possible, current areas should be retained because they reflected a strong sense of community and the Council's commitments to decentralise both political management and service delivery. With staff already dispersed to these areas significant boundary changes could cause extensive costly organisational upheaval.
6. The recent population projections were unduly pessimistic, there would not be a dramatic reduction in the electorate by 2009 and, indeed, recent mid-year estimates indicated growth. Information on population projections, housing completions, housing trends and potential developments would be provided.

Aggregation of Existing Wards

7. As required by the amendment to legislation, our Secretariat set out for us options for creating new 3 or 4 member wards by combining existing single member wards.

8. The aggregations of existing wards raised particular difficulties in the area around Inverness where the structure did not reflect the configuration of existing communities. All aggregations of the wards at the west and south west of the built up area inevitably absorbed rural electorates in Glen Urquhart extending as far as Fort Augustus. To the east of Inverness it was inevitable that communities at Westhill, Smithton and Culloden would be divided.

9. Aggregations of existing wards also led to a division in Nairn. This emerged from the need to incorporate the 2 wards surrounding Grantown-on-Spey, which could not be linked with the 3 rural wards in Badenoch and Strathspey because the legislation did not permit wards returning 5 elected members. Grantown-on-Spey posed a particular problem because it would be located within a larger rural ward extending towards Nairn.

10. Elsewhere in the Council area, difficulties arose with some community issues. For instance, at Thurso an aggregation of 3 existing wards led to a division of Scrabster, which could be resolved only by incorporating a fourth ward that included a substantial rural area to the west and south west. Further, at Skye, the existing structure had 4 wards wholly on the Island and a fifth including electorate on the mainland at Lochalsh. We were also aware of the significant volume of forecast new build housing throughout the Council area, most notably to the south and east of Inverness.

11. After consideration of these, and all the other relevant matters, we were not persuaded that our initial proposals should be based on a configuration dictated by a simple aggregation of existing wards. We, therefore, decided not to continue with that approach because by adopting a different approach:

- the built-up area of Inverness could be closely contained within urban wards;
- Thurso and Scrabster could be contained within a single ward, Wick could be contained within a single ward, and the remainder of Caithness including Reay could form a rural ward;
- it was likely that the Isle of Skye could form a single ward rather than be divided; and
- proper account could be taken of the forecast new housing developments, particularly in the Inverness, Culloden and Nairn areas.

12. As a consequence of our decision, our Secretariat then prepared alternative designs for revised wards using the methodology made known to the Council and bearing in mind the information on perceived natural communities and other matters provided to us in its concluded view.

Initial Proposals

13. Although the forecast of electorate at 2009 for the Council area indicated a small decrease, there was significant new-build housing forecast in areas adjoining Inverness. With this in mind, our Secretariat proposed 5 wards which encompassed the City of Inverness and all of the forecast developments. To the east of Inverness, Culloden was associated with Cawdor and Ardersier. Nairn was associated with electorate linked to the town by the A939.

14. In Badenoch and Strathspey, a multi-member ward configuration of all of the communities would form a single ward returning 5 members. As the legislation did not permit wards comprising 5 members, the area between Dalwhinnie and Nethy Bridge was brought together as a 3-member ward. Grantown-on-Spey was associated with an area lying to the south and east of Inverness thus

maintaining the integrity of Nairn. Although not ideal, these 2 wards reflected the appropriate level of representation for the number of electors and this was preferred to the significant under-representation which emerged when all of the settlements in Badenoch and Strathspey were accommodated in a single ward.

15. Our Secretariat proposed that the Black Isle should comprise a single ward. Although Dingwall and Conon Bridge were brought together in a single ward, it was not possible to include Strathpeffer in this configuration. Muir of Ord, Glen Urquhart, Glen Moriston and Fort Augustus were combined to form a largely rural ward in the centre of the Council area.

16. In the west, there was a case for linking Skye to Lochalsh, but our Secretariat preferred the option that retained the island as a single ward. Lochalsh was linked with Ullapool and Strathpeffer in a 4-member ward. The alternative was to place Lochalsh with Caol/Mallaig and Fort William because of the A87 and this option was preferred.

17. Consideration of Fort William and Caol influenced thinking at the southern limits of the Council area. The area could be divided along the line of the Great Glen with Fort William linked to Spean Bridge, and Glencoe. Caol would then link with Ardgour, Sunart, Mallaig and Lochalsh. Alternatively, Caol could be linked with Mallaig, Lochalsh and Spean Bridge, with Fort William forming a ward along with Sunart, Moidart, Morvern and Glencoe. On balance the second option was preferred in that it better recognised transport links, produced 2 wards with balanced electorate and similar geographic areas, and retained in a single ward those parts of the former Argyll County Council which were transferred to Highland Region area at reorganisation in 1975.

18. Our Secretariat concluded that in the north and north-west the settlement pattern and sparse distribution of electorate, coupled with the generally poor transport links, justified creating a 3-member ward in Sutherland/Ross and Cromarty that was significantly below parity. The proposed geography was in line with the existing ward structure which, at the Third Statutory Review had been designed to allow significant over-representation. In the north-east, few options were available: Thurso was linked to Scrabster, Wick was contained within a closely defined ward, and the remainder of the Caithness area, including Reay, formed a rural ward.

19. Helmsdale and Dornoch, and the remainder of Sutherland, were combined with Edderton, thus retaining existing links between these areas. Ullapool, Poolewe, Gairloch, Torridon, and Applecross on the western seaboard were linked in a ward which extended eastwards along the main transport links to Strathpeffer. Easter Ross was divided into 2 wards which focussed on Tain to the east and on Alness, Invergordon and Evanton along the northern shore of the Cromarty Firth.

20. Having considered the alternatives, we concluded that our Secretariat's proposals should be adopted, subject to minor amendments, as our initial proposals. In the course of our deliberations we took fully into account the Schedule 6 rules, and the requirement placed upon us that we make recommendations which, in our view, were in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

21. Following full discussion it was agreed that our initial proposals for Highland Council area should comprise 23 electoral wards of which 12 would be 3-member wards and 11 would be 4-member wards as follows:

Ward Number a	Forecast Electorate b	Number of Elected Members c	Average Electorate per Member d	Divergence from Parity (%) e
1	4,685	3	1,562	-25
2	7,755	4	1,939	-7
3	6,085	3	2,028	-2
4	5,370	3	1,790	-14
5	5,290	3	1,763	-15
6	6,560	3	2,187	5
7	8,530	4	2,133	3
8	6,255	3	2,085	0
9	7,965	4	1,991	-4
10	7,035	3	2,345	13
11	7,845	4	1,961	-6
12	8,635	4	2,159	4
13	8,975	4	2,244	8
14	8,425	4	2,106	1
15	8,975	4	2,244	8
16	6,430	3	2,143	3
17	6,265	3	2,088	1
18	8,205	4	2,051	-1
19	6,620	3	2,207	6
20	6,000	3	2,000	-4
21	8,665	4	2,166	4
22	8,855	4	2,214	7
23	6,745	3	2,248	8

Informing the Council of our Initial Proposals

22. We submitted our initial proposals to The Highland Council on 8 March 2005 illustrated by maps showing the boundaries of the proposed wards. We also provided details of the forecast of electorate for each ward at 2009, a GIS file containing the boundaries of each ward and a CDROM containing maps of the proposed ward boundaries in PDF image format. (A GIS file containing the GRO(S) postcode geography showing the 2004 electorate together with the expected new build/demolition etc data and the electorate for each postcode at 2009 arising from these components of change was also available to the Council to assist with the review process.)

23. We asked the Council to provide its views on our initial proposals within two months as specified in the legislation. Contact was maintained with the Council at officer level throughout this initial consultation period.

The Highland Council Response

24. We received The Highland Council's written response to our initial proposals on 5 May 2005. The Council was disappointed at a perceived lack of flexibility in the process and considered that options for 5-member wards and, in special circumstances, 2-member wards would have been more appropriate for such a large and diverse area.

25. The Council proposed a number of changes and provided maps and supporting documentation.

26. It was suggested that Muir of Ord should be linked with Dingwall and Conon Bridge, and minor changes were proposed in Wards 6, 10 and 13. Lochalsh should be removed from Ward 12 and added to Ward 6 to provide a 4-member ward. Wards 12 and 18, without Lochalsh, should be reconfigured on a north/south basis with a 3-member ward to the west, and a 4-member ward covering Fort William, Spean Bridge and Glencoe to the east.

27. In Ward 16 there were few communities of interest between Grantown-on-Spey and east Loch Ness, and the latter had always been linked with communities in and around Inverness. The proposed ward excluded Culloden and cut off Cawdor from its natural Nairn neighbours. Compromises were required to retain the strong natural communities of Badenoch and Strathspey, Nairn and Inverness. The Council proposed that the area east of Loch Ness should be linked to an Inverness ward, and the Grantown, Carrbridge and Cromdale areas should form a 4-member ward covering all of Badenoch and Strathspey. Ward 20 should be increased to take in electorate from Smithton. The remainder of Culloden, Balloch and Ardersier should form a 4-member ward; and Ward 15 should be enlarged to include Cawdor and Piperhill.

28. In Inverness, Wards 22 and 23 should be reconfigured so that South Kessock was linked to Merkinch. Three minor changes were requested which affected Wards 3, 4, 5 and 8.

29. Revised ward names recognising the changes proposed by the Council were provided.

Consideration of the Council Response to the Initial Proposals

30. We considered the 4 minor changes suggested at Thurso, Wick, the Dornoch Bridge and at Newmore and agreed to make the necessary revisions, which affected few electors.

31. Within Inverness, we were content that a suitable, well-defined boundary could be identified between wards 22 and 23 which would accommodate the Council's request for a reconfiguration that associated South Kessock and Merkinch. We noted that the revised electorates in these wards were well balanced.

32. We considered the proposed amendments in the area of Dingwall, Conon Bridge and Muir of Ord. The proposed change affected Ward 13 and we noted that this provided an opportunity to give sympathetic consideration to revisions proposed by the Council to the east and south-east of Inverness. Further, it was possible to enlarge our proposed Ward 9 within well-defined boundaries so that it incorporated Muir of Ord.

33. In considering whether Lochalsh should be included within Ward 6, we were concerned that the electorate in the revised area fell just short of justifying a 5-member ward and, that the area was increased by around 84,000 hectares to become the largest ward in the Council area. Overall, we considered that the transport links between Lochalsh and Caol were no worse than those between Lochalsh and Strathpeffer. On balance, we agreed that the Lochalsh area should be retained in a ward associated with Caol.

34. We considered the proposal that the Fort William area be divided between 2 wards on an east/west basis rather than a north/south basis. We concluded that the initial proposals met with the statutory criteria and produced 2 wards which were better balanced in terms of geographical

coverage, transport links and level of representation than the alternatives offered by the Council which also divided communities in the Great Glen. Accordingly we agreed that our initial proposals should not be amended.

35. When we examined the area east of Inverness and the Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey areas in Ward 16, we found that the area east of Inverness around Smithton and Culloden could not be revised in the manner suggested by the Council without dividing communities and giving rise to electoral disparities. Further, the solution offered by the Council resulted in a reduction in the number of elected members. We were aware of the community issues in Badenoch and Strathspey, but noted also the under-representation that would result from allocating 4 elected members to an extensive geographic area which had sufficient electorate to justify returning 5 members. As a compromise we agreed that Ward 13 should be extended to encompass electorate on the eastern side of Loch Ness. Ward 19 was extended to incorporate Tomatin and Carrbridge. All of Badenoch and Strathspey, save for an area around Carrbridge was retained in a single ward. We re-examined the area around Cawdor and Piperhill but were unable to resolve the perceived community issues within the terms of the statutory rules and agreed that our proposals for ward 15 should not be altered. We again noted that, had we not been precluded from making recommendations for 5-member wards the issues around Badenoch, Strathspey and Nairn could have been readily resolved.

36. We accepted as appropriate the ward names provided by the Council and adopted them as our own.

Provisional Proposals

37. Our provisional proposals for revised electoral arrangements in the Highland Council area made provision for a Council of 80 elected members in 8 wards each returning 3 members and 14 wards each returning 4 members as follows:

Ward		Forecast Electorate c	Number of Elected Members d	Average Electorate per Member e	Divergence from Parity(%) f
Number a	Name b				
1	North, West and Central Sutherland	4,685	3	1,562	-25
2	Thurso	6,085	3	2,028	-2
3	Wick	5,425	3	1,808	-13
4	Landward Caithness	7,755	4	1,939	-7
5	East Sutherland	5,660	3	1,887	-9
6	Wester Ross and Strathpeffer	6,925	3	2,308	11
7	Cromarty Firth	8,625	4	2,156	4
8	Tain and Easter Ross	6,255	3	2,085	0
9	Mid Ross	8,875	4	2,219	7
10	Black Isle	7,610	4	1,903	-8
11	Eilean a' Cheo'	7,845	4	1,961	-6
12	Caol, Mallaig and Lochalsh	8,580	4	2,145	3
13	Aird and Loch Ness	8,130	4	2,033	-2
14	Inverness West	6,640	3	2,213	7
15	Inverness Central	8,935	4	2,234	8
16	Inverness Ness-Side	8,690	4	2,173	5
17	Inverness Millburn	5,960	3	1,987	-4
18	Ardersier	7,975	4	1,994	-4
19	Nairn	8,980	4	2,245	8
20	Inverness South, Tomatin and Carrbridge	9,115	4	2,279	10
21	Badenoch and Strathspey	9,140	4	2,285	10
22	Fort William and Ardnamurchan	8,280	4	2,070	0

38. We published our provisional proposals for revised electoral arrangements in Highland Council area on 21 July 2005. These differed from our initial proposals in that they reflected the revision of the boundaries: around Wick, Thurso, the Dornoch Firth and Newmore; around Dingwall, Conon Bridge and Muir of Ord; within Inverness at South Kessock; and to the east and south of Inverness around Loch Ness, Carrbridge and Tomatin and Grantown-on-Spey. We also made a number of minor adjustments necessary to fix the proposed boundaries to the OS MasterMap® TOID®s (see Part 1 paragraphs 19-24).

39. A statutory notice, detailing where our provisional proposals had been deposited for the public consultation and setting out the arrangements we had made for receiving representations, was published in the Press and Journal, John O'Groats Journal, Northern Times, Ross-shire Journal, Inverness Courier, Nairnshire Telegraph, West Highland Free Times, Oban Times and Strathspey and Badenoch Herald. Copies of the documents and maps deposited for the public consultation were also placed on our web site. A short news release was issued on 20 July 2005. The Council was also provided with copies of the documentation and maps on CDROM which it was free to distribute on a wider basis. Further, we provided the Council with GIS files containing the proposed ward boundary details.

40. All MPs and MSPs with a constituency interest were provided with copies of our provisional proposals on CDROM as were the headquarters organisations of the political parties represented at

the Scottish Parliament. We also informed the Scottish Parliament Information Centre, Community Councils, Electoral Registration Officers and the Electoral Commission of our provisional proposals.

41. We asked that representations should be made to us within the 12-week period ending on 13 October 2005. We informed all concerned that representations could be made by writing to our Secretary at 3 Drumsheugh Gardens Edinburgh, EH3 7QJ, by email at highland@lgbc-scotland.gov.uk, by fax at 0131 538 7511, or by using the representations pro forma accessible on our web site at www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk. Those making representations were asked to provide their full postal address including postcode.

Representations

42. One hundred and four representations were received during the statutory public consultation. The main points raised by the parties are summarised below:

Council

The Highland Council wrote supporting the proposals for Wards 1-5, 7-11 and 13-17. The Council objected to Wards 6 and 12 proposing that Lochalsh should be transferred to Ward 6 and that the number of members be increased from 3 to 4. A reconfiguration was proposed which created one ward comprising Invergarry, Caol, Ardnamurchan and the Small Isles, and a second ward comprising Spean Bridge, Fort William and Glencoe. The Council objected to Wards 18 and 19 because Cawdor and Piperhill would be best served by being included within Ward 19 with Nairn. It also objected to Wards 20 and 21, requesting that the Carrbridge area be transferred from Ward 20 to 21.

Minor amendments were proposed to the boundaries of Wards 13,17,19,20 and 21. The Council also requested that Wards 5, 9, 11 and 18 be renamed 'East Sutherland and Edderton', 'Dingwall and Seaforth', 'Eilean a' Chèò' and 'Culloden and Ardersier' respectively.

MPs, MSPs and Councillors

Danny Alexander MP objected to Carrbridge being split from Badenoch and Strathspey because the settlement was within the Cairngorms National Park, which has a role in any planning matters. There was also concern that the proposals did not reflect the natural boundaries of the community. It was important to the operation of the new electoral system, and local democracy in general, that communities identified with the wards to which they were allocated. Cawdor and Piperhill had many historic ties to Nairnshire and they naturally belonged in the Nairn ward. It was recognised that if they were included in the Nairn ward it would create a numerical imbalance, but this could be remedied.

Fergus Ewing MSP objected to the proposal which would incorporate Carrbridge within Ward 20, and which would also incorporate Cawdor. It made no sense for part of the area within the Cairngorms National Park to be dealt with in a different local government ward. Carrbridge had always considered itself to be part of Badenoch and Strathspey and there was no strong connection with Inverness; the areas involved in Badenoch and Strathspey were already considerable; there were few electors involved; it was impossible to argue that there is any qualitative difference between councillors who represent say 2,200 or 2,500 and this small difference seems to have been awarded inordinate significance. A

local inquiry should be held. It was questioned whether it would have been necessary to incorporate Carrbridge and Cawdor within Inverness had the option of devising wards of 2 or 5 members been open to the Commission.

Councillor McFarlane-Slack approved of the proposals for Ward 22 but requested that it be re-named South Lochaber. The arguments for not splitting Lochaber along the Great Glen were well-founded. Morvern and Ardnamurchan together with the communities in Kinlochleven, Glencoe, Ballachulish and Duror formed part of the former County of Argyll. Further the proposals for Lochaber provided for the first time, direct responsibilities for elected members, for both rural and urban areas.

Councillor Clark supported the proposals for the north/south split of Lochaber because it balanced the electorate and was fairer to electors than the east/west split proposed by The Highland Council.

Councillor Dunlop objected to the proposal to include Carrbridge in Ward 20. Carrbridge community was part of Strathspey in terms of culture, heritage and geography. Council services were delivered through the Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee. If it was absolutely necessary to achieve parity, the boundaries of Wards 19, 20 and 21 should be re-drawn to form 3*3-member wards. Auldearn and part of Nairn, together with Cawdor, Daviot, Tomatin, Carrbridge, Grantown on Spey and Cromdale could form a 3-member ward. The remainder of Nairn would form a second 3-member ward, and the remainder of Badenoch and Strathspey the third.

Councillor Fraser was concerned that including Cawdor and Piperhill in Ward 18 (the bulk of which was based in Inverness) would be detrimental to the delivery of services. He was also concerned about the number of the electorate who would not bother to turn out because their vote would have no weight in an extended Inverness ward. If placing Cawdor and Piperhill in Ward 19 increased the variance from parity to 20% then so be it. If the Commission was unwilling to change its view then a public inquiry should be held.

Councillor Macmillan agreed with Dingwall Community Council that Ward 9 should be named "Seaforth" and was surprised that a local councillor secured a majority on The Highland Council for the name "Dingwall and Seaforth".

Community Councils

Arisaig & District Community Council was concerned with the proposal to link Lochalsh with Lochaber. Arisaig had strong links with Ardnamurchan, Moidart, Sunart and Morven, but had little to do with communities to the north of Fort William. The Highland Council's suggested alternative was supported.

Caol Community Council agreed with the views of the majority of Lochaber Area Committee that the wards should be West Lochaber and East Lochaber. Lochalsh had no connection to Lochaber either historically or geographically.

Carrbridge & Vicinity Community Council was concerned that the traditional links between Carrbridge and the Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee were removed. As a gateway to the Cairngorms National Park the ward boundary should be re-drawn in line with the Park boundary in the vicinity of Carrbridge. The proposal would only increase the electorate to 9,800 and Schedule 6 Rule 1 (3) b emphasised the retention of local ties

rather than parity. Carrbridge had traditionally been part of the Presbytery of Abernethy which encompassed the drainage area of the upper Spey; it was likely that services would continue to be delivered from Kingussie and communication channels should be with that local area committee. The primary school would be organised by a different area committee to its secondary school. Due to imbalance of electorate, the area was unlikely to maintain the involvement of a city-based councillor to the extent which is currently enjoyed. Political ties would be broken creating a divide within a close-knit community. A petition of 156 names was submitted.

Cawdor & West Nairnshire Community Council objected that Cawdor and Piperhill had been taken out of the Nairn ward. The A96 corridor between Inverness and Nairn must be given careful consideration as new developments in this area would affect numbers of electorate in the provisional proposals. The boundary of the Ardersier ward did not take into account the areas of sparse population to the south in Drynachan and a number of electors in that area were placed in the Inverness South, Tomatin and Carrbridge ward.

Creich Community Council was concerned that the elected members could come from anywhere within the very large area of Ward 1 and could easily be based many miles away from a large proportion of their constituents. The area should be reduced or the number of elected representatives increased.

Fort William Community Council objected to the proposed north-south split of Lochaber because it was against the natural alignment both in social and natural affiliations. The natural division of the Great Glen created boundaries which were easily understood. The Lochaber community had historical, cultural, religious, social and political links with Lochalsh but was not naturally linked. The statutory rules allowed departures from parity where special geographic conditions applied and that they emphasised the view that retention of local ties should have greater weight than parity.

Glenelg & Arnisdale Community Council was dismayed at the proposals to include the community in the proposed Ward 12 because the area had little or no affinity with Caol and Mallaig and it was likely that the area would be represented by a councillor from the Caol or Fort William area. Lochalsh had practically nothing to do with the proposed Ward 12 in terms of specific issues and service requirements. Nominations for the candidates for the new elections might include a party political element; and councillors would be less accessible and less accountable. The area would be much better served by having Lochalsh included in Ward 6.

Glengarry Community Council supported the Commission's proposals for a north-south split in Lochaber. An east-west configuration would split the village at Laggan and the proposals were fairer to the electorate throughout Lochaber.

Inverlochy & Torlundy Community Council objected to the proposed north-south split in Lochaber. The alternative proposed by Lochaber Area Committee was preferred.

Kyle Community Council objected to the merging of Lochalsh with Caol and Mallaig to form the proposed Ward 12. Lochalsh was rural and the electorate would be skewed towards the urban area of Caol. The transport links between Lochalsh and the rest of the ward were such that there would be a loss in efficiency of the council workforce; and there are no links between Fort William and Lochalsh, largely due to the geography. Lochalsh should be incorporated with the proposed Ward 6 to form a 4-member ward.

Lochalsh Community Council objected to the proposals to relate the area to Mallaig. Association with Wester Ross would be more appropriate where the police are based and where the high school linked the two areas.

Lochardil & Drummond Community Council noted the variation in the number of electors per elected member. It requested re-consideration of the boundary between Wards 15 and 16 which would involve the transfer of electors from Ward 15 to Ward 16 and reflect the existing Community Council boundary.

Lochcarron Community Council objected that the proposed area for Ward 6 (Wester Ross and Strathpeffer) was too large and that the needs of Strathpeffer are completely different to those of a sparsely populated rural area. It would be more logical to associate Wester Ross with Lochalsh where needs and electorates were similar. No consideration had been given to the size of the rural areas and the consequent difficulties councillors might face in fulfilling their duties.

Morar Community Council was dismayed at the proposed boundary changes. There were many issues shared with Lochalsh but the 2 communities had evolved separately. Morar was a disadvantaged community and the boundary changes would exacerbate its problems.

Plockton & District Community Council had concerns about the amalgamation of Caol, Mallaig and Lochalsh because: Skye and Lochalsh had no connection with Caol and Mallaig; the elected councillor might not be representative of the area; consequently the area would not receive adequate council services; and there would be no easy access to officials.

Portree Community Council objected to the boundary changes because it would lead to reduced representation for Skye. It might have to merge with another area, with possible job losses.

Stromeferry & Achmore Community Council were disappointed that Lochalsh was being placed with Caol and Mallaig rather than Wester Ross and Strathpeffer. The area's links were east-west rather than north-south. Lochalsh should be transferred into Ward 6 and a member transferred from Ward 12 to Ward 6 to achieve electoral parity.

Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Council supported the proposal to transfer Lochalsh from Ward 12 to Ward 6.

West Ardnamurchan Community Council could not support north and south Lochaber wards when there was a natural boundary along the Great Glen and Loch Linnhe. West Lochaber had different needs to east Lochaber. Further, Lochalsh had a long standing affiliation with Skye.

Local Political Parties

Badenoch & Strathspey Labour Party opposed the Commission's proposals to group Carrbridge with the south of Inverness and Tomatin in Ward 20. Councillors would have no involvement in the decisions affecting schooling or the services delivered from Kingussie, and they could lose voluntary services such as the community transport and mental health care schemes. It was acknowledged that the Commission's proposals gave the

Badenoch and Strathspey ward the largest electorate in the Council area and including Carrbridge would increase that.

Other organisations

Carrbridge Tourist Association objected to the proposals to place Carrbridge in Ward 2 on the grounds that the settlement is a gateway to the Cairngorm National Park; it is an important tourist destination; and all planning applications in Carrbridge must be approved by the Park Authority.

Separation from the rest of Badenoch and Strathspey would make marketing and enterprise funding difficult. Carrbridge has traditionally been part of Badenoch and Strathspey, and it was unlikely to get adequate involvement from a city-based councillor. Carrbridge related to Grantown and Kingussie rather than Tomatin and south Inverness. The Slochd summit was a natural boundary between communities.

Cawdor Heritage Group registered several objections, in particular to the proposed boundaries between Wards 18, 19 and 20.

The traditional link between Cawdor, Piperhill and Nairn should be maintained. Including the area of Cawdor and Piperhill in Ward 19 produced a variation in electorate much less than that deemed acceptable for Ward 1. Electors in postcode IV12 5RQ should not be included in Ward 20. The Group objected to the method of selecting boundaries in uninhabited areas.

Polling districts N67C and N66C together with postal district IV12 5RQ should also be included in Ward 19. The boundary of Ward 19 should be the existing boundary with Moray to the east, the original southern boundary of Nairnshire to the south, and the River Nairn from the Culloden viaduct to a point near its confluence with the Cawdor Burn to the west.

Cawdor Scottish Discretionary Trust & the Cawdor Marriage Settlement Trust pointed out that Cawdor was a conservation area, and the proposals would damage rural Nairnshire and the town of Nairn. There was no need to reduce the area covered by the 4 present wards within Nairnshire. There would be insufficient weight given to the needs of the Cawdor and Piperhill communities which would be on the periphery of Inverness and the proposals were to the detriment of service provision and voting.

Dachaid Care & Support Scheme opposed the Commission's proposals to group Carrbridge with the south of Inverness and Tomatin in Ward 20. It acknowledged that the Commission's proposals gave the Badenoch and Strathspey ward the largest electorate in the Council area and that including Carrbridge would increase that size to approximately 9,680 electors, but this size was manageable.

Duthil Parish Church, Carrbridge stated that the church and the village were very much part of Badenoch and Strathspey, and much of the economic life of the area was bound up with the Strathspey tourist industry. There was also concern that the local primary school should remain with the Education Committee for the area.

Glenelg & Arnisdale Development Trust was concerned at the proposals to include the community in Ward 12. As one of the areas covered by "Initiative on the Edge",

Glenelg and Arnisdale had been recognised as meriting special assistance. The Trust had developed partnerships with public and private bodies and the proposed boundaries would destroy many of the projects the Trust wished to carry forward. The area had little or no affinity with Caol and Mallaig and it was probable that the area would be represented by a councillor from Caol or Fort William. Lochalsh had practically nothing to do with the proposed Ward 12 and the area should be included in Ward 6.

Nairn Community Care Forum objected to the removal of Cawdor and Piperhill from the Nairn area because people in these areas would suffer a deterioration in joint service provision. Retaining Cawdor and Piperhill in Nairn would skew the parity figures, but the provision of services to vulnerable people was more important than electoral parity.

Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association supported the proposals from Highland Council which linked Lochalsh with the proposed Ward 6.

Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations objected to Lochalsh being placed in Ward 12 with parts of Lochaber and preferred to be included with Wester Ross in Ward 6.

Other representations

The editor of the community newspaper “West Word” objected to the proposal to divide Lochaber along the A830 and supported Highland Council’s suggestion of dividing it along the Great Glen. The Small Isles, Knoydart, Morar and Arisaig were linked with Moidart and Ardnamurchan, sharing histories of settlement and land ownership and having common issues with fishing, the marine environment and tourism. These had little resemblance to the experiences of the inhabitants of Spean Bridge and Roy Bridge on the other side of Lochaber.

Thirty representations were received which variously objected to the placing of the area of Cawdor and Piperhill in Ward 18.

The area had been traditionally linked with Nairnshire and looked to Nairn for service provision. As part of a rural community it had different needs from Smithton and Culloden, and the proposals mean that the area would become a remote outpost of Inverness.

Nairn and Ardersier were a beacon of good practice under the Joint Future and Community Health Partnership policies of the Scottish Executive. Changing the ward boundaries would seriously endanger the efficient administration of both the local Health and Social Services in the area.

Housing proposed for the Carse of Ardersier would render the Commission’s forecast electorate incorrect. In the effort to ensure electoral parity, the Commission’s proposals would effectively disenfranchise some voters. The proposals would make the administration of the Cawdor and Piperhill area more complicated and time-consuming and destroy “Nairnshire”.

Twenty-nine representations were received which variously objected to the placing of Carrbridge in Ward 20.

Carrbridge was part of the community of the Spey Valley and in particular Badenoch and Strathspey. It looked to Aviemore, Boat of Garten and Grantown rather than

Inverness. It was likely that services would continue to be delivered from Kingussie and, therefore, Carrbridge should continue to be covered by the Badenoch & Strathspey Area Committee.

Carrbridge was a tourism gateway to the Cairngorms National Park. Planning powers had been vested in the Cairngorms National Park Authority and Carrbridge should not be within a ward where the majority of planning proposals would be decided by Highland Council. Carrbridge would be denied the representation of councillors living and working in the local community. Carrbridge Primary school should be under the same area committee as the secondary school into which it feeds.

Including Carrbridge in the Badenoch and Strathspey ward would not make a great difference to the number of electors per member. Reference was made to the application of Schedule 6, Rule 2 and Rule 1 (3) (a) and (b). The Slochd provided a natural boundary.

The proposals would cut across the historical church structure which linked Duthil church in Carrbridge with Boat of Garten.

Three representations were received which objected to the placing of Lochalsh in Ward 12. The objections were based on: Lochalsh having many links with Ross-shire and Dingwall but nothing in common with north Lochaber and no historical connection with Caol and Mallaig. Lochalsh should be transferred to Ward 6.

Two representations objected to the proposal to split Lochaber into a north and a south ward. The area comprising Ardnamurchan, Moidart, Morar, Glenfinnan and the thirty-mile-wide region to the west of Fort William was extremely remote and had special problems. Splitting this area on a north-south basis would retain the northern ward as rural, whilst the southern ward would incorporate a more urban area. The latter would elect a town-based councillor who would have little understanding of issues in rural areas. A north-south divide would go against hundreds of years of tradition. The western areas shared community links with Gaelic, music, culture and geography. Coastal and tourism links would be split by the north-south proposal. The east-west split as proposed by the Lochaber Area Committee was supported.

A representation requested a minor boundary change to the southern boundary of Ward 19 which would improve the ward geography by including a property located in Ward 20 which, because of the topography, had no direct access into that ward.

A representation expressed disappointment that the Crown area of Inverness was being divided by the proposals. The current boundaries already placed parts of that community in the town centre ward and the proposal added further areas to the proposed Ward 15. Although there would be several councillors in the ward, their brief would be more difficult than before, and the electorate would see their representatives less frequently. The Crown district should not be broken up for the sake of numerical parity.

Consideration of Representations

43. We considered the representations received in relation to Carrbridge, Cawdor and Piperhill and noted the concerns with regard to the provisionally proposed Wards 18, 19, 20 and 21. We

re-examined the relevant areas to determine whether it was possible to satisfy the representations received within the terms of the statutory rules.

44. We examined the alternative that combined the proposed Wards 19 and 21 with Carrbridge, Cawdor and Piperhill together with Tomatin and Daviot to provide an area which could be represented by 9 members in 3*3-member wards. On the basis of the information provided to us, our Secretariat constructed 3 wards, splitting the town of Nairn along the river. We noted that 2 of the wards were acceptable in terms of electoral parity - the first, largely comprised west Nairn and the second, Badenoch and Strathspey (excluding Carrbridge and Grantown-on-Spey). However, the third ward, which accommodated part of Nairn, Cawdor, Daviot, Carrbridge, Grantown-on-Spey and Cromdale deviated significantly from parity. We noted also that the proposal did not offer an adequate solution for the residual parts of the proposed Wards 18 and Ward 20. Using our geographic information systems we established that the distribution of electorate in the residential areas of Culloden and Cradlehall/Westhill did not offer any suitable breaks which would enable us to transfer electorate between the Ardersier Ward and the Inverness South Ward to produce an alternative which did not have an adverse impact on communities. Drawing these matters together, we found that it was not possible to establish a 4-member and 3-member ward with electoral parity that retained sufficient community cohesion.

45. We examined further alternatives that involved dividing Nairn by means of either the River Nairn or the Inverness/Aberdeen railway line. Both produced wards to the east that met the terms of the statutory rules, but neither provided satisfactory wards in the west. Although we had some sympathy with what was proposed we had to conclude that the area covered by the provisionally proposed Wards 18, 19, 20 and 21 could not be re-configured satisfactorily to meet the wishes of the objectors concerned with these arrangements at Carrbridge or Cawdor and Piperhill.

46. We again noted that had the legislation in force provided for 5-member wards, it would have been possible and practicable to design electoral arrangements in this area that fully met the requirements of the statutory rules in terms that better reflected the perceived communities.

47. We noted that many of the representations concerning the Carrbridge area cited the Slochd summit as being the natural boundary of a possible enlarged ward. Although that was a significant natural barrier, both the A9 and Edinburgh/Inverness railway which traversed the area provided good transport links towards Inverness. Although we recognised the local circumstances relating to the Cairngorm National Park, we were in no doubt such matters should not overly influence our consideration of electoral arrangements for the Council area.

48. We agreed that, on a fine balance, Carrbridge should be incorporated into Ward 21. In reaching our decision, we took into consideration the significant natural boundary at Slochd summit. We acknowledged the ties between Carrbridge and the rest of Badenoch and Strathspey. We also noted that the amendment better recognised Community Council boundaries and community relationships. However, we retained serious concerns regarding the significant under-representation that would result from our decision. We agreed also that the amendment should be published and that representations should be invited.

49. In our consideration of the transfer of Cawdor and Piperhill from Ward 18 to Ward 19 we noted that, despite identifying a number of alternative boundaries, each of the resulting electorates produced unacceptable deviations from electoral parity that would have provided for a 5-member ward, which was not possible. Accordingly, we were not persuaded to agree to a straightforward transfer of electorate. Schedule 6 Rules gave priority to electoral parity with the issues of fixing boundaries and local ties being subject to that rule. We also agreed that there were no special geographical considerations in the area that would allow for a departure from Rule 1 (2). While we recognised that

some existing associations across the wider area could not be accommodated, we concluded that no local community had been divided as a consequence of our proposals.

50. When we considered those requests for a change to Ward 20 transferring an area into Ward 19, we noted that this new boundary would be established close to the Cairngorms National Park and would better respect the southern boundaries of the Community Councils in this area. In addition, we noted that this alignment would address concerns expressed by other groups and individuals. The changes involved few electors and made no significant difference to the forecast electorates for each ward. Accordingly, we agreed to adopt the changes proposed.

51. We considered the minor amendments sought in the boundaries of Wards 13, 20 and 21. No electors were involved, and we agreed to adopt the proposed changes.

52. We considered the representations concerning Lochalsh noting that they emphasised the few links with Lochaber, that associations were predominantly with Wester Ross to the north, and that there were concerns about the size of the ward as set out in our provisional proposals.

53. We noted that combining Lochalsh with Ward 6 plus the transfer of a member resulted in a marginal improvement in the electoral parity. We noted also that the re-configured Ward 6 was the second largest in the Council area but, bearing in mind the main transport links across and within the area and the distribution of the electorate, we agreed that our provisional proposals should be amended. We concluded that, because of the extent and significance of the change, the amendment should be published and that representations should be invited.

54. We considered those representations concerned with the division of Lochaber into a north ward and a south ward in light of our decision to relocate Lochalsh in Ward 6, noting that there was a measure of support for our provisional proposals. Creating a 4-member eastern ward and a 3-member western ward resulted in electoral parity poorer than that attained by retaining a north/south division; and the main transport links pointed to a north/south division. We again noted that much of the southern ward was formed by combining areas that had formerly been part of Argyll County. After due consideration, we were not persuaded to re-configure our proposed electoral arrangements on an east/west basis.

55. In considering Ward 1, we recognised that, although it covered an extensive area, this broadly reflected the 3 existing wards combined. Bearing in mind the transport links, settlement patterns and widely dispersed electorate, we considered it appropriate to continue to allow for the significant over-representation in the existing electoral arrangements. Drawing these matters together, we agreed that our proposals for Ward 1 should not be amended.

56. We considered the representation concerning the boundary between Ward 15 and Ward 16 at Lochardil noting that a straightforward transfer of electors from Ward 15 to Ward 16 would not adversely affect parity. Accordingly, we agreed to adopt the alternative alignment.

57. We found that including the Crown Community Council area in a newly configured Ward 17 would result in a deviation from parity which was significantly greater than that in our provisional proposals. Further there was no general opposition to our provisional proposals from the Council, community organisations, or other interested parties in the area. Under the circumstances we were not persuaded that the alternative proposal should be adopted.

58. In considering the representation regarding reduced representation for the Isle of Skye, we noted that at present 4 wards were wholly included within Skye and a fifth comprised part of Skye

together with an area on the mainland, including part of Lochalsh. Under our proposals, Skye was covered by a single 4-member ward, which on the basis of the forecast electorate provided for a small over-representation. Given the circumstances we were content that the provisional proposals provided for the appropriate representation for the Isle of Skye.

59. We considered the representations regarding ward names. In line with our general policy on the naming of wards we agreed to adopt the amendments requested by Highland Council.

Revised Proposals

60. Our revised proposals for electoral arrangements in Wards 6 and 12 and Wards 20 and 21 were set out as follows:

Ward		Forecast Electorate c	Number of Elected Members d	Average Electorate per Member e	Divergence from Parity(%) f
Number a	Name b				
6	Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh	9,175	4	2,294	10
12	Caol and Mallaig	6,330	3	2,110	2
20	Inverness South	8,565	4	2,141	3
21	Badenoch and Strathspey	9,650	4	2,413	16

61. We published our revised proposals for Wards 6 and 12 and Wards 20 and 21 on 12 January 2006, generally following the procedures adopted for the publication of our provisional proposals. We asked that representations on our revisions should be made to us within the 4-week period ending 9 February 2006.

Representations on Revised Proposals

62. We received 3 representations that were concerned with the revised proposals. The main points raised are summarised below:

Council

The Highland Council approved of the revised proposals for Wards 6 and 12 and Wards 20 and 21 but was disappointed that we had not accepted all of the Council's previous representations. The Council had agreed that it should commence a campaign directed at the Scottish Executive for the area of Cawdor and Piperhill to be included in Ward 19. The Council requested that we confirm the names of the proposed new wards.

Community Councils

Plockton Community Council expressed support for the revised proposals for the Skye and Lochalsh wards.

Other Representation

A representation expressed concern about the boundaries of Ward 6 (Wester Ross and Strathpeffer) on the grounds that the whole of the Strathpeffer Glen related clearly to Dingwall and Inverness. Various services were located within Dingwall and used by Strathpeffer residents. Strathpeffer lay to the east of the watershed and was part of what was generally recognised as “Easter Ross”. Strathpeffer was also within the Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan, whereas the proposed Ward 6 took in the entire Wester Ross plan as well as the Lochalsh part of the Skye and Lochalsh plan. These factors should mitigate against the Strathpeffer, Blairninich and Heights areas being included within Ward 6.

Consideration of Representations on Revised Proposals

63. We noted the representations from The Highland Council and Plockton Community Council.

64. In considering the matters raised in respect of our proposed arrangements for Strathpeffer, we noted that the prospect of including that area in a ward together with Dingwall had been explored at an early stage in the review. However, the number of electors in the combined areas produced a significant deviation from electoral parity which was not acceptable within the terms of the statutory rules. Accordingly, we agreed not to amend our proposals in this area.

Part 3 Final Recommendation

1. Having conducted the fourth statutory review of electoral arrangements for Highland Council area in accordance with the procedures described in Parts 1 and 2 above, we recommend that future electoral arrangements for the said Council area should provide for a Council of 80 elected members in 8 wards each returning 3 members and in 14 wards each returning 4 members as follows:

Ward		Forecast Electorate	Number of Elected Members	Average Electorate per Member	Divergence from Parity(%)
Number a	Name b				
1	North, West and Central Sutherland	4,685	3	1,562	-25
2	Thurso	6,085	3	2,028	-2
3	Wick	5,425	3	1,808	-13
4	Landward Caithness	7,755	4	1,939	-7
5	East Sutherland and Edderton	5,660	3	1,887	-9
6	Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh	9,175	4	2,294	10
7	Cromarty Firth	8,625	4	2,156	4
8	Tain and Easter Ross	6,255	3	2,085	0
9	Dingwall and Seaforth	8,875	4	2,219	7
10	Black Isle	7,610	4	1,903	-8
11	Eilean a' Chèò	7,845	4	1,961	-6
12	Caol and Mallaig	6,330	3	2,110	2
13	Aird and Loch Ness	8,130	4	2,033	-2
14	Inverness West	6,640	3	2,213	7
15	Inverness Central	8,680	4	2,170	4
16	Inverness Ness-Side	8,945	4	2,236	8
17	Inverness Millburn	5,995	3	1,998	-4
18	Culloden and Ardersier	7,975	4	1,994	-4
19	Nairn	8,985	4	2,246	8
20	Inverness South	8,565	4	2,141	3
21	Badenoch and Strathspey	9,650	4	2,413	16
22	Ft William and Ardnamurchan	8,280	4	2,070	0

2. The boundaries of the proposed electoral wards are described in the form of digital data as set out at Part 1 paragraph 22 of our report. These data files, which have been securely stored on magnetic media at the date of publication of our report, comprise GIS files in shapefile format containing the features copied from the OS MasterMap®, large-scale digital data as supplied to us at July 2004. A full copy of the OS MasterMap®, Topography Layer, the Highland Council area boundary depicted in the Administrative Boundaries theme and the low water mark ordinary springs large-scale digital data (prepared on our behalf by OS from its large-scale digital information) has similarly been secured on magnetic media. These secured data files ensure that the proposed ward boundary polyline shapefiles data can be verified against the July 2004 version of the large-scale base mapping from which the proposed ward boundaries are derived.

3. A statutory notice, detailing where our report has been deposited for inspection was published in the Press & Journal, John O’Groat’s Journal, Northern Times, Ross-shire Journal, Inverness Courier, Nairnshire Telegraph, West Highland Free Times, Oban Times and Strathspey and Badenoch Herald. A news release announcing the publication of our report was also issued.

4. Maps at the print size and scale set out below have also been deposited for public inspection at the locations set out in the statutory notice:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-----------------|
| • Highland Council area (north) | A0 | scale 1:200,000 |
| • Highland Council area (south) | A0 | scale 1:200,000 |
| • Inverness and surrounding area | A2 | scale 1:25,000 |
| • Thurso and surrounding area | A2 | scale 1:25,000 |
| • Wick and surrounding area | A2 | scale 1:25,000 |
| • Fort William and surrounding area | A2 | scale 1:25,000 |

5. Our report and the maps detailing the recommended ward boundaries, together with individual maps of each of the recommended wards, are available on our web site at www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk and can be viewed or downloaded free of charge within the constraints imposed by Crown copyright.

Appendices

- Appendix A Extract from Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004
- Appendix B Direction Under Section 18(2A) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973
- Appendix C Direction Under Section 18(2A) of The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973
- Appendix D Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended
Schedule 6 – Rules to be observed in considering electoral arrangements
- Appendix E Review Timetable
- Appendix F Illustrative Maps

Appendix A

Extract from Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004

4 Reviews of electoral arrangements

- (1) As soon as practicable after the commencement of this section the Boundary Commission shall-
 - (a) review the electoral arrangements for all local government areas for the purpose of considering future electoral arrangements for those areas, and
 - (b) formulate proposals for those arrangements.
- (2) Part II of the 1973 Act applies to a review under subsection (1) as it applies to a review under section 16 of that Act except that section 17 of that Act has effect as if it required-
 - (a) the Boundary Commission to submit a report on any review before such date as the Scottish Ministers may direct, and
 - (b) the Scottish Ministers to make an order under section 17 giving effect to the proposals of the Commission under subsection (1) (whether as submitted to them or with modifications).
- (3) The Boundary Commission shall, when complying with section 18(2)(aa) of the 1973 Act on a review under subsection (1), also inform the council of the reasons for any differences between-
 - (a) their draft proposals, and
 - (b) the draft proposals which would have been made had they been formulated on the basis that each electoral ward of a local government area is to consist of a combination of existing electoral wards (the rules set out in Schedule 6 to that Act having been disregarded in so far as those rules conflicted with that basis).
- (4) The Boundary Commission shall disregard subsection (3) when formulating proposals for future electoral arrangements under subsection (1).
- (5) The 1973 Act is amended as follows-
 - (a) in section 16(2) (duty of Boundary Commission to carry out periodic reviews of electoral arrangements), for “Schedule 5 to this Act” substitute “section 4(1) of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 9)”,
 - (b) in section 18 (procedure for reviews)-
 - (i) in subsection (2), after paragraph (a) insert-

- “(aa) at least two months before taking any steps under paragraph (b) below to inform other persons of any draft proposals or any interim decision not to make proposals, inform the council of any local government area affected by the review of those proposals or that decision;
- (ab) before taking any such steps, take into consideration any representation made to them by such a council during the period of two months beginning on the day on which the council is informed under paragraph (aa);”,
- (ii) after subsection (2) insert-
 - “(2A) The Scottish Ministers may give directions to-
 - (a) the Boundary Commission,
 - (b) the council of any local government area affected by a review, in relation to consultation under subsection (2)(a) above.
 - (2B) Such directions may be given generally or in relation to particular reviews or particular aspects of reviews.”,
- (c) section 20 is repealed,
- (d) in subsection (1) (interpretation) of section 28, in the definition of “electoral arrangements”, after “councillors”, where second occurring, insert “, the number of councillors for each electoral ward”,
- (e) in subsection (2) (review of electoral arrangements to be carried out in compliance with certain enactments) of that section-
 - (i) after “Act”, where first occurring, insert “or section 4(1) of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 9)”, and
 - (ii) for “section 5 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994” substitute “section 1 of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (asp 9)”,
- (f) Schedule 5 is repealed,
- (g) in sub-paragraph (2) of paragraph 1 of Schedule 6, for the words from “of”, where fourth occurring, to the end of that sub-paragraph substitute “calculated by dividing the number of local government electors in each electoral ward of that local government area by the number of councillors to be returned in that ward shall be, as nearly as may be, the same.”, and
- (h) at the end of sub-paragraph (3) of that paragraph insert-

“but if, in any case, there is a conflict between those criteria, greater weight shall be given to the latter.”

Appendix B

DIRECTION UNDER SECTION 18(2A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973

1. The Scottish Ministers, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 18(2A) and (2B) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (“the Act”), and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby give the following directions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (“the Commission”).
2. These directions apply in relation to any consultation carried out by the Commission, in accordance with section 18(2)(a) of the Act, with the council of any local government area affected by a review under Part II of the Act (“the council”).
3. In carrying out any such consultation, the Commission shall comply with the requirements set out in paragraphs 4 to 12 below.

Information to be provided by the Commission

4. The Commission shall, within 14 days of the date of this Direction, inform the council in writing, by letter, by recorded delivery, addressed to the Chief Executive of that council of the following–
 - (a) the timetable proposed by the Commission for that consultation;
 - (b) the timetable proposed by the Commission for the review to be conducted by the Commission under section 4(1) of the Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004;
 - (c) the general approach the Commission proposes to adopt in formulating its proposals for ward boundaries;
 - (d) the information the Commission would like to have available to use in formulating those proposals;
 - (e) the assistance which that council would be asked to render to the Commission in the process of the review; and
 - (f) such other matters as the Commission considers appropriate.

Process of consultation with the council

General

5. The Commission shall take all reasonable steps to establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the council for the purposes of the review. That dialogue may be conducted in person, orally, in writing or otherwise.

6. In the course of the consultation, the Commission shall encourage the council-
 - (a) to establish, and communicate to the Commission, any proposals or ideas that the council may have in relation to new ward boundaries, or otherwise in relation to the formulation of the Commission's proposals; and
 - (b) to provide such factual information held by the council as the Commission or the council think relevant in relation to the formulation of the Commission's proposals.

Meeting with the council

7. Subject to paragraph 9, the Commission shall meet with the council no later than twelve weeks after the date of the letter sent in terms of paragraph 4.
8.
 - (1) The Commission shall propose to the council 2 dates, and the times on those dates, on which that meeting might take place.
 - (2) Where the council indicates that those proposals are unsuitable then the Commission shall offer 2 further dates, and the times on these dates, on which the meeting might take place.
 - (3) All of the dates and times proposed by the Commission under this paragraph shall be within the ordinary working hours of the council.
 - (4) Nothing in this paragraph shall prevent the Commission and the council meeting at any time which is not within the ordinary working hours of the council where the Commission and the council so agree.
9. The Commission is not required to meet with the council where-
 - (a) the council indicates that it does not wish to meet the Commission; or
 - (b) the council fails to respond to any proposal made under
 - (i) paragraph 8(1), during the period of 14 calendar days beginning with the day on which the council received that proposal; or
 - (ii) paragraph 8(2), during the period of 7 calendar days beginning with the day on which the council received that proposal.

Formal written views of the council

10.
 - (1) The Commission shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that they have received the concluded view of the council in writing on the matters raised in the consultation by no later than-
 - (a) the end of the period of four weeks beginning with the date of any meeting held in accordance with paragraph 7; or

- (b) in the event that, in terms of paragraph 9, no meeting took place between the Commission and the council, the end of the period of four weeks beginning with -
 - (i) the date on which the council indicated that it did not wish to meet the Commission; or
 - (ii) the date on which the period referred to in paragraph 9(b)(i), or if applicable, 9(b)(ii) ends,whichever may apply.

- (2) Where the Commission have not received the concluded view referred to in sub-paragraph (1), within the timescale provided for in that sub-paragraph, the Commission may disregard any conflict in the views that have been expressed by, or purportedly by, the council where, in the opinion of the Commission, those views conflict.

11. Where the Commission is of the opinion that it has not received the concluded view of the council it shall notify the council of that fact no fewer than 7 calendar days before the end of the consultation.

12. For the purposes of these directions, the Commission shall assume that a view expressed as being the concluded view of the council is the concluded view of the council if that view is expressed in a letter from the Chief Executive of the council to the Commission.

Andrew P Kerr

A member of the Scottish Executive

Edinburgh
30th August 2004

Appendix C

DIRECTION UNDER SECTION 18(2A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973

1. The Scottish Ministers, in exercise of the powers conferred by section 18(2A) and (2B) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (“the Act”), and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby give the following directions.
2. These directions apply in relation to any consultation carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (“the Commission”), in accordance with section 18(2)(a) of the Act, with the council of any local government area affected by a review under Part II of the Act (“the council”).
3. In taking part in such a consultation, the council shall comply with the requirements set out in paragraph 4 below.
4. For the purposes of enabling the Commission to exercise the functions conferred upon them by virtue of section 18(2)(a) of the Act, as read with the Scottish Ministers’ direction to the Commission dated 30th August 2004, the Council shall co-operate with the Commission and shall in particular:-
 - (a) establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue which, where appropriate, may include meeting with the Commission;
 - (b) take all reasonable steps to ensure that any views expressed, or purporting to be expressed, by it or on its behalf to the Commission are accurate;
 - (c) provide the Commission with all such information as the Commission may reasonably request; and
 - (d) provide the Commission with all such information as the Council considers relevant, including any proposals or ideas the Council may have, in relation to new ward boundaries, or otherwise in relation to the formulation of the Commission’s proposals.

Andrew P Kerr

A member of the Scottish Executive

Edinburgh
30 August 2004

Appendix D

Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended Schedule 6 – Rules to be observed in considering electoral arrangements

1. (1) This schedule applies to the consideration by Scottish Ministers or the Boundary Commission of electoral arrangements for election of councillors of local government areas.
 - (2) Having regard to any change in the number or distribution of electors of a local government area likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration, the number calculated by dividing the number of local government electors in each electoral ward of that local government area by the number of councillors to be returned in that ward shall be, as nearly as may be, the same.
 - (3) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) above, in considering the electoral arrangements referred to in sub-paragraph (1) above regard shall be had to-
 - (a) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable;
 - (b) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular boundary but if, in any case, there is a conflict between those criteria, greater weight shall be given to the latter.
2. The strict application of the rule stated in paragraph 1(2) above may be departed from in any area where special geographical conditions appear to render a departure desirable.

Appendix E

Review Timetable

Stage 1: Initial consultation with Councils and the early establishment of an ongoing dialogue between the Commission and Councils for the purpose of the Review.

Councils are given full opportunity to communicate to the Commission any proposals or ideas that they may have in relation to the design of new wards. The Commission outlines the methodology underlying its intended approach to the Review.

Clarification of general review issues, both technical and administrative. Exchange of factual information between the Commission and Councils relevant to the design of proposed wards.

Discussion/exchange of information for any areas of concern.

12 weeks

Stage 2: Development of initial proposals by the Commission for each Council area with ongoing consultation between the Commission and Councils as necessary on emerging issues.

Preparation of maps, supporting documentation and GIS files of proposed ward boundaries for Councils once the Commission has completed drafting its initial ward schemes.

10 weeks

Stage 3: Initial proposals released to Councils. Two months allowed for the Council to comment on proposals, offer amendments and or alternatives. Further discussions with Council as required throughout this stage to clarify emerging issues relating to the initial proposals.

9 weeks (2 months)

Stage 4: Full consideration by the Commission of issues arising through stage 3 which might lead to revision/adjustment of initial proposals. Further liaison with Councils taken forward on a needs basis

8 weeks

Stage 5: Publication of the Commission's provisional proposals as part of the statutory public consultation process. Analysis of representations received. Seek Council views on aspects of representations and the impact they have on the provisional proposals as required.

12 weeks

Stage 6: Full analysis of representations received by the Commission.

Commission determines where a need has arisen for local inquiries, organises and conducts inquiries and reviews its provisional recommendations in light of inquiry reports.

Publication of revised recommendations where the Commission makes significant changes to its provisional proposals.

Consider representations received within 1 month.

Move to final recommendations where possible.

20 weeks

Stage 7: Complete final recommendations for all Council areas.

Complete review process, write and submit reports.

Appendix F

Illustrative Maps

Ward 1 – North, West and Central Sutherland

Ward 2 – Thurso

Ward 3 – Wick

Ward 4 – Landward Caithness

Ward 5 – East Sutherland and Edderton

Ward 6 – Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh

Ward 7 – Cromarty Firth

Ward 8 – Tain and Easter Ross

Ward 9 – Dingwall and Seaforth

Ward 10 – Black Isle

Ward 11 – Eilean a' Chèò

Ward 12 – Caol and Mallaig

Ward 13 – Aird and Loch Ness

Ward 14 – Inverness West

Ward 15 – Inverness Central

Ward 16 – Inverness Ness-Side

Ward 17 – Inverness Millburn

Ward 18 – Culloden and Ardersier

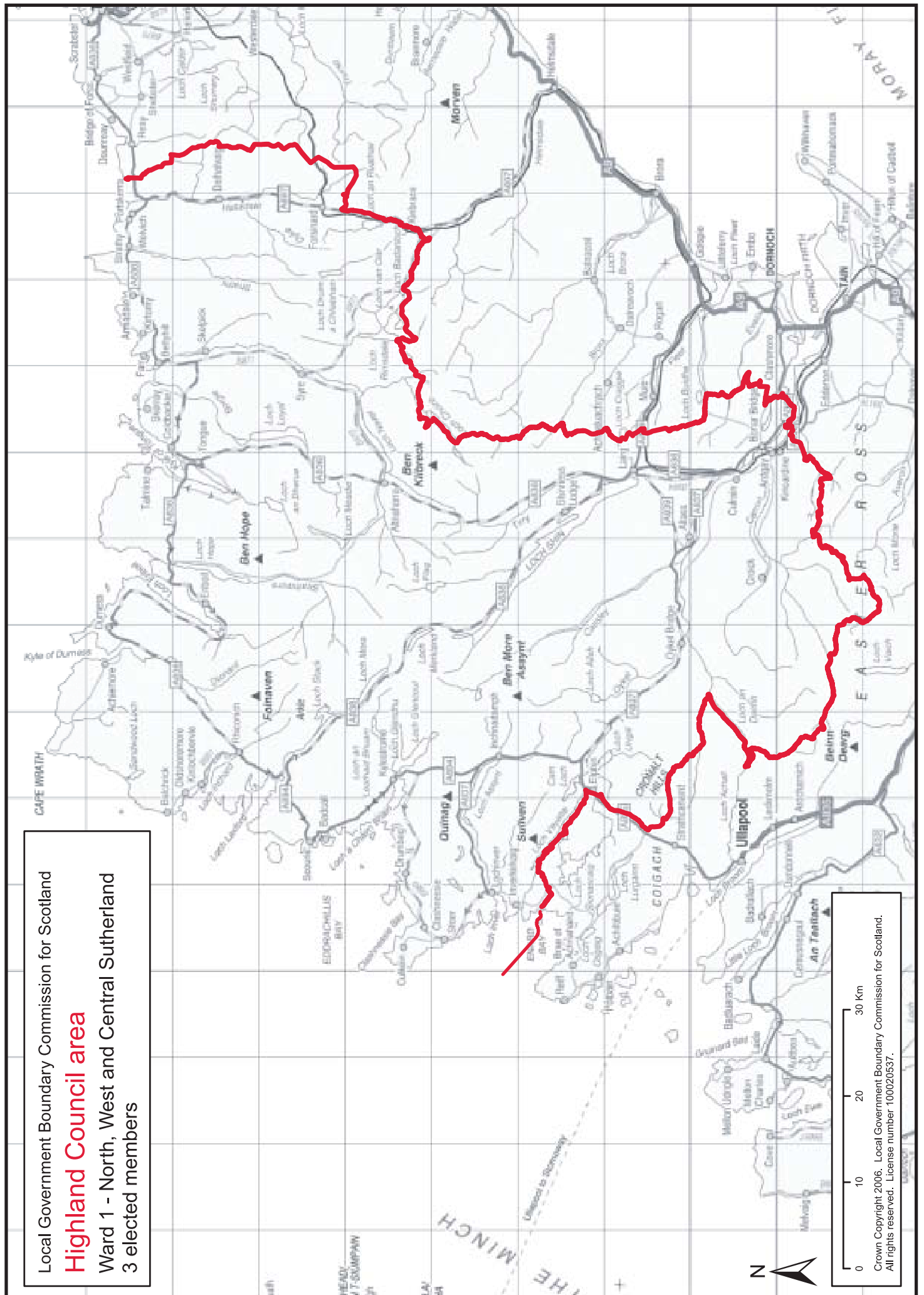
Ward 19 – Nairn

Ward 20 – Inverness South

Ward 21 – Badenoch and Strathspey

Ward 22 – Ft William and Ardnamurchan

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Highland Council area
 Ward 1 - North, West and Central Sutherland
 3 elected members



Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 3 - Wick

3 elected members



Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 4 - Landward Caithness

4 elected members



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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 5 - East Sutherland and Edderton

3 elected members

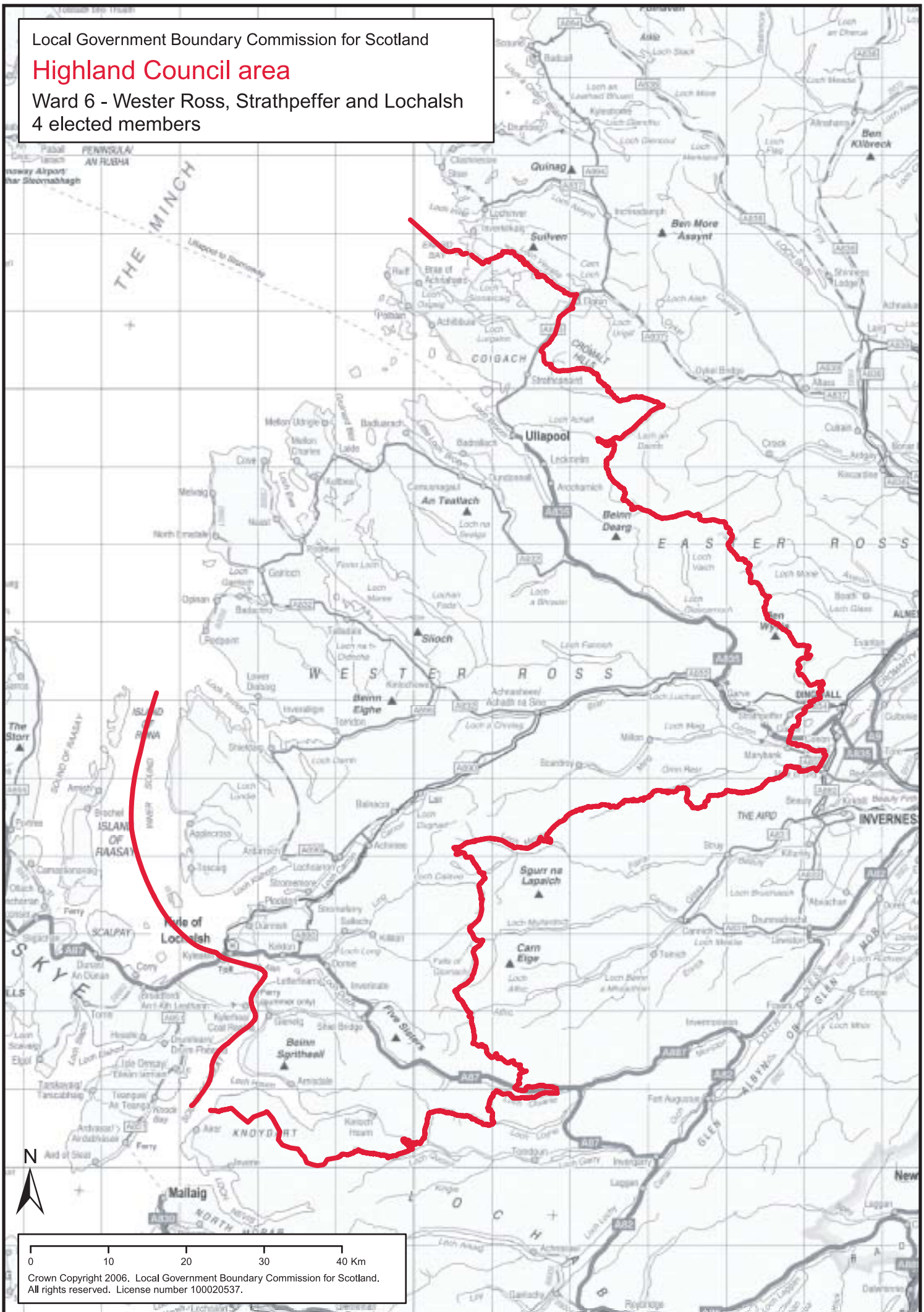


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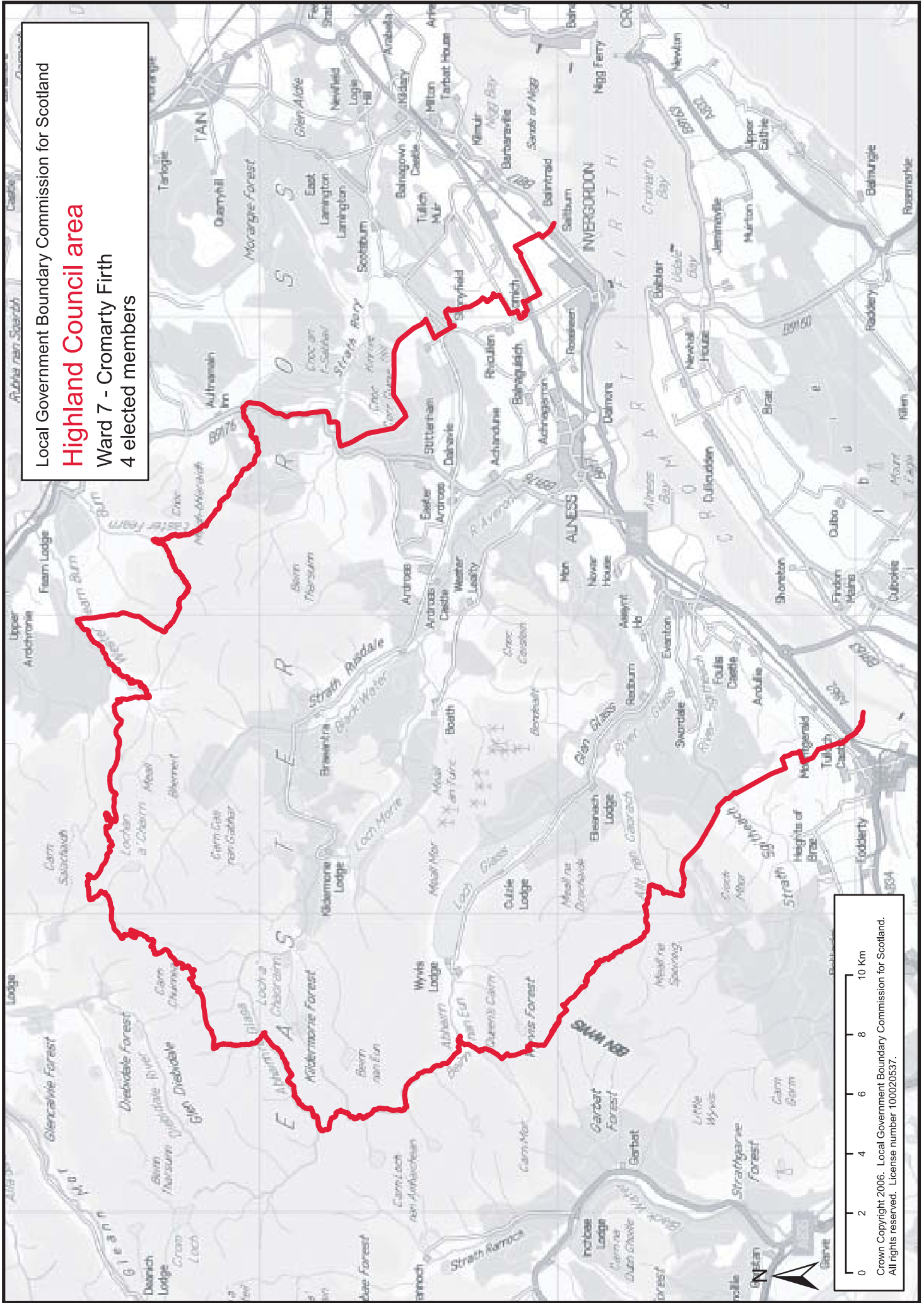
Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

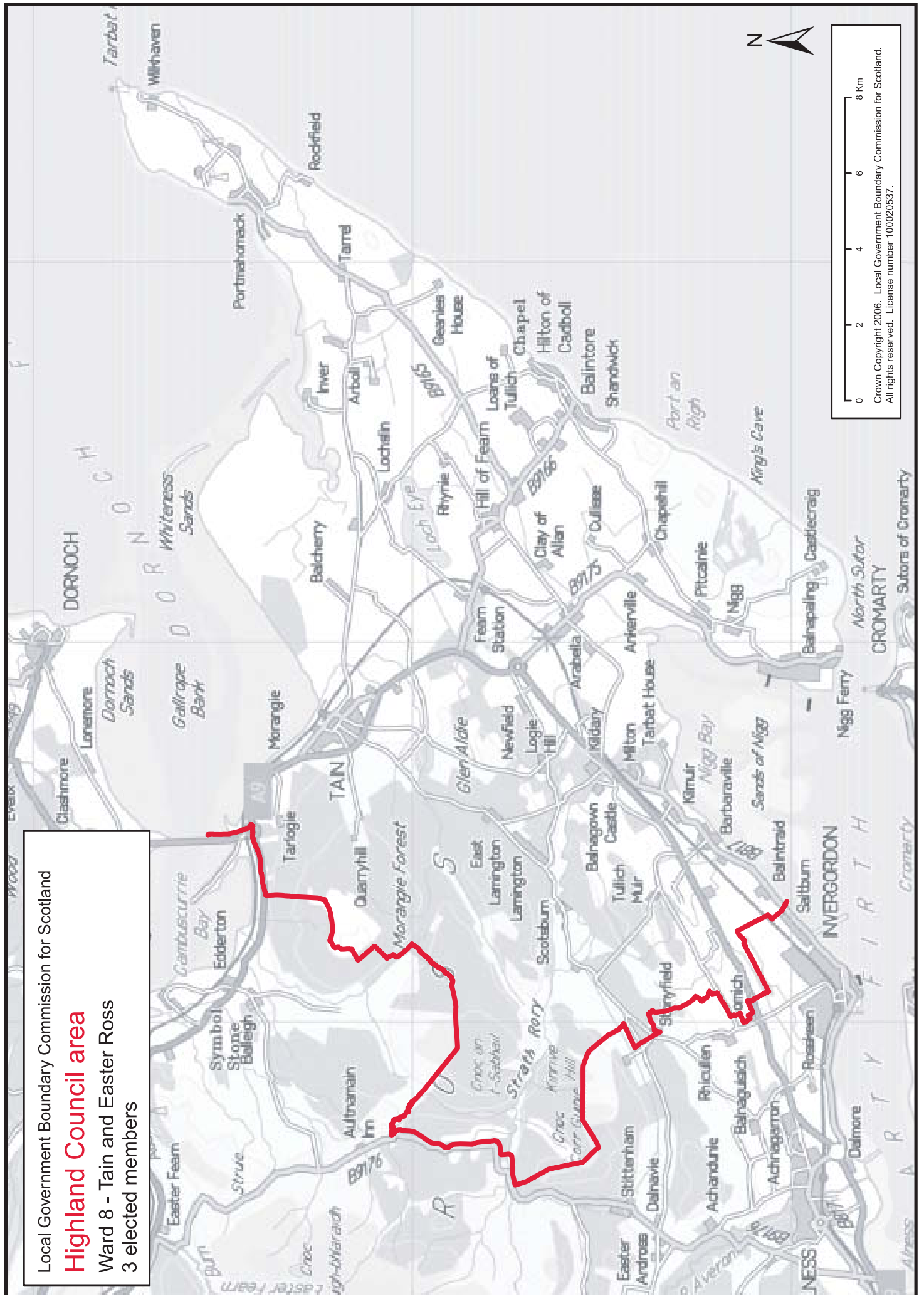
Highland Council area

Ward 6 - Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh
4 elected members



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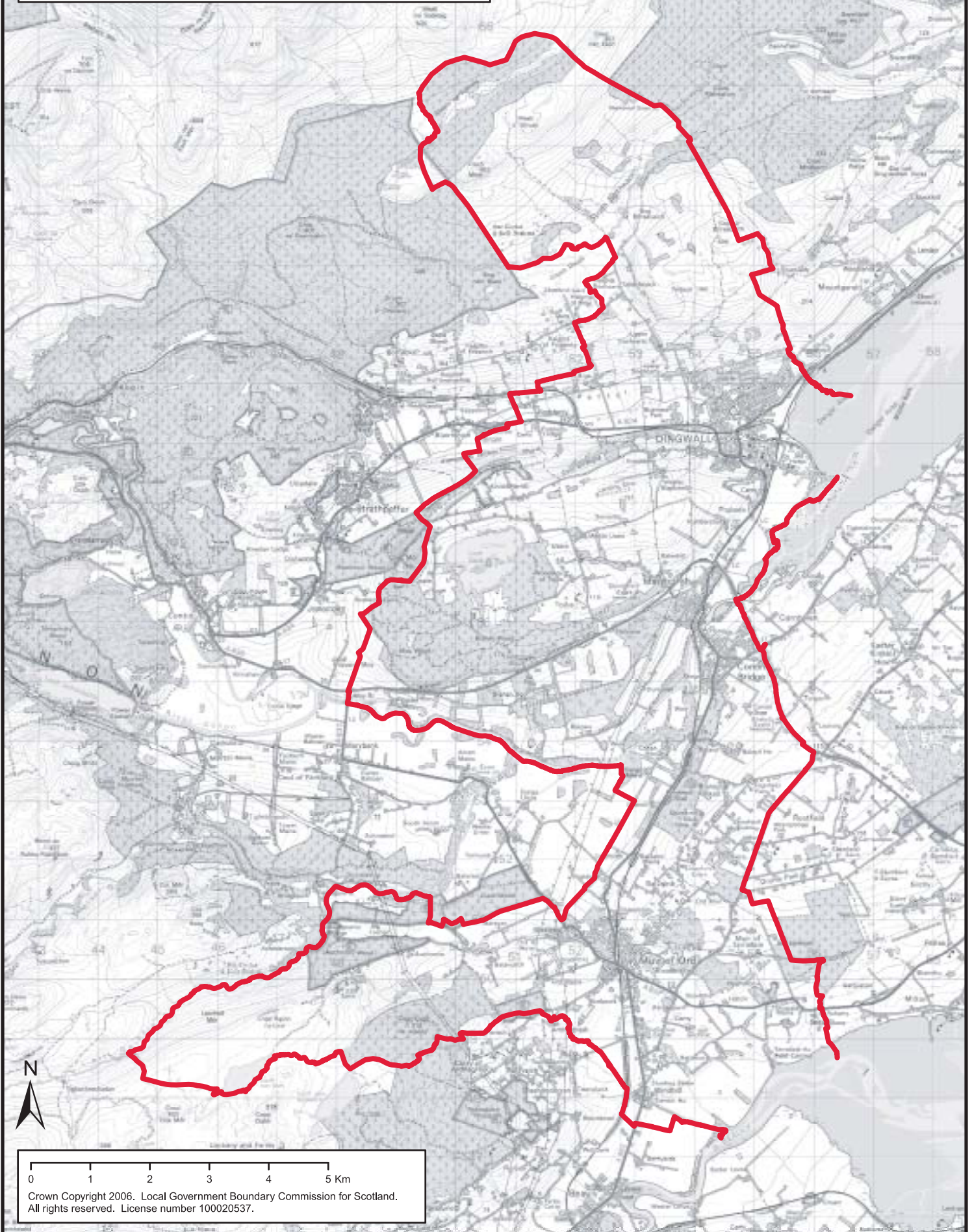


Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 9 - Dingwall and Seaforth

4 elected members

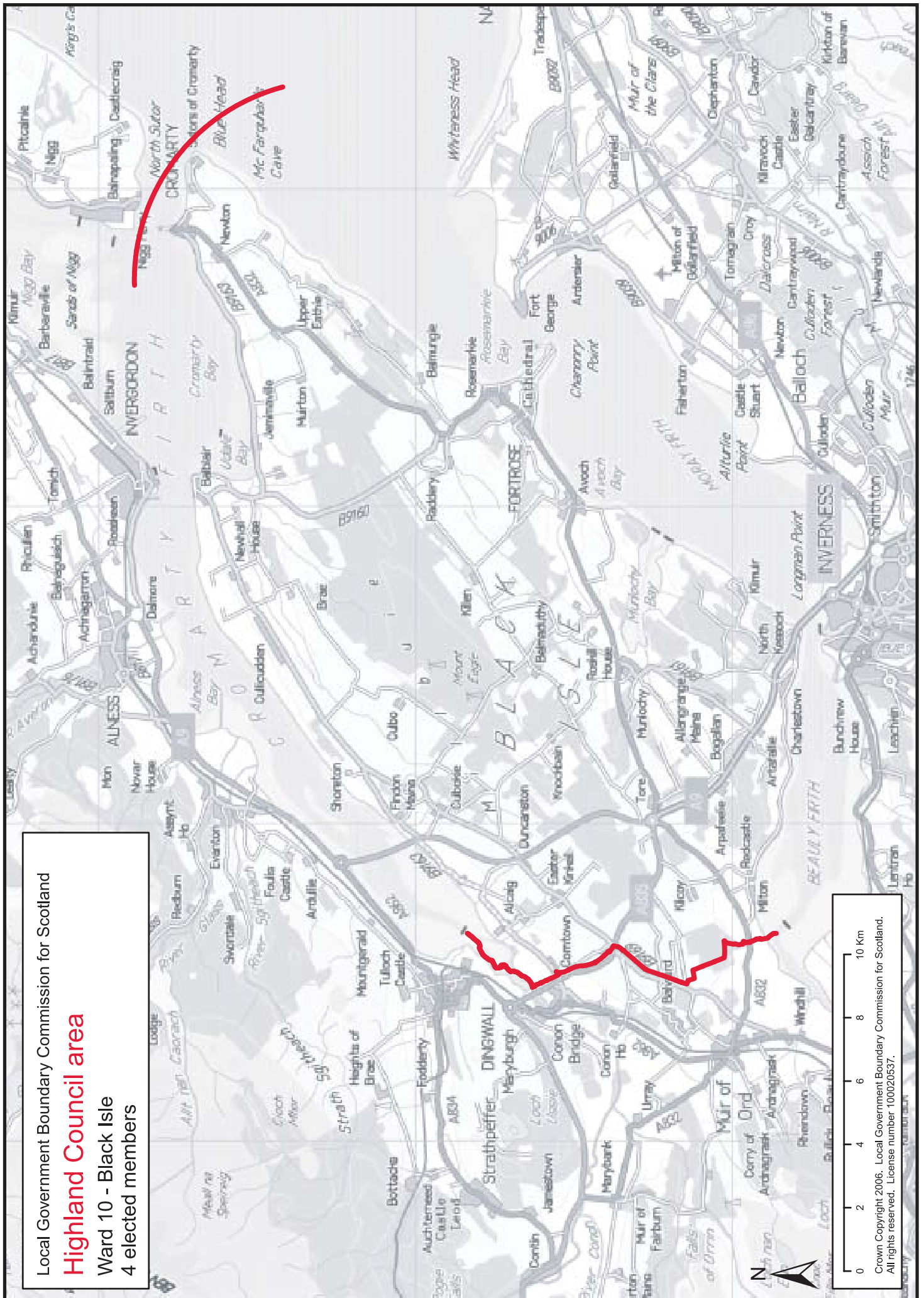


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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 10 - Black Isle
4 elected members

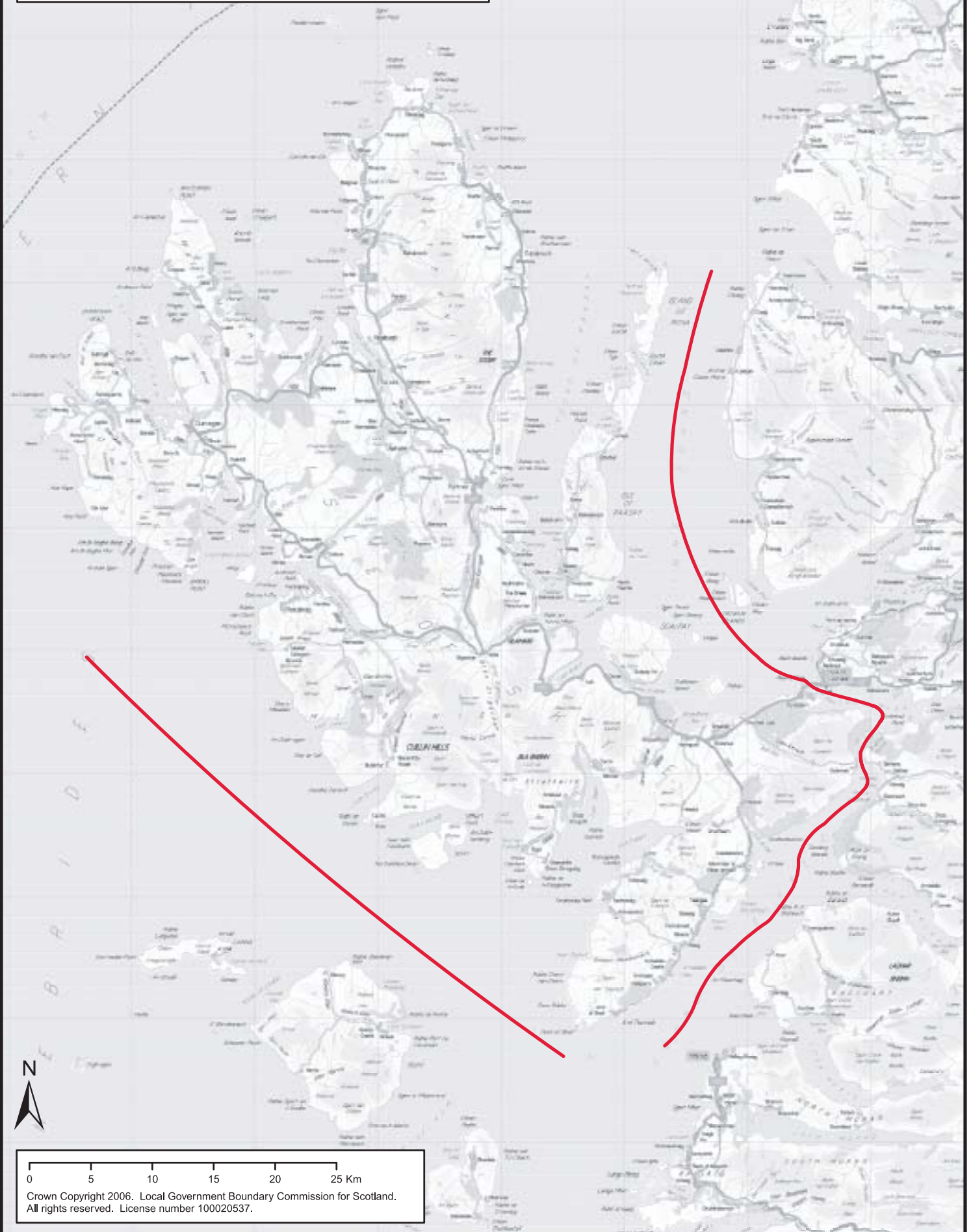


Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 11 - Eilean a' Chèo

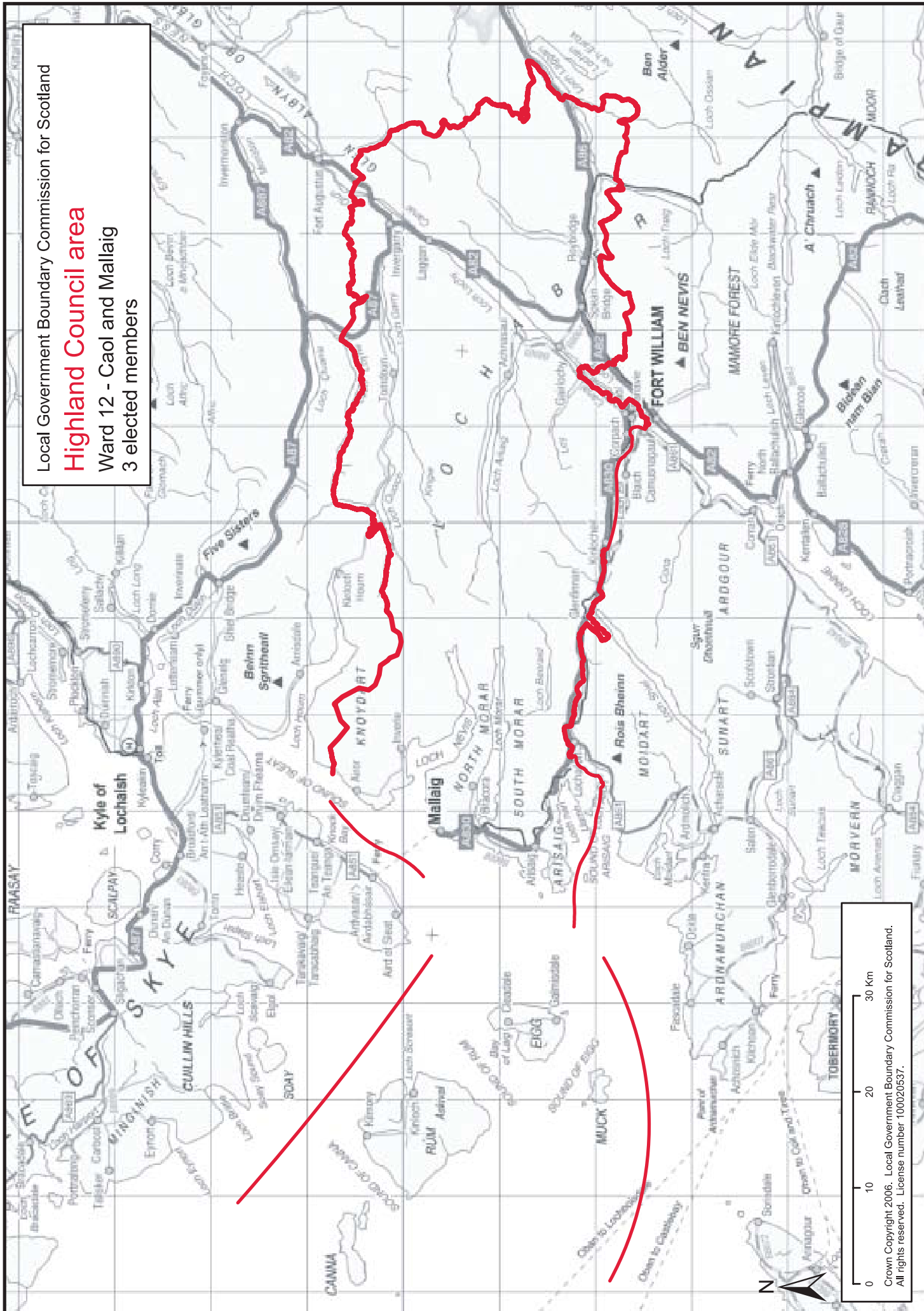
4 elected members

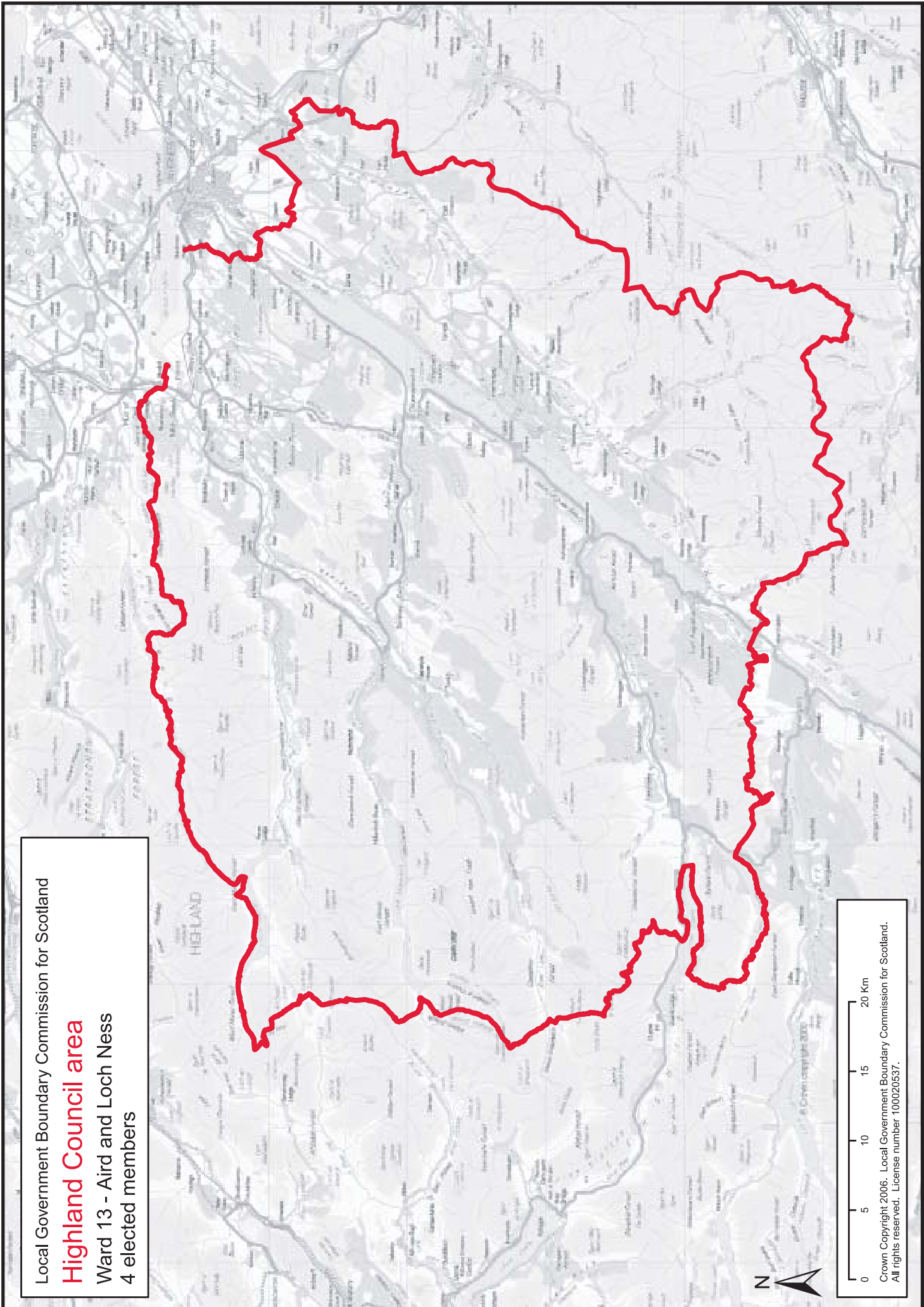


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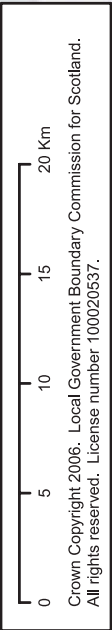
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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Highland Council area
 Ward 12 - Caol and Mallaig
 3 elected members





Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Highland Council area
Ward 13 - Aird and Loch Ness
4 elected members

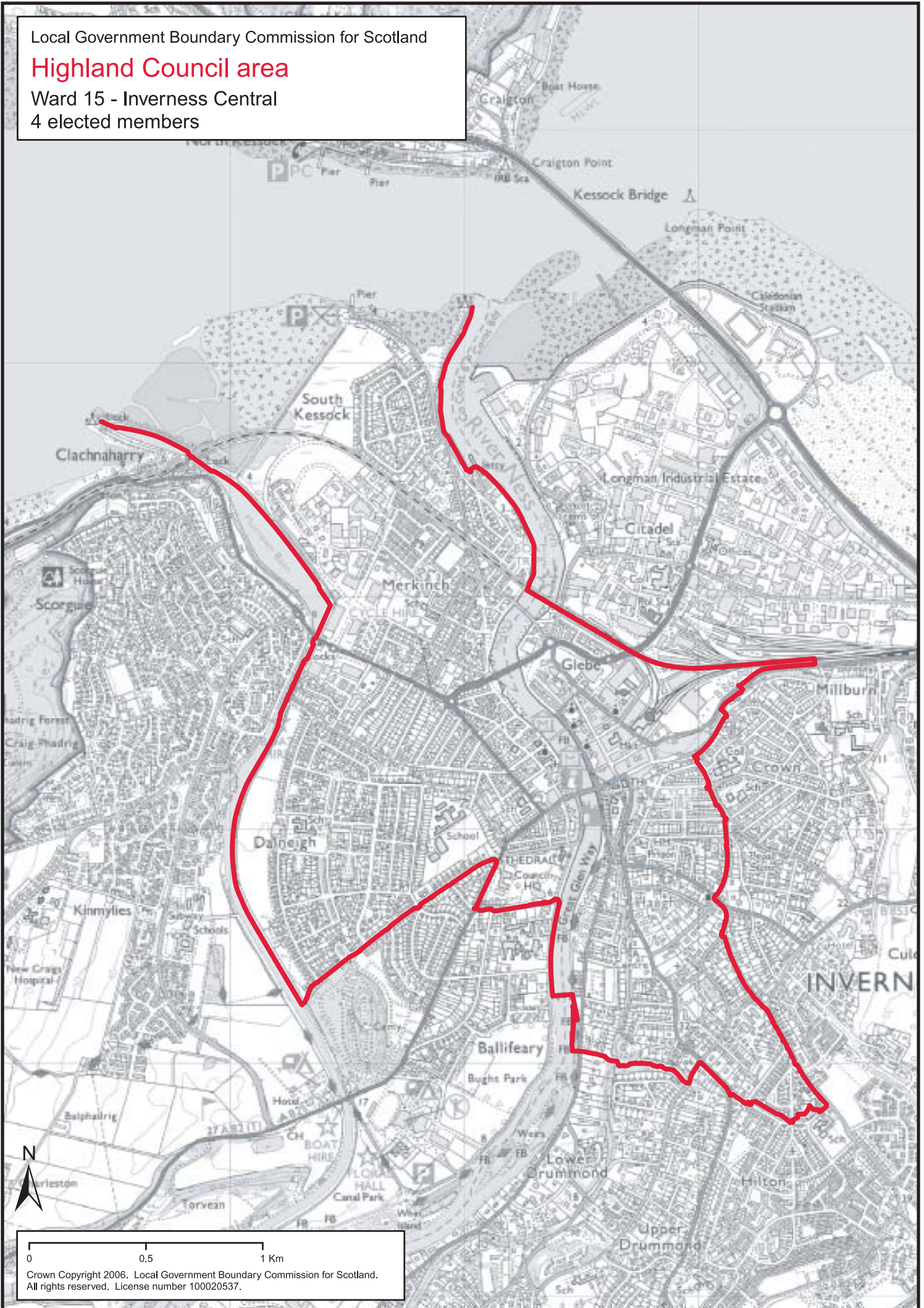


Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 15 - Inverness Central

4 elected members



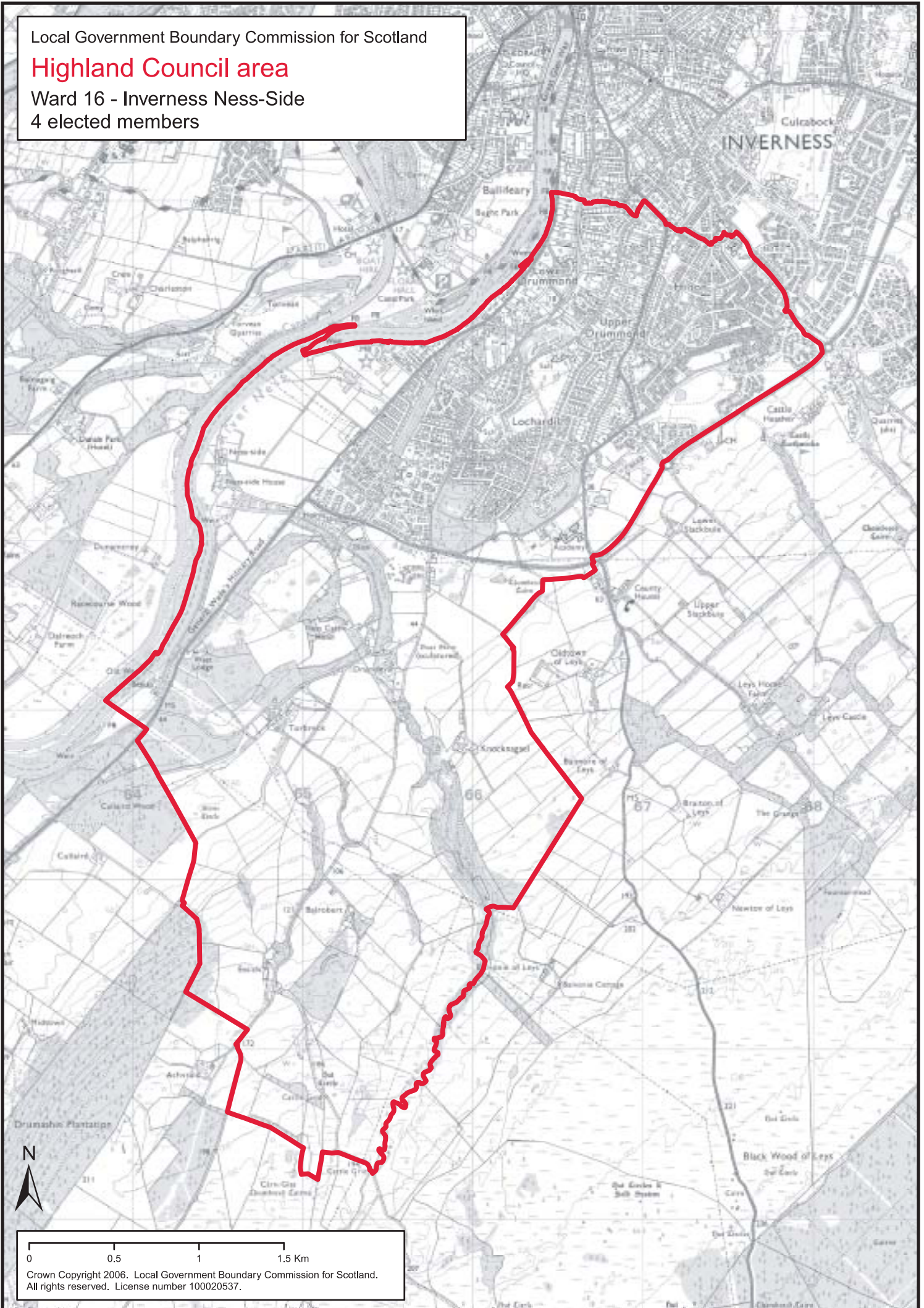
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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 16 - Inverness Ness-Side

4 elected members

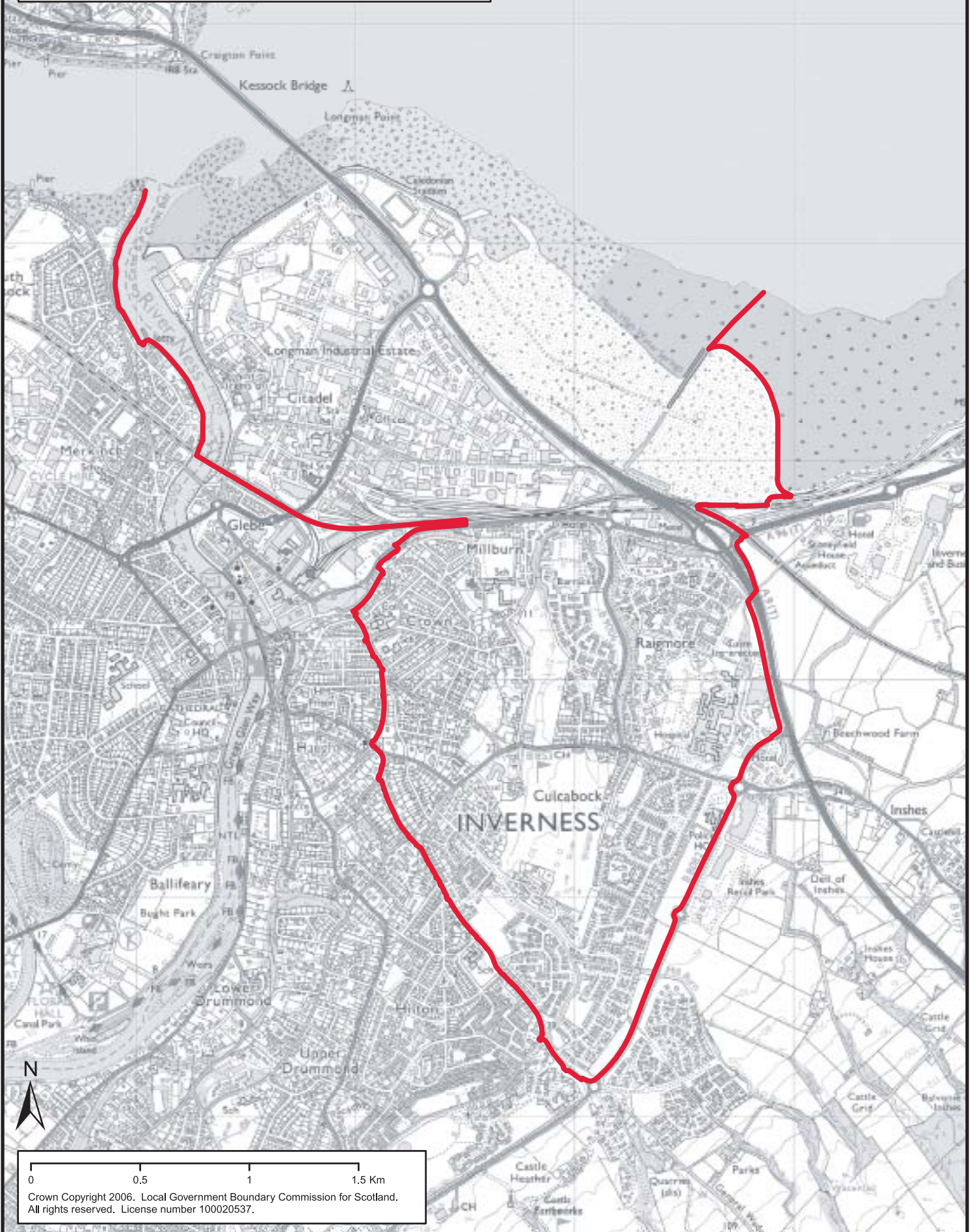


Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 17 - Inverness Millburn

3 elected members



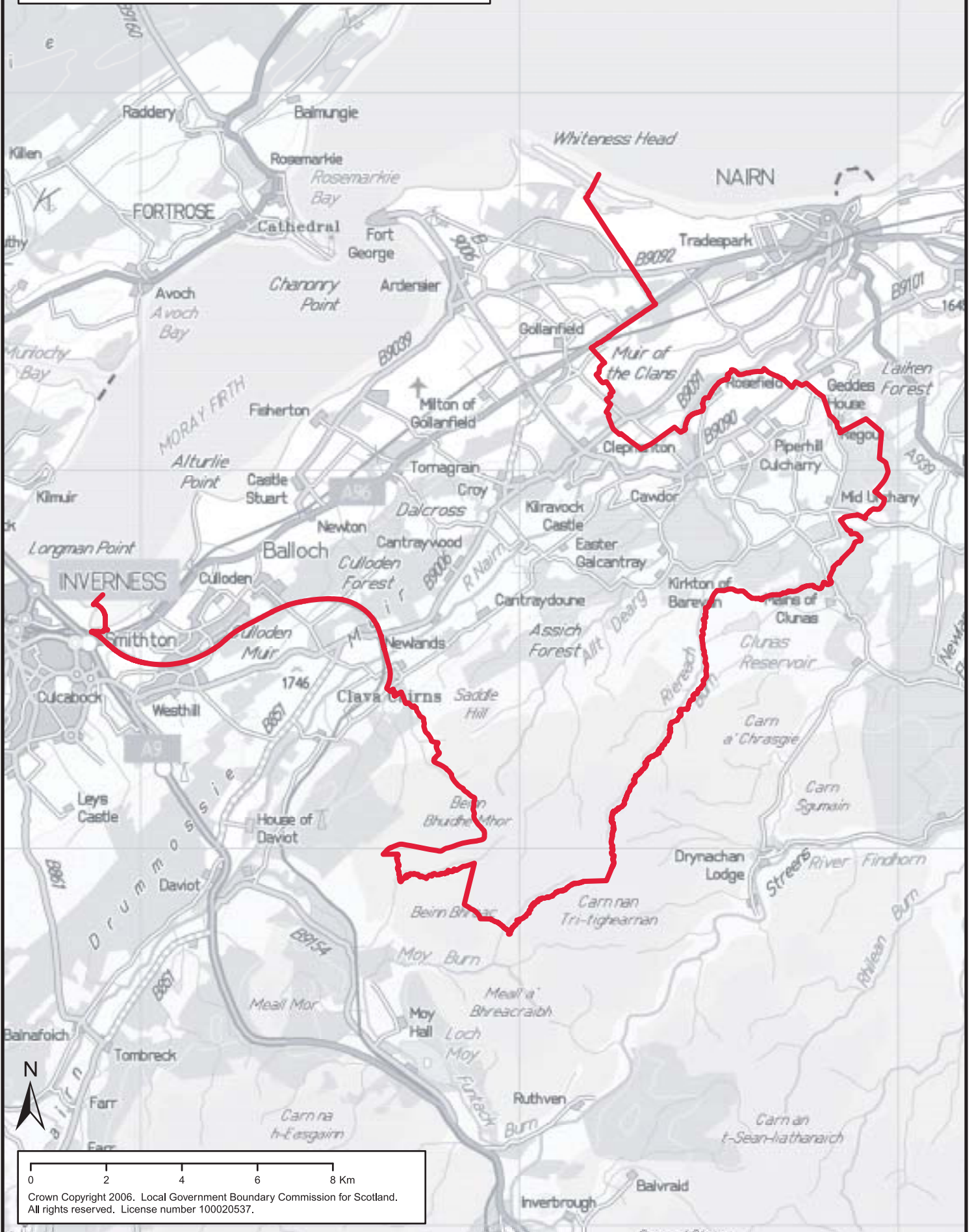
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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 18 - Culloden and Ardersier

4 elected members



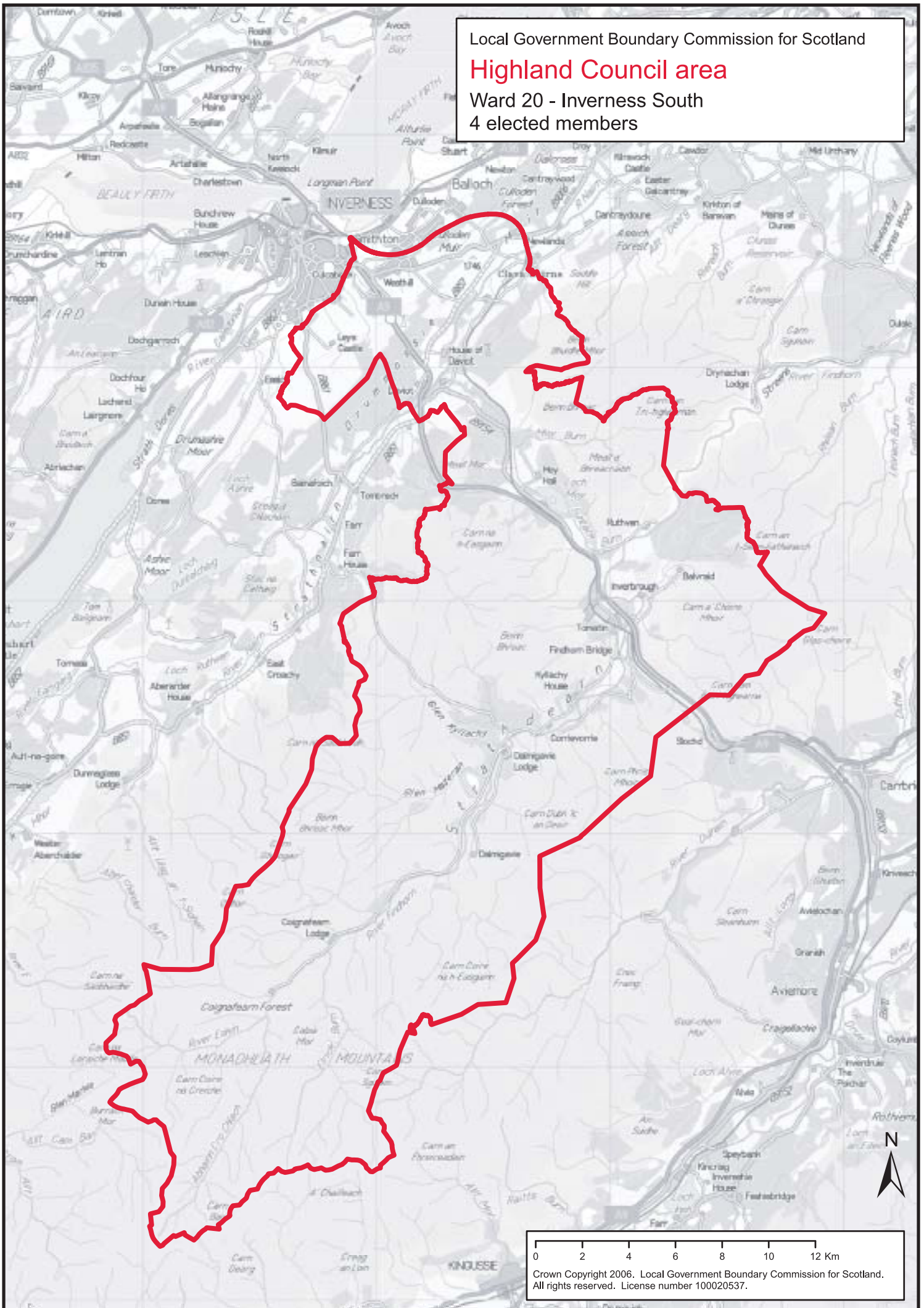
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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Highland Council area

Ward 20 - Inverness South

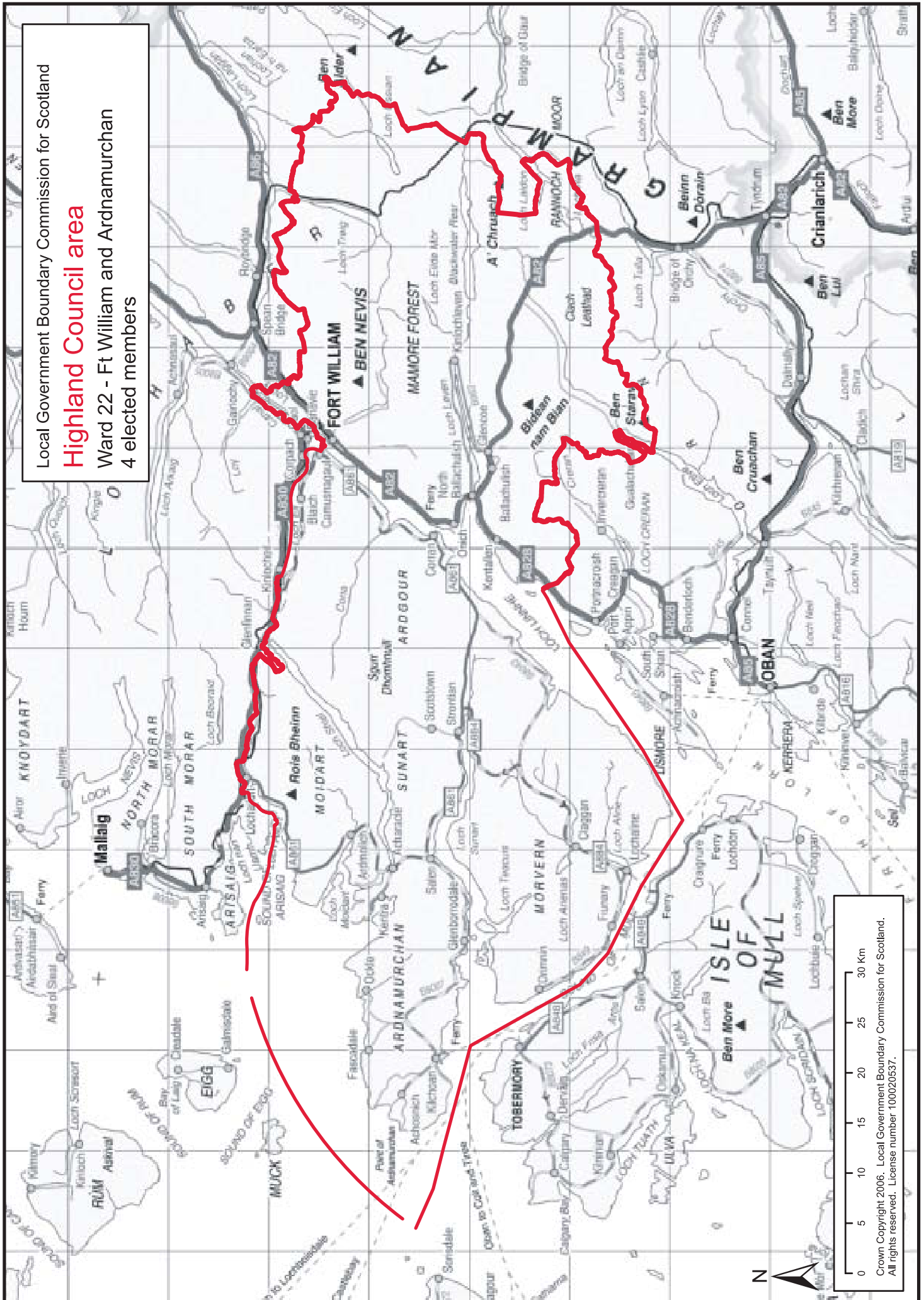
4 elected members



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Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Highland Council area
 Ward 22 - Ft William and Ardnamurchan
 4 elected members



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