

BOUNDARIES SCOTLAND - REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A report was submitted to the Council meeting held on 24 September 2020, detailing the terms of a proposed response to Boundaries Scotland's initial consultation, which ran for a 2 month period from 16th July to 30th September 2020, in regard to the 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements for Argyll and Bute Council area. The Council agreed the response and this was submitted

- 3.1 The Commission are tasked by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to undertake reviews of local government electoral arrangements in Scotland every 8 to 12 years. Argyll and Bute Council area was last reviewed during the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements, which reported in 2016. Scottish Ministers did not accept the Commission’s 5th Review recommendations for Argyll and Bute due to concerns about the impact of the recommendations on local ties and preference at that time for maintenance of status quo.
- 3.2 A further review was required under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. The Act recognises the importance of the Scottish Islands and the particular challenges they face. It offers additional flexibility to allow the Commission to recommend wards that elect 1 or 2 Councillors, as well as 3 or 4 Councillors, where such a ward contains an inhabited island. The Act requires Boundaries Scotland to review the six Councils containing inhabited islands. Shetland, Orkney and Na h-Eileanan an Iar Councils were consulted during 2019, and Argyll and Bute, together with Highland and North Ayrshire Councils have been consulted with during 2020/21.

Final Proposals for Argyll and Bute Council area

- 3.3 At page 3 of the Boundaries Scotland report the final proposals for Argyll and Bute are detailed as follows:-

“We propose that in the interests of effective and convenient local government the future electoral arrangements for Argyll and Bute Council area should provide for a council of 34 Councillors in 12 wards, comprising four wards returning 2-members, six wards returning 3-members and two wards each returning 4-members”:-

Ward	Electorate	Variation from Electoral Parity	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity
Kintyre	3	16.032	25	5.847
Islay, Jura and Colonsay and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree	3	16.032	25	5.847
Mid Argyll	4	7.857	63	7.857

“Our proposals:

Take account of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 by using the flexibility offered by two-member wards to better reflect local ties for island communities. The proposals present island-only wards for Islay, Jura and Colonsay and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree; retain the existing Isle of Bute ward with two councillors rather than three as at present, and

present a 2-member Lorn ward which includes the inhabited island of Lismore;
Reflect special geographic circumstances in relation to variation from electoral parity in the proposed island wards of Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree and Islay, Jura and Colonsay due to these islands' remoteness and their limited transport links;
Make no changes to the boundaries of four of the existing wards (Cowal; Dunoon; Isle of Bute; and Lomond North);
Place Oban within a single ward to avoid breaking local community ties;
Minimise change to the existing ward boundaries in Helensburgh, while reducing councillor numbers there by one; and
Have regard to Argyll and Bute Council's four administrative areas and the local ties and communities that they represent."

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Following consultation with the Council over a 2 month period from 16th July to 30th September 2020 and the wider public over a 12 week period between November 2020 and January 2021, Boundaries Scotland have prepared a report for Scottish Ministers setting out their final proposals for Argyll and Bute Council area. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1, which Members are asked to note.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy - In line with Scottish Government Legislation to improve health and social care outcomes for customers
 5.2 Financial – none arising from this report
 5.3 Legal – Review undertaken in line with Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, Scottish Elections (Reform) Act, and the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018.
 5.4 HR – none arising from this report
 5.5 Equalities/Fairer Scotland Duty/Islands – the Boundaries Scotland proposals have taken account of the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018
 5.6 Risk – none arising from this report
 5.7 Customer Services – the Boundaries Scotland proposals consider enhanced local ties for Island communities / parity of constituent representation on Islands

6.0 APPENDICE3(1)3(0211B5)TJ5 Tf1 0 0 eg out the 5.1

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