



2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements
Argyll and Bute Council area
Initial Proposals Consultation

July 2020

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HD

0131 244 2001

lgbc@scottishboundaries.gov.uk

www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk

Membership of the Commission

Chair: Mr Ronnie Hinds

Deputy Chair: Prof. Ailsa Henderson

Commissioners: Mr Roland Bean

Mr Jonathan Collins

Mr Gordon Macmillan

Dr Susan Walker

Secretary to the Commission: Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray

Introduction

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is an independent, non-political body with responsibility for:
 - carrying out reviews of electoral wards for local authorities;
 - carrying out reviews of the boundaries of local authority areas; and
 - carrying out reviews of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament.
2. We 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 a preference at that time for maintenance of the status quo. A further review is now 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.
3. The Scottish Elections (Reform) Act, which has recently completed its passage through the Scottish Parliament, allows us to recommend two and five member wards, in addition to three and four member wards, throughout Scotland. We considered the Act in developing our proposals while bearing in mind that the relevant sections of the legislation are not yet commenced.

This review

4. This review uses the same methodology for determining councillor numbers as was used in the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements.
5. We decide the number of councillors for each council by placing it into a category with similar councils. Argyll and Bute council area is grouped with other more rural council areas with below average levels of deprivation according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), with a ratio of electors per councillor of 2,800.
6. We are aware that a large change of councillor numbers in a council area can be disruptive, therefore our methodology also incorporates a 10% change rule. This means that we will not normally propose increasing or decreasing the total number of councillors in a council area by more than 10% as an immediate consequence of the Islands Reviews.
7. For each electoral ward, we make recommendations about its boundary, its name and the number of councillors to represent the ward.
8. When reviewing electoral arrangements the legislation requires us to take account of the following factors:
 - the interests of effective and convenient local government;
 - within each council, that each councillor should represent the same number of electors as nearly as may be;
 - local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary;
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable; and
 - special geographical considerations.

9. We developed our proposals using electorate data from 1 December 2018 but must also consider the likely change in the number of electors forecast within a 5 year period. We have prepared our forecasts using data supplied by councils as well as population forecasts from National Records of Scotland.

Consultation

10. The legislation states that we must first of all consult on our proposals with councils for at least two months. We agreed to a period of consultation and that period runs from 16 July until 30 September 2020. After consideration of responses received, we will conduct a public consultation on our proposals commencing in the autumn of 2020. After considering all the responses to our consultations, we will submit our final recommendations to Scottish Ministers.

11. All comments we receive in response to our consultations will be available to view on our website in due course.

Next steps

12. We intend to submit a report containing our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Argyll and Bute council area to Scottish Ministers by May 2021, in time for implementation for the next local government elections in May 2022.

Proposals for wards in Argyll and Bute council area

13. Our methodology for determining councillor numbers proposed 33 councillors for Argyll and Bute council area. However, in developing our proposals, a better ward design was achievable with 34 councillors and accordingly we present an electoral arrangement for 34 councillors representing four 2-member wards, six 3-member wards and two 4-member wards, reducing overall councillor numbers by two.

14. We have prepared maps which illustrate our proposals for wards in Argyll and Bute council area and these are attached.

15. Our proposals for the council area:

- take account of the Islands (Scotland) Act by using the flexibility offered by 2-member wards to better reflect local ties for island communities. The proposals present island-only wards for: Islay, Jura and Colonsay; Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree; and retain the existing Isle of Bute ward with 2 councillors rather than 3 as at present;
- consider 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 five of the existing wards (Cowal; Dunoon; Isle of Bute; Lomond North; and Mid Argyll);
- 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;
- take account of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act, which allows the use of 2-member and 5-member wards across Scotland, to design a 2-member ward that considers local ties in Lorn; and
- have regard to Argyll and Bute Council's four administrative areas and the local ties and communities that they represent.

16. The table below details the electorates with actual and forecast variation from parity of the proposed wards.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%)
1	Kintyre	4	7,404	-5.7	7,222	-6.8
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5	2,927	-24.4
3	Mid Argyll	3	5,985	1.7	5,927	2.0
4	Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree	2	3,211	-18.2	3,438	-11.2
5	Oban	4	8,357	6.5	8,497	9.7
6	Lorn	2	4,190	6.8	4,164	7.5
7	Cowal	3	5,734	-2.6	5,596	-3.7
8	Dunoon	3	5,500	-6.6	5,304	-8.7
9	Isle of Bute	2	4,696	19.6	4,406	13.8
10	Lomond North	3	6,000	1.9	5,858	0.8
11	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	9.1	6,075	4.6
12	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	8.3	6,420	10.5
		34	66,725		65,834	