

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 in accordance with the 30th September 2020 deadline.
- 1.2 Following the initial consultation with the Council, Boundaries Scotland considered our response and developed proposals for public consultation, which ran for a 12 week period between November 2020 and January 2021.
- 1.3 Having considered all the comments submitted as part of the public consultation, Boundaries Scotland have now published their final proposals for Argyll and Bute Council area and a copy of the report to Scottish Ministers is attached at appendix 1. If Scottish Ministers are content with the report, it is anticipated that the proposals will be implemented ready for the Local Government elections in May 2022.
- 1.4 In line with section 18(3) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 the Council will make copies of the report available for public inspection at suitable locations and will be publicised on the Council website from 10 June 2021 until 6 months after the making of an Order in the Scottish Parliament giving effect to any proposals in the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:-

- 2.1 Note the final proposals from Boundaries Scotland in regard to the 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements for Argyll and Bute Council area (attached at appendix 1); and
- 2.2 Note that if Scottish Ministers are content with the report any proposals approved by them will be in force prior to the Local Government Elections in May 2022.

3. DETAIL

- 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 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 No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 18)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%) ¹	Forecast Electorate (2024) ²	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%) ¹
1	Kintyre	3	6,032	2.5	5,847	0.7
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5	2,927	-24.4
3	Mid Argyll	4	7,357	-6.3	7,302	-5.7
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	

“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 APPENDICES

- 6.1 Appendix 1: Review of Electoral Arrangements – Argyll and Bute Council Area Final Proposals

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Legal and Regulatory Support

Policy Lead – Councillor Mary-Jean Devon – Support Services

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For further information, please contact:

Laura Blackwood

Directorate Support Officer

01546 604325