

News Release

Issued on behalf of The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland



EMBARGO – NOT FOR USE BEFORE 0001 Hours on 20 March 2019

Electoral reviews of island council areas

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has begun (Wednesday 20 March) a consultation with councils on proposals for electoral arrangements in Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. The consultation will run until 20 May 2019.

Ronnie Hinds, Chair of the Commission, said:

“We are pleased to begin our consultation on electoral arrangements with the three councils today and I look forward to engaging with them on our proposals. It is important that electoral arrangements for Scottish councils are effective and that our proposals deliver on requirements for electoral parity and, as far as possible, take account of local ties and special geographical considerations.

“We also welcome the flexibility offered by the Islands (Scotland) Act to use one or two member wards and have used this flexibility as appropriate in our proposals. After completion of our consultation with councils we will be seeking public views on our proposals over the summer.”

The 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements will make proposals for the six council areas specified in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 – Argyll and Bute, Highland, North Ayrshire, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands.

The Commission is conducting the review in two phases, focusing firstly on Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands. Consultation with the public is planned for the summer 2019. The Commission will then review Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire.

The reviews will result in recommendations for the number of councillors on each council and the number and boundaries of wards for the election of those councillors. They will not look at the external boundaries of council areas. The new islands legislation allows for use of one or two member wards, in addition to the current three and four member wards, where a ward includes an inhabited island.

Background

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 requires the Commission to review the six councils as soon as practicable and the Commission will make its recommendations to Scottish Ministers by May 2021, in order that the resulting wards will be available for the local government elections in May 2022.

When reviewing electoral arrangements the Commission is required to take account of the following factors:

- The interests of effective and convenient local government
- Within each council, each councillor should represent the same number of electors as closely as possible
- Local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary
- The desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable
- Special geographical considerations

Where a ward contains an inhabited island the Commission can recommend that it elects between one and four councillors. In all other circumstances a ward must return either three or four councillors.

Contact for Further Information:

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Information on the review can also be found on the Commission's website:
www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk

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