

News Release

Issued on behalf of The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland



The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland commences the reviews of Islands council areas

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has begun reviews of electoral arrangements for the six council areas specified in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. These are Argyll and Bute Council, Highland Council, North Ayrshire Council, na h-Eilanan an iar, Orkney Islands Council and Shetland Islands Council.

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 1 or 2 member wards, in addition to the current multi-member wards, where a ward includes an inhabited island.

The Commission will conduct the reviews in two phases, focusing first on na h-Eilanan an iar and Orkney and Shetland Islands council areas. Consultation with the councils and the public is planned for spring and summer 2019. The Commission will then review Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas.

Ronnie Hinds, Chair of the Commission, said:

“We welcome the new islands legislation and the flexibility it offers us to use one or two member wards where there are inhabited islands. The islands make a unique contribution to Scotland but island communities face distinctive challenges and the new flexibility will help us recognise that while respecting the other requirements of an electoral review.

“We look forward to engaging with the six councils and their communities and have already taken the opportunity during 2018 to begin discussions in Shetland, Orkney and na h-Eileanan an iar. Consultation is key to our work and we hope to encourage full participation in the reviews over the next two years.”

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 before 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 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.

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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