

**LGBCS Paper 2462****2018 Review of Electoral Arrangements  
Shetland Islands council area****Purpose**

1. The Commission is invited to consider its Initial Proposals for the 2018 Review of Electoral Arrangements in Shetland Islands council area.

**Background**

2. The Commission agreed to adopt the same methodology from its 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews for its review of Island-only council areas. The 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews methodology placed Shetland Islands, Orkney Islands and Na h-Eileanan Siar council areas in the same category with a ratio of electors per councillor of 800:1.
3. The methodology recommended 22 councillors for Shetland Islands council area, representing no change from the existing number of councillors. The Commission may wish to consider flexibility with councillor numbers when considering its ward design options and following feedback from its consultations.
4. The 5 year forecast electorate in the Shetland Islands shows an increase from 17,729 in 2018 to 17,873 in 2023.
5. During the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements the Commission recommended ward boundaries which addressed variation from parity in wards 3 and 5.
6. The Commission met Shetland Islands Council in June 2018 to discuss the approach to the review and in particular the new flexibility offered by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to use 1 or 2-member wards. At that meeting, Shetland Islands Council suggested areas where it felt this flexibility might be beneficial. They suggested replacing the current 3-member North Isles ward with a 1-member ward for Bruray and Whalsay and a 2-member ward covering Fetlar, Unst and Yell as there are no direct ferry links between these groups of islands. The Council also felt that matching ward boundaries to Locality boundaries would assist both the council and health board in delivering local services.

**Options**

7. This paper sets out four options for the Commission to consider:
  - Option 1 is the Commission's recommendations from its 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews;
  - Option 2 aims to improve variation from parity in wards 3 and 5 with 1, 2, 3 and 4-member wards;
  - Option 3 proposes a ward design based on Shetland Localities; and
  - Option 4 retains the existing ward boundaries that have been in place since 2007.
8. Options 1, 2 and 4 propose 22 councillors. Option 3 proposes 23 councillors, one more than the Commission's methodology recommended.
9. Options 1 and 4 propose 3 and 4-member wards. Options 2 and 3 propose 1, 2, 3 and 4-member wards
10. Each of these options is considered in more detail below.

**Option 1 – Recommendations from 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews**

11. Option 1 adopts the Commission's recommendations from its 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews.

12. The 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews addressed variation from parity in ward 3 and ward 5 and made no changes to the ward boundaries of ward 1 (North Isles) and ward 2 (Shetland North). The recommended ward boundaries from the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews broadly followed community council area boundaries to the west of Lerwick.

13. During the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews public consultation stage, 5 respondents commented on this ward design, with both some support and opposition to the proposals.

14. The electorates and associated variation from parity of the proposed wards for Option 1 are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendices A & E:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity	Forecast Electorate	Forecast variation from parity
1	North Isles	3	2,207	-8.7%	2,207	-9.4%
2	Shetland North	3	2,504	3.6%	2,524	3.6%
3	Shetland West	3	2,681	10.9%	2,724	11.8%
4	Shetland Central	3	2,200	-9.0%	2,230	-8.5%
5	Shetland South	3	2,639	9.2%	2,655	8.9%
6	Lerwick North	3	2,334	-3.5%	2,336	-4.2%
7	Lerwick South	4	3,164	-1.8%	3,197	-1.6%
		<b>22</b>	<b>17,729</b>		<b>17,873</b>	

15. The advantages of Option 1 are:

- it improves variation from parity in ward 3 and ward 5 in comparison to the existing ward boundaries;
- makes no changes to ward 1 (North Isles) and ward 2 (Shetland North), retaining local ties; and
- two members of the public supported this ward design during the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews public consultation stage, both in the south of Shetland and throughout the area.

16. The disadvantages of Option 1 are:

- There was some opposition to this ward design during the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews public consultation stage. This included:
  - a member of the public stated that Gulberwick and Lerwick have close ties and they should not be split between wards;
  - a community council stated that the proposals do not consider existing community council boundaries, break local ties between Scalloway and Tingwall, and asked the Commission to consider adopting parish boundaries instead;
  - Shetland Islands Council raised concerns stating that the proposed ward boundaries did not align with other boundaries, they may consider variation from parity but do not consider community ties, especially in Shetland West and they break local ties by Quarff and Gulberwick; and
- variation from parity is over 10% in ward 3; and

**Option 2**

17. Option 2 proposes a ward design that aims to address variation from parity with 1, 2, 3 and 4-member wards.
18. Option 2 divides the existing 3-member North Isles ward into a 1-member Whalsay and Skerries ward and a 2-member Unst, Fetlar and Yell ward.
19. Option 2 retains the existing Shetland North ward.
20. The proposed West Mainland ward boundary partly follows an historic ward boundary and partly a watershed.
21. The proposed boundary between the two Lerwick wards mainly follows the existing ward boundary, historic ward boundaries and Anderson Road.
22. The proposed ward boundaries in the south of Shetland follow historic ward boundaries.
23. The electorates and associated variation from parity of the proposed wards for Option 2 are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendices B & F:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity %	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity %
1	Unst and Fetlar and Yell	2	1,345	-16.5	1,345	-17.2
2	Whalsay Skerries	1	862	7.0	862	6.1
3	North Mainland	3	2,504	3.6	2,524	3.6
4	West Mainland	3	2,510	3.8	2,553	4.8
5	Lerwick North	3	2,352	-2.7	2,352	-3.5
6	Lerwick South	4	3,151	-2.2	3,186	-2.0
7	Quarff and Cunningsburgh	4	3,405	5.6	3,451	6.2
8	Dunrossness and Fair Isle	2	1,600	-0.7	1,600	-1.5
		22	17,729		17,873	

24. The advantages of Option 2 are it:
- retains the existing Shetland North ward; and
  - addresses variation from parity in wards 3 and 5.
25. The disadvantages of Option 2 are:
- variation from parity in ward 1 is over 10% but this ward contains solely inhabited islands in the far north of the council area and therefore special geographical circumstances could be considered.

**Option 3 – Shetland Localities**

26. Option 3 adopts a ward design based on Shetland Localities. Localities are used by the Council and Health Board for community planning and health and social

care. Shetland Council asked the Commission to consider a ward design based on localities when they met in June 2018.

27. There are seven localities in Shetland: North Isles; Whalsay & Skerries; North Mainland; Central Mainland; West Mainland; South Mainland; and Lerwick and Bressay. They mainly follow similar boundaries to community councils and parishes and will therefore have some historical or local community ties. Only the Shetland North locality and current Shetland North ward are coterminous.
28. The Central Mainland locality boundary, to the west of Lerwick, mainly follows a similar boundary to an historic ward and community council area boundary.
29. The Shetland South locality boundary follows a community council area boundary.
30. The Lerwick and Bressay locality contains approximately 5,300 electors, therefore this locality has been divided into two wards. The proposed boundary splits Lerwick by following the existing ward boundary.
31. Option 3 recommends 23 councillors, one more than the methodology proposes. An extra councillor has been added to one of the 2 wards included within the Lerwick and Bressay locality. An additional councillor improves variation from parity in this area as well as two other wards.
32. Variation from parity is over 10% in three wards but this could be considered acceptable if the ward design creates easily identifiable boundaries that consider local ties.
33. The electorates and associated variation from parity of the proposed wards for Option 3 are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendices C & G:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity
1	North Isles	2	1,345	-12.76%	1,345	-13.46%
2	Whalsay and Skerries	1	862	11.83%	862	10.93%
3	Shetland North	3	2,504	8.28%	2,524	8.27%
4	Shetland West	2	1,373	-10.94%	1,373	-11.66%
5	Shetland Central	4	3,017	-2.15%	3,092	-0.53%
6	Lerwick North and Bressay	3	2,335	0.97%	2,335	0.16%
7	Lerwick South	4	3,008	-2.44%	3,041	-2.17%
8	Shetland South	4	3,285	6.54%	3,301	6.20%
		<b>23</b>	<b>17,729</b>		<b>17,873</b>	

34. The advantages of Option 3 are:
- it adopts boundaries recognisable to the Council, Health Board and general public; and
  - addresses variation from parity in wards 3 and 5.
35. The disadvantages of Option 3 are:

- variation from parity is over 10% in three wards, but two of these are solely island wards and special geographical circumstances could be considered; and
- proposes 23 councillors, one more than methodology recommends.

#### Option 4 – Existing Wards

36. Option 4 retains the existing electoral arrangements. It makes no changes to the existing ward boundaries or number of councillors.

37. The electorates and associated variation from parity for Option 4 are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendices D & H:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity
1	North Isles	3	2,207	-9%	2,207	-9%
2	Shetland North	3	2,504	4%	2,523	4%
3	Shetland West	3	2,038	-16%	2,051	-16%
4	Shetland Central	3	2,365	-2%	2,400	-2%
5	Shetland South	3	2,836	17%	2,852	17%
6	Lerwick North	3	2,334	-3%	2,336	-4%
7	Lerwick South	4	3,445	7%	3,504	8%
		<b>22</b>	<b>17,729</b>		<b>17,873</b>	

38. The advantages of Option 4 are:

- it maintains the existing electoral arrangements and may avoid confusion by retaining identifiable ward boundaries; and
- it maintains local ties.

39. The disadvantages of Option 4 are:

- variation from parity in two wards is over 10%. Ward 3 (Shetland West) is a Shetland mainland ward which includes the inhabited islands of Papa Stour and Foula. Ward 5 Shetland South is also a Shetland mainland ward and it includes the inhabited island of Fair Isle; and
- it does not consider the use of 1 or 2 member wards;

#### Conclusions

40. Only options 2 and 3 consider the use of 1, 2, 3 and 4-member wards.

41. All four options propose at least one ward with variation from parity over 10%, although the Commission can consider special geographical circumstances due to the remoteness of Shetland and its island communities.

42. Option 3 considers a ward design based on Shetland Locality boundaries. These boundaries are used by both the Council and Health Board and would create recognisable boundaries but variation from parity is over 10% in three wards.

#### Recommendations

43. The Commission is invited to provisionally agree its Initial Proposals for the 2018 Review of Electoral Arrangements in Shetland Islands council area.

44. The Secretariat will liaise with Council Officials to consider possible ward names. The Commission will wish to consider these before confirming its initial proposals.

**Secretariat  
November 2018**