

LGBCS Paper 2471**2018 Review of Electoral Arrangements
Orkney Islands council area****Purpose**

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

Background

2. At its meeting of 3 December the Commission considered Paper 2463 and three ward design options for Orkney Islands council area. The three options included:
 - Option 1 which demonstrated the status quo and existing ward boundaries that have been in place since 2007. These are also the Commission's recommendations from its 5th Reviews;
 - Option 2 which aimed to improve variation from parity in wards 3 and 5, while minimising change to the existing arrangements; and
 - Option 3 which considered the use of 2, 3 and 4-member wards.
3. All three options retained 21 councillors for Orkney Islands council area.
4. The Commission also asked the Secretariat to consider alternative options for the North Isles ward; see Appendix G for further discussion of the North Isles.
5. During the 5th Reviews the Commission recommended no changes to the existing electoral arrangements for Orkney Islands council area.

Meeting with Council Officers

6. The Secretariat met officers from Orkney Islands Council on Monday 14th January 2019 to discuss informal views on proposed boundaries, the extent to which they take account of local ties, possible ward names and to seek advice on handling of the public consultation later in 2019. The Secretariat will provide an oral update from their visit at the Commission meeting.

Options

7. This paper sets out three options for the Commission to consider. Options 1 and 3 are unchanged from Paper 2463. Each of the options is considered in more detail below, but in summary:
 - Option 1 – Commission's recommendations from its 5th Reviews and the existing ward boundaries;
 - Option 2 – minimises change but amends ward boundaries south of Kirkwall and in west mainland; and
 - Option 3 – ward design that only retains one ward and proposes a 2-member ward.

Option 1 – Recommendations from 5th Reviews/ Existing Wards

8. Option 1 adopts the Commission's recommendations from its 5th Reviews which retained the existing electoral arrangements and made no changes to councillor numbers or ward boundaries.
9. During the 5th Reviews consultation on councillor numbers, Orkney Islands Council asked the Commission to consider the unique challenges that councillors face when representing remote and island communities. There were two responses to the public consultation on councillor numbers, one which

opposed and one which supported the proposals. During the 5th Review consultation on ward boundaries only Orkney Islands Council responded to the consultation but offered no further comment.

10. The 5th Reviews recommended a North Isles ward with a wide variation from parity because its rural, sparsely-populated with limited transport links and composed of islands.

11. 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 & D:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity %	Forecast Electorate	Forecast variation from parity %
1	Kirkwall East	4	3,416	5.3	3,422	5.8
2	Kirkwall West and Orphir	4	3,454	6.4	3,492	7.9
3	Stromness and South Isles	3	2,147	-11.8	2,140	-11.8
4	West Mainland	4	3,521	8.5	3,492	7.9
5	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray	3	2,702	11.0	2,670	10.0
6	North Isles	3	1,798	-26.1	1,771	-27.0
		21	17,038		16,988	

12. The advantages of Option 1 are:

- maintains the existing electoral arrangements and minimises disruption;
- avoids confusion by retaining identifiable ward boundaries; and
- there was no opposition to this ward design during the 5th Reviews.

13. The disadvantages of Option 1 are:

- forecast variation from parity is over 10% in two wards. However, during the 5th Reviews the Commission considered that the wide variation from parity in ward 6 (North Isles) was acceptable due to its special geographic circumstances, with 12 populated islands and limited transport links between the islands.

Option 2

14. Option 2 proposes a ward design that aims to minimise change to the existing electoral arrangements while addressing variation from parity in wards 3 and 5.

15. Option 2 proposes to transfer approximately 450 electors from the West Mainland ward to the Stromness and South Isles ward. The proposed boundary mainly follows recognised boundaries (community council, historic ward, parish) as well as the centre of a loch.

16. Option 2 also proposes to transfer approximately 190 electors from the East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray ward to the Kirkwall East ward. The proposed boundary follows an historic ward boundary and burns by Kirkwall airport. The proposed boundary considers local ties by placing Kirkwall airport and the community of Wideford within a Kirkwall East ward.

17. 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 & E:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity
1	Kirkwall East	4	3,622	11.6	3,605	11.4
2	Kirkwall West and Orphir	4	3,454	6.4	3,492	7.9
3	Stromness and South Isles	3	2,607	7.1	2,590	6.7
4	West Mainland	4	3,061	-5.7	3,042	-6.0
5	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray	3	2,496	2.5	2,488	2.5
6	North Isles	3	1,798	-26.1	1,771	-27.0
		21	17,038		16,988	

18. The advantages of Option 2 are:

- addresses variation from parity in wards 3 and 5;
- minimises change to the existing electoral arrangements;
- considers local ties in the whole council area;
- retains the existing North Isles and Kirkwall West and Orphir wards;
- the proposed West Mainland ward boundary follows recognisable current and historic boundaries. The proposed Kirkwall East boundary follows an historic ward boundary and natural features.

19. The disadvantages of Option 2 are:

- although Option 2 improves variation from parity in ward 5 (East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray), by considering local ties south of Kirkwall variation from parity has worsened in ward 1 (Kirkwall East); and
- variation from parity is over 10% in the North Isles ward. However, during the 5th Reviews the Commission considered that the wide variation from parity in ward 6 (North Isles) was acceptable due to its special geographic circumstances, with 12 populated islands and limited transport links between the islands.

Option 3

20. Option 3 aims to address variation from parity in existing wards 3 and 5 and considers the use of a 2-member ward.

21. Option 3 proposes a 2-member ward that includes the islands of South Ronaldsay and Burray as well as St Marys on the mainland. The proposed ward boundary follows community council, historic ward and parish boundaries. The islands of Burray and South Ronaldsay contain approximately 1,100 electors, too many electors for a 1-member ward and too few for a 2-member ward. Therefore the proposed ward includes both island and mainland communities linked by the A961 road.

22. Option 3 proposes a 4-member Stromness and South Isles ward. The electorate of the islands of Flotta and Hoy is approximately 400, too few for a 1-member ward. The proposed ward links Flotta and Hoy to the two mainland ferry terminals at Stromness and Houton that serve them. Houton is currently located within a separate ward to Flotta and Hoy. The proposed ward boundary mainly

follows a parish boundary and partly community council and historic ward boundaries.

23. Option 3 splits Kirkwall to create two 4-member wards. The proposed boundary between the two Kirkwall wards follows the existing ward boundary and then broadly follows an A-road in a northerly direction towards Kirkwall harbour. Historically the A-road has been a ward boundary.

24. The proposed boundary to the west of Kirkwall does not follow any recognisable or historic boundaries. The existing ward boundary to the west of Kirkwall follows field drainage ditches. If the Commission wished a stronger boundary in this area, variation from parity in the proposed Kirkwall West ward would exceed 10%.

25. Option 3 retains one ward from the existing arrangements, North Isles.

26. 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 & F:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity
1	Kirkwall East	4	3,529	8.7	3,518	8.7
2	Kirkwall West and Orphir	4	3,455	6.5	3,510	8.5
3	Stromness and South Isles	4	3,215	-0.9	3,172	-2.0
4	West Mainland	4	3,307	1.9	3,273	1.1
5	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray	2	1,734	6.9	1,717	6.1
6	North Isles	3	1,798	-26.1	1,798	-25.9
		21	17,038		16,988	

27. The advantages of Option 3 are:

- it addresses variation from parity in wards 3 and 5.

28. The disadvantages of Option 3 are:

- variation from parity is over 10% in the North Isles ward. However, during the 5th Reviews the Commission considered that the wide variation from parity in ward 6 (North Isles) was acceptable due to its special geographic circumstances, with 12 populated islands and limited transport links between the islands;
- retains only one ward from the existing arrangements; and
- the proposed boundary to the west of Kirkwall does not follow recognisable boundaries or physical features.

Conclusions

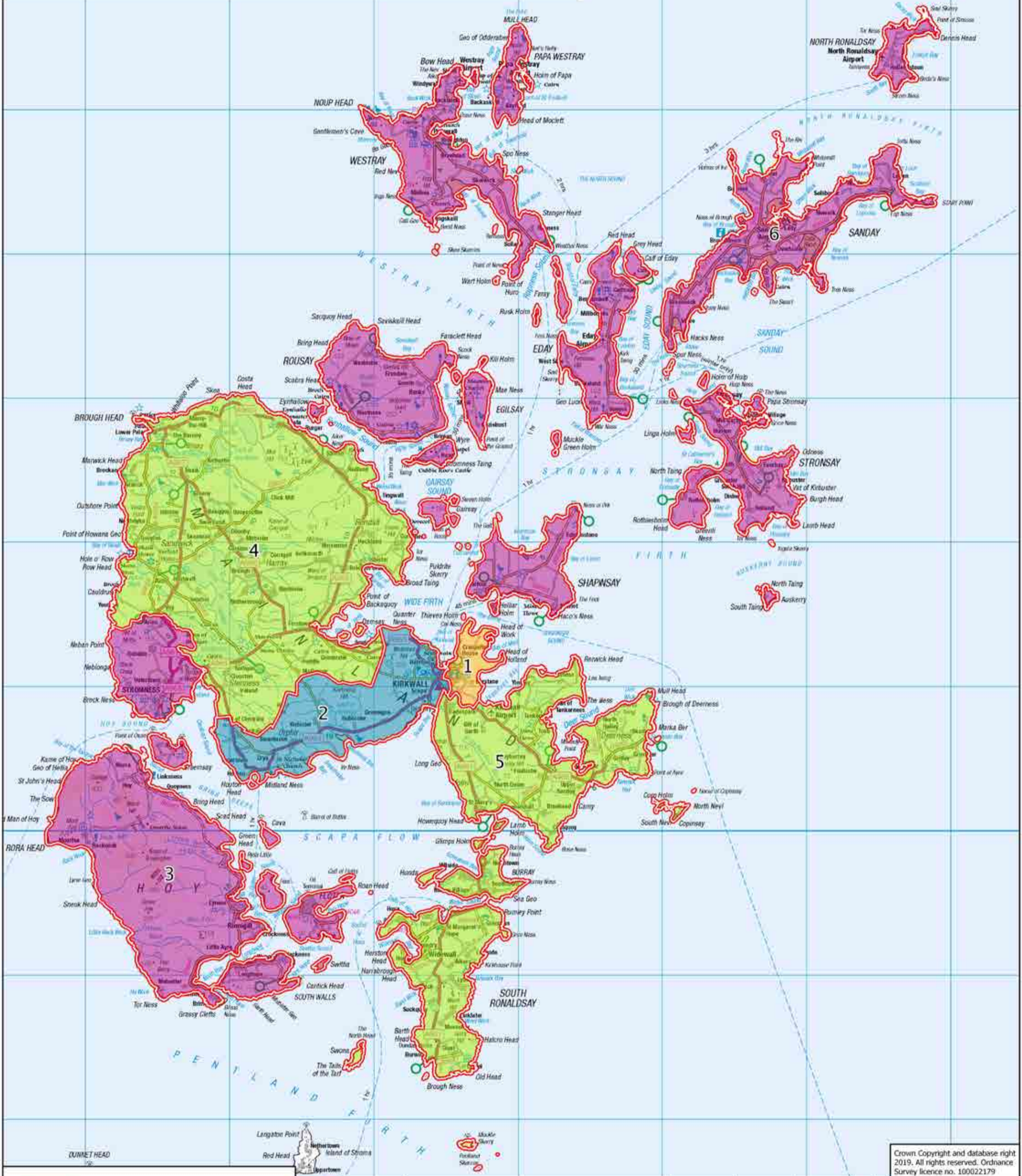
29. Option 1 retains the existing electoral arrangements which were also the Commission's recommendations from its 5th Reviews. During the 5th Reviews consultations, there was little comment or opposition to the proposed ward boundaries and councillor numbers.

30. Option 2 minimises change to the existing electoral arrangements, follows recognised boundaries in West Mainland and would likely be supported.
31. Options 2 and 3 both address variation from parity in wards 3 and 5. However in considering local ties south of Kirkwall, Option 2 worsens variation from parity in ward 1 (Kirkwall East). Therefore the Commission could adopt only the boundary changes in West Mainland for Option 2.
32. None of the options consider a 1-member ward. There are no individual islands or areas in Orkney with sufficient electorate to design a 1-member ward.
33. Only Option 3 considers the use of a 2-member ward but this ward contains electors from both a peninsula and mainland.
34. Option 3 offers improved variation of parity than Options 1 and 2. Although Option 2 without the proposed changes south of Kirkwall would offer better variation of parity.
35. Option 3 only retains one existing ward and may break local ties.
36. Options 1, 2 and 3 retain a 3-member North Isles ward, with forecast variation of parity at -27%. The North Isles ward is arguably the most remote ward in Scotland with poor transport links dependent on the weather and poor broadband connections. A 2-member North Isles ward would improve variation from parity but make it challenging for 2-members to represent the island electorate. There are calls within the North Isles for a 4-member ward but variation of parity would be approx. -42%.
37. Historically the Commission has been considerate of the challenges within this ward. The Commission's 4th Reviews recommended a North Isles ward with variation from parity of -21%. Its 5th Reviews recommended a North Isles ward with -24% due to its special geographic circumstances, with sparsely-populated islands and limited transport links. The 5th Reviews also recommended a North, West and Central Sutherland mainland ward in Highland council area with variation from parity of -32%.

Recommendations

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

Secretariat
February 2019

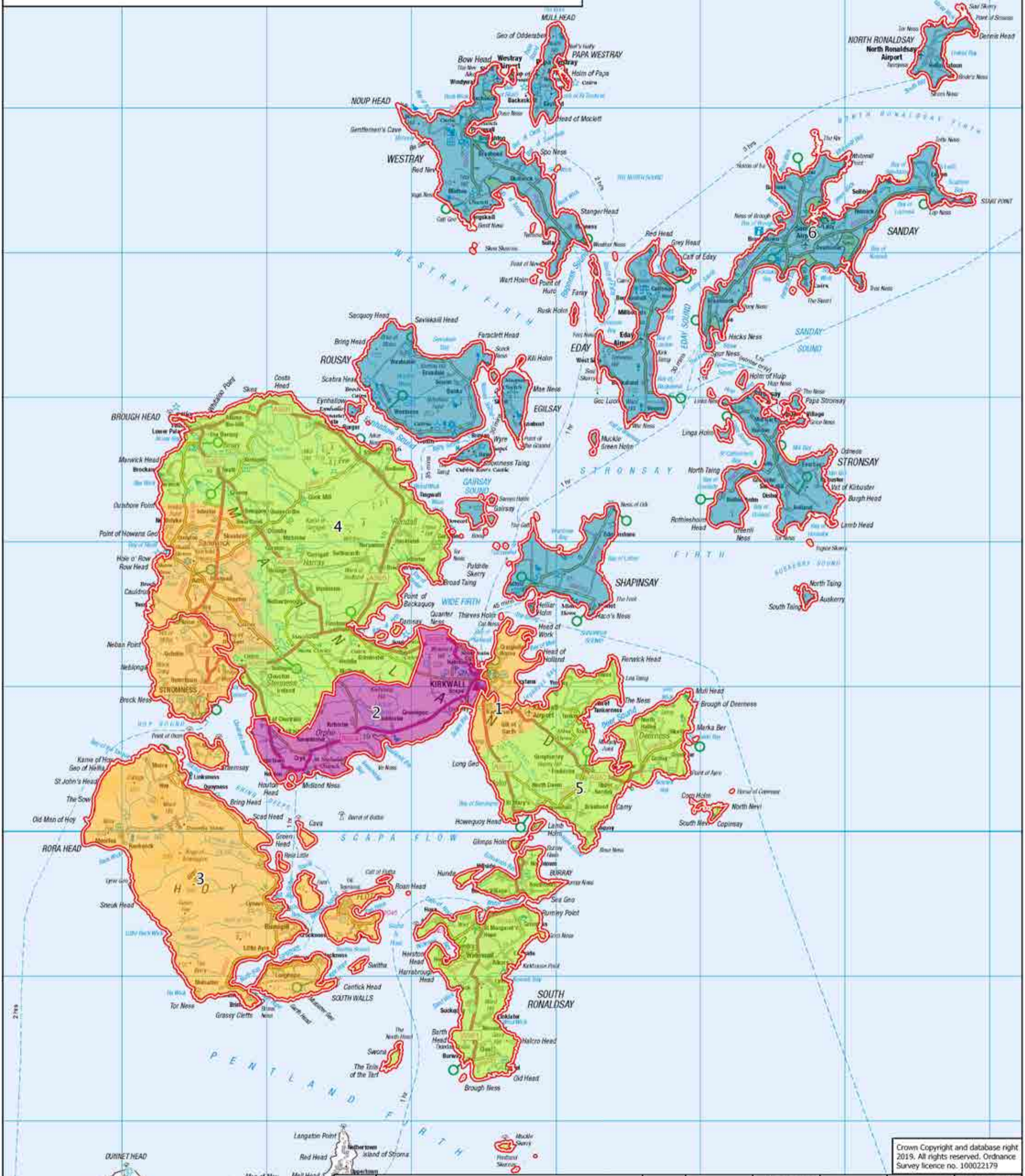


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Existing Ward Boundary
 Proposed Ward Boundary

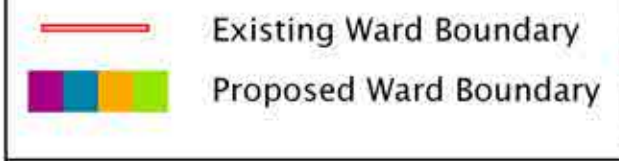
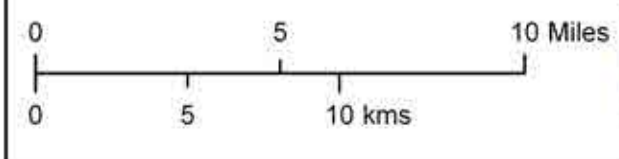
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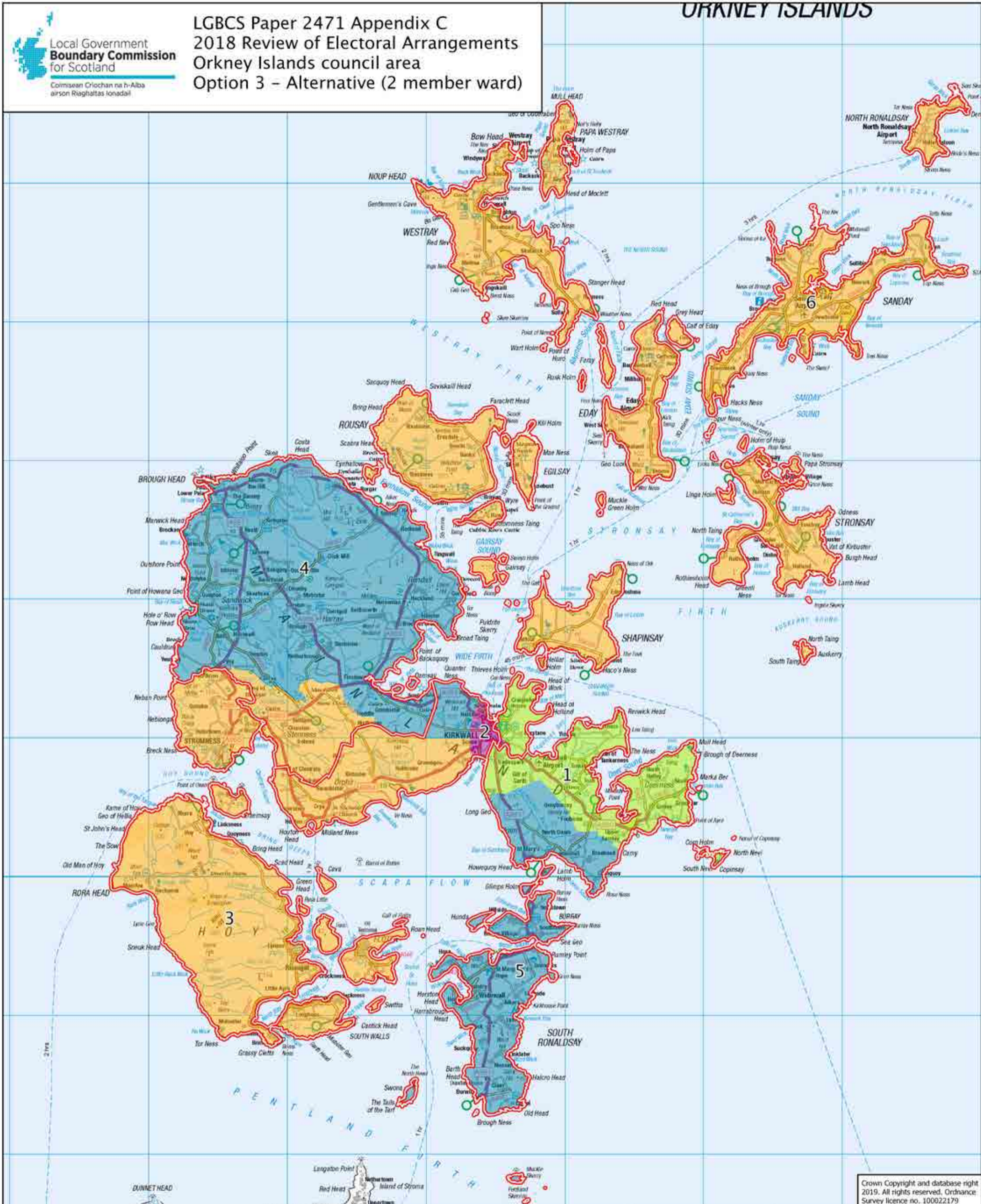
Ward No.	Ward Name	Councillors	Electorate (Dec 17)	Current Variation from Parity	Forecast Electorate (2023)	Forecast Variation from Parity
1	Kirkwall East	4	3,416	5.3	3,422	5.8
2	Kirkwall West and Orphir	4	3,454	6.4	3,492	7.9
3	Stromness and South Isles	3	2,147	-11.8	2,140	-11.8
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6	North Isles	3	1,798	-26.1	1,771	-27.0
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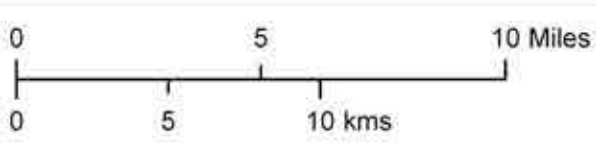
Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 17)	Current Variation from Parity	Forecast Electorate (2023)	Increase	Forecast Variation from Parity
1	Kirkwall East	4	3,622	11.6	3,605	-17.0	11.4
2	Kirkwall West and Orphir	4	3,454	6.4	3,492	38.0	7.9
3	Stromness, Sandwick and South Isles	3	2,607	7.1	2,590	-17.0	6.7
4	West Mainland	4	3,061	-5.7	3,042	-19.0	-6.0
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6	North Isles	3	1,798	-26.1	1,771	-27.0	-27.0
		21	17,038	9.6	16,988		10.0



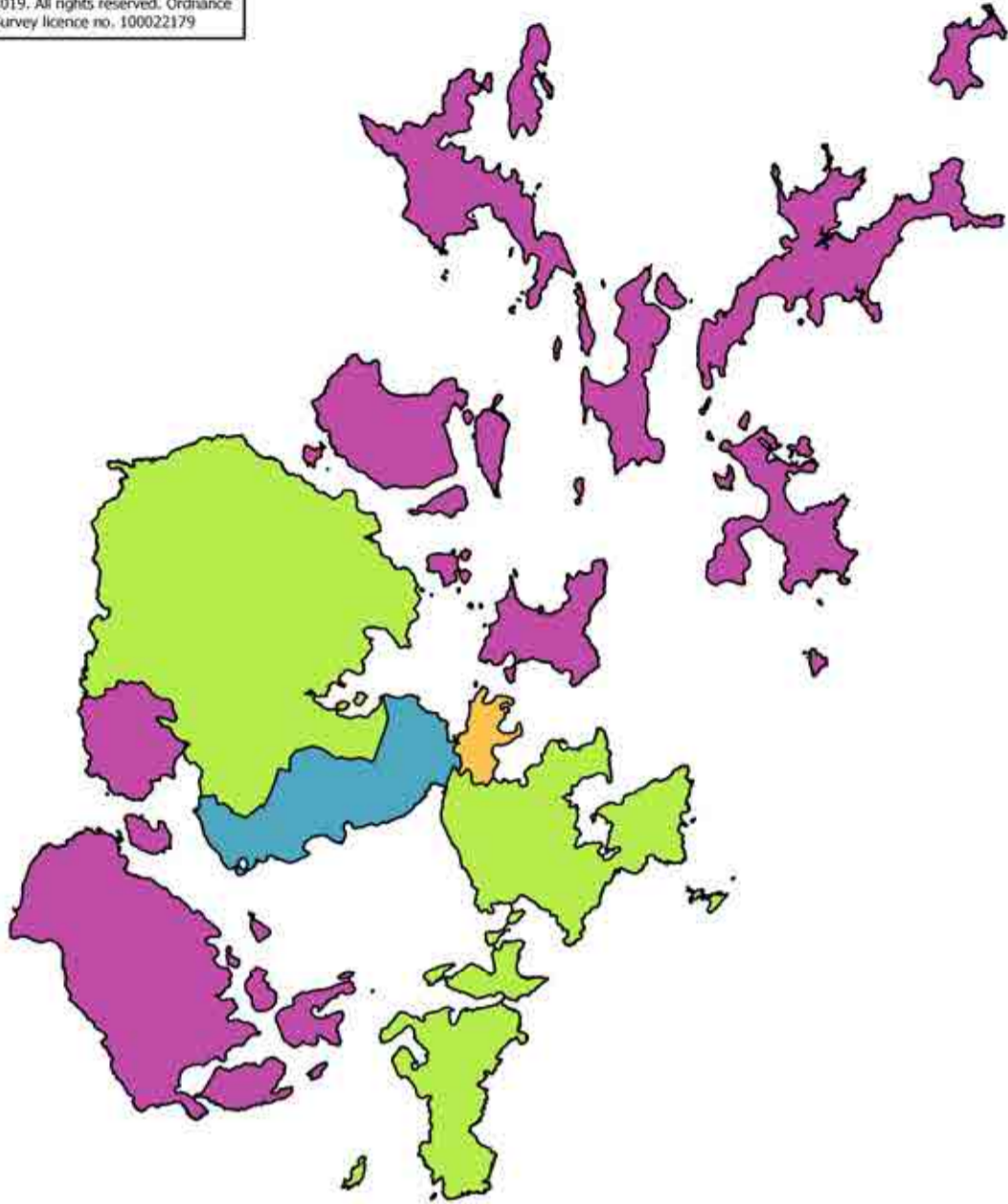


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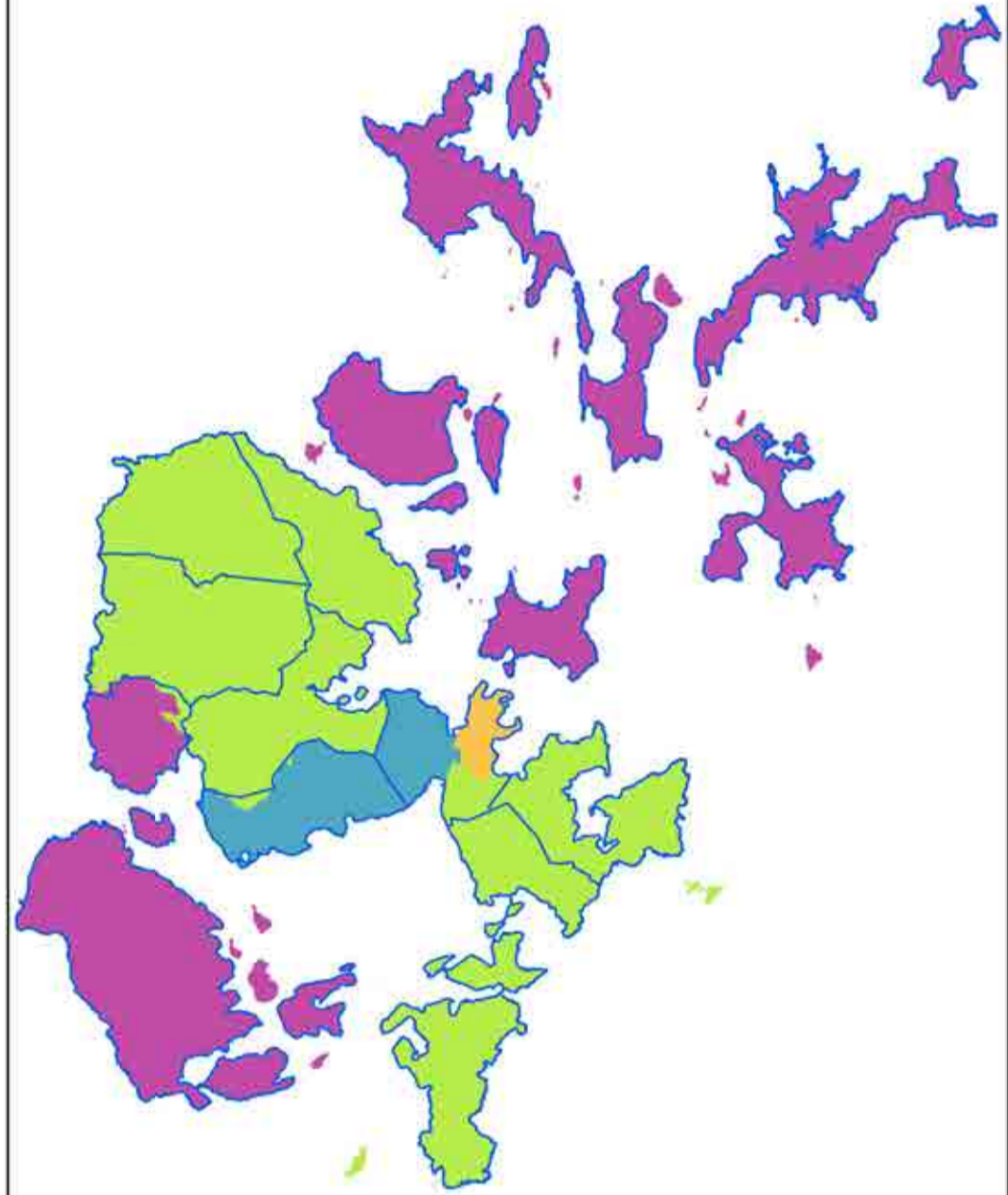
Existing Ward Boundary
 Proposed Ward Boundary



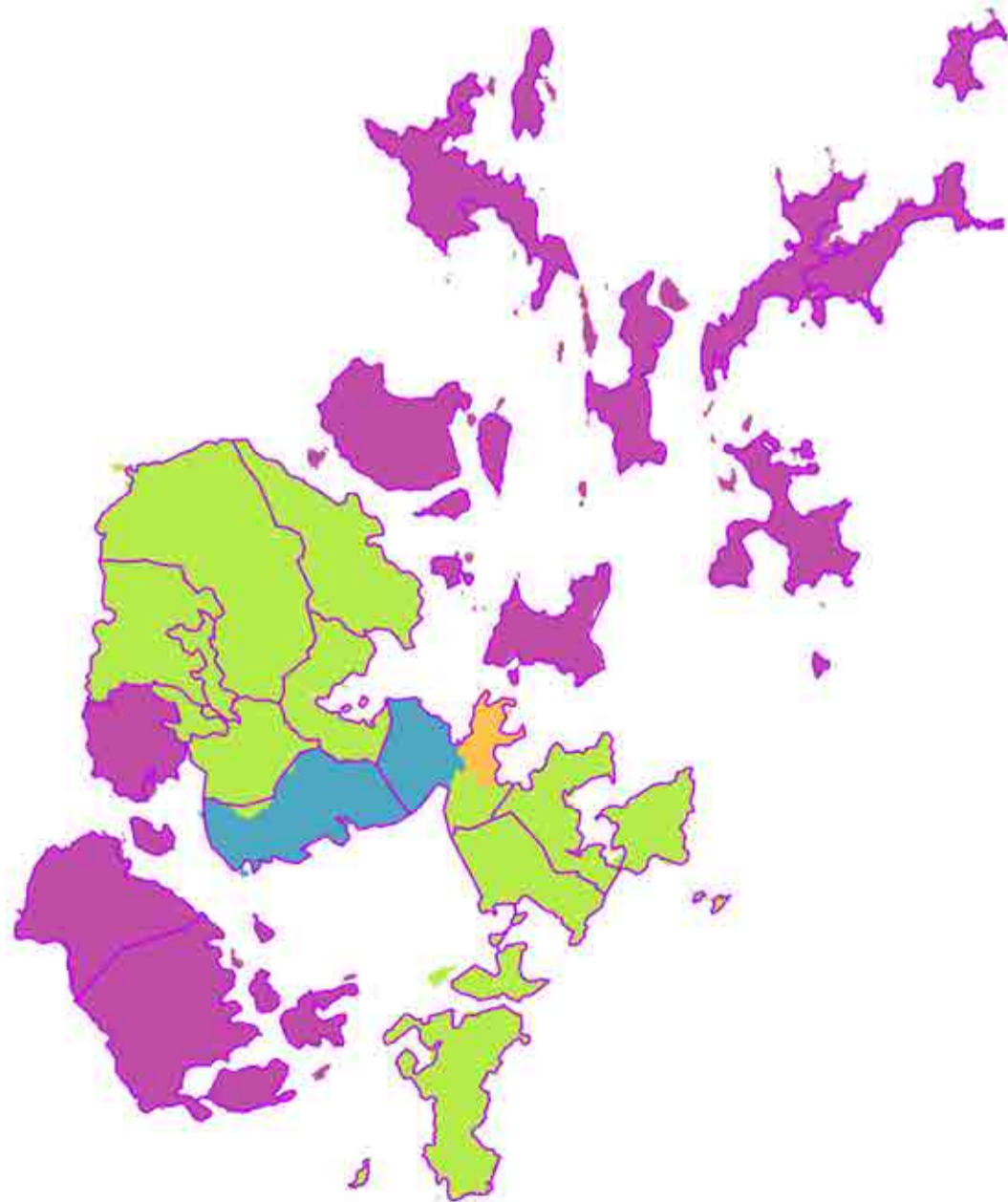
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4	West Mainland	4	3,307	1.9	3,273	1.1
5	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray	2	1,734	6.9	1,719	6.2
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		21	17,038		16,988	



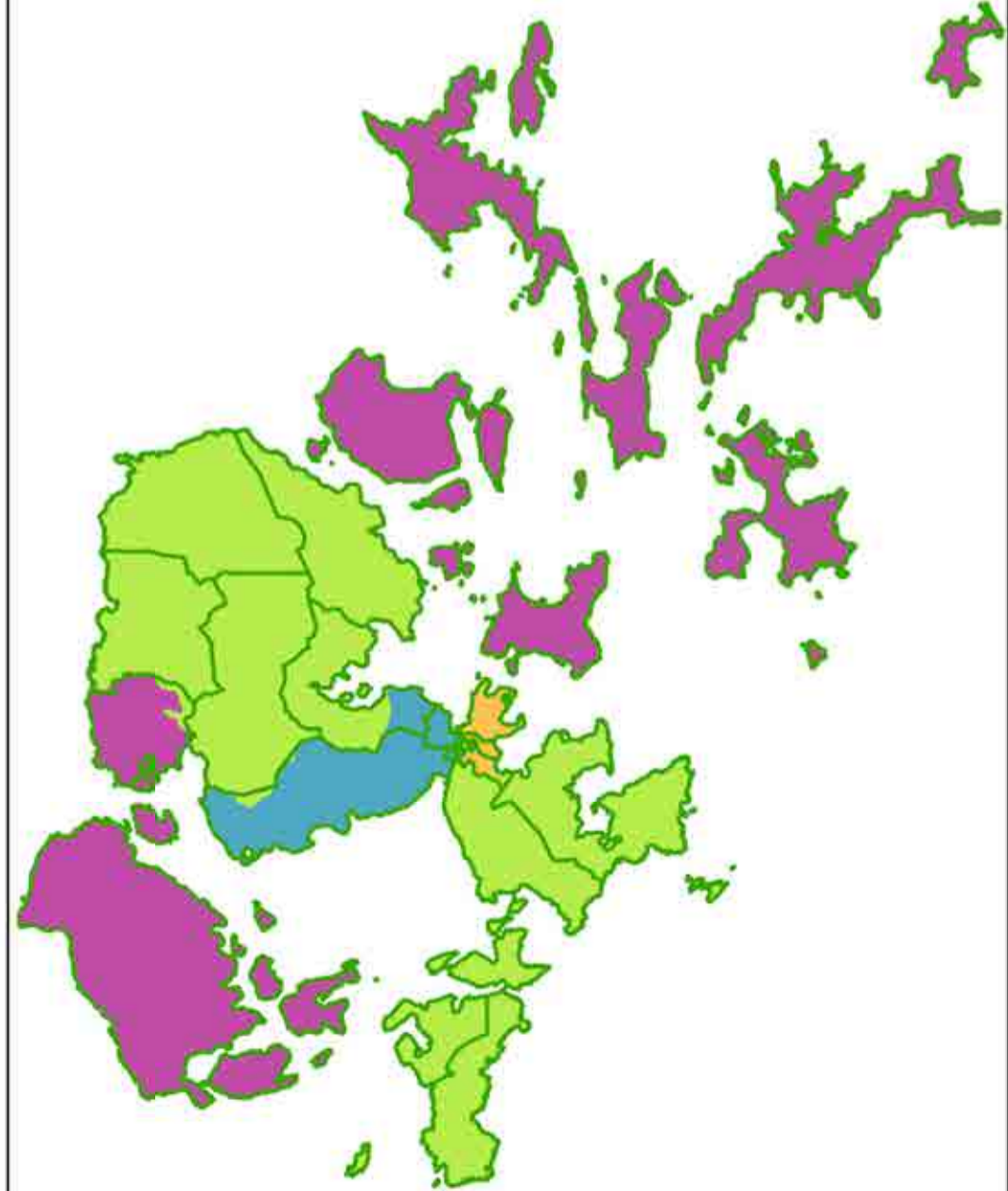
Existing Wards



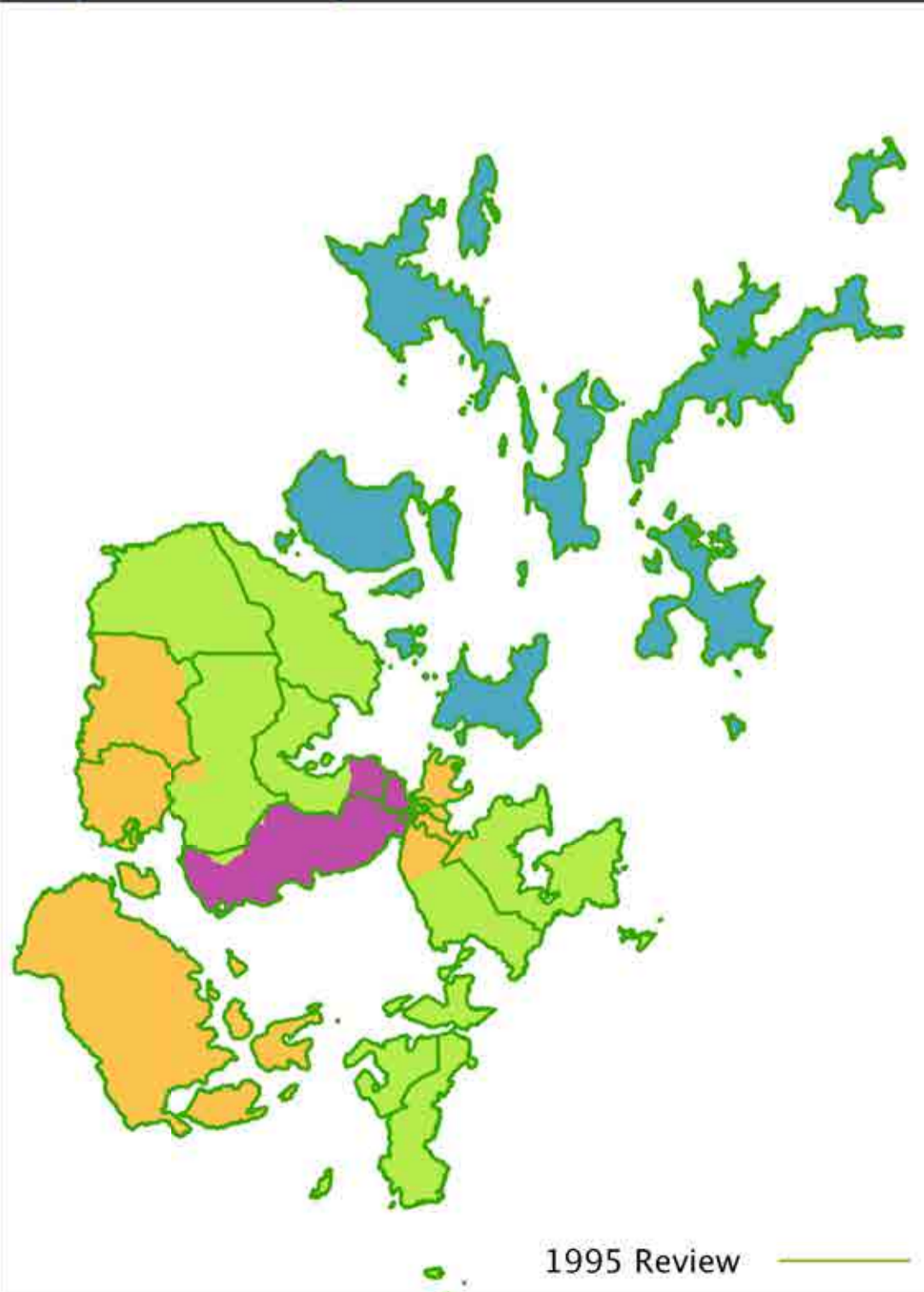
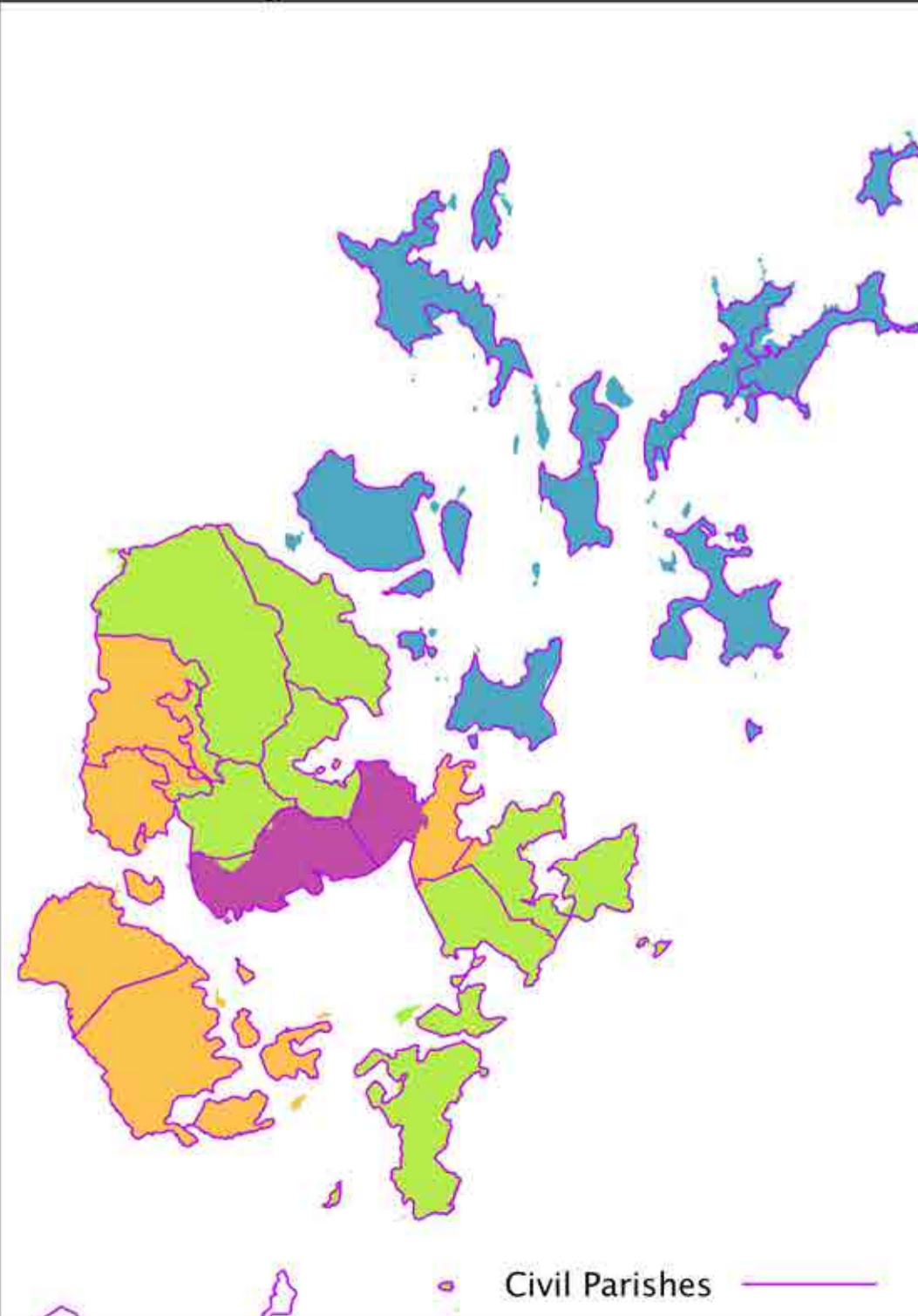
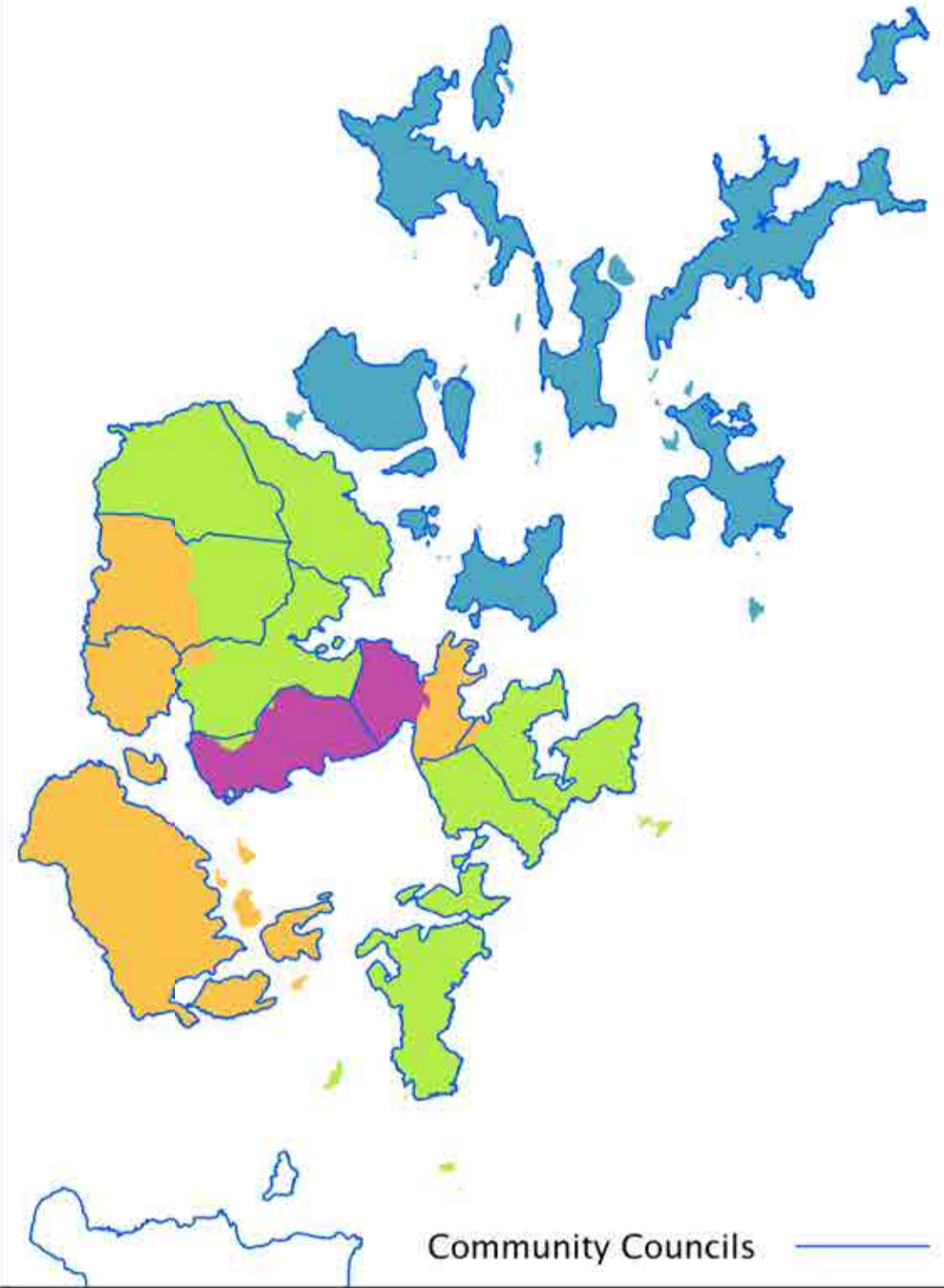
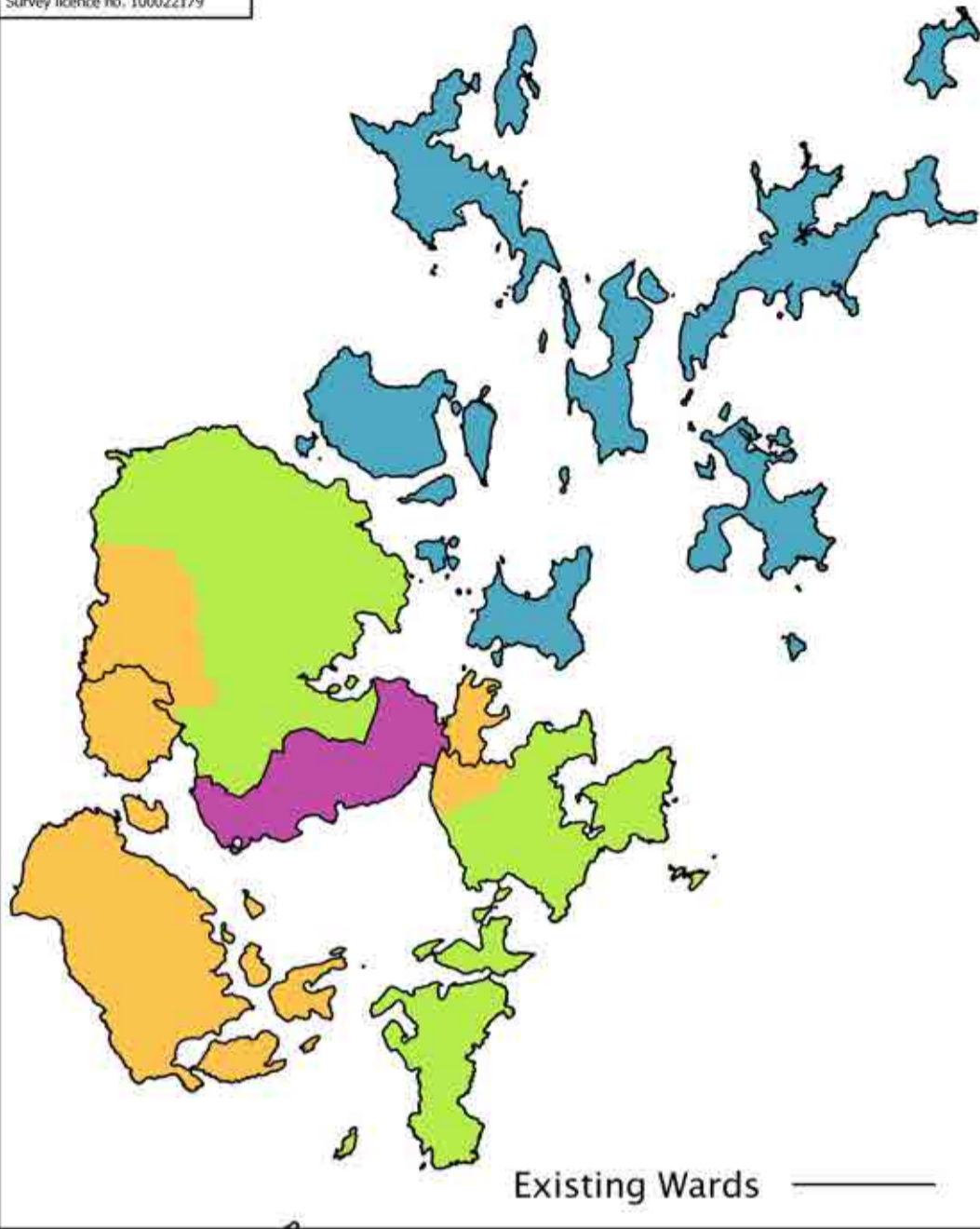
Community Councils

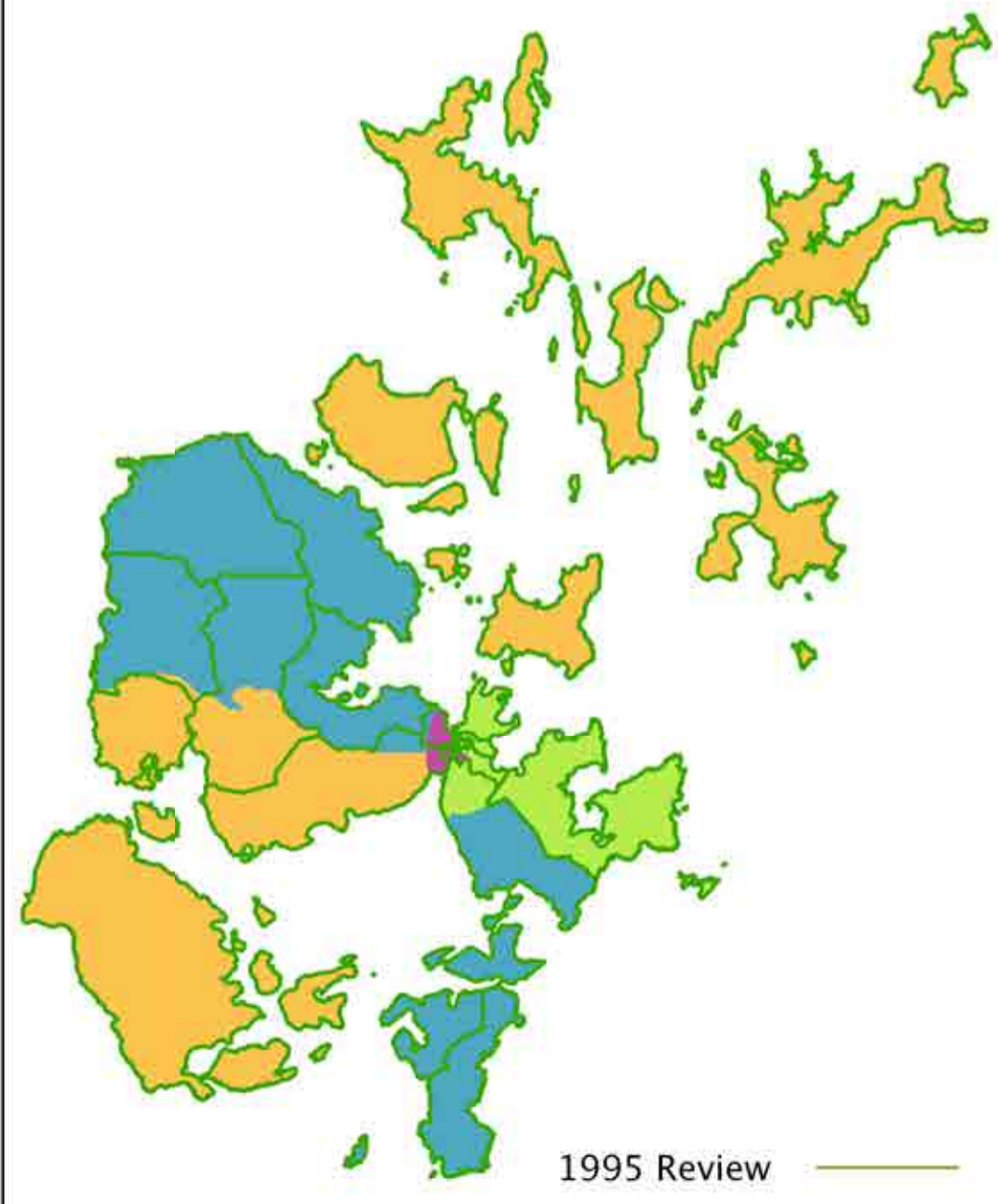
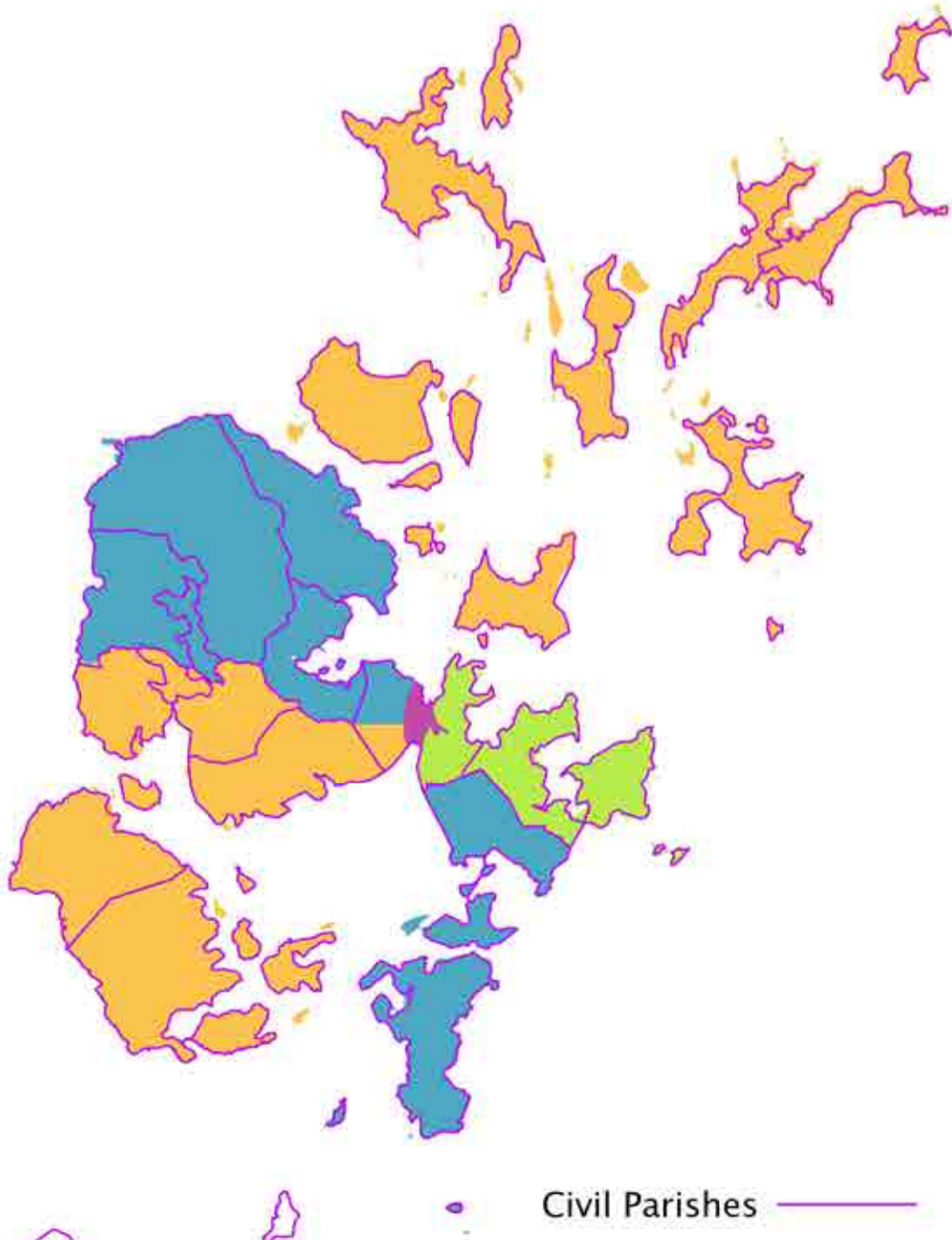
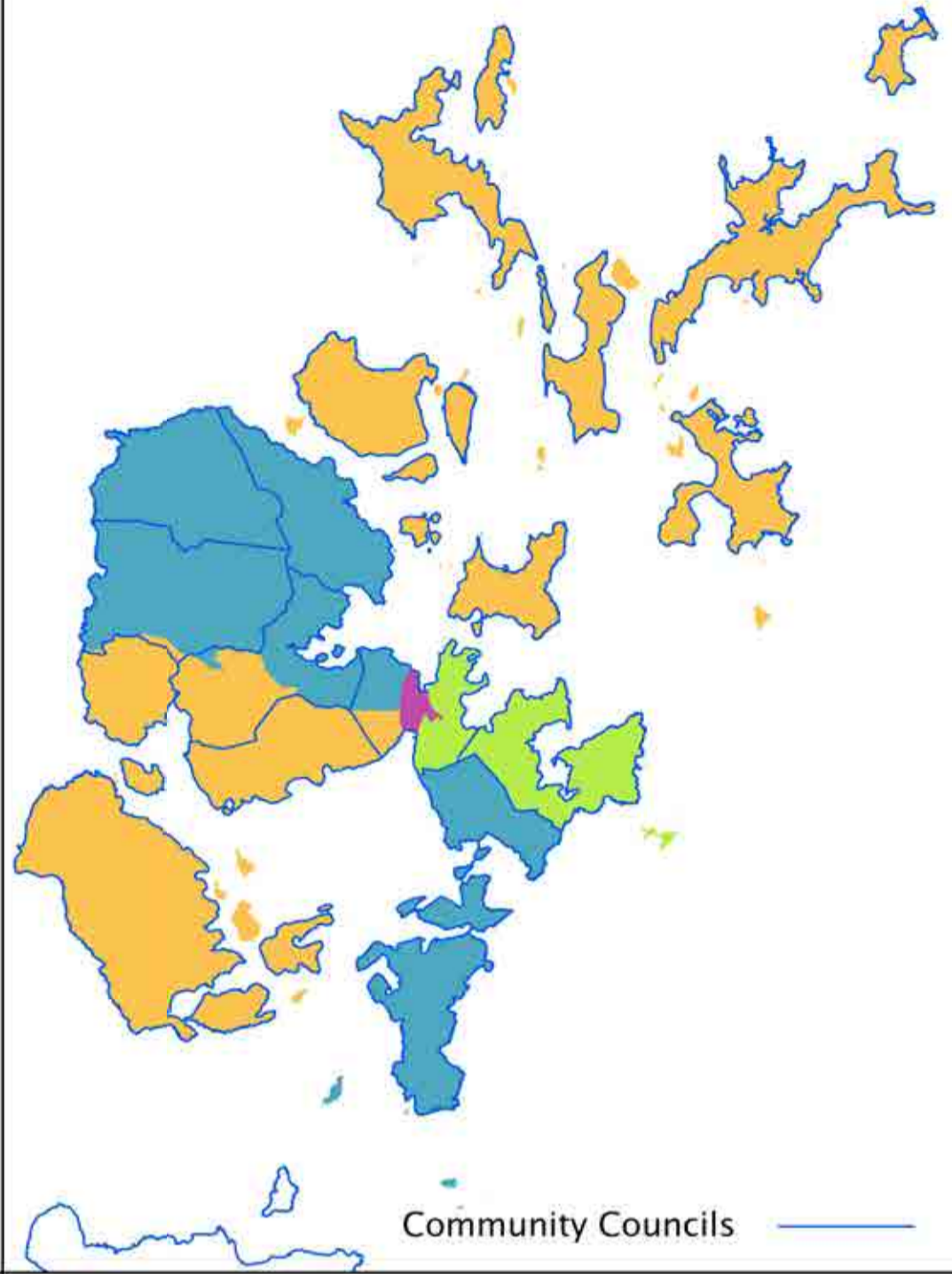
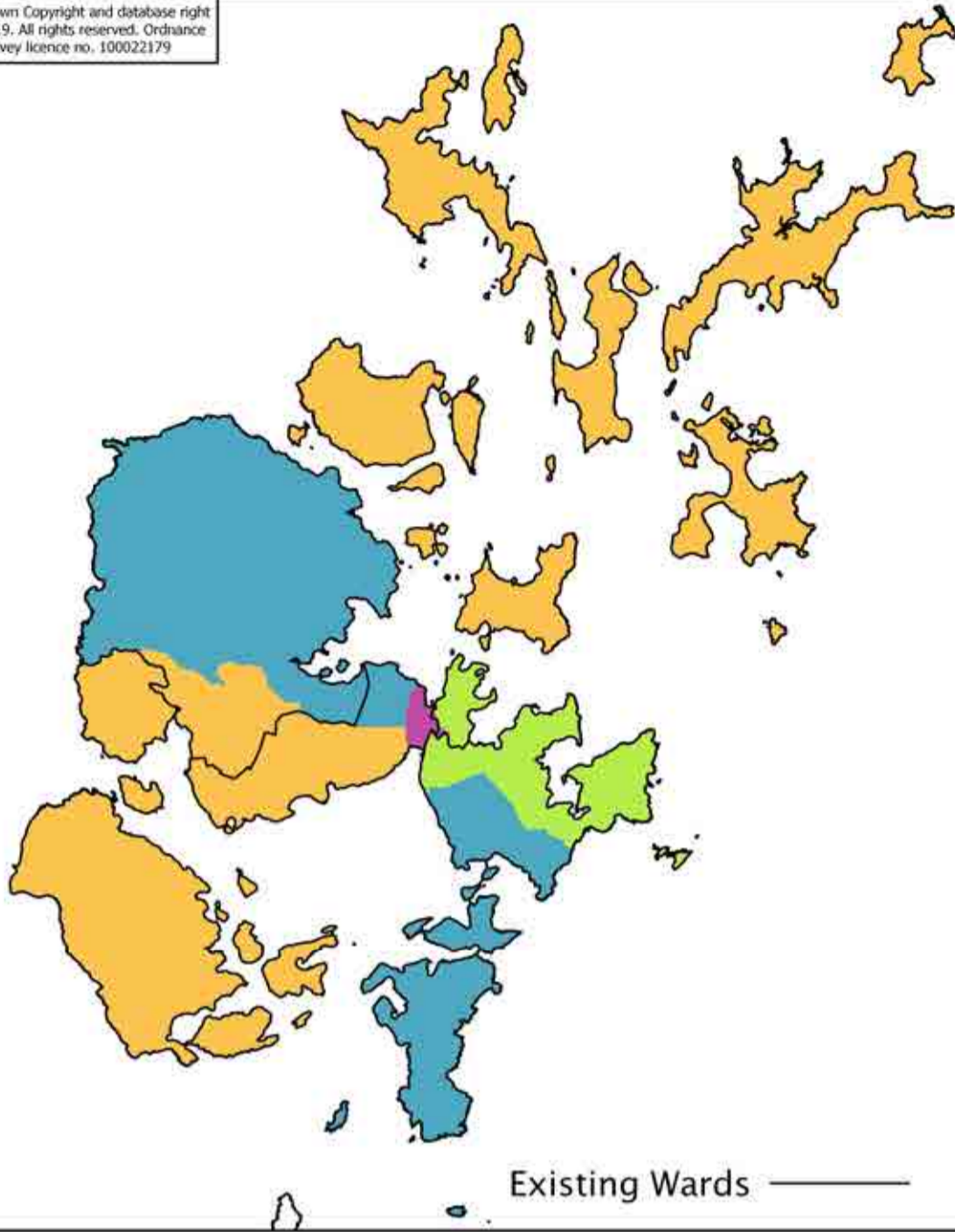


Civil Parishes



1995 Review





**LGBCS Paper 2471
Appendix G**

Orkney Islands council area – North Isles ward options

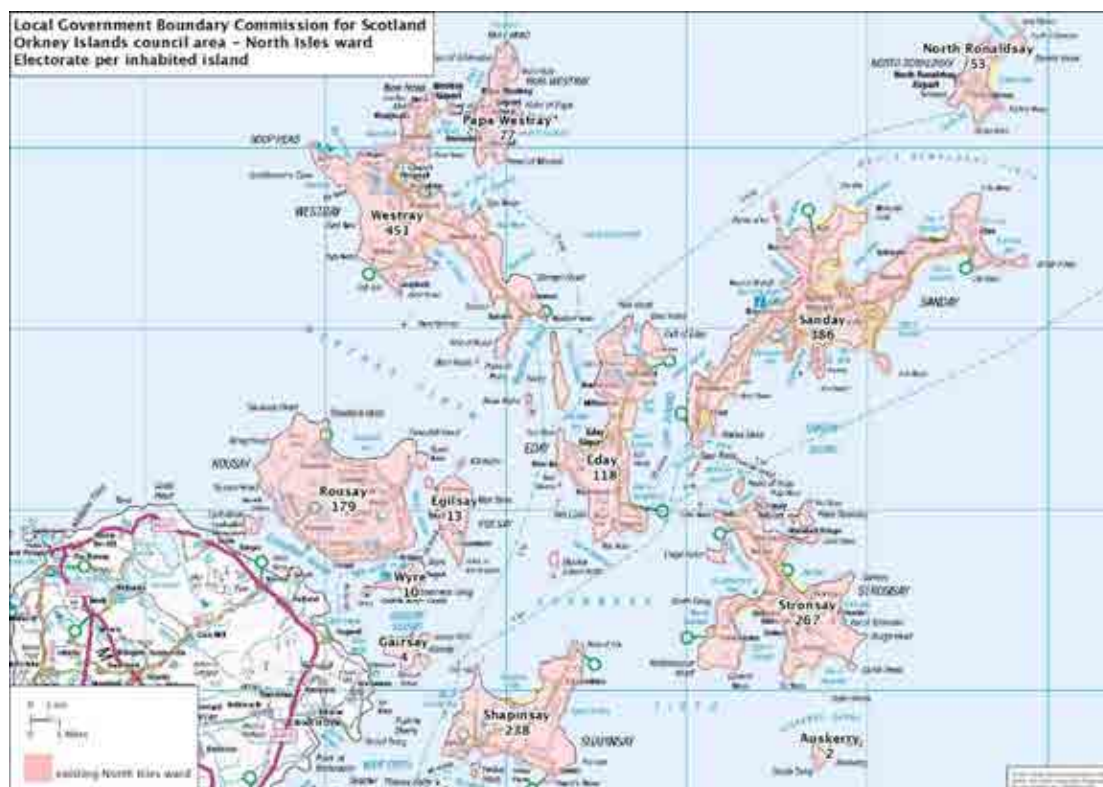
Purpose

1. At its meeting of 3 December 2018 the Commission considered Paper 2463 and three ward design options for Orkney Islands council area. All three options made no changes to the existing North Isles ward boundary and number of Councillors but forecast variation from parity was –27% in this ward.
2. The Commission asked the Secretariat to consider further ward design options in Orkney ward 6 (North Isles) and to consider if there are any local ties between the North Isle islands and the mainland.

Background

3. The North Isles is currently a 3–member ward. There are currently 21 Councillors on Orkney Islands Council.
4. There are 12 inhabited islands within the North Isles ward with a total electorate of 1,798.

Island	Electorate (Dec 2017)	Island	Electorate (Dec 2017)
Eday	118	Egilsay	13
Sanday	386	Wyre	10
Stronsay	267	Gairsay	4
Auskerry	2	Westray	451
Shapinsay	238	Papa Westray	77
Rousay	179	North Ronaldsay	53



North Isles ward alternative options

5. The Commission could consider:

- either a 2-member, 3-member or 4-member North Isles ward;
- linking an island(s) with the mainland; or
- splitting the North Isles ward into two or three 1-member wards.

2-member, 3-member or 4-member North Isles ward;

6. A 2-member ward would improve variance from electoral parity in the North Isles. However this would likely prove challenging for two Councillors to fully represent the electorate due to poor transport links, dependent on weather conditions.

7. There are also poor broadband connections in the North Isles which make it difficult to video conference island meetings, therefore North Isle Councillors have to attend meetings in person.

8. Councillors need to arrange overnight accommodation to attend meetings on some islands.

9. Community Council meetings in the North Isles are usually held in afternoons to accommodate air and ferry timetables.

10. Due to the transport timetable some North Isles Councillors need to arrange two night's accommodation to attend Council meetings in Kirkwall.

11. The Council and North Isles residents would probably prefer to retain a 3-member North Isles ward. There were no comments received during the 5th Reviews consultation requesting either an increase or decrease in councillor numbers in the North Isles.

12. The Council mentioned that there have been suggestions that a 4-member ward would better represent the electorate. A 4-member North Isles ward (with a total of 22 councillors) would result in variation from parity of nearly -42%.

Island–Mainland Ward(s)

13. Historically islands in the North Isles have commonly been linked together rather than with communities on the mainland.

14. Island communities have common issues compared with mainland communities. Therefore the islands may wish to remain together.

15. The Commission could consider a ward that linked North Isles islands with the mainland.

16. The Commission's 3rd Review of Electoral Arrangements did recommend a Shapinsay and Kirkwall Harbour ward and an Evie, Rendall, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre ward.

17. The islands of Shapinsay and Rousay/ Egilsay/Wyre/Gairsay are geographically close to the mainland and possibly have fewer links to other islands within the North Isles.

18. The Commission could consider linking either Shapinsay (238 electors) to a Kirkwall ward or Rousay/ Egilsay/ Wyre/ Gairsay (206 electors) with a mainland ward. This would result in a 2-member North Isles ward with variation from parity within -10% (with a total of 20 councillors).
19. Linking both Shapinsay and Rousay/ Egilsay/ Wyre/ Gairsay to mainland wards would result in a North Isles ward with only 1,354 electors, too few for a 2-member ward and too many for a 1-member ward.
20. If the Commission linked Shapinsay or Rousay/ Egilsay/ Wyre/ Gairsay to a mainland ward, it would arguably be more challenging for only two Councillors to represent the remaining North Isles' disperse electorate.

Splitting the North Isles ward

21. There are insufficient electors on a single island within the North Isles for a 1-member island ward.
22. North Isle islands could be linked together by transport links or by grouping community councils.
23. Eight community councils represent the 12 inhabited islands in the North Isles ward. Each island has its own community council apart from community council (total 206 electors) and Stronsay and Auskerry community council (total 269 electors).

Community Council	Electorate (Dec 2017)	Community Council	Electorate (Dec 2017)
Eday	118	Shapinsay	238
Sanday	386	North Ronaldsay	53
Stronsay/ Auskerry	269	Westray	451
Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay	206	Papa Westray	77

24. None of the eight community councils have sufficient electorate individually to create a 1-member ward. The largest inhabited island or community council is Westray with 451 electors.
25. The Commission could consider linking island communities by ferry routes.
26. The ferry routes in the table below show links between the islands in the North Isles and ferry travel times.

Island	Travel time from Kirkwall (ferry)	Travel time from Tingwall (ferry)	Links with other Islands (ferry)	Total electorate of ferry route
Eday	75-100 mins		Sanday 20mins Stronsay 35mins	771
Shapinsay	45 mins		None	238
Rousay		30-70 mins	Egilsay 20mins Wyre 40mins	202
Westray	85-140 mins		Papa Westray 40mins	528
North Ronaldsay	160 mins		None	53

Auskerry	No regular ferry		None	2
Gairsay	No regular ferry		None	4

27. The Eday/ Sanday/ Stronsay ferry route links three islands with a total electorate of 771. This could be considered a 1-member ward but would result in 1,027 other North Isles electors, too few for a 2-member ward and too many for a 1-member ward.
28. All other ferry routes have too few electors for a 1-member ward. Therefore any other ward design would contain islands with few or no transport links.
29. There is an inter-island air service within the North Isles. The table below shows the links between the islands and total electorate of each route. All islands are within a 15 minute flight from Kirkwall. Only 6 of the North Isle islands have airports.
30. The air-route with the largest electorate is Sanday-Stronsay with 653 electors. A 1-member Sanday-Stronsay ward with 653 electors, would result in a ward with -23% variation from parity, with a total 20 councillors.

Island	Other islands on air route	Total electorate of air route
Eday	North Ronaldsay	171
Sanday	Stronsay	653
North Ronaldsay	Papa Westray	130
Papa Westray	Westray	528

Conclusion

31. The North Isles ward is arguably the most remote ward in Scotland. It would take at least 7 days for a Councillor to visit all of the North Isles islands.
32. Forecast variation in parity is -27% for the North Isles ward. The Commissions 4th Reviews recommended a North Isles ward with variation from parity of -21%. Its 5th Reviews recommended a North Isles ward with -24%. The 5th Reviews also recommended a North, West and Central Sutherland mainland ward in Highland council area with variation from parity of -32%.
33. The existing arrangements, with a 3-member North Isles ward (total 21 councillors), results in variation of parity of approx. -26%.
34. A 2-member North Isles ward (total 20 councillors) would result in variation of parity of approx. 5%.
35. A 4-member North Isles ward (total 22 councillors) would result in variation of parity of approx. -42%.
36. There are more common issues for a Councillor to deal with for solely island wards rather than island/ mainland ward.

37. The North Isles councillors are unable to carry out their duties in one day and normally spend a significant amount of time away from home staying in overnight accommodation due to the long commute time caused by poor transport links. Attendance at Council meetings in Kirkwall can require two nights away. A reduction in Councillor numbers in the North Isles would make it more challenging for Councillors to represent the electorate.
38. There is poor broadband in the North Isles which make video calls difficult, which requires Councillors to attend meetings in person.
39. Ferry and air routes link the islands to the mainland but these are weather dependent.
40. There are no regular ferry routes that link more than three islands in the North Isles. Only one ferry route Eday/Sanday/Stronsay with 771 electors could be considered as a 1-member ward.
41. Auskerry and Gairsay do not have a regular ferry service.
42. The islands of Shapinsay, Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre, Gairsay and Auskerry (total electorate 446) have no air links. The Sanday/Stronsay air route services the largest islands electorate (653 electors).
43. The island of Shapinsay could be linked to a Kirkwall ward. The islands of Rousay, Egilsay, Wyre and Gairsay could be linked to a mainland ward. Either of these options would result in 2-member North Isles ward.
44. Due to the challenges of representing a widespread electorate with few transport links, there is an argument for a 4-member North Isles ward but variation from parity would be approx. -42%.
45. During the 5th Reviews the Commission recommended no changes to the North Isles ward due to its special geographic circumstances, with sparsely-populated islands and limited transport links, which the Commission considered justified the high level of variation from parity.