

## 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements Orkney Islands council area

### Purpose

1. The Commission is invited to consider responses to the public consultation on its Initial Proposals for the 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements in Orkney Islands council area and agree if it wishes to undertake further consultation before agreeing its Final Recommendations.

### Electoral Arrangements at the start of this review

2. At the start of this review, Orkney Islands council area was represented by 21 councillors in three 3-member wards and three 4-member wards.
3. The electorates and associated variation from parity for the existing electoral arrangements are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendix A.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 17)	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
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
		<b>21</b>	<b>17,038</b>		<b>16,988</b>	

### Initial Proposals – Consultation with Councils

4. The Commission agreed to adopt its methodology from its 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for this review. The 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews' methodology placed Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas in the same category with a ratio of electors per councillor of 800:1.
5. The methodology recommended 21 councillors for Orkney Islands council area ( $17,038 \div 800 = 21$ ) the same as at present.
6. The existing electoral arrangements in Orkney Islands council area offered variation from electoral parity of over 10% in three wards: Stromness and South Isles; East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray; and North Isles.
7. The Initial Proposals presented an electoral arrangement for 21 councillors representing three 3-member wards and three 4-member wards, maintaining existing electoral arrangements. They:
  - addressed variation from electoral parity in existing wards 3 (Stromness and South Isles) and 5 (East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray);
  - minimised change to the existing electoral arrangements;
  - considered local ties in the whole council area;
  - retained the existing North Isles and Kirkwall West and Orphir wards;
  - proposed a West Mainland ward boundary which follows recognisable current and historical boundaries;

- recognised special geographical circumstances in the North Isles ward due to it comprising rural, sparsely populated islands with limited transport links;
- renamed the Stromness and South Isles ward as Stromness, Sandwick and South Isles to reflect changes to the ward boundary but retained all other ward names; and
- proposed a Kirkwall East boundary which follows an historical ward boundary and natural features which place Kirkwall airport within a Kirkwall ward.

8. The electorates and associated variation from parity for the Initial Proposals – council consultation are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendix B.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 17)	Variation from parity %	Forecast Electorate (2023)	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
		<b>21</b>	<b>17,038</b>		<b>16,988</b>	

9. The Commission consulted on its Initial Proposals with Orkney Islands Council for a 2-month period from 20 March to 20 May 2019.

### **Initial Proposals – Public Consultation**

10. The Commission considered the response received on its Initial Proposals from Orkney Islands Council at its meeting of 17 June 2019.

11. The Commission noted that the Council were mainly content with the wards to which no change was proposed.

12. The Commission agreed to adopt the Council's suggested amendment to its Initial Proposals for wards 1 and 2 in Kirkwall. The Commission agreed that using Bridge Street as a boundary between the wards by the harbour area in Kirkwall, would provide for a more easily identifiable boundary between those wards, with only a minor change to electoral parity compared to its Initial Proposals.

13. The Commission accepted the Council's view that the Commission's proposed boundary which placed Sandwick in ward 3 (Stromness, Sandwick and South Isles) would break local ties in the West Mainland area, around the village of Dounby, and agreed to retain the existing ward boundary between wards 3 and 4 and retain the existing ward names. The Commission considered the variation from electoral parity in ward 3 acceptable due to the special geographic circumstances of the ward, which contained inhabited island communities.

14. The Initial Proposals – Public Consultation presented an electoral arrangement with no changes to the existing number of councillors, number of wards or ward names. The proposals:

- minimised change to the existing ward boundaries. They retained three existing ward boundaries: North Isles; Stromness and South Isles; and West Mainland;
- only made changes to ward boundaries by Kirkwall. The boundary between the two Kirkwall wards is amended by Kirkwall harbour to create a more easily identifiable ward boundary;
- extended the Kirkwall East ward boundary southwards to better reflect local ties. It places Kirkwall airport within a Kirkwall ward; and
- retained the existing North Isles ward with a wide variation from electoral parity to better reflect local communities and the special geographical circumstances in the ward due to it comprising of rural, sparsely populated islands with limited transport links.

15. The electorates and associated variation from parity for the Initial Proposals – public consultation are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendix C.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 17)	Variation from parity %	Forecast Electorate (2023)	Forecast variation from parity %
1	Kirkwall East	4	3,661	12.8	3,644	12.6
2	Kirkwall West and Orphir	4	3,415	5.2	3,452	6.7
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	2,496	2.5	2,670	2.6
6	North Isles	3	1,798	-26.1	1,771	-27.0
		<b>21</b>	<b>17,038</b>		<b>16,988</b>	

16. The Commission’s public consultation on its Initial Proposals with Orkney Islands council area ran for a 12-week period from 10 September to 2 December 2019.

17. During the public consultation the Commission: issued a news release; placed a half page newspaper advertisement in The Orcadian; placed posters and further information regarding the review in over 60 display points (such as airport terminals, schools, council offices, libraries, health centres and places of worship); and paid for social media advertising. The materials encouraged those interested to respond to the consultation via the Commission’s consultation site.

### **Responses to Initial Proposals – Public Consultation**

18.29 responses were received during the public consultation, see Annex for responses submitted via the consultation site. Responses submitted by email and post have been printed for information as well. All responses will be available on the Commission’s website or consultation site at a later date if permission was granted for publication.

19. The Commission received 28 responses via its consultation site, and one by email from Orkney Islands Council.

20. Orkney Islands Council have submitted a draft response that will be ratified at a council meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The Commission will be informed if the formal response differs from their draft submission.
21. Most of the responses supported the Commission's proposals for councillor numbers and ward boundaries.
22. The main issues to arise were:
- support for retaining the existing electoral arrangements; and
  - support for a further reduction in councillor numbers.

### **Councillor Numbers**

23. Orkney Islands Council advised that they support the Commission's proposals to retain the existing number of councillor numbers (OIC 29).
24. 16 respondents supported maintaining the current number of councillors. The comments included:
- the current number of councillors is sufficient to cover the council area (OIC 2, OIC 4, OIC 6, OIC 7, OIC 8, OIC 10, OIC 14, OIC 16, OIC 23, OIC 24, OIC 26, OIC 27);
  - two respondents supported the overall number of councillors but suggested reducing representation in the proposed Kirkwall East ward and increasing representation in the proposed North Isles ward (OIC 1, OIC 20);
  - two responses made no comment (OIC 3, OIC 25).
25. 12 members of the public opposed maintaining the current number of councillors. The issues raised included:
- a desire to further reduce councillor numbers to save costs or improve efficiency or service (OIC 9, OIC 11, OIC 12, OIC 13, OIC 15, OIC 17, OIC 18, OIC 19, OIC 21, OIC 22);
  - support for a 4-member North Isles ward due to the additional travel time to cover the area (OIC 5);
  - concern that the proposed North Isles ward is under-represented and an alternative suggestion for further representation in that ward (OIC 28).

### **Ward Boundaries**

26. Orkney Islands Council advised that they support the Commission's proposals to amend ward boundaries in Kirkwall and to the south of Kirkwall. (OIC 29).
27. 11 respondents supported the proposed ward boundaries because:
- they minimise change and the existing ward boundaries currently work quite well (OIC 2, OIC 3, OIC 6, OIC 7, OIC 8, OIC 16, OIC 23, OIC 24, OIC 26);
  - one respondent commented that the proposed wards reflect the current number of electors (OIC 14); and
  - one response made no comment (OIC 5).
28. 12 members of the public opposed the proposed ward boundaries. The issues raised included:
- the proposals will not save money (OIC 12);

- a suggestion that single-member wards are preferable to multi-member wards. They believed that electors from the island of Hoy are under-represented in the current Stromness and South Isles ward (OIC 4);
- one respondent suggested South Ronaldsay and Burray should sit within a separate ward to East Mainland as island communities have different needs (OIC 18);
- the electorate are under-represented in the proposed North Isles ward. They suggested a 2-member Westray, Papa Westray and Rousay ward; 2-member Sanday, Stronsay and North Ronaldsay ward; and a single-member Eday and Shapinsay ward (OIC 28);
- a suggestion that island communities with a resident councillor are better represented than other island communities and that Kirkwall is over-represented (OIC 11);
- concern that the North Isles are under-represented due to the poor transport links between the islands. They suggest that at least a third or half of all councillors should represent the North Isles and the ratio of councillors should reflect the necessary spending in any area (OIC 27);
- Kirkwall is over-represented (OIC 10);
- one respondent opposed the proposals but offered no further explanation or reason (OIC 9);
- an alternative suggestion that the proposed ward boundaries should be coterminous with health board boundaries (OIC 19);
- suggestion to link electors from the islands of Rousay, Egilsay, Gairsay and Wyre with the mainland due to their closer transport links (OIC 21);
- a suggestion for an additional councillor in the proposed West Mainland ward (OIC 25);
- one response made no comment (OIC 17).

### **Kirkwall East**

29. Councillor Scott (Kirkwall East ward) submitted a suggestion outwith the public consultation pointing out an anomaly in the boundary between St Catherine's Place, Garden Street and Bridge Street Wynd by Kirkwall harbour as it is confusing to local residents. During the council consultation Orkney Islands Council included this suggestion in their response and this ward boundary was adopted by the Commission for the public consultation (OIC 30).

30. Two members of the public suggested reducing councillor numbers in the proposed Kirkwall East ward while increasing councillor numbers in the North Isles (OIC 1, OIC 20). A 3-member Kirkwall East ward would offer variation from parity of +50% and a 4-member North Isles ward would offer variation from parity of -45% (based on a total of 21 councillors).

### **North Isles**

31. A member of the public suggested a 4-member North Isles ward (OIC 5). The Commission retained the existing North Isles ward with a wide variation from electoral parity (-27%) to reflect special geographical circumstances in the ward. A 4-member North Isles ward would offer variation from electoral parity of over -42% (based on a total of 22 councillors).

32. A member of the public suggested that at least a third or half of all councillors should represent the North Isles. 7 councillors (third) representing the North

Isles in two wards would result in variation from electoral parity of nearly –70% in each ward. 10 councillors (half) representing the North Isles in three wards would result in variation from electoral parity of nearly –80% (OIC 27).

- 33.A member of the public advised the proposed North Isles ward is under-represented. They suggested a 2-member Westray, Papa Westray and Rousay ward; 2-member Sanday, Stronsay and North Ronaldsay ward; and a single-member Eday and Shapinsay ward. This suggestion would propose a total of 23 councillors and variation from electoral parity in each of the three suggested North Isles wards would be approximately –50% (OIC 28).
- 34.A member of the public suggested transferring the inner islands of Rousay, Shapinsay, Egilsay and Wyre from the proposed North Isles ward to the proposed West Mainland ward because there are better transport links between the inner islands and the mainland than with the outer islands. The suggestion would transfer approximately 200 electors from the proposed North Isles ward to the proposed West Mainland ward. Historically, the Commission's 3rd Reviews of Electoral Arrangements recommended an Evie, Rendall, Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre ward which linked these islands to the mainland. The Commission's 2nd Reviews of Electoral Arrangements placed these islands within their own ward, it was named Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre. Reducing the electorate of the proposed North Isles ward would offer variation from electoral parity of –34% and variation from electoral parity in the proposed West Mainland ward would be approximately +15% (OIC 21).

### **Stromness and South Isles**

- 35.A member of the public suggested creating a Hoy ward. There are approximately 400 electors on the South Isles (Hoy, Flotta and Graemesay). A single-member South Isles ward would offer variation from electoral parity of over –50%. Historically, the Commission's 3<sup>rd</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements recommended two single-member wards which linked the South Isles with the Orkney mainland. These were a Stromness South, Graemesay and North Hoy ward and an Orphir, Walls and Flotta ward. The Commission's 2nd Reviews of Electoral Arrangements recommended a single-member South Isles ward called Hoy, Graemesay, Walls and Flotta (OIC 4).

### **East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray**

- 36.A member of the public suggested that the proposed East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray ward should be split into an island ward and a mainland ward. South Ronaldsay and Burray are linked to each other and to the mainland by causeways, therefore these islands are not as remote as other inhabited islands in the council area. Ronaldsay and Burray have better transport links than other inhabited islands and it takes less than 30 minutes to drive from Kirkwall to South Ronaldsay. Historically the south mainland has been linked to at least one of these islands, the Commission's 3<sup>rd</sup> Reviews recommended a Holm and Burray ward and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reviews recommended a Holm and Wideford ward (OIC 18).

### **West Mainland**

- 37.A member of the public suggested adding an additional councillor to the proposed West Mainland ward. They offered no reasoning or explanation for their suggestion and no other responses suggested this. The proposed West

Mainland ward is a 4-member ward and the suggestion would create a 5-member ward which is currently outwith the legislation but the Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill expected in the summer of 2020 could offer the Commission the flexibility of 5-member wards (OIC 25).

### **Other**

38. A member of the public suggested aligning Health Board boundaries with ward boundaries. According to the Orkney Health Board website the council area is divided into two localities: the Mainland, which will be subdivided into the West and East Mainland, and the Isles. Therefore the suggestion would propose 3 wards covering the whole council area (OIC 19).

### **Ward Names**

39. No alternative ward names were suggested during the public consultation.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

40. The Secretariat has not developed alternative suggestions based on the initial analysis of responses to the Orkney islands council area consultation but the Commission may wish alternative suggestions developed for its next meeting.

41. Taking into account all of the evidence arising from the public consultation, the Secretariat invites the Commission to decide for Orkney Islands council area whether:

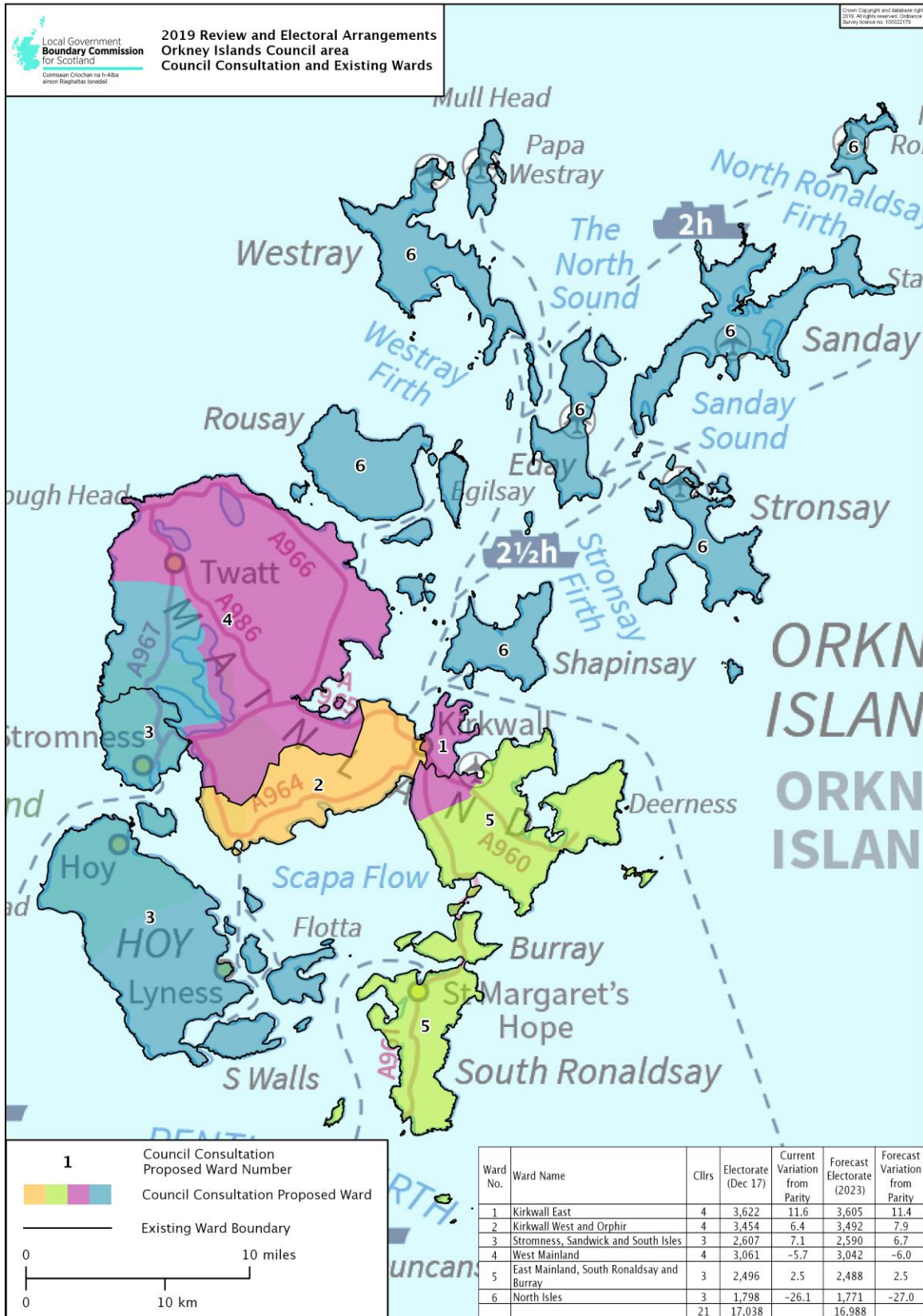
- to adopt without amendment the Initial Proposals as its Final Recommendations, (see Appendix C); or
- to make amendments to its Initial Proposals, either councillor numbers or ward boundaries at this area or that area as its Final Recommendations; and
- to consult on revised proposals.

**Secretariat**  
**December 2019**

**Existing Wards**



**Initial Proposals – Consultation with Council**



**Initial Proposals – Public Consultation**

