

LGBCS Paper 2519**2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements
North Ayrshire council area****Purpose**

1. The Commission is invited to give preliminary consideration to its Initial Proposals for the 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements in North Ayrshire council area.

Background

2. The Commission agreed to adopt the same methodology from its 5th Reviews for its 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements. The 5th Reviews methodology placed North Ayrshire council area as a Category 2 council area with ratio of electors per councillor of 3,000:1.
3. The methodology recommended 36 councillors for North Ayrshire council area. The 5th Reviews applied a 10% cap on change, increasing councillor numbers from 30 to 33.
4. At its meeting of October 2019, the Commission considered Paper 2502: "2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire Council areas – methodology for determining councillor numbers". The Commission considered whether to propose electoral arrangements using councillor numbers from the 5th Reviews or using councillor numbers based on the 5th Reviews methodology with updated electorate and using the existing number of councillors as the starting point. The Commission asked for designs based on a range of options.
5. The Commission may wish to:
 - re-apply its methodology from the 5th Reviews for councillor numbers and recommend 33 councillors;
 - apply the methodology to the existing number of councillors which would recommend 36 councillors; or
 - be flexible with councillor numbers when considering its ward design options and following feedback from its consultations.
6. Ward design options have been developed that consider flexibility with councillor numbers, however it has not been possible to develop a design with 36 councillors which does not break local community ties.
7. In applying the Schedule 6 rules the Commission must give consideration to the change in the number or distribution of electors of a local government area likely to take place over a period of 5 years. Electorate forecasts are developed using data provided by councils and National Records for Scotland. Unfortunately there have been delays in the Secretariat receiving housing development data from North Ayrshire Council which means the data used in this paper is liable to change and parity figures are based on December 2018 electorate. It is expected, however, that the forecast data will be available in time to inform the Commission's decisions at its next meeting. The 2018 electorate is 106,848 but is expected to decline over the next 5 years. According to National Records Scotland "between 2016 and 2026, the population of North Ayrshire is projected to decrease from 135,890 to 133,023. This is a decrease of 2.1%, which compares to a projected increase of 3.2% for Scotland as a whole."

8. The Commission met North Ayrshire Council in December 2019 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 in wards that contain inhabited islands. At that meeting, North Ayrshire Council advised they wished a ward design which aligned with their locality boundaries and included a 2-member Arran ward, increasing councillor numbers by one to a total of 34 councillors. They advised locality boundaries are based on the geography of the area and local communities with historical ties. There are six North Ayrshire locality areas: Arran; North Coast; Kilwinning; Irvine; Three Towns (Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston); and Garnock Valley. They opposed the current Dalry and West Kilbride ward because there are few links within the ward that extends from Beith to the Ayrshire coast. They were content to retain the existing Irvine and Kilwinning wards.
9. There are three inhabited islands within the council area. Arran with 3,812 electors, Holy Island, off the Arran coast, with 8 electors and Cumbrae with 1,046 electors.

Options

10. This paper sets out four options for the Commission to consider:
- Option 1 retains the existing ward boundaries that have been in place since 2017, implementing the Commission's recommendations from the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements;
 - Option 2 and Option 3 aim to align with North Ayrshire council area locality boundaries; and
 - Option 4 considers the North Ayrshire Council suggestion from the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements.
11. Options 1 and 2 both propose 33 councillors. Options 3 and 4 both propose 35 councillors.
12. Options 1 and 4 propose 3 and 4-member wards. Options 2 and 3 propose 3, 4 and 5-member wards
13. Each of these options is considered in more detail below.

Option 1 – Recommendations from 5th Reviews/ Existing wards

14. Option 1 retains the existing electoral arrangements. It makes no changes to the existing ward boundaries or number of councillors. The existing electoral arrangements have been in place since May 2017.
15. The 5th Reviews recommended an arrangement which proposed 33 councillors, representing 7 3-member wards and 3 4-member wards, increasing the number of wards in the area by 2 and increasing councillor numbers by 3.
16. During the 5th Reviews public consultation stage, there were 15 responses. The comments included a desire for ward boundaries to align with locality boundaries, suggestions for an Arran ward and comments on the proposed ward boundaries in the Garnock Valley.
17. 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 Appendix A:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec. 2018)	Variation from electoral parity %
1	Irvine West	4	11,921	-8.0%
2	Irvine East	3	9,907	2.0%
3	Kilwinning	4	13,297	2.7%
4	Stevenston	3	9,509	-2.1%
5	Ardrossan and Arran	3	9,584	-1.3%
6	Dalry and West Kilbride	3	9,951	2.4%
7	Kilbirnie and Beith	3	10,501	8.1%
8	North Coast and Cumbraes	4	13,524	4.4%
9	Saltcoats	3	9,842	1.3%
10	Irvine South	3	8,815	-9.3%
		33	106,851	

18. The advantages of Option 1 are:

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

19. The disadvantages of Option 1 are:

- it does not consider North Ayrshire Council locality boundaries; and
- it retains a Dalry and West Kilbride ward which extends across the area from Beith to the Ayrshire Coast, areas with few links.

Option 2

20. Option 2 proposes a ward design that considers North Ayrshire locality boundaries. None of the proposed ward boundaries overlap locality boundaries.

21. Option 2:

- retains four existing wards: Kilwinning; Irvine East; Irvine South; and Irvine West. The Kilwinning ward is coterminous with the Kilwinning locality boundary. The three Irvine wards fit within the Irvine locality boundary.
- proposes a 5-member North Coast ward and a 5-member Garnock Valley ward. Both wards are coterminous with their locality boundaries.
- proposes an Arran and Ardrossan ward and Saltcoats and Stevenson ward. The proposed ward boundary between Ardrossan and Saltcoats mainly follows a community council area boundary and a burgh boundary. It also partly follows a historical ward boundary along Sorbie Road. These two wards are placed within the Arran locality and Three-Towns locality boundary.

22. 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 Appendix B:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec. 2018)	Variation from electoral parity %
1	North Coast, Cumbraes, West Kilbride	5	17,766	9.7
2	Garnock Valley	5	16,138	-0.3
3	Arran and Ardrossan	4	12,209	-5.7
4	Saltcoats and Stevenson	5	16,798	3.8
5	Kilwinning	4	13,297	2.7
6	Irvine West	4	11,921	-8.0

7	Irvine East	3	9,907	2.0
8	Irvine South	3	8,815	-9.3
		33	106,851	

23. The advantages of Option 2 are that it:

- retains four of the existing North Ayrshire wards therefore minimising change and retaining some identifiable ward boundaries; and
- considers North Ayrshire Council locality boundaries.

Option 3

24. Option 3 also considers North Ayrshire locality boundaries. None of the proposed ward boundaries overlap locality boundaries.

25. Option 3:

- retains four existing wards: Kilwinning; Irvine East; Irvine South; and Irvine West. The Kilwinning ward is coterminous with the Kilwinning locality boundary. The three Irvine wards fit within the Irvine locality boundary.
- proposes a 5-member Garnock Valley ward, coterminous with the locality boundary.
- proposes a 4-member Largs and Cumbrae ward. The proposed ward boundary follows the Largs community council area boundary. Cumbrae is linked to the mainland by the ferry terminal at Largs.
- places Arran within the same ward as the north coastal towns of Fairlie and West Kilbride. The Commission commonly places islands in the same ward as the connecting mainland ferry terminal. Arran is currently situated within an Arran and Ardrossan ward, although there are arguably few links between the communities of Arran and Ardrossan except for the ferry.
- proposes three wards within the Three-Towns locality. The proposed Ardrossan ward boundary follows the burgh boundary. The proposed boundary between Saltcoats and Stevenson partly follows a community council, burgh and historical ward boundary between the A78 road and A738 road, before it follows Old Raise Road and Kinnier Road and then rejoins the existing ward boundary. There are few features to define the boundary between Ardrossan, Saltcoats and Stevenson.

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 Appendix C:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec. 2018)	Variation from electoral parity %
1	Largs and Cumbraes	4	11,969	-2.0
2	Fairlie and West Kilbride and Arran	3	9,617	5.0
3	Saltcoats	3	8,256	-9.9
4	Stevenston	3	8,542	-6.7
5	Ardrossan	3	8,389	-8.4
6	Garnock Valley	5	16,138	5.7
7	Kilwinning	4	13,297	8.9
8	Irvine West	4	11,921	-2.4
9	Irvine East	3	9,907	8.2
10	Irvine South	3	8,815	-3.8

		35	106,851	
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27. The advantages of Option 3 are:

- retains four of the existing North Ayrshire wards therefore minimising change and retaining some identifiable ward boundaries; and
- considers North Ayrshire Council locality boundaries.

28. The disadvantages of Option 3 are:

- some may oppose a ward that separates Arran and Ardrossan.

Option 4 – Suggestion from North Ayrshire Council during the 5th Reviews

29. Option 4 is based on a submission from North Ayrshire Council during the 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. It considered locality boundaries and proposed 35 councillors.

30. Option 4:

- proposes three wards that all sit within the Irvine locality. It also proposes a Kilwinning ward coterminous with the Kilwinning locality boundary.
- proposes two wards within the Garnock Valley locality: a Beith and Kilbirnie East ward and a Dalry and Kilbirnie West ward.
- splits the North Coast locality to create a Largs, Skelmorie and Cumraes ward and a Fairlie and West Kilbride and Arran ward. The proposed boundary between these wards doesn't follow any recognised boundaries, the proposed boundary partly follows: streams, fence and the watershed.
- proposes an Ardrossan and Saltcoats East ward and a Stevenson and Saltcoats West ward within the Three-Towns locality. The proposed boundary between Saltcoats and Stevenson partly follows a historical ward boundary which follows Dalry Road and the A738 and then broadly follows the existing ward and historical burgh boundary.

31. The Commission did not adopt this proposed ward design because it split Kilbirnie within two wards and placed Arran in a separate ward to Ardrossan.

32. The electorates and associated variation from parity for Option 4 are shown in the table below and the boundaries are shown in Appendix D:

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from electorate parity %
1	Largs, Skelmorie and Cumraes	4	12,364	1.2
2	Fairlie and West Kilbride and Arran	3	9,232	0.8
3	Dalry and Kilbirnie West	3	8,076	-11.8
4	Beith and Kilbirnie East	3	8,074	-11.8
5	Ardrossan and Saltcoats East	4	12,722	4.2
6	Stevenson and Saltcoats West	4	12,443	1.9
7	Kilwinning	4	13,297	8.9
8	Irvine West	4	11,921	-2.4
9	Irvine East	3	9,907	8.2
10	Irvine South	3	8,815	-3.8
		35	106,851	

33. The advantages of Option 4 are:

- retains four of the existing North Ayrshire wards therefore minimising change and retaining some identifiable ward boundaries; and

- considers North Ayrshire Council locality boundaries.

34. The disadvantages of Option 4 are:

- it splits the towns of Kilbirnie and Saltcoats between wards; and
- the Commission did not adopt this ward design during the 5th Reviews because it split Kilbirnie and placed Arran and Ardrossan in separate wards.

Conclusions

North Ayrshire Islands

35. There are only three inhabited islands within the area: Cumbrae; and Arran and Holy Island who are situated closely together.

36. The island of Cumbrae, with 1,046 electors, has too few electors to propose a single-member Cumbrae ward. All of the options considered place Cumbrae within a ward with Largs because Largs is the nearest town and they are linked by the ferry. There are no direct links between the islands of Arran and Cumbrae, therefore no options have considered placing them within the same ward.

37. The Commission could propose an Arran ward, coterminous with the Arran locality. However a single-member Arran ward with a total of 33 councillors would offer variation from electoral parity of +18%. A two-member Arran ward with a total of 34 councillors, as suggested by North Ayrshire Council, would offer variation from electoral parity of nearly -40%.

38. Options 1 and 2 propose wards containing Ardrossan and Arran and both of these communities are linked by the ferry. Options 3 and 4 propose wards containing Arran and West Kilbride. There are no ferry links between Arran and West Kilbride on the mainland. However there is arguably little in common between Arran and Ardrossan other than the ferry link. Arran residents may look to Irvine and beyond for local amenities.

Electorate

39. The rules governing electoral reviews state that the Commission must have regard to the likely change in the number and distribution of the local government electorate over a 5-year period.

40. Due to delays in receiving forecast housing development data, the Secretariat have been unable to create 5 year forecast electorate data for this meeting. However published population trends show that the North Ayrshire population is expected to decline over the next 5 years.

41. The forecast electorate will be available for the Commission's next meeting, expected in early April, when it agrees its initial proposals for consultation with the council.

42. Although the Commission cannot consider the forecast electorate it can consider some of the main issues: retaining the existing Irvine and Kilwinning ward boundaries; adopting a ward design based on North Ayrshire locality boundaries; a 5-member Garnock Valley ward; and whether Arran should be placed within a ward with Ardrossan or West Kilbride.

Legislation

43. The Scottish Elections (Reform) Bill could allow the Commission to recommend 2 and 5-member wards across Scotland as well as the current 3 and 4-member wards (and single-member wards where there are inhabited islands). The timescales for the legislation passing through Parliament is summer 2020.
44. Options 2 and 3 both propose a 5-member Garnock Valley ward coterminous with the Garnock Valley locality. The Commission could consider two 3-member wards within the Garnock Valley but this would split Kilbirnie between wards, see Option 4. Option 1 shows the constraints of using solely 3 and 4-member wards.

North Ayrshire Localities

45. There are six North Ayrshire locality areas: Arran, North Coast, Kilwinning, Irvine, Three Towns (Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Stevenston) and Garnock Valley.
46. North Ayrshire Council asked the Commission to consider locality boundaries when designing ward boundaries because locality boundaries consider both the local geography of the area and local community ties.
47. North Ayrshire Council consulted with the public when they designed their locality area boundaries and as a result they are recognised by local communities. North Ayrshire Council advise that localities are also recognised by public bodies (police and community councils).
48. Localities are used for community planning and community empowerment.
49. Options 2, 3 and 4 all consider North Ayrshire locality areas. In Option 1 the existing Dalry and West Kilbride ward cuts across both the Garnock Valley and North Coast locality boundaries.

Garnock Valley Locality

50. The Garnock Valley locality contains three towns (Beith, Dalry and Kilbirnie) who are linked by local geography and local ties.
51. Options 2 and 3 propose a 5-member Garnock Valley ward coterminous with the Garnock Valley locality boundary.
52. Option 4 proposes two 3-member wards within the Garnock Valley locality but as there are over 5,000 electors in each of the three towns, this option splits Kilbirnie between two wards.
53. Option 1 splits the Garnock Valley locality between wards breaking local ties in the area.

Kilwinning and Irvine Localities

54. Options 1-4 all retain the existing Kilwinning and Irvine wards.
55. The proposed Kilwinning ward is coterminous with the Kilwinning locality.
56. The three existing Irvine wards, with a total of 10 Councillors, sit within the Irvine locality. North Ayrshire were content to retain the existing Irvine and Kilwinning wards because of their alignment with locality boundaries.

Councillor numbers

57. The Commission's methodology recommends 36 councillors for North Ayrshire council area. The 5th Reviews applied a 10% cap on change, increasing councillor numbers from 30 to 33.
58. North Ayrshire Council advised they would prefer 34 councillors, with a two-member Arran ward.
59. It has not been possible to develop a ward design with 36 councillors which does not break local community ties. The suggestion from North Ayrshire Council (option 4) during the 5th Reviews recommended 35 councillors. Options 2, 3 and 4 all consider local community ties rather than increasing councillor numbers.
60. An option with 36 councillors could be seen as a significant change in councillor numbers within a 5-year period (30 councillors in early 2017 to 36 in 2022).

5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements

61. During the 5th Reviews, North Ayrshire Council wished ward boundaries to align with locality boundaries. Their response to the public consultation was supported by many public bodies including NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Police Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service etc.
62. During the 5th Reviews public consultation on its proposed ward boundaries the Commission received only 15 comments. These included an alternative ward design from North Ayrshire Council, suggestions for an Arran ward and opposition to splitting Kilbirnie between wards.

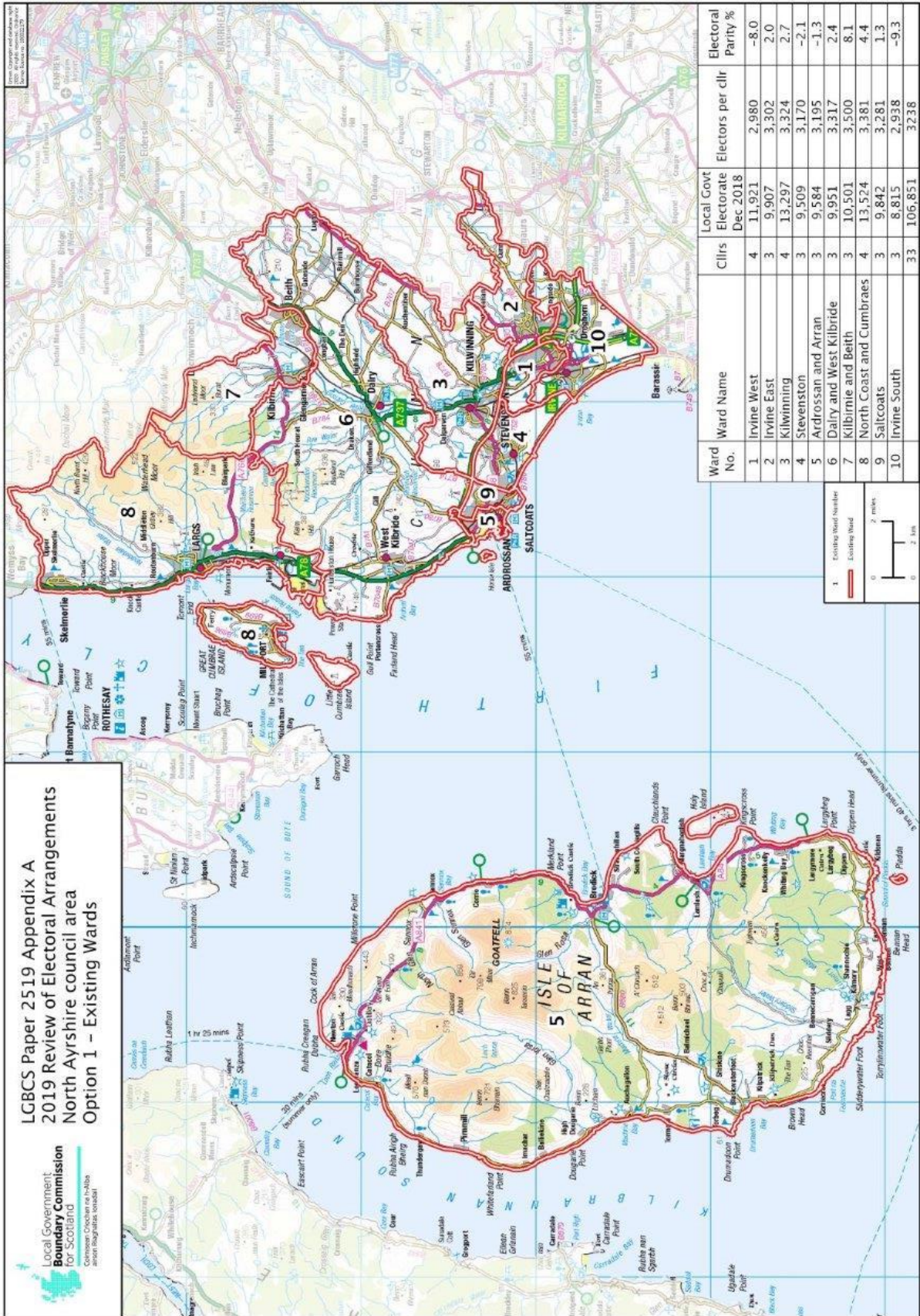
Options summary

63. All four options retain the existing Irvine and Kilwinning ward boundaries.
64. Option 1 retains the existing electoral arrangements but it breaks local community ties within the proposed Dalry and West Kilbride ward because there are no links between Beith and communities on the Ayrshire coast. They are two different geographical areas, coastal West Kilbride and upland Garnock Valley.
65. Option 2 considers North Ayrshire Council locality area boundaries and places Arran and Ardrossan within the same ward.
66. Option 3 considers North Ayrshire Council locality area boundaries but places Arran with West Kilbride.
67. Option 4 considers North Ayrshire Council locality area boundaries but places Arran with West Kilbride and splits Kilbirnie between wards.

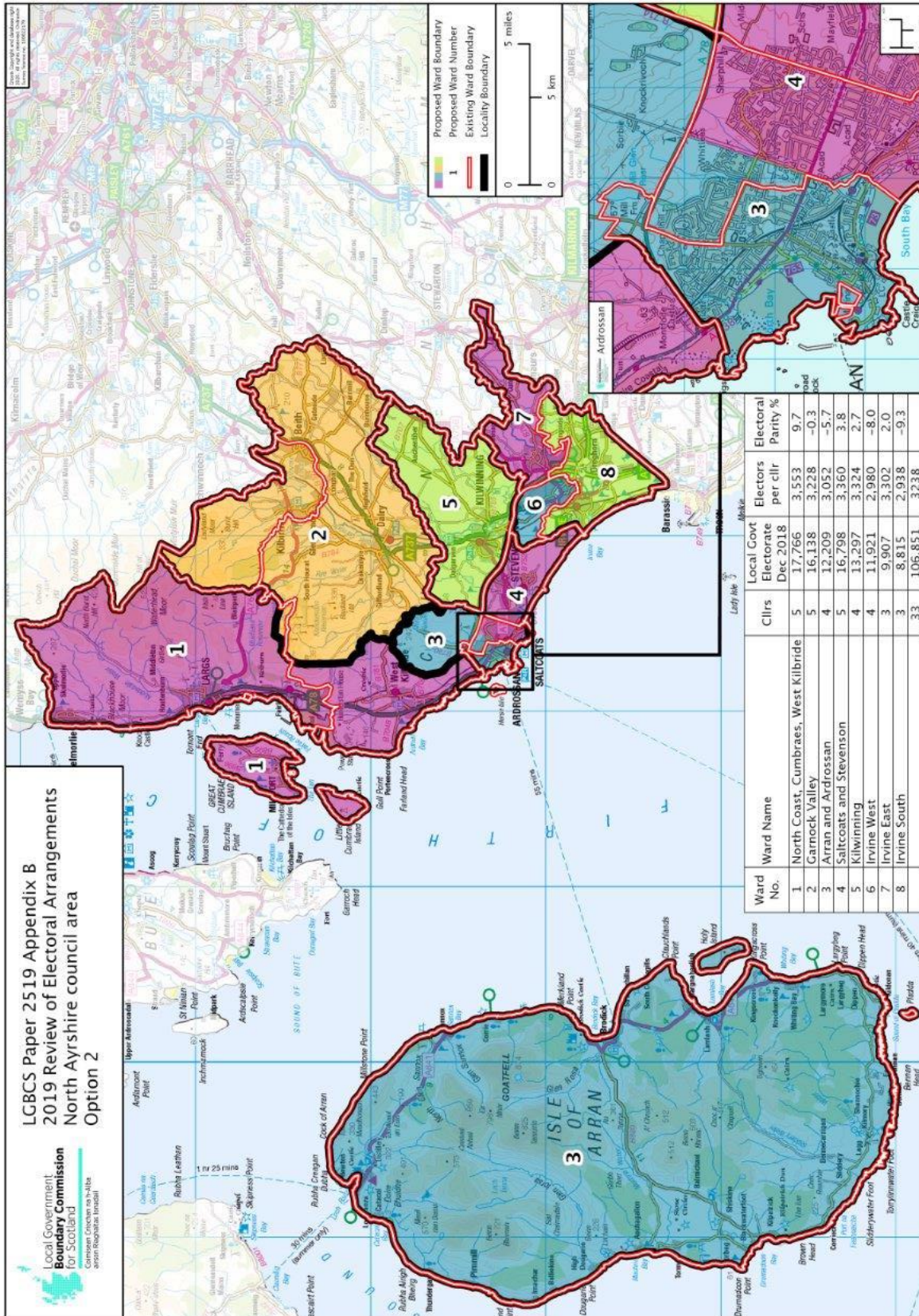
Recommendations

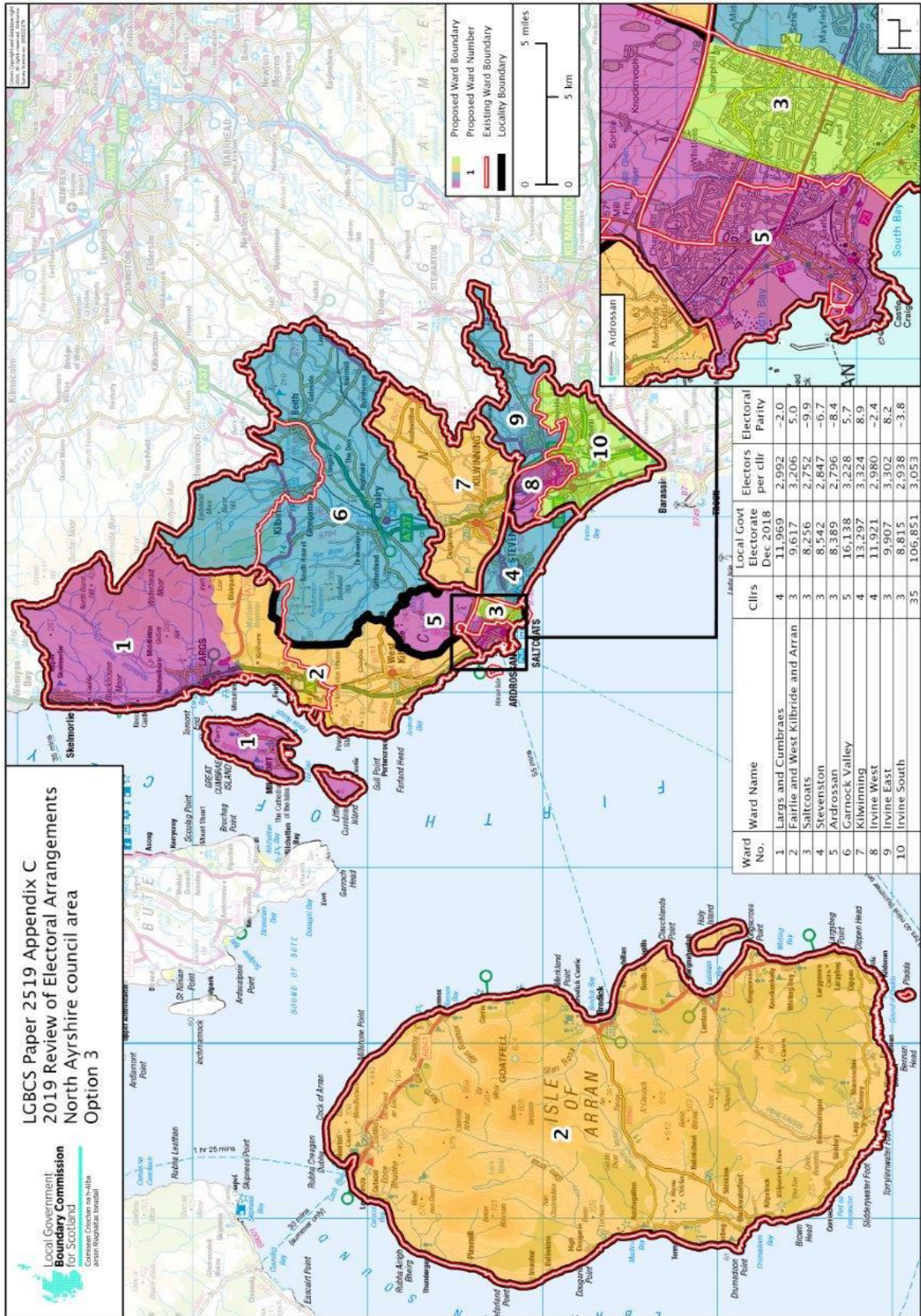
68. The Commission is invited to consider which options it wishes the Secretariat to informally discuss with North Ayrshire Council, along with possible ward names, before confirming its Initial Proposals at its next meeting.

Secretariat
January 2020

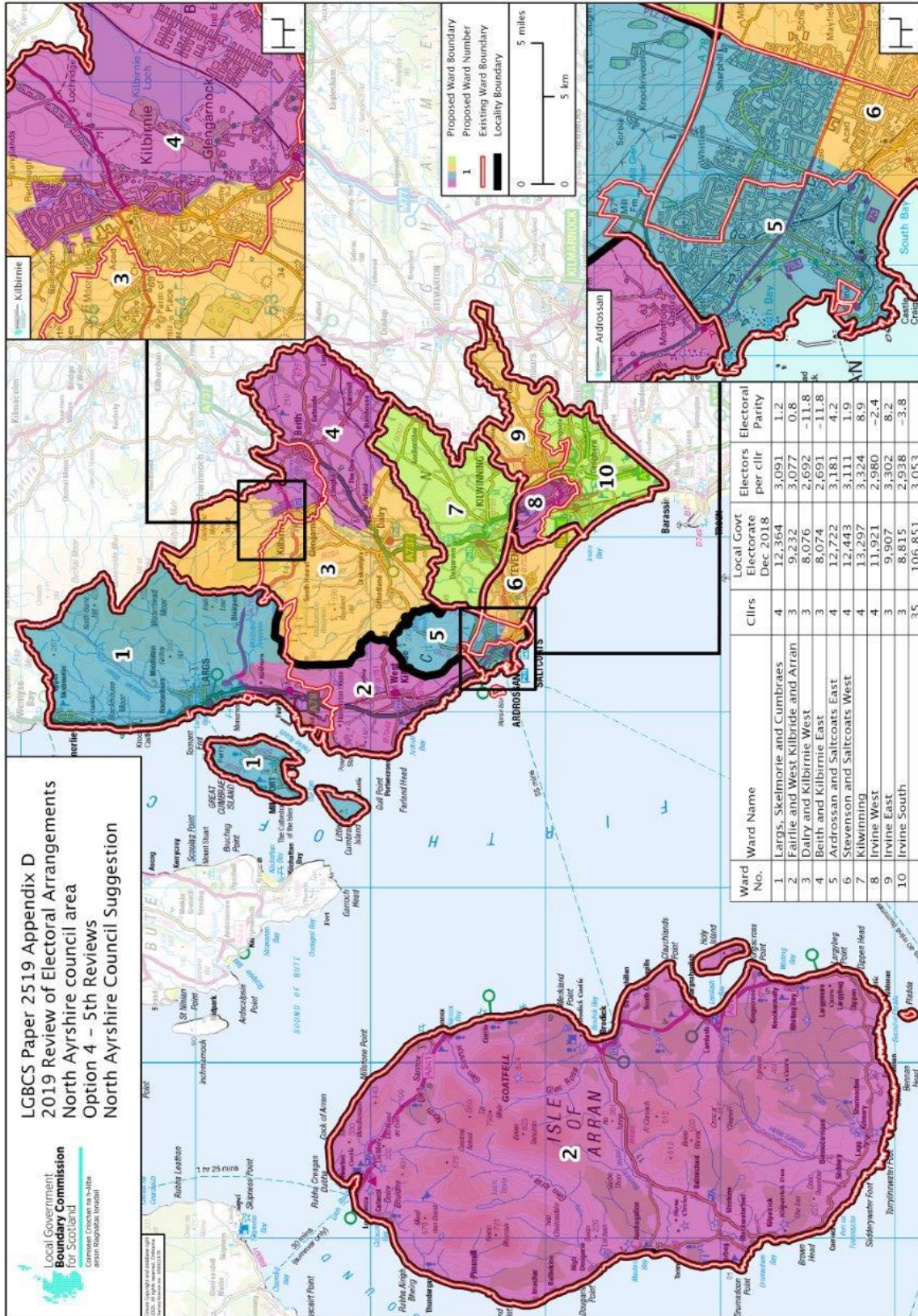


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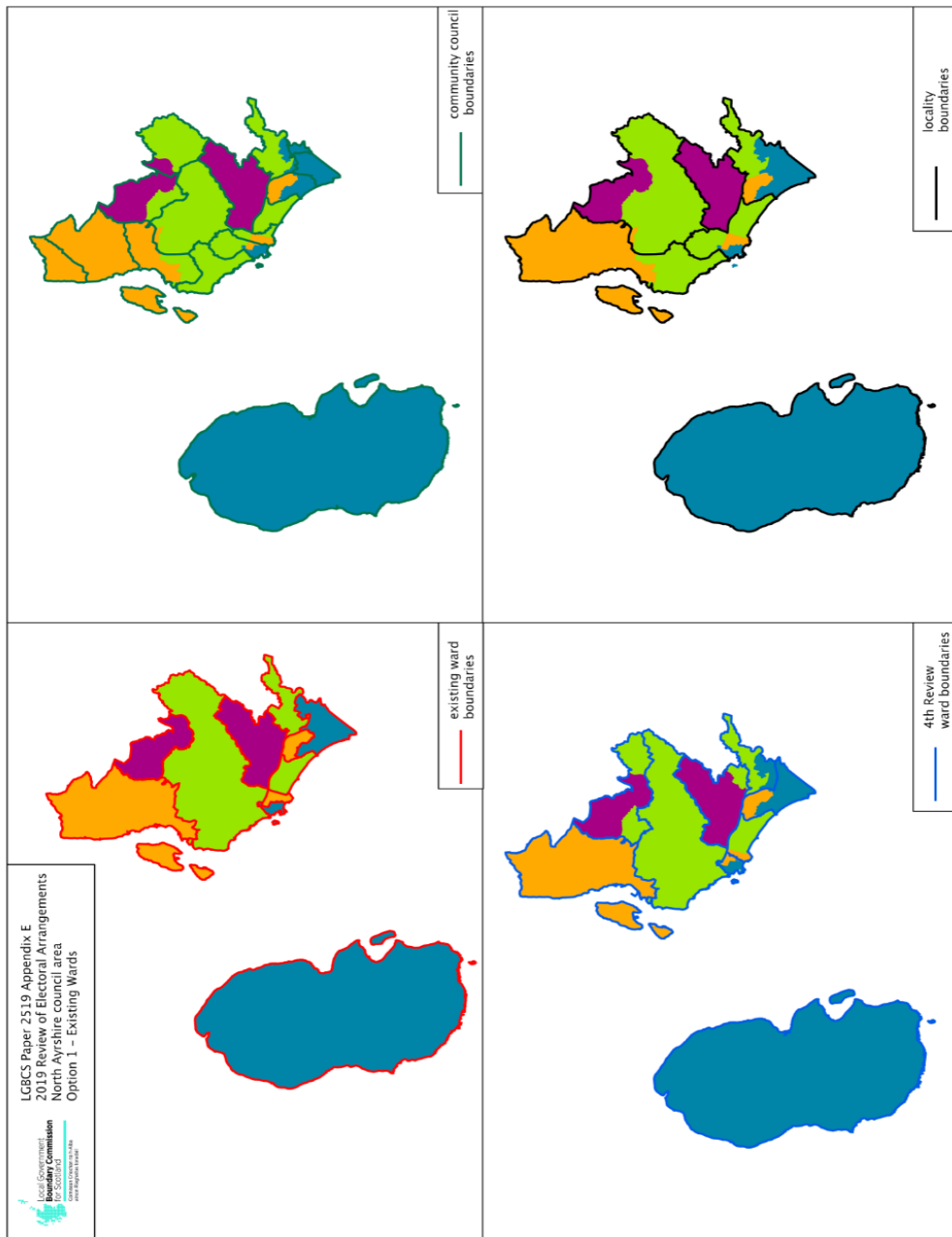


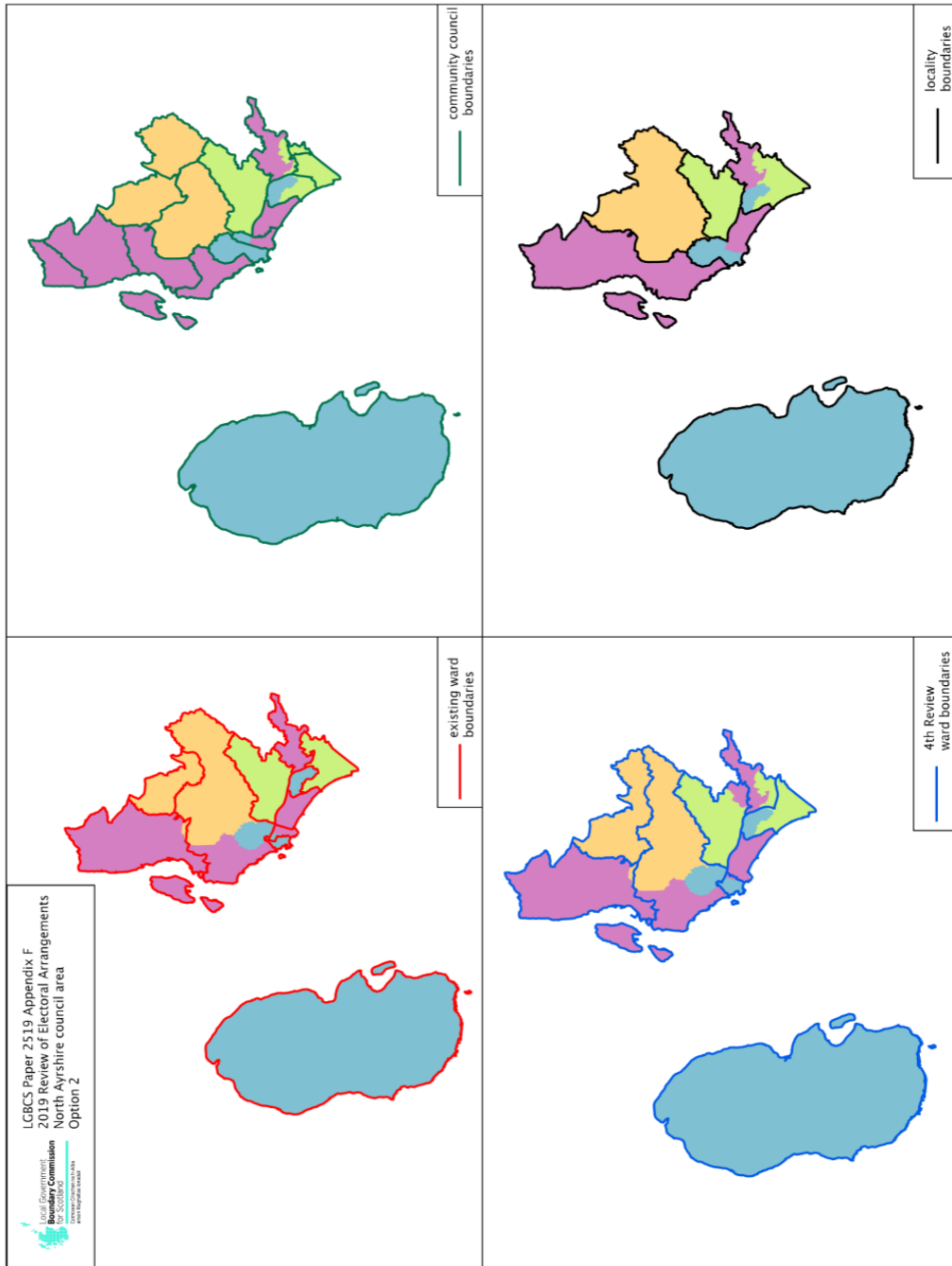


Appendix D

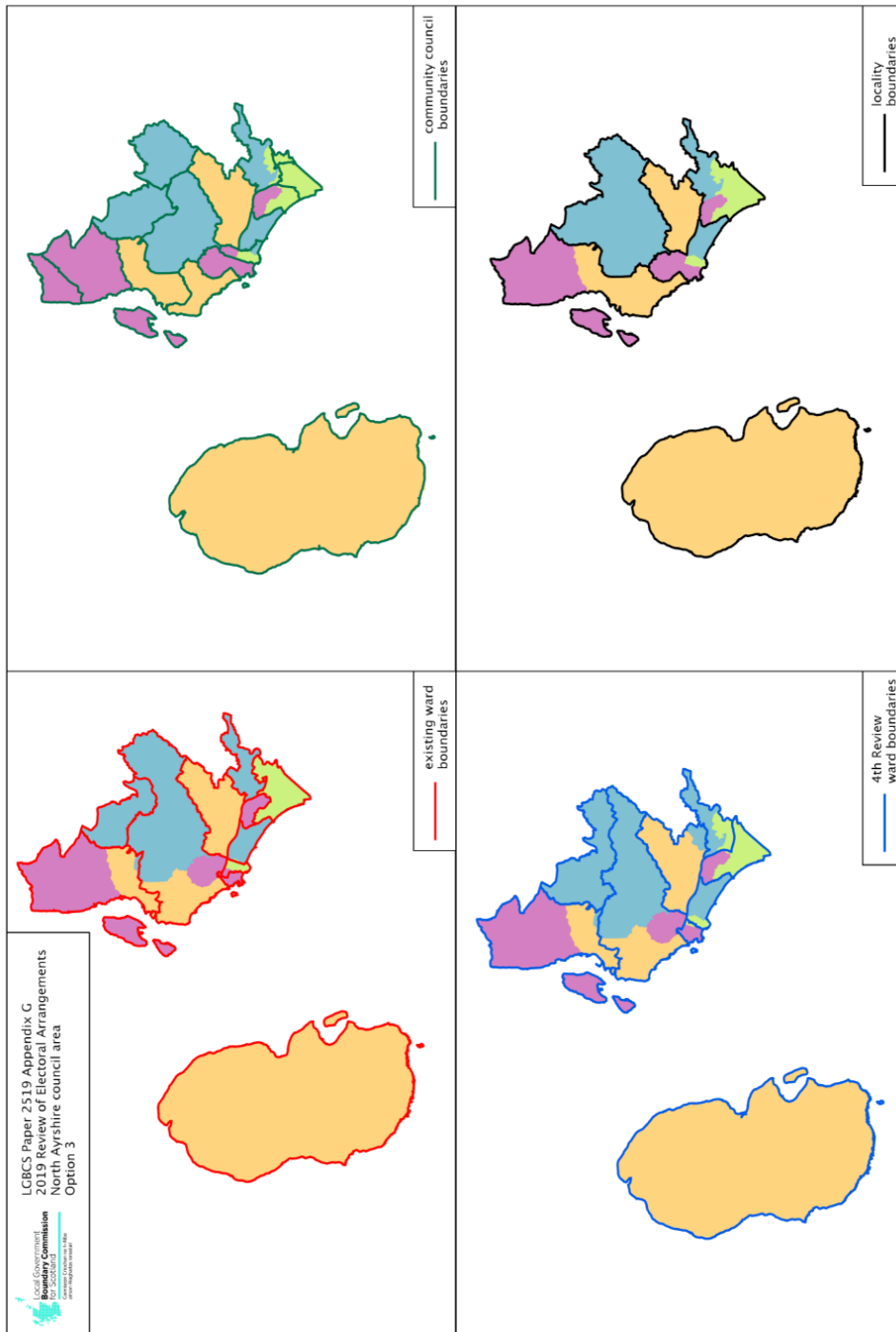


Appendix E





Appendix G



Appendix H

