

2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements: Consideration of Initial Proposals for Argyll and Bute council area

Action required

1. The Commission is invited to consider the response from Argyll and Bute Council to the consultation on its Initial Proposals for electoral arrangements and consider whether it wishes to make changes before the public consultation.

Background

2. The Commission agreed its Initial Proposals for Argyll and Bute council area at its meeting of 7 April 2020 (see Paper LGBCS 2525).
3. Argyll and Bute Council were consulted on the Initial Proposals for a 2-month period, from 16 July to 30 September 2020.
4. The Commission's methodology for determining councillor numbers proposed 33 councillors for Argyll and Bute council area. However, in developing its proposals, a better ward design was achievable with 34 councillors and accordingly the Commission presented an electoral arrangement for 34 councillors representing four 2-member wards, six 3-member wards and two 4-member wards, reducing overall councillor numbers by two.
5. A map of the Initial Proposals is shown at Appendix A.
6. The Commission's proposals for the council area:
 - take account of the Islands (Scotland) Act by using the flexibility offered by 2-member wards to better reflect local ties for island communities. The proposals present island-only wards for: Islay, Jura and Colonsay; Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree; and retain the existing Isle of Bute ward (with 2 councillors rather than 3 as at present);
 - consider special geographic circumstances in relation to variation from electoral parity in the proposed island wards of: Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree; and Islay, Jura and Colonsay due to these islands' remoteness and their limited transport links;
 - make no changes to the boundaries of five of the existing wards (Cowal; Dunoon; Isle of Bute; Lomond North; and Mid Argyll);
 - place Oban within a single ward to avoid breaking local community ties;
 - minimise change to the existing ward boundaries in Helensburgh, while reducing councillor numbers there by one;
 - take account of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act, which allows the use of 2-member and 5-member wards across Scotland, to design a 2-member ward that considers local ties in Lorn; and
 - have regard to Argyll and Bute Council's four administrative areas and the local ties and communities that they represent.
7. The table below details the electorates with actual and forecast variation from parity of the proposed wards.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity %
1	Kintyre	4	7,404	-5.7	7,222	-6.8
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5	2,927	-24.4
3	Mid Argyll	3	5,985	1.7	5,927	2.0
4	Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree	2	3,211	-18.2	3,438	-11.2
5	Oban	4	8,357	6.5	8,497	9.7
6	Lorn	2	4,190	6.8	4,164	7.5
7	Cowal	3	5,734	-2.6	5,596	-3.7
8	Dunoon	3	5,500	-6.6	5,304	-8.7
9	Isle of Bute	2	4,696	19.6	4,406	13.8
10	Lomond North	3	6,000	1.9	5,858	0.8
11	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	9.1	6,075	4.6
12	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	8.3	6,420	10.5
		34	66,725		65,834	

Response from Argyll and Bute Council

8. In their response to the consultation, see Appendix B, Argyll and Bute Council raised the following points. They:

- welcome the Commission's consideration of the four Area Committee areas when developing its ward boundaries;
- support the proposals where no change is proposed to both councillor numbers or ward boundaries (Cowal, Dunoon, Lomond North and Mid Argyll);
- oppose any reduction in the overall number of councillors. They state the proposals "diminish the overall electoral accountability, while failing to take into account material factors in relation to electoral parity, impact of demographic issues such as an ageing population and social and economic deprivation, and the consequent requirement for more effective electoral representation these factors create;"
- oppose the reduction in representation on the island of Bute because there are significant demographic and deprivation issues such as a third of the electorate being over 64. They also state that the loss on representation is at odds with the overall aim of the Islands Act;
- raise concerns with differences in variation from electoral parity in the island wards. They report that 2-members would represent the same size of population on Bute as the 4-members representing the other two island wards (Islay, Jura and Colonsay; and Mull, Iona, Coll & Tiree). They raise further concerns with under-representation in Lorn and Helensburgh;
- would support linking some of the smaller islands to island wards if there were suggestions for this during the public consultation stage. The smaller islands include Gigha, Seil, Lismore, Luing, Easdale and Kerrera;
- asked the Commission to consider an alternative ward boundary in Kintyre which would place Tarbert and Skipness within a Mid Argyll ward. The proposed boundary would follow a community council area boundary;
- advised there was conflicting feedback from members regarding the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islay, Jura and Colonsay wards. There was some support for no change to the existing arrangements and concern that a 2-member Islay, Jura and Colonsay island only ward could increase councillor workload; and

- asked the Commission to consider a response from Council's Argyll Islands Strategic Group to the Islands (Scotland) Bill Consultation in September 2017 which noted the advantages of having mainland-island wards and raised concerns that 1 or 2 member island wards would reduce the number of members representing islands as a whole. However during the 5th Reviews an Atlantic Islands ward was considered but at that time it was not possible to have a 2 member ward.
9. The Council also raised concerns that the public consultation will take place during the COVID-19 pandemic which may impact the public consultation process and the work of the Commission.

Consideration of response

Councillor Numbers

10. Argyll and Bute Council oppose any reduction in the overall number of councillors. They wish to retain the existing electoral representation due to an ageing population and social and economic deprivation. The Council oppose a loss of representation on Bute.
11. The Commission's methodology placed Argyll and Bute council area as a Category 4 council area with a ratio of electors per councillor of 2,800:1. Category 4 councils have between 30% and 59% of their population living outwith settlements of 3,000 or more people and less than 15% of the population living in the 15% most deprived datazones. Other Category 4 council areas include: Aberdeenshire; Dumfries and Galloway; Highland; Moray; Perth and Kinross; Scottish Borders; and Stirling. The Commission's methodology recommended 24 councillors for Argyll and Bute council area but applied a 10% cap on change, reducing councillor numbers from 36 to 33. Argyll and Bute councillor numbers have remained unchanged since 1999 and ward boundaries since 2007.
12. The Commission's methodology for determining councillor numbers considers rurality and various factors of deprivation. It is based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data which identifies the places in Scotland where people are experiencing disadvantage across different aspects of their lives.
13. The Commission's methodology for determining councillor numbers during its 3rd Reviews, which reported in 1999, placed Argyll and Bute and Highland within the same category with a ratio of electors per councillors of 2,000:1. Applying that ratio to the current electorate would still result in a reduction in councillor numbers ($66,725 \div 2,000 = 34$).
14. Argyll and Bute Council did not raise any issues with representation for island communities or a need for more representation due to the geography of the council area. The Commission has applied a different ratio for the wholly island council areas of Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands and Na h-Eileanan an Iar of 800:1.
15. The Commission could consider retaining the existing electoral arrangements with 36 Councillors. The table below shows the ward electorate and variation from electoral parity of the existing arrangements. A map of the existing arrangements is shown at Appendix C.

16. Retaining the existing arrangements would retain recognised ward boundaries but they do not consider the Commission's methodology for councillor numbers and offer wide variation from electoral parity in Bute. The Council support the proposals which retain the existing Cowal, Dunoon, Lomond North and Mid Argyll wards.

Ward no	Ward name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity %	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity %
1	South Kintyre	3	5,103	-8.2	4,919	-10.3
2	Kintyre and the Islands	3	5,148	-7.4	5,230	-4.7
3	Mid Argyll	3	5,985	7.6	5,927	8.0
4	Oban South and the Isles	4	7,896	6.5	7,825	7.0
5	Oban North and Lorn	4	7,862	6.0	8,274	13.1
6	Cowal	3	5,734	3.1	5,596	2.0
7	Dunoon	3	5,500	-1.1	5,304	-3.3
8	Isle of Bute	3	4,696	-15.5	4,406	-19.7
9	Lomond North	3	6,000	7.9	5,858	6.8
10	Helensburgh Central	4	7,357	-0.8	6,924	-5.3
11	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	5,444	-2.1	5,570	1.5
		36	66,725		65,834	

Isle of Bute

17. Argyll and Bute Council oppose the proposed reduction in electoral representation on the Isle of Bute. They believe the proposals are at odds with the Islands Act because Bute, as an island, should not be losing representation.
18. On the Isle of Bute, retaining the existing electoral arrangements with a 3-member ward, offers variation from electoral parity of -16%, forecast to -20%.
19. The Initial Proposals proposed a 2-member Isle of Bute ward with variation from electoral parity of +20%, forecast to +14%. When developing its Initial Proposals the Commission noted that a 2-member Isle of Bute ward was under-represented but it covers a relatively small area and has closer links to the mainland than other islands within the area.
20. The Council compared the proposed representation on a 2-member Bute ward with the two 2-member Inner Hebrides island wards. Based on the existing electorate (December 2018) there are 4,696 electors on Bute and 6,058 on the other two island wards (Islay, Jura and Colonsay; and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree).
21. The Commission's Initial Proposals considered that special geographical circumstances could apply to the Islay, Jura and Colonsay; and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree wards due of their remoteness and limited transport links.
22. The Bute ferry takes 5 minutes to reach the mainland between Colintrave and Rhubodach. The ferry journey to Islay and Jura takes two hours. It is a 4 hour ferry journey from Oban to Tiree.
23. The Council state that a third of the population on Bute are over 64 and that this makes it more challenging for councillors to represent constituents.

24. According to NRS population estimates approximately 20% of Scotland's population is over 64, in Argyll and Bute council area it is 26% and on Bute it is 32%.
25. From 1999 – 2007, Bute was represented by three single-member wards (Bute North, Bute Central and Bute South).
26. To improve variation from electoral parity the Commission could consider creating a Bute-mainland ward but during the Commission's 5th Reviews public consultation there was strong opposition to a Bute-mainland ward. An island-mainland ward may not be seen as being in the spirit of the Islands Act.
27. The Commission could consider wider variation from electoral parity on Bute because it is an island and apply special geographical circumstances and propose a 3-member Bute ward.
28. The table below shows the Initial Proposals with a 3-member Bute ward and a total of 35 Councillors. This option creates five wards with variation from electoral parity over 10% while the Initial Proposals have three wards with variation from electoral parity over 10%.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Current Variation from Parity	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Parity
1	Kintyre	4	7,404	-2.9%	7,222	-4.0%
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-25.3%	2,927	-22.2%
3	Mid Argyll	3	5,985	4.6%	5,927	5.0%
4	Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree	2	3,211	-15.8%	3,438	-8.6%
5	Oban	4	8,357	9.6%	8,497	12.9%
6	Lorn	2	4,190	9.9%	4,164	10.7%
7	Cowal	3	5,734	0.3%	5,596	-0.8%
8	Dunoon	3	5,500	-3.8%	5,304	-6.0%
9	Isle of Bute	3	4,696	-17.9%	4,406	-21.9%
10	Lomond North	3	6,000	4.9%	5,858	3.8%
11	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	12.3%	6,075	7.7%
12	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	11.5%	6,420	13.8%
		35	66,725		65,834	

Variance from electoral parity comparisons

29. Argyll and Bute Council highlighted a wide difference in variation from electoral parity between the existing electoral arrangements and the Initial Proposals.
30. The existing electoral arrangements offer two wards with forecast variation from electoral over 10% (Oban North and Lorn = +13% and Isle of Bute = -20%). The Initial Proposals offer three wards with forecast variation from electoral over 10% (Islay, Jura and Colonsay = -24%, Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree = -11% and Isle of Bute = +14%).
31. When developing its Initial Proposals the Commission noted the wide variations from electoral parity in the proposed Islay, Jura and Colonsay; and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree wards. The Commission considered the variation from electoral parity was acceptable due to the islands remoteness and their limited transport

links and agreed that special geographical circumstances could be applied in these wards.

32. If the Commission retained the existing electoral arrangements with 36 Councillors, it could improve forecast variation from electoral parity in the existing Oban North and Lorn ward by amending the ward boundary between the two Oban wards.
33. Variation from electoral parity could only be improved in the existing Isle of Bute ward by linking it with the mainland but this was strongly opposed during the Commission's 5th Reviews public consultation.

Island wards

34. Argyll and Bute Council would consider supporting any suggestions received during the public consultation to place some of their smaller islands within an island ward rather than a mainland ward. The islands mentioned by the Council included: Gigha; Seil; Lismore; Luining; Easdale; and Kerrera).
35. All of these islands are currently situated within island-mainland wards and have been since 1999.
36. Seil is linked to the mainland by a road-bridge but the other islands are served by ferry:
 - Gigha - 20 minute ferry to Kintyre on the mainland;
 - Lismore - 50 minute ferry to Oban;
 - Kerrera - 5 minute ferry to Gallanach on the mainland; and
 - Luining and Easdale - 5 minute ferry to Seil.
37. The Council mentioned there were differing views from members on whether to support island only wards or island-mainland wards. Some believed that an island only ward may increase councillor workload but no supporting evidence was provided.
38. The Commission may wish to consider including a sub-question on its consultation site so that those responding during the public consultation can comment on any island-mainland or island-island links to gain feedback on possible issues or ties between islands and the mainland.

Alternative suggestion - Kintyre

39. Argyll and Bute Council suggested an alternative ward boundary in Kintyre which would place Tarbert and Skipness within a Mid-Argyll ward. The proposed boundary follows a community council area boundary and would transfer approximately 1,200 electors between the proposed Kintyre and Mid Argyll wards.
40. The community council area boundary partly follows a historical ward boundary between the North Kintyre and Mid Kintyre wards in use between 1995 - 1999.
41. This suggestion may improve local ties because it follows both a community council area boundary and a historical ward boundary.
42. The table below shows this suggested change to the Initial Proposals with both wards remaining within 10% variation from electoral parity. A map of the alternative suggestion is shown at Appendix D.

Ward no	Ward name	Cllrs	Electorate	Variation from parity %	Forecast Electorate	Forecast Variation from parity %
1	Kintyre	3	6,161	4.6%	5,964	2.7%
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5%	2,927	-24.4%
3	Mid Argyll (including Tarbert)	4	7,228	-7.9%	7,185	-7.2%
4	Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree	2	3,211	-18.2%	3,438	-11.2%
5	Oban	4	8,357	6.5%	8,497	9.7%
6	Lorn	2	4,190	6.8%	4,164	7.5%
7	Cowal	3	5,734	-2.6%	5,596	-3.7%
8	Dunoon	3	5,500	-6.6%	5,304	-8.7%
9	Isle of Bute	2	4,696	19.6%	4,406	13.8%
10	Lomond North	3	6,000	1.9%	5,858	0.8%
11	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	9.1%	6,075	4.6%
12	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	8.3%	6,420	10.5%
		34	66,725		65,834	

Public consultation timing

43. The Council raised concerns with the timing of the public consultation and concerns there will be less engagement with the review due to the pandemic.
44. The Commission must submit its recommendations to Scottish Ministers by May 2021 to enable preparations for local government elections in May 2022.
45. The Commission have been invited to attend Argyll and Bute Council's Area Community Planning Groups meetings in November. The Area Community Planning Group meetings are attended by community councils and would give the Commission an opportunity to present its proposals to local communities, raise awareness of the review and take any questions.
46. The Commission's attendance at the Community Planning Groups meetings is discussed in the Public Consultation Approach paper (LGBCS 2536).

Summary

47. Argyll and Bute Council: oppose any reduction in councillor numbers; oppose a 2-member Isle of Bute ward; raise concerns with electoral parity for island wards; seek the public's views on links with smaller islands with the mainland or other islands; and suggest a minor amendment to the proposed ward boundaries by Tarbert.

Argyll and Bute Geography

48. Argyll and Bute Council area is arguably the most diverse council area in Scotland geographically. There is a wide contrast from urban Helensburgh to the Inner Hebrides islands of Coll and Tiree. It is also the second largest council area in Scotland at 7,160 square kilometres. The geography and poor transport links make it challenging for councillors to represent communities within their wards necessitating overnight stays to meet constituents. Special geographic circumstance might be considered to apply in many parts of the council area and

justify over-representation in any particular ward but this would have consequences elsewhere.

49. Argyll and Bute contains more inhabited islands than the Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands or Western Isles. A third of Argyll and Bute's area consists of islands and nearly a fifth of its electorate reside on islands.
50. The four most populated islands are Bute with approximately 4,700 electors, Islay (2,500 electors), Mull (2,400 electors) and Tiree (530 electors).
51. There are also limited transport links within the council area. The A83 road is regularly closed at the "Rest and be Thankful." There are few rail links. There are airtlinks for Tiree, Islay, Campbeltown and Oban. The ferry from Oban to Tiree takes approx. 4 hours, while the Bute-mainland ferry only takes 5 minutes.

Special geographic circumstances

52. The Commission considered special geographic circumstances in two of the three island wards it proposed. They were: Islay, Jura and Colonsay; and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree. These island wards are remote from the mainland with limited transport links.
53. The Commission did not consider special geographic circumstances apply in Bute because it covers a relatively small area and has closer links to the mainland. A 2-member Bute ward offers variation from electoral parity of +20%. The Commission could re-consider special geographic circumstances on Bute. A 3-member Bute ward offers variation from electoral parity of -18%. There would likely be opposition to a Bute-mainland ward.

Existing electoral arrangements

54. Argyll and Bute Council wish to retain 36 Councillors. The Commission could consider retaining the existing electoral arrangements but they not consider the Commission's methodology for councillor numbers and offer wide variation from electoral parity in Bute.

Local Ties

55. The Commission's Initial Proposals proposed three island wards: they retained the existing Isle of Bute ward; and proposed a: Islay, Jura and Colonsay; and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward.
56. When considering its Initial Proposals the Commission felt that islands are more likely to have common issues, challenges and ties and that communities within island wards may have more in common with each other than with island-mainland wards.
57. The response from the Council highlighted both some support and opposition for wholly island wards. Island residents may have common issues on islands but there are also common issues for island-mainland wards with ferry or transport links.
58. Argyll and Bute Council were keen to hear if island residents would prefer to reside on island only or island-mainland wards. Public consultation sub-

questions on island links could assist the Commission when it considers its final recommendations.

Tarbert

59. Argyll and Bute Council made an alternative ward boundary suggestion by Tarbert which may improve or better reflect local ties because it follows historical ward and community council area boundaries.

Conclusion

60. The Secretariat invites the Commission to either:

- retain its Initial Proposals for public consultation, with or without amendments; or
- adopt the alternative suggestion from Argyll and Bute Council and amend the proposed ward boundary by Tarbert;
- consider special geographic circumstances and propose a 3-member Isle of Bute ward;
- consult on the existing electoral arrangements;
- include sub-questions in its public consultation on island links.

**Secretariat
October 2020**

Appendix A – Initial Proposals



Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



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24th September 2020

Mr Ronnie Hinds
Chair – Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HD

[REDACTED]
Dear Mr Hinds

2019 REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS – ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL AREA

In response to the letter from the LGBCS on 16th July 2020, which set out the initial proposals for the Argyll and Bute Council area, the Council have now considered the proposals in detail and welcome the opportunity to provide the following response to the stage 1 consultation.

The Council are grateful for the efforts of the Commission to engage with us during the past couple of months, in particular attendance at the elected member seminar held on 10th August 2020 to discuss the proposals and to address member queries was appreciated.

The Council are content that the four Area Committee areas have remained unchanged, which from an administrative/governance point of view is welcomed. In addition, there is a general acceptance of the proposals with regard to those wards where no change is proposed to Councillor numbers or the boundary – Cowal, Dunoon, Lomond North, and Mid Argyll.

However, the Council are disappointed that the Commission's starting point, in a similar vein to the 5th Review that was undertaken in 2016, is to recommend a reduction in Councillor numbers for the Argyll and Bute area. In line with the Council's response at that time, the Council objects to the proposals in that they diminish the overall electoral accountability,



while failing to take into account material factors in relation to electoral parity, impact of demographic issues such as an ageing population and social and economic deprivation, and the consequent requirement for more effective electoral representation these factors create. On this basis, the Council rejects any reduction in the overall number of Councillors for Argyll and Bute

In addition, the proposals for Argyll and Bute seem to be at odds with the overall focus of the review, which is to recognise the importance of Scottish islands and the unique challenges they face. The same can be said of the approach taken in 2016, when the review was focussed on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. In both reviews, the proposals adversely impact the island of Bute, with Councillor representation being reduced, which would appear to be in conflict with the principles being applied. There are significant demographic and deprivation issues on Bute, for example 30% of the electorate are over the age of 64. On this basis the case can be made that there is a requirement for additional representation on the island of Bute and the proposals from the Commission are counter to this. Furthermore, maintaining the status quo on Bute (3 members) would bring the number of electors into closer parity with the proposals for the other island wards.

Overall, the proposals presented by the Commission, particularly in respect of the island wards, have raised a number of concerns for the Council in terms of electoral parity. For example, in respect of the wards for Islay, Jura & Colonsay (ward 2) and Mull, Iona, Coll & Tiree (ward 4) it is proposed that there are 4 Councillors covering a similar population to ward 9 - Bute, where it is proposed to have only 2 Councillors. Between ward 2 and ward 9 the forecast variation from electoral parity varies vastly from -24.4 to 13.8 respectively. Similar concerns can also be applied in respect of the proposals for ward 6 – Lorn, and the proposed boundary change within the Helensburgh and Lomond administrative area, which would inevitably result in the area being under-represented in terms of electoral parity in future years.

During the course of engagement with members on the proposals, a number of common points were captured with regard to the range of smaller islands within Argyll and Bute, which are currently included within mainland wards – Gigha, which sits within ward 1 – Kintyre, and Seil, Lismore, Luing, Easdale and Kerrera, which fall within ward 5 – Oban and ward 6 – Lorn. The Council are of the view that if, as part of the public consultation, there is a view that these islands should form part of the dedicated island wards proposed for their respective areas, then the Council would support this option being pursued.

A further boundary issue that the Council would like to see explored as part of the public consultation is in respect of proposed ward 1 – Kintyre, where it is suggested that the boundary for the Kintyre ward could stop at Kennacraig, with Tarbert and Skipness moving within the boundary of ward 3 - Mid Argyll. This would maintain the current Community Council boundary for Tarbert and Skipness, and the East and West Kintyre split. This proposal was raised at the Members Seminar held on 10th August 2020 and it is understood that the Commission have started looking at the implications of this.

The final issues that the Council would like to feedback on are in regard to the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands (MAKI) area which covers wards 1, 2 and 3, where there was differing opinions from members in respect of the proposals, particularly those for ward 2 – Islay, Jura and Colonsay. One perspective was that the status quo should remain for MAKI as there are no proposals to change overall Councillor representation, and the proposed boundary changes do not appear to provide a positive outcome for the area. It was considered, for



example, that having a 2 member ward for Islay, Jura and Colonsay has the potential to create workload issues and under-representation.

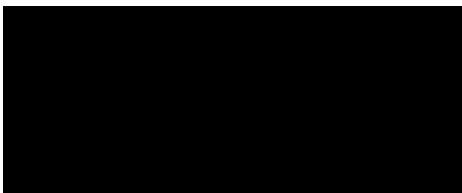
There was also a desire to take cognisance of a previous response submitted by the Council's Argyll Islands Strategic Group to the Islands (Scotland) Bill Consultation in September 2017, which noted the advantages of having councillor representation across both mainland and island areas to better represent the interests between island and mainland communities. Additionally, the consultation response submitted that the development of 1 or 2 member wards for inhabited islands would reduce the number of members representing islands as a whole.

Conversely, there was support for the creation of a dedicated island ward, which was deemed to be a positive step forward. During the 5th Electoral Review an Atlantic Islands ward was considered but at that time it was not possible to have a 2 member ward. The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 has changed this position and therefore presents the opportunity to adopt an islands only ward.

The Council considers it important that the aforementioned issues are fully addressed and explored as part of the public consultation, to enable the views of communities in Argyll and Bute to be considered.

In addition, and although the Council recognises it may not directly relate to the Commission's remit, the Council considers that it is a matter of concern that the public consultation is being undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic when potentially further restrictions are being applied for the protection of the public, which could adversely impact the public consultation process and the work of the Commission overall.

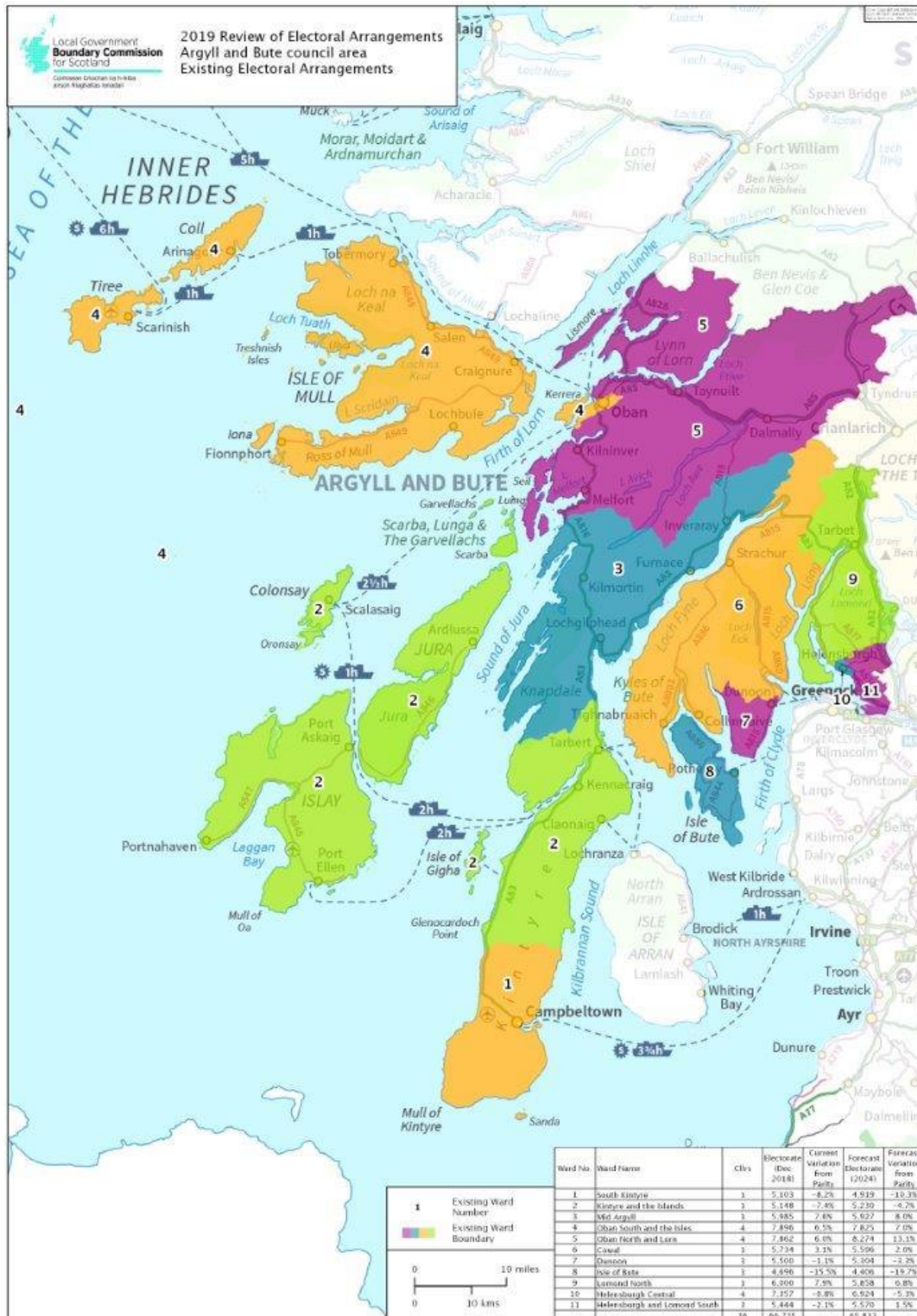
Yours sincerely



Douglas Hendry
Executive Director



Appendix C – Existing electoral arrangements



Appendix D – Argyll and Bute Council alternative suggestion by Kintyre

