

**2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements
Media coverage during consultations with Argyll and Bute, Highland and North
Ayrshire council areas.**

Background

1. The Commission consulted on its Initial Proposals with Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire Councils from 16 July until 30 September 2020.
2. The Secretariat has monitored online media coverage during the consultation period and this paper summarises that coverage.
3. The Secretariat monitors media coverage by making use of the free alerts service provided by Google. These alerts highlight any mention of the Commission or key words relating to the Commission's work.

Media Coverage

4. During the consultations with Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire Council's there were 13 articles in various local newspapers and websites that mentioned the reviews and the impact that the proposals may have. Links to the news articles can be found in Appendix A.

Highland

5. Eleven of the 13 articles concentrated on Highland council area.
6. Two newspaper reports reflected local criticism to amalgamate the existing Sutherland wards and reduce councillor numbers in Sutherland.
7. Two of the articles mentioned that the proposals would reduce representation in Caithness.
8. Three articles reported on the proposed changes in both Caithness and Sutherland and reiterated the points raised above.
9. There were a further three articles that highlighted opposition to the proposals throughout the area.
10. One report highlighted dismay with the proposals in Inverness.

Argyll and Bute

11. The Lochside Press highlighted that Helensburgh could lose one councillor.

North Ayrshire

12. The Largs and Millport Weekly News featured a local councillor's opposition to the proposed North Coast ward.

Conclusion

13. The Secretariat will continue to monitor news coverage during the public consultation stage of the reviews and will keep the Commission informed of any significant issues raised.

**Secretariat
October 2020**

Appendix A – Media coverage on Initial Proposals

Highland council area
https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/proposed-council-ward-boundary-changes-spark-anger-206855/
https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/fighting-council-boundary-changes-will-be-a-real-struggle-admits-caithness-civic-leader-206725/
https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/inverness/2353106/proposed-boundary-changes-favour-more-councillors-for-inverness-at-expense-of-rural-areas/
https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/shock-at-plan-to-amalgamate-sutherland-two-highland-council-wards-206687/
https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/proposed-boundary-changes-show-complete-disregard-for-far-north-communities-206510/
https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/sutherland-boundary-changes-totally-and-utterly-unacceptable-206959/
https://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/nicola-sinclair-welcomes-rejection-of-proposals-to-cut-councillor-numbers-in-caithness-212018/
https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/mixed-feeling-on-boundary-commission-shake-up-proposals-for-ross-shire-206875/
https://www.northern-times.co.uk/news/council-to-debate-boundary-proposals-which-could-adversely-affect-caithness-and-sutherland-211624/
https://www.strathspey-herald.co.uk/news/highland-council-is-fuming-over-monkey-with-a-paint-brush-plans-to-redraw-boundaries-and-cut-the-number-of-elected-representatives-211651/
https://www.ross-shirejournal.co.uk/news/highland-council-unanimously-rejects-boundary-commission-proposals-to-redraw-ward-boundaries-and-reduce-councillor-numbers-212568/
Argyll and Bute council area
https://thelochsidepress.com/2020/09/19/helensburgh-could-lose-a-councillor-in-boundaries-review/
North Ayrshire council area
https://www.largsandmillportnews.com/news/18614248.shock-new-boundary-changes-considered-north-coast-ward/