

**2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements
Final Recommendations for Argyll and Bute council area**

For information

1. The Commission is invited to consider responses to the public consultation on its Initial Proposals for the 2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in Argyll and Bute council area, consider if any changes are required to its Initial Proposals and agree its Final Recommendations.

Electoral arrangements at the start of this review

2. At the start of the review Argyll and Bute council area was represented by 36 councillors, representing eight 3-member wards and three 4-member wards.
3. The electorates and associated variation from parity of the existing wards 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 (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast variation from electoral parity (%)
1	South Kintyre	3	5,103	-8	4,919	-10
2	Kintyre and the Islands	3	5,148	-7	5,230	-5
3	Mid Argyll	3	5,985	8	5,927	8
4	Oban South and the Isles	4	7,896	7	7,825	7
5	Oban North and Lorn	4	7,862	6	8,274	13
6	Cowal	3	5,734	3	5,596	2
7	Dunoon	3	5,500	-1	5,304	-3
8	Isle of Bute	3	4,696	-16	4,406	-20
9	Lomond North	3	6,000	8	5,858	7
10	Helensburgh Central	4	7,357	-1	6,925	-5
11	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	5,444	-2	5,570	2
		36	66,725		65,834	

4. The existing electoral arrangements in Argyll and Bute council area offered variation from electoral parity of over 10% in one ward, Isle of Bute.

Initial Proposals – Consultation with Councils

5. The Commission agreed to adopt its methodology for councillor numbers from its 5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for this review. The 5th Reviews' methodology placed Argyll and Bute council area within a category with the most rural council areas with below average deprivation, with a ratio of electors per councillor of 2,800:1.
6. The methodology recommended 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.
7. The Initial Proposals for Argyll and Bute council area:
 - took 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 presented island-only wards for: Islay, Jura and Colonsay; Mull,

Iona, Coll and Tiree; and retained the existing Isle of Bute ward with 2 councillors rather than 3 as at present;

- considered 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;
- made no changes to the boundaries of five of the existing wards (Cowal; Dunoon; Isle of Bute; Lomond North; and Mid Argyll);
- placed Oban within a single ward to avoid breaking local community ties;
- minimised change to the existing ward boundaries in Helensburgh, while reducing councillor numbers there by one;
- took 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
- had regard to Argyll and Bute Council's four administrative areas and the local ties and communities that they represent.

8. The electorates and associated variation from electoral parity for the consultation with Argyll and Bute Council 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 (%)	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	

9. In their response to the consultation Argyll and Bute Council raised the following points. They:

- welcomed the Commission's consideration of the four Area Committee areas when developing its ward boundaries;
- supported the proposals where no change was proposed to both councillor numbers or ward boundaries (Cowal, Dunoon, Lomond North and Mid Argyll);
- opposed any reduction in the overall number of councillors. They stated 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;"

- opposed 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 stated that the loss of representation is at odds with the overall aim of the Islands Act;
- raised concerns with differences in variation from electoral parity in the island wards. They reported 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 raised 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;
- 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; and
- raised concerns that the public consultation would take place during the COVID–19 pandemic which may impact on its effectiveness. public consultation process and the work of the Commission.

Initial Proposals – Public Consultation

10. The Commission’s Initial Proposals for public consultation were unchanged with the exception of a small adjustment to the boundary between the proposed Kintyre and Mid Argyll wards. This change followed a suggestion from Argyll and Bute Council and placed Tarbert in the proposed Kintyre ward. This change transferred approximately 1,400 electors from the Kintyre to Mid Argyll wards.
 11. 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.
 12. The table below details the electorates with actual and forecast variation from parity of the proposed wards for public consultation. The boundaries are shown in Appendix C.
 13. The 12–week public consultation was conducted from 4 November 2020 until 26 January 2021.
-

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%)
1	Kintyre	3	6,032	2.5	5,847	0.7
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5	2,927	-24.4
3	Mid Argyll	4	7,357	-6.3	7,302	-5.7
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	

Summary of responses – Public Consultation

14. There were 261 responses to the consultation on the Commission’s proposals for Argyll and Bute council area. 40 were identified as being from a single source and following investigation were discounted from total leaving 221 valid responses the overwhelming majority of which were received via the consultation site. A spreadsheet of all responses has been sent to the Commission and this paper captures the main themes and arguments presented.
15. Around 200 responses were from members of the public, 10 from community groups or community councils, one from a councillor, one from an MSP and two from local political groups. Argyll and Bute Council did not submit a further comment during the public consultation.
16. We ask respondents if they are responding on behalf of an organisation. All responses to the consultation are considered equally.

Key themes

17. The main themes raised during the consultation were:
- the majority of comments oppose the proposals either in part or in their entirety;
 - most comments in opposition supported the retention of the existing arrangements;
 - most opposition focused on Isle of Bute becoming a 2-member ward; and opposition for the proposed Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward;
 - there was some support for the Commission’s proposals throughout the council area and more specifically support where no change was proposed; and
 - comments in support of the proposals for island-only wards.

General Comments

18. 50% of all respondents responded to the question, “What general comments would you like to make regarding the Commission's proposals for councillor numbers and wards in Argyll and Bute Council area?”
19. Many of those who made general comments went on to repeat their comments under specific wards.
20. Those supportive of the proposals commented that they supported the concept of island only wards.
21. Those in opposition to the proposals commented that they:
 - opposed a reduction in councillor numbers, especially in island wards and wished to retain the existing arrangements; and
 - believed the overall effect of the proposals was a reduction in representation for the island communities.
22. Some respondents made suggestions out-with the legislation for this review such as suggestions for islands joining Highland council area and a suggestion that Argyll and Bute should be split into two council areas. Another general comment suggested transferring Helensburgh to West Dunbartonshire council area.

Comments on individual wards

23. The consultation asked respondents to comment on individual wards. These are summarised below in groups of neighbouring wards, adopting Argyll and Bute Council's four administrative areas: Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands; Bute and Cowal; Helensburgh and Lomond; and Oban, Lorn and the Isles.

Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands area

24. There are currently three wards within this area. The existing Kintyre and the Islands ward contains the inhabited islands of Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha.
25. The Commission's proposals in this area retained nine councillors and three wards but created a: 2-member island only ward consisting of Islay, Jura and Colonsay; 4-member Kintyre ward; and 3-member Mid Argyll ward. The Isle of Gigha remained part of a Kintyre ward.
26. Following a suggestion from Argyll and Bute Council the Commission amended the Kintyre ward boundary by Tarbert for the public consultation.
27. 71% of all respondents commented on these wards.
28. Opposition to the proposals in this area was spread relatively equally between the wards, although slightly more responses commented on the greater changes proposed by the Kintyre and Islay, Jura and Colonsay wards.

Kintyre ward

29. 25% of all respondents commented on this ward.
 30. Few respondents who supported the proposals provided an explanation for their response but some stated Gigha has closer links with Kintyre. One respondent
-

suggested fewer councillors and another suggested a councillor should reside on Gigha.

31. The main reasons for opposition to the Commission's proposals for the Kintyre ward were:

- a desire to retain the existing arrangements;
- suggestions to retain Gigha within a Kintyre ward; and
- suggestions to place Gigha within an island ward, with Islay, Jura and Colonsay.

32. Other reasons given in opposition to the Commission's proposals for the Kintyre ward included:

- West Kintyre Community Council objected strongly to the proposals and argued in favour of the existing arrangements which they say serve their area well with the workload shared by island councillors who have no trouble attending meetings;
- East Kintyre Community Council are currently split between wards and feel that even though they would be placed into a single ward their representation would suffer under the Commission's proposals;
- a Carradale (Kintyre) resident seeks no change;
- a respondent suggests decisions on island wards should be made by island residents and ward boundaries should follow school catchment areas;
- a respondent suggests Gigha should have its own councillor;
- a respondent made an alternative suggestion similar to the Kintyre ward proposed during the consultation with the council;
- 2 responses suggest two councillors for Campbeltown and its surrounding areas and 1 for rural surrounding areas; and
- a respondent agrees with the proposed councillor numbers but believes the boundaries disenfranchise most of non-suburban Kintyre.

Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward

33. 29% of all respondents commented on this ward with more opposing the proposals than supporting.

34. Around 30% of the comments on this ward were supportive of the Commission's proposals for an island only Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward. Reasons given in support of the proposals included:

- combining Islay and Jura in an island ward will allow better representation for islanders recognising distinctive, common interests, different to those of the mainland; and
- being an island group on their own will allow the councillors to concentrate on the needs of the islands and not mainland issues;
- dedicated islands councillors would spend less time travelling to deal with the mainland part of the ward.

35. Some comments in support of an island ward were concerned that the number of councillors may be too low.

36. There were further comments on whether Gigha should be placed in an Island-only or a Kintyre ward. One comment suggested Colonsay would be better served in an Oban ward due its ferry links. There was a suggestion that a 2-member island ward will give better representation to islanders.

37. The main reasons for the greater opposition to the Commission's proposals for the Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward were:

- loss of mainland connections were seen as detrimental with a desire to retain the existing arrangements because links between islands and the mainland are important for business, travel, administration and tourism purposes and to protect the economy.
- loss of links to the ferry ports at Kennacraig and Tarbert were opposed; and
- the loss of a councillor resulting in less choice and less effective representation.

38. Other reasons given in opposition included:

- four respondents opposed a 2 member ward but not the island ward itself ;
- two respondents believe the ward is over represented.

Mid Argyll ward

39. 17% of all respondents commented on this ward with most opposing the proposals.

40. Of those in support, few offered reasons but those that did supported the proposed ward boundary; supported the increased size of the ward and increased representation; and one supports the move to island wards that better reflect the way the resources of the council are managed and also local amenities.

41. Those opposing the proposed Mid Argyll ward wished to retain the existing arrangements within the area. Reasons given to oppose the proposals included a desire to keep Tarbert and Skipness in Mid Argyll as at present, belief that the proposed ward is too large and another respondent commented that the connection between Mid Argyll and the Islands is strong and creating a disconnect is unwanted.

Bute and Cowal area

42. The proposals retained the existing 3-member Cowal ward, 3-member Dunoon ward but proposed a 2-member Bute ward.

Cowal and Dunoon wards

43. 25% of all respondents commented on this ward.

44. Respondents were generally content with the Commission proposals to retain the existing arrangements for the proposed Cowal and Dunoon wards.

45. Comments opposing the proposed Cowal and Dunoon wards wished to see a reduction in representation within the area.

Isle of Bute ward

46. 33% of all respondents commented on this ward.

47. The Commission proposed a 2-member Isle of Bute ward reducing representation within this island ward. The Commission was content that the ward is relatively small geographically and has better links to the mainland than other islands in the council area.

48. Approximately one quarter of the comments for the Bute ward were supportive of a reduction in councillor numbers. Respondents commented that Bute covers a small geographical area with relatively good transport links.

49. Around three quarters of those who responded argued that a 2-member Isle of Bute ward would have an adverse effect on their representation and mean that remote communities' voices would be under-represented at a council level which seemed particularly unfair given the changes were proposed under the auspices of an Islands Act. Single responses in opposition to the proposals also cited factors such as a desire for Bute councillors to be resident on the island itself, whilst others cited concerns with the accuracy of population estimates as a reason for opposing the Commission's proposals.

Helensburgh and Lomond area

50. The Commission's proposals retain the existing 3-member Lomond North ward but propose a small change to the ward boundary within Helensburgh to create two 3-member Helensburgh wards (Helensburgh and Lomond South and Helensburgh Central).

Lomond North ward

51. 11% of all respondents commented on this ward with most supporting no change to the existing arrangements.

52. Those opposing suggested a 2-member Lomond North ward and to transfer the area south of Tarbet (Helensburgh) to West Dunbartonshire council area.

Helensburgh Central ward

53. 13% of all respondents commented on this ward.

54. There was mainly opposition to the proposed Helensburgh Central ward because they wish to:

- retain the existing arrangements;
- create a 2-member or single-member Helensburgh Central ward;
- transfer Helensburgh to West Dunbartonshire;
- create a wholly Helensburgh ward.

55. Helensburgh Community Council oppose a reduction in councillors for their wards and state that as the population is expected to grow in their area that changes should wait until the next review.

56. A small number of respondents supported the proposals but offered no reasons.

Helensburgh and Lomond South ward

57. 13% of all respondents commented on this ward.

58. The Commission's proposals for Helensburgh and Lomond South are supported by a small number of respondents. Few responses gave reasons for supporting the proposals but some supported the ward boundary changes in urban Helensburgh rather than in rural areas.

59. The small majority of respondents who opposed the proposed Helensburgh and Lomond South ward did so because they:

- wish to retain the existing arrangements;
-

- wish to retain four councillors in Helensburgh Central but make changes to the proposed ward boundaries elsewhere;
- suggest one or two councillors could adequately serve the ward; and
- believe Helensburgh should not be part of Argyll and Bute and would be better served as part of West Dunbartonshire council area.

Oban, Lorn and the Isles area

60. This area is currently represented by two 4-member Oban wards (Oban South and the Isles and Oban North and Lorn).
61. The Commission's proposals presented three wards: a 2-member Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward, a 2-member Lorn ward and a 4-member Oban ward.
62. The proposed Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward considers special geographic circumstances in relation to variation from electoral parity in the proposed island ward and aims to better reflect local ties for island communities.
63. The proposed Oban ward places the town within a single 4-member ward. The existing arrangements split Oban between two wards.
64. The proposed Lorn ward creates a geographically smaller ward than the existing Oban North and Lorn ward, however the proposals consider local ties in their design and present a 2 member ward.

Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward

65. 25% of all respondents commented on this ward with an equal number both supporting and opposing them.
66. Most of the generally supportive comments stated:
- support for the proposals but concerns about transport links between the islands;
 - a respondent agrees with island wards in principle however they believe transport links provide a barrier to the proposed ward. They believe a pool of Councillors covering Mull and Iona, and Coll and Tiree along with Oban as part of the Oban South and the Isles Ward would be an acceptable alternative;
 - 2-member wards are an excellent way of serving the needs of islanders;
 - a Mull resident should represent Mull;
 - desire to have a resident councillor;
 - a respondent supports island only wards but fears Mull would be under-represented in a 2-member ward;
 - a respondent states that it is vital islands have a ward separate from the mainland as it has different needs;
 - a respondent states the proposals are an excellent suggestion as the islands deserve their own dedicated councillors;
 - a respondent believes the proposals will provide recognition of island-living problems in a way and island – mainland ward does not. They go on to suggest that representation for both groups of islands will be difficult with no direct links with the possibility of two 2-member wards in a 4-member ward a solution; and
 - a respondent agrees with the proposals but believes the decision should be made by island residents.
-

67. Iona Community Council support the proposal for an island ward comprising four islands. Whilst they understand that the councillors cannot be assigned to 'Mull and Iona' and also 'Coll and Tiree' but that would be their preferred outcome.

68. Opposition to Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward included:

- a number of suggestions wished to retain the existing arrangements;
- a respondent states they are unsure of the suitability this island ward given the lack of transport links between Mull/Iona and Coll/Tiree. They also suggest adding the islands of Luing, Easdale, Kerrera and Lismore to the ward;
- suggestion to add Luing, Seil and Kerrera and create a 4 member ward as the area is too large for two councillors;
- suggestion that two councillors would be excessive given the population and a waste of money. They go on to suggest Mull, Coll and Tiree become part of Highland region because they have more in common with Mallaig and the small isles than with a Glasgow suburb such as Helensburgh;
- the suggestion island communities would lose important links to the mainland and that mixed wards afford electors greater choice;
- the Argyll and Bute branch of the Scottish Green Party believes the grouping of Coll and Tiree with Mull does not make sense as a Mull councillor cannot directly visit the other islands;
- a respondent believes any island councillor should be resident on the island they represent and the islands should remain within an Oban ward;
- a respondent questions whether 2 councillors is sufficient to travel around all the islands;
- a respondent states that the continued reduction of councillors in the island communities makes them think that the Commission has reviews the boundaries purely on how easy the islands are to visit and not if the communities require different representation. They go on to state that the ward should have 3 councillors instead of the proposed 2; and
- a respondent states they prefer a single councillor representing Tiree and Coll. They were previously a district councillor on the islands from 1984 to 1988.

69. Cllr Roddy McCuish fully supports Tiree community council's proposal that a councillor be elected to serve both Coll and Tiree. He believes that having a resident serve the islands would be preferable given the travel difficulties posed by the islands' location. The proposal for a single member ward representing both Coll and Tiree was supported by Mike Russell MSP.

70. Coll community council wish a single-member Coll and Tiree ward and this is supported by 71% of Coll's permanent residents who submitted to a local survey (49 total response – estimated pop. 170).

71. Mull community council state that it is most important that councillors actually live on the Islands or have close connections to them.

Oban ward

72. 22% of all respondents commented on this ward with a small majority of respondents opposing it.

73. Those opposing an Oban ward stated:

- a desire to retain the existing arrangements;
-

- suggestions for a 3-member Oban ward;
- preference for two Oban wards;
- suggestions to place Easdale, Luing, Kerrera and Lismore in an island specific ward; and
- two mainland respondents do not wish to be placed in a ward with islands such as Mull, Jura, Coll and Tiree because their needs are different to the more remote Islands.

74. Seil and Easdale community council wish to retain the existing arrangements as they believe they are well served by the existing arrangements and any changes would be detrimental to their community;

75. Kilninver and Kilmelford community council and three respondents resident in Kilmelford wish to retain the existing arrangements as they feel the arrangements are best suited to their geographical location as they suit the local residents as they do not look to Oban and feel themselves to be a remote rural community.

76. Those supporting the Oban ward stated:

- support the inclusion of Kerrera, Seil and Luing within the ward as they have economic ties to Oban;
- prefer a single Oban ward;
- the islands would be better served in an island only ward;
- a respondent believes the number of councillors is correct for the area and with the possible exception of Seil, islands should be in island only wards; and
- a respondent agrees with the proposals and suggests the ward be named Oban and the Isles.

Lorn ward

77. 12% of all respondents commented on this ward with most opposing it.

78. Those supporting a Lorn ward stated:

- support for splitting Lorn and Oban;
- a respondent thinks this is a cohesive ward. They also suggest Mull could be included in this ward as it is within commuting distance to Oban whereas Coll and Tiree are not; and
- Councillor Kieron Green (Oban North and Lorn) was generally supportive of the proposals but suggests amending the ward boundary to create a 3-member Lorn ward and a 3-member Oban ward. He strongly objects to any suggestions to add Lismore to a Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward due to the difficulties in transport between these islands.

79. Those opposing a Lorn ward stated:

- some suggested the area covers too large a geographical area for two councillors to represent;
 - suggestions to place Lismore within an island ward; and
 - a 2 member ward reduces representation and choice for voters.
-

Alternative suggestions

80. The alternative suggestions submitted during the public consultation are discussed below.
81. Most suggestions wished to retain the existing electoral arrangements. Consideration of retaining the existing electoral arrangements is discussed later.
82. Some suggestions cannot be considered because they are out-with the legislation for this review. These included: adding Helensburgh to West Dunbartonshire council area; adding Mull, Coll and Tiree to Highland council area; creating an island only council area; and dividing Argyll and Bute council area into two or more smaller councils.

Gigha

83. There were seven suggestions to include Gigha within the proposed Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward.
84. There are approximately 125 electors on Gigha. A 2-member Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Gigha ward offers variation from electoral parity of -24%. The initial proposals offered variation from electoral parity of -27% in the proposed Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward.
85. There are no direct ferry links between Gigha and Islay, Jura and Colonsay. Gigha is served by a 20 minute ferry from Tayinloan (Kintyre). Islay has two ferry terminals served by Kennacraig (Kintyre). Colonsay is served by ferries from Oban and Islay. Jura is served by a ferry from Islay.
86. Historically Gigha has been linked with Kintyre. Gigha was included within a Mid Kintyre ward from 1995-99 and a North and West Kintyre ward from 1999-2007.
87. Most responses to the consultation wished to retain links between Gigha and Kintyre or retain the existing arrangements.
88. There was a suggestion to create a single-member Gigha ward but this would offer variation from electoral parity of -95%.

Colonsay

89. There were a couple of suggestions to add Colonsay to an Oban ward because Colonsay is served directly by a ferry from Oban. There are approximately 110 electors on Colonsay, therefore adding Colonsay to an Oban ward has little impact on variation of electoral parity in Oban. An Islay and Jura ward offers variation from electoral parity of -30%.

More representation for island wards

90. There were suggestions calling for greater representation for the proposed island wards. The initial proposals proposed three 2-member island wards.
91. The Commission applied special geographic considerations in two of the three island wards. A 3-member Bute ward, 3-member Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward and 3-member Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree with a total of 37 councillors would offer variation from electoral parity of -13%, -49% and -41% respectively.

Isle of Bute - 3-member ward

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

LGBCS Paper 2552
March 2021

92. 27% of all responses to the consultation were in favour of retaining the existing arrangements, a 3-member Isle of Bute ward.
93. The Commission applied special geographic considerations in two of the proposed island wards but not Bute. The Commission recognised Bute is under-represented but the Commission considered that it covers a relatively small area and has closer links to the mainland than other islands within the area.
94. Bute is served by two ferries: the Wemyss Bay – Rothesay route takes 35 minutes and the Colintraive (Cowal) – Rhubodach (Bute) takes 5 minutes.
95. Bute has been represented by three councillors since 1999. From 1995 to 1999 there were three single-member Rothesay wards and a Kyles and Bute ward which extended onto the mainland.
96. The proposed 2-member Bute ward offers variation from electoral parity of 19%. The initial proposals presented two other wards with variation from electoral parity over 10%, the island wards of Islay, Jura and Colonsay and Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree.
97. Retaining the existing arrangements, with 36 councillors, offers variation from electoral parity over 10% in a single ward, Bute with -16%.
98. A 3-member Isle of Bute ward, with an increased proposed council size of 35 councillors, would result in variation from electoral parity of -18%. This suggestion is illustrated in the table below. This would offer five wards with variation from electoral parity over 10%, the island wards and Helensburgh wards.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllr s	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%)
1	Kintyre	3	6,032	5.5	5,847	3.6
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-25.3	2,927	-22.2
3	Mid Argyll	4	7,357	-3.5	7,302	-2.9
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	

Oban and neighbouring islands

99. The Initial Proposals place Lismore within a Lorn ward and the other four islands (Kerrera, Seil, Easdale and Luing) within an Oban ward. Lismore is more detached from the other islands geographically.

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

LGBCS Paper 2552
March 2021

100. There were suggestions to both include the Firth of Lorn islands of Lismore, Kerrera, Seil, Easdale and Luig within an Oban ward or within a Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward.
101. There are 46 electors on Easdale, 156 on Lismore, 37 on Kerrera, 481 on Seil and 140 on Luig.
102. The existing electoral arrangements place Kerrera within an Oban South and the Isles ward. The other four islands are currently within an Oban North and Lorn ward.
103. Seil is linked by a bridge to the mainland so could be considered separately to the other islands, although Easdale and Luig are both accessed via Seil.
104. There are no direct ferry links between Lismore, Kerrera, Seil, Easdale, Luig and Mull.
105. There were a small number of comments suggesting Kerrera, Seil, Easdale, Luig be placed in an island ward with Mull. These comments cited the shared characteristics including communication, transport, industrial, economic and social links that reflect the island way of life as reasons in support.
106. The majority of comments regarding these islands were split between support for the Commission's proposals, placing them in an Oban ward or retaining the existing arrangements.
107. Comments in support of the Commission's proposals cited the continuation of longstanding social and economic ties as reasons to remain part of an Oban ward.
108. As stated above a small number of comments suggested placing Easdale, Lismore, Kerrera, Seil and Luig in a 4-member Island only ward. This would appear problematical given the radical nature of the arrangement and no direct inter island links.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%)
1	Kintyre	3	6,032	8.5%	5,847	6.6%
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-23.2%	2,927	-20.0%
3	Mid Argyll	4	7,357	-0.8%	7,302	-0.2%
4	Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree, Easdale, Lismore, Kerrera, Seil and Luig	4	4,071	-45.1%	4,298	-41.2%
5	Oban	4	7,497	1.1%	7,637	4.4%
6	Lorn	2	4,190	13.0%	4,164	13.8%
7	Cowal	3	5,734	3.1%	5,596	2.0%
8	Dunoon	3	5,500	-1.1%	5,304	-3.3%
9	Isle of Bute	2	4,696	26.7%	4,406	20.5%
10	Lomond North	3	6,000	7.9%	5,858	6.8%
11	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	15.5%	6,075	10.7%
12	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	14.7%	6,420	17.0%
		36	66,725		65,834	

109. With close to 900 electors in the Firth of Lorn islands, their removal does not have a major impact on parity in the Oban ward but a 4-member island only ward has a variation from parity of -45%. Furthermore the overall councillor numbers would be 36, unchanged from the existing arrangements.

110. There were also comments in support and opposition to Lismore being placed within an Island ward with Mull. Given the small number of electors involved in such an arrangement parity would not be materially affected in either the proposed wards involved. Lack of transport links to other islands from Lismore and the close mainland ferry links to Oban would need to be considered as reasons in opposition to such a proposal.

Dunoon

111. There was a single suggestion to extend the proposed Dunoon ward to the B836 road to include the whole of Dunoon and Sandbank within a single ward. There are approximately 2,600 electors by Sandbank.

112. This suggestion could be achieved with a 2-member Cowal ward and 4-member Dunoon ward. Variation from electoral parity for this suggestion is shown in the table below. Within this area there was mainly support for retaining the existing arrangements.

Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Current Variation from Parity
Cowal	2	3,134	-17.8%
Dunoon	4	8,100	6.2%

Lorn

113. There were a couple of suggestions, including the Argyll and Bute branch of the Scottish Green Party to create a larger 3-member Lorn ward which includes parts of the proposed Oban and Mid Argyll ward to create a more equal electorate within the area. This suggestion would create two very large rural wards (Lorn and Mid Argyll) with poor transport links and fails to consider Argyll and Bute Council's four administrative area boundaries.

114. There was a suggestion to include Connel within an Oban ward. The Commission's proposals place Connel and its Community Council area within Lorn ward. Were the Connel Community Council area to be transferred to the Oban ward along with its 511 electors then variation from parity in the proposed Oban ward would be in excess of +12% and forecast to worsen.

Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Current Variation from Parity
Oban	4	8,857	12.8%
Lorn	2	3,690	-6.0%

Coll and Tiree and single member ward

115. Both Coll and Tiree community councils seek a single elected representative to reside on their island to create a 1-member Coll and Tiree ward. A single member island ward is supported by Mike Russell MSP.
116. From 1995 to 2007 there was a single-member Coll and Tiree ward.
117. Coll and Tiree have little to connect them with Mull as there are no ferry links between these islands. The ferry links are via Oban.
118. The Commission met and heard representations from both Coll and Tiree community councils. Both community councils have strongly argued in favour of a single member ward to represent their islands as they believe effective representation will be best achieved by having a resident councillor. A Coll and Tiree ward would not necessarily ensure a resident councillor but that would be the choice of the electors if a resident candidate were to stand.
119. A single member Coll and Tiree ward would offer forecast variation from parity of -63.8% and a single member Mull and Iona ward offer forecast variation from parity of 41.4%.
120. A 2-member Mull and Iona ward would have a variation from parity of -27.2% and would mean an increase in councillor numbers from the proposed 34 to 35. The single member Mull and Iona ward suggestion is illustrated in the table below. Iona CC were concerned about representation for smaller isles as the electorate is predominantly on Mull. There were further comments calling for representatives to be resident in the area which they represent which is not something provided for in the legislation and outwith the scope of the review.

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2018)	Variation from Electoral Parity (%)	Forecast Electorate (2024)	Forecast Variation from Electoral Parity (%)
1	Kintyre	3	6,032	2.5%	5,847	0.7%
2	Islay, Jura and Colonsay	2	2,847	-27.5%	2,927	-24.4%
3	Mid Argyll	4	7,357	-6.3%	7,302	-5.7%
4	Mull and Iona	1	2,511	27.9%	2,738	41.4%
5	Coll and Tiree	1	700	-64.3%	700	-63.8%
6	Oban	4	8,357	6.5%	8,497	9.7%
7	Lorn	2	4,190	6.8%	4,164	7.5%
8	Cowal	3	5,734	-2.6%	5,596	-3.7%
9	Dunoon	3	5,500	-6.6%	5,304	-8.7%
10	Isle of Bute	2	4,696	19.6%	4,406	13.8%
11	Lomond North	3	6,000	1.9%	5,858	0.8%
12	Helensburgh Central	3	6,424	9.1%	6,075	4.6%
13	Helensburgh and Lomond South	3	6,377	8.3%	6,420	10.5%
		34	66,725		65,834	

All Island ward

121. A respondent suggests combining the proposed Islay, Jura & Colonsay ward with the proposed Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward. This would create a

geographically extensive 4 member ward with a forecast variation from parity of -17.8%.

Alternative Ward Names

122. There was one suggestion for an alternative ward name “Oban and the Isles” to replace the proposed Oban ward name.
123. The existing “Oban and the Isles” ward includes part of Oban and the islands of Mull, Iona, Coll, Tiree and Kerrera. The electorate of these islands is approx. 3,250 electors and 4,650 electors in Oban.
124. The proposed Oban ward includes the islands of Seil, Luing, Easdale and Kerrera and comprises 7,653 mainland electors and approximately 700 island electors.

Summary

125. The existing electoral arrangements have remained unchanged since 2007 and councillor numbers are unchanged since 1999.
126. The Commission agreed to adopt the same methodology for determining councillor numbers from its 5th Reviews for its island reviews. Strict application of the methodology would result in 24 councillors ($66,725 \div 2,800$) for Argyll and Bute council area but with a 10% limit on change, 33 councillors. However, in developing its proposals, a better ward design was achievable with 34 councillors.
127. The Commission’s proposals retained four of the existing 11 ward boundaries, although Bute has become a 2-member ward.
128. The Commission’s proposals took account of the Islands Act in proposing three island only wards. The Commission considered special geographical circumstances in two of the proposed island wards, with a wider variation from electoral parity in a 2-member Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward and 2-member Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward. There was strong opposition to the proposed 2-member Isle of Bute ward.
129. Opposition to the proposals also focussed on the proposed Kintyre, Islay, Jura & Colonsay and Mid Argyll wards, where local island and mainland electors oppose a perceived reduction in representation.
130. The proposed Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree ward and Oban ward received a mixed response of support and opposition.
131. The consultation responses contained few alternative suggestions, mostly seeking to retain the existing electoral arrangements. The Commission may not wish to adopt some alternative suggestion without the opportunity to undertake further consultation.

Options

132. The Commission is invited to consider the following options:
 - Option 1 – retain the existing arrangements;
 - Option 2 – retain the Initial Proposals; or
 - Option 3 – amend initial proposals following public consultation.
-

133. If the Commission prefers, it could ask the Secretariat to develop a further option which could include aspects of the alternative suggestions outlined above.

Option 1 – Retain the existing electoral arrangements

134. The public consultation has revealed opposition to the Commission's proposals in Bute, Kintyre, and for the proposed Islay, Jura and Colonsay island ward and some support for retaining the existing electoral arrangements, see Appendix A.

135. The advantages of retaining the existing arrangements are:

- likely supported by Argyll and Bute Council and a majority of those in rural communities such as Kintyre and the island communities;
- avoids confusion by retaining recognisable ward boundaries; and
- offers a single ward with variation from electoral parity over 10%.

136. The disadvantages of retaining the existing arrangements are:

- councillor numbers are unchanged since 1999 and ward boundaries since 2007;
- the Commission's methodology for determining councillor numbers proposes 24 councillors ($66,725 \div 2,800$) but with the application of a 10% limit on change proposed 33 councillors. The existing arrangements have 36 councillors; and
- they do not take advantage of the flexibility offered by the Islands Act.

Option 2 – Initial Proposals

137. The public consultation has resulted in support where no changes were proposed, and a higher level of opposition than support in Bute and in Kintyre and the Islay, Jura and Colonsay island ward. See Appendix B.

138. The advantages of retaining the Initial Proposals are:

- there was some support during the public consultation for the proposed ward boundaries in Mull, Iona, Coll and Tiree and Oban and for the islands-only Islay, Jura and Colonsay ward (around a third of those commenting on that ward); and
- use of islands-only wards utilises the flexibility offered by the Islands Act.

139. The disadvantages of retaining the Initial Proposals are:

- there was majority opposition (approximately 60% of all comments) to both the proposed number of councillors and ward boundaries particularly in areas such as Kintyre, Islay, Jura and Colonsay, Mid Argyll and the Isle of Bute;
 - a number of responses wished to retain the existing electoral arrangements; and
 - variation from electoral parity is over 10% in three wards based on the existing electorate but two wards consider special geographical circumstances.
-

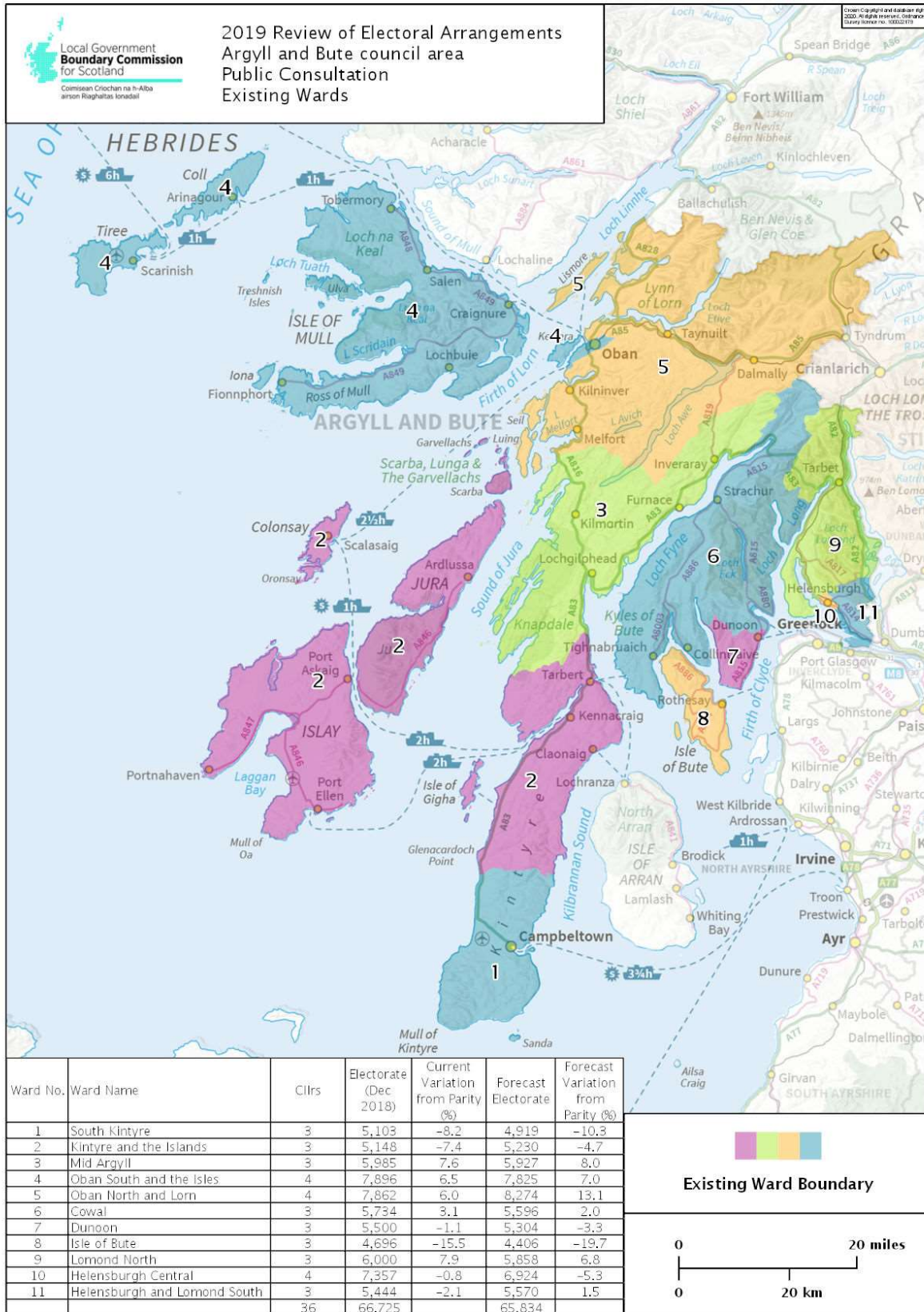
Recommendations

140. Taking into account all of the evidence arising from the public consultation, the Secretariat invites the Commission to decide for Argyll and Bute council area, whether to:

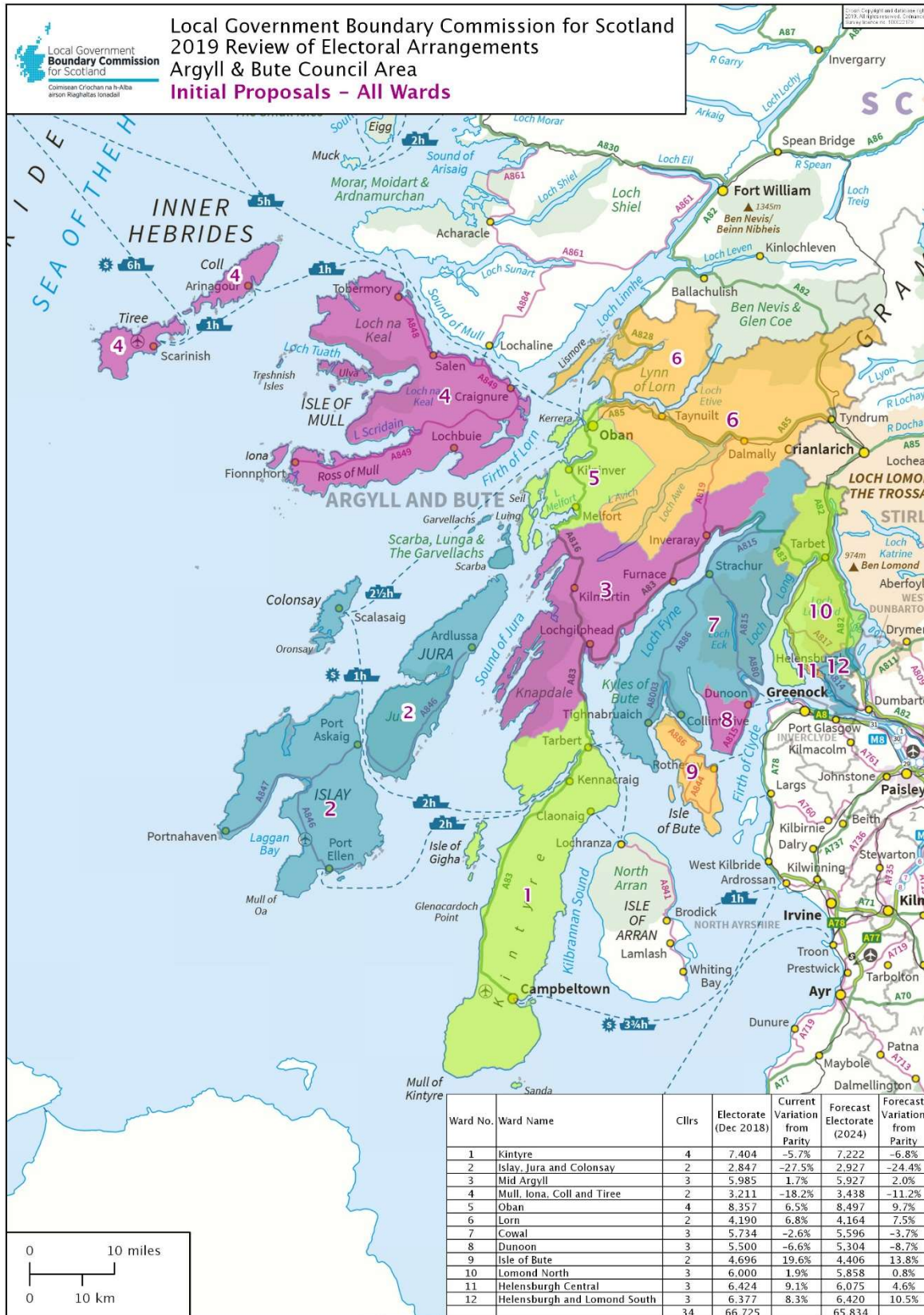
- adopt without amendment the Initial Proposals as its Final Recommendations;
- retain the existing electoral arrangements as its Final Recommendations;
or
- make amendments to its Initial Proposals, either councillor numbers or ward boundaries, as its Final Recommendations;
- amend or retain its proposed ward names.

**Secretariat
March 2021**

Appendix A – Existing Arrangements



Appendix B – Initial Proposals – Council Consultation



Appendix C – Initial Proposals – Public Consultation

