

## 2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements Draft Final Proposals for Highland council area

### For decision

1. The Commission is invited to agree its draft final proposals for Highland council area.

### Development of Final Proposals

2. The Commission considered responses to its public consultation for Highland council area at its meeting of 11 March 2021 when it discussed Paper 2553.
  3. At that meeting the Commission agreed to retain a 3-member Eilean a' Chèo (Skye) ward, as in the Initial Proposals. The Commission noted the opposition to the ward and preference that it remain a 4-member ward and considered that given Skye's bridge connection to the mainland that special geographic circumstances would not justify the large variation from electoral parity which would result from a 4-member ward.
  4. The Commission also agreed that a 3-member Culloden and Ardersier ward with high forecast electorate growth was acceptable at this time. The impact of Covid on future developments would mean that the forecast growth would likely be achieved over a longer period than anticipated.
  5. The Commission asked the Secretariat to further consider options that included: retaining the existing ward boundaries in Caithness and Sutherland; retaining the proposed ward boundaries in Caithness and Sutherland; either 13 or 14 councillors representing Caithness and Sutherland; and some minor ward boundary suggestions submitted during the public consultation.
  6. The Commission considered these further options at its meeting of 14 April 2021 when it discussed Paper 2557.
  7. At that meeting the Commission agreed to adopt the suggestions to amend the ward boundaries by Laggan, to follow the Cairngorm National Park boundary, and to follow the historical Caithness and Sutherland county boundary. Neither suggestion affected any electors.
  8. The Commission then agreed Caithness and Sutherland Option 3, which retained the existing ward boundaries in the area with the exception of a change at Edderton with a total of 13 councillors, subject to the Secretariat considering any minor ward boundary changes between wards 1 and 4 to improve variation from electoral parity.
  9. The Commission discussed alternative suggestions to amend ward boundaries by Fort Augustus, Knoydart and Dingwall but asked the Secretariat to consider alternative historical or more easily identifiable boundaries in these areas.
  10. The Commission considered the various suggestions by correspondence and agreed to: avoid the division of Knoydart between wards; to follow a community council area boundary by Strathpeffer; and a historical ward boundary by Fort Augustus.
-

11. The Commission could not find any recognisable alternative boundaries in Sutherland that would improve variation from electoral parity between wards 1 and 4.

12. The Commission's draft Final Proposals are shown below in the table.

| Ward No. | Ward Name                          | Cllrs     | Electorate (Dec 2018) | Current Variation from Parity % | Forecast Electorate (2024) | Forecast Variation from Parity % |
|----------|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1        | North, West and Central Sutherland | 2         | 4,833                 | -3.9                            | 4,578                      | -10.1                            |
| 2        | Thurso and Northwest Caithness     | 4         | 10,083                | 0.3                             | 9,543                      | -6.3                             |
| 3        | Wick and East Caithness            | 4         | 9,815                 | -2.4                            | 9,389                      | -7.8                             |
| 4        | East Sutherland                    | 3         | 5,958                 | -21.0                           | 5,858                      | -23.3                            |
| 5        | Wester Ross and Lochalsh           | 3         | 7,803                 | 3.4                             | 7,414                      | -3.0                             |
| 6        | Cromarty Firth                     | 4         | 9,643                 | -4.1                            | 9,529                      | -6.5                             |
| 7        | Tain, Easter Ross and Edderton     | 3         | 7,355                 | -2.5                            | 7,083                      | -7.3                             |
| 8        | Dingwall and Seaforth              | 5         | 11,757                | -6.5                            | 12,142                     | -4.7                             |
| 9        | Black Isle                         | 3         | 8,895                 | 17.9                            | 8,683                      | 13.6                             |
| 10       | Eilean a' Chèò                     | 3         | 8,579                 | 13.7                            | 8,299                      | 8.6                              |
| 11       | Caol, Mallaig and the Small Isles  | 3         | 7,009                 | -7.1                            | 7,156                      | -6.4                             |
| 12       | Aird                               | 3         | 8,265                 | 9.6                             | 8,202                      | 7.3                              |
| 13       | Inverness North West               | 5         | 14,091                | 12.1                            | 14,140                     | 11.0                             |
| 14       | Inverness North East               | 4         | 10,081                | 0.2                             | 9,620                      | -5.6                             |
| 15       | Inverness South West               | 5         | 11,235                | -10.6                           | 12,676                     | -0.5                             |
| 16       | Inverness South East               | 4         | 9,910                 | -1.5                            | 9,926                      | -2.6                             |
| 17       | Culloden and Ardersier             | 3         | 8,521                 | 13.0                            | 11,781                     | 54.2                             |
| 18       | Nairn and Cawdor                   | 4         | 10,425                | 3.7                             | 10,047                     | -1.4                             |
| 19       | Badenoch and Strathspey            | 4         | 10,637                | 5.8                             | 11,310                     | 11.0                             |
| 20       | Fort William and Ardnamurchan      | 4         | 8,646                 | -14.0                           | 8,567                      | -15.9                            |
|          |                                    | <b>73</b> | <b>183,541</b>        |                                 | <b>185,943</b>             |                                  |

13. A map of the Commission's draft Final Proposals for Highland council area is at Appendix B.

14. Maps highlighting the proposed boundaries at Knoydart, Strathpeffer, Fort Augustus and Caithness-Sutherland are at Appendix C.

### Recommendations

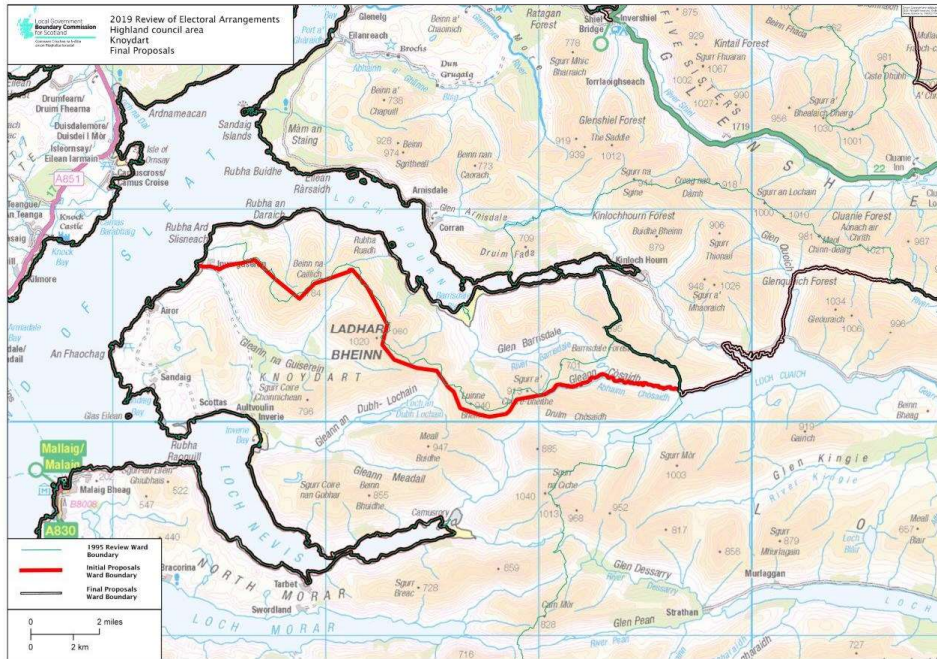
15. The Commission is invited to agree its draft Final Proposals for Highland council area.

**Secretariat**  
**May 2021**

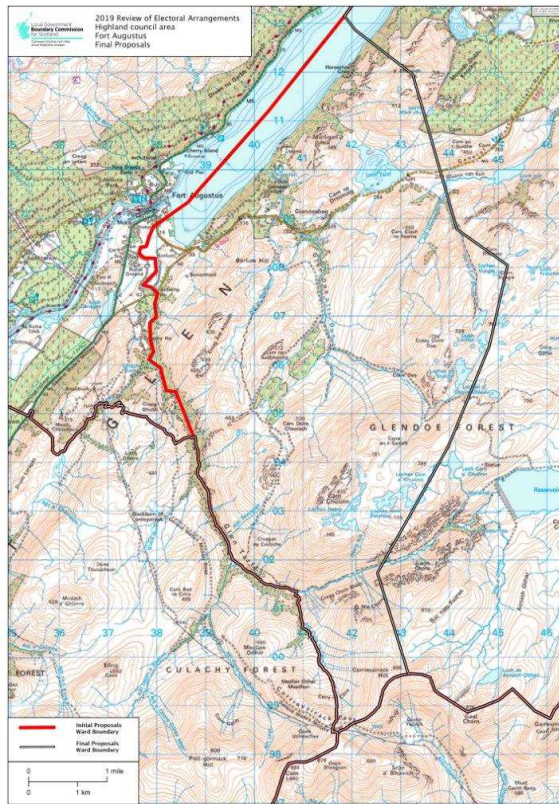




Final Proposals – Knoydart boundary



Final Proposals – Fort Augustus boundary



Final Proposals – Caithness–Sutherland county boundary



Final Proposals – Strathpeffer boundary

