

## **Item: 10**

**Policy and Resources Committee: 26 November 2019.**

**Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland.**

**Report by Chief Executive.**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

To consider the Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland's consultation on the review of electoral arrangements.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Committee is invited to note:

#### **2.1.**

That, in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (the Commission) is required to conduct reviews of each local authority's electoral arrangements every eight to 12 years.

#### **2.2.**

That the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 requires the Commission to review the electoral arrangements of the six councils containing inhabited islands.

#### **2.3.**

That, on 10 September 2019, the Commission launched a public consultation on a review of electoral arrangements, for which responses are required by 2 December 2019.

#### **2.4.**

That the Commission's proposals for the Orkney Islands Council area make no changes to the existing number of councillors, number of wards or ward names, retaining 21 councillors across six wards.

#### **2.5.**

That the Commission proposes changes to ward boundaries in Kirkwall and East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray, as detailed on the map attached as Appendix 1 to this report, as follows:

- The boundary between the two Kirkwall wards is amended at Kirkwall Harbour to create a more easily identifiable ward boundary.

- The Kirkwall East boundary is extended southwards to better reflect local ties. It places Kirkwall airport, currently within the East Mainland, Burray and South Ronaldsay ward, within a Kirkwall ward.

**It is recommended:**

## **2.6.**

That the Council endorses the proposals made by the Commission relating to the Orkney Islands Council area in respect of changes to ward boundaries in Kirkwall and East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray, detailed at paragraph 2.5 above.

## **2.7.**

That the Chief Executive should submit a response to the Commission, on behalf of the Council, in relation to the review of electoral arrangements, by the deadline of 2 December 2019.

# **3. Background**

## **3.1.**

Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (the Commission) is required to conduct reviews of each local authority's electoral arrangements every eight to 12 years. The main reason for these reviews is that the population, and therefore the electorate, can change and thus some councillors may represent more or fewer electors than other councillors in the same council area.

## **3.2.**

In addition, The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 requires the Commission to review the electoral arrangements of the six councils containing inhabited islands (Argyll and Bute, Highland, North Ayrshire, Orkney, Shetland and Nan Eilean Siar) as soon as practicable. The Commission will make its recommendations for these six councils areas to Scottish Ministers by May 2021 in order that the resulting wards can be used for the local government elections in May 2022.

## **3.3.**

When reviewing electoral arrangements, the Commission is required to take account of the following factors:

- The interests of effective and convenient local government.
- Within each council, each councillor should represent the same number of electors as closely as possible.
- Local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary.
- The desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable.
- Special geographical consideration.

### **3.4.**

Where a ward contains an inhabited island, the Commission can recommend that it elects between one and four councillors. In all other circumstances a ward must return either three or four councillors.

### **3.5.**

The Commission has sought the views of the Chief Executive and Council Officers in the early stages of its deliberations and discussed potential proposals with Elected Members during a seminar in April 2019. The proposals within the public consultation reflect these discussions.

## **4. Review of Electoral Arrangements in Orkney**

### **4.1.**

The Commission's proposals make no changes to the existing number of councillors, number of wards or ward names retaining 21 councillors across 6 wards.

### **4.2.**

The Commission's proposals minimise change to the existing ward boundaries, retaining three existing ward boundaries: North Isles, Stromness and South Isles, and West Mainland.

### **4.3.**

The proposals make changes to ward boundaries in Kirkwall and East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray, as follows:

- The boundary between the two Kirkwall wards is amended at Kirkwall Harbour to create a more easily identifiable ward boundary.
- The Kirkwall East boundary is extended southwards to better reflect local ties. It places Kirkwall airport, currently within the East Mainland, Burray and South Ronaldsay ward, within a Kirkwall ward.

#### **4.3.1.**

The proposed changes to the ward boundaries are shown in the map attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

### **4.4.**

Through discussion at the members' seminar in April 2019, the Commission did explore whether single member wards were a potential proposal, particularly in respect of the North Isles ward.

#### **4.4.1.**

An alternative solution which reflects the desire to maintain, not increase, councillor numbers and reduce the challenges of undertaking constituent business across a number of isles was not identified.

#### 4.4.2.

Therefore, the Commission has retained the existing North Isles ward with a wide variation from electoral parity or wide imbalance in number of electors per councillor. It considered special geographical circumstances in the ward due to it comprising rural, sparsely populated isles with limited transport links.

#### 4.5.

The proposed changes will have an impact on the numbers of electorate in the affected wards as follows:

Ward No.	Ward Name.	Councillors.	Current Electorate (Dec 17).	Proposed Electorate (Dec 17)	Difference
1.	Kirkwall East	4.	3,416.	3,661.	+ 245.
2.	Kirkwall West and Orphir.	4.	3,454.	3,415	-39.
3.	Stromness and South Isles.	3.	2,147.	2,147.	0.
4.	West Mainland.	4.	3,521.	3,521.	0.
5.	East Mainland, South Ronaldsay and Burray.	3.	2,702.	2,496.	-206.
6.	North Isles.	3.	1,798.	1,798.	0.
		21.	17,038.	17,038.	0.

#### 4.6.

The Commission's public consultation on these proposals commenced on 10 September 2019 and closes on 2 December 2019. It is suggested that the proposals from the Commission are welcomed as they reflect the current arrangement which works well within the constraints of Orkney's geography and demographics. The proposals also reflect adjustments in the boundaries around Kirkwall to align with local ties.

### 5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

### 6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of the recommendations of this report.

## **7. Legal Aspects**

There are no legal implications arising directly as a result of the recommendations of this report.

## **8. Contact Officers**

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## **9. Appendix**

Appendix 1: Ward 1 Kirkwall East Map of Proposals.

