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Date: 16 December 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

You are invited to the following meeting:

**Special Shetland Islands Council  
Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lerwick  
Wednesday 18 December 2019 at 10.00am**

Apologies for absence should be notified to Leisel Malcolmson at the above number.

Yours faithfully

Executive Manager – Governance and Law

Convener: Malcolm Bell

## **AGENDA**

- (a) Hold circular calling the meeting as read.
- (b) Apologies for absence, if any.
- (c) Declarations of Interest - Members are asked to consider whether they have an interest to declare in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting. Any Member making a declaration of interest should indicate whether it is a financial or non-financial interest and include some information on the nature of the interest. Advice may be sought from Officers prior to the meeting taking place.

## Items

1. Local Government Boundary Review – Local Government Boundary  
Commission Detailed Proposals  
*GL-18*



# Shetland Islands Council

Agenda Item

**1**

<b>Meeting(s):</b>	<b>Special Shetland Islands Council</b>	<b>18 December 2019</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Local Government Boundary Review – Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation (Detailed Proposals)</b>	
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>GL-18-19-F</b>	
<b>Author / Job Title:</b>	<b>Executive Manager – Governance &amp; Law</b>	

## **1.0 Decisions / Action required:**

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Council: -
- (a) ACCEPT the detailed proposals put forward by LGBC; or
  - (b) ACCEPT some of the wards proposed but make alterations in respect of the others; or
  - (c) SUBMIT NO COMMENTS in respect of the consultation exercise.
- 1.2 Delegate authority to the Executive Manager – Governance & Law to prepare a response, in consultation with the Convener and Leader which embraces the main points of the debate on this report capturing the above decision and any incidental requirements for the Council's position to be effectively communicated.

## **2.0 High Level Summary:**

- 2.1 This report addresses a resumption of consideration of Council ward boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission to complete its fifth review. Shetland Islands Council was one of six Councils for which the review conducted during the term of the last Council was stalled and, therefore, not applied for the election held in 2017.
- 2.2 This was for the purpose of allowing the enactment of provisions then proposed in the Islands Bill to introduce the option of one or two member wards for those Councils who were Islands Authorities or Local Authorities with inhabited islands.
- 2.3 As soon as these provisions were enacted in the Islands Act 2018, the Commission began dialogue firstly with the three Island Authorities. The Commission confirmed that they would apply the new provisions available to them in coming forward with improved proposals in order to complete the fifth review during the current term of this Council. The new boundaries would take effect in time for the election of Local Authority Councillors in May 2022.

- 2.4 When conducting any review, the Boundary Commission will consult with the Local Authority affected in relation to initial emerging proposals in order to determine the number of Council Members appropriate for that Council and at that initial stage seek views of the Council in respect of the design of boundary proposals, which could achieve, so far as practical, electoral parity. That first stage culminated in the Council considering a report on 15 May 2019 ([GL-06-19-F](#)). A copy of that report is attached as Appendix 1 to aid consideration of this matter at today's meeting.
- 2.5 The Commission's consultation with the Council at this initial stage was excellent, with Members gaining the benefit of a presentation from a contingent of the Commission led by its Chair, Mr Ronnie Hinds, and officer support from Isabel Drummond-Murray, the Commission's Secretary, as well as Colin Wilson who is substantially involved in drafting proposals and ultimate final reports for the Commission's considerations. Although the consultation was essentially with the Council at the early stage, the Commission was happy for the Council to engage with, for example, Community Councils to share ideas around the initial proposals.
- 2.6 The result of the Council's consideration of those initial proposals was to invite the Commission to come up with a solution which enabled optimum use of two-member wards in the rural areas retaining the current three and four-member wards for Lerwick North and Bressay and for Lerwick South, respectively. Although the Council suggested potential boundaries for this wide range of two-member wards, by description of the communities which would be located within the boundaries, it was left to the Boundary Commission to identify what effect that would have on electorate numbers. The Boundary Commission obliged the Council in this way but, having drawn up the map and recalculated electoral numbers, it was clear that the levels of parity would, while satisfying some areas thereby created, in some others would create significant divergence from parity. This led to the commission coming up with more detailed proposals of their own encompassing some of their initial proposals, some of the changes suggested by the Council and, in one or two instances, retaining the previous existing wards. It is that detailed proposal which is currently out for consultation, and the subject of this report.
- 2.7 The actual consultation period closed on 2 December 2019, but the Commission kindly granted the Council an extension of two weeks to the date of this meeting, so that the Council could debate the proposals outwith the pre-election period for the now completed UK General Parliamentary Election.

### **3.0 Corporate Priorities and Joint Working:**

- 3.1 Significant boundary changes can have a greater or lesser effect on delivery of services, depending on the extent to which the changed boundaries remain conterminous with the boundaries of known localities adopted by various public bodies in the delivery of their services in Shetland.
- 3.2 Some of the factors taken into account by the Boundary Commission when making their recommendations to Scottish Ministers is that in seeking to establish electoral parity there will be regard to identifying natural boundaries, maintaining local ties (locality provision will fall within this category) and special geographical circumstances. The Council has previously advised the Commission that maintaining locality boundaries is an important criteria and, whilst the representation need not be exact across boundaries, the perimeter of locality boundaries modified purely in the pursuit of electoral parity could cause

unwelcome distortions to the effective delivery of locality services. This could also affect collation of data pertinent to the areas served, for example in the monitoring of performance over time, in order to inform future service delivery.

#### **4.0 Key Issues:**

##### **Historic Context:**

- 4.1 Ever since the introduction of multi-member wards, there has been pressure to identify how, in pursuit of electoral parity, suitable provision for boundaries could be made for the South wards which has continued to see population growth and increasing electoral numbers when that three-member ward already had a significant positive deviation from parity.
- 4.2 Conversely, on the West side, the areas of Aithsting & Sandsting and Sandness & Walls required increasing amounts of geographic area to be taken from Whiteness & Weisdale and even extending to Girsta in the East, in order to make up sufficient numbers of electors to address the significant negative deviation from parity where the population numbers were, at best, remaining the same but in some areas showing decline.
- 4.3 That was the scene when the Fifth Statutory Review Of Electoral Arrangements was reported to the Scottish Ministers in May 2016. At that juncture the Council had objected to the proposals, particularly in relation to the inclusion of parts of the east coast of Shetland in order to make up numbers for Shetland West ward.
- 4.4 Perhaps, as a result of those objections and a suggestion that Scottish Ministers might wait until the provisions in the Islands Bill had been enacted, introducing one and two member wards, led to the Islands Authorities being excluded from the final determination of the Fifth Statutory Review in 2017. Once the Bill was enacted, there emerged the tantalising prospect of applying one or two member wards as a possible means of addressing what had been long standing problems of matching electoral numbers with geographic areas and their communities in a manner that represented and enabled sound Local Government arrangements for the Islands.
- 4.5 The level of consultation assistance and willingness to engage demonstrated by the Commission throughout this stage of the review is testament to the desire of making the Islands Act work for the benefit of Shetland and hopefully providing a means whereby the boundaries now determined will be able to endure for a sufficient period of time to enable long term planning for the communities within those bounded areas.
- 4.6 For the first time in Shetland the Boundary Commission also made specific arrangements to meet with Shetland's Association of Community Councils (ASCC). By meeting the Chairs of all Community Councils in this way the Chair of the Commission was able to clearly set out the parameters of their review, the ideas which lay behind their proposals, and was able to respond to question that the Community Councils posed about the review.
- 4.7 Perhaps as a direct result of the Commission's engagement, this consultation has seen Community Councils play their part, as demonstrated by Appendix 4. Our Council and Community Councils each representing the interests of their respected constituents can be seen to gain when there is coterminosity of boundaries, but the Boundary Commission has always indicated that the boundaries of Community Councils fall to be determined by Local Authorities and not by the Boundary

Commission. However, as representatives of their community, Community Councils have an important voice in the consultations on Local Government boundaries and this has been clearly demonstrated by their contributions on this occasion.

- 4.8 At the end of the initial consultation with the Council when it was agreed that, in order to accommodate the best opportunity to achieve electoral parity, an increase in numbers in Councillors to 23 would be appropriate, the Council also suggested a plan whereby the whole of the rural and island areas immediately outside Lerwick could be divided into 8 two member wards. This had certain advantages in terms of reducing the large geographic span of some of the existing wards, a comparability between wards of relatively similar size and electorates, transposing into (with some tweaks of the Council's constitution) a means of representation on Committees that would be seen as both equal and proportionate. However, as demonstrated by the table on the bottom of Appendix 2, the resultant unequal distribution of voters, difficulties around determining where boundaries might be placed e.g. north of Channerwick, significant deviations, both positive and negative, across most of the proposed wards, created problems which could not be readily reconciled.

#### **LGBC – Detailed Proposals**

- 4.9 As a result, the Boundary Commission came forward with proposals now seen in Appendix 3, whereby the suggested two-member wards of the North Isles, Shetland North, Whalsay and Skerries and Shetland North East (Nesting, Lunnasting and Voe) and Shetland West would all remain as previously proposed, two-member wards but Shetland Central and Shetland South would become four-member wards.
- 4.10 In adopting this proposal, the Boundary Commission were demonstrating willingness to allow some deviation from parity, particularly in relation to the North Isles (-13) and the newly created ward of Shetland North East, Whalsay and Skerries (+7).

#### **Consultation – Community Council Input**

- 4.11 Whalsay Community Council, having undertaken local consultation, have presented a majority view from the Islands that they would wish to retain the original status quo of a three-member ward which continues with the original alignment with the North Isles. Skerries Community Council in commenting on the proposal for their Island to be aligned with the mainland of Shetland, whilst saying that they are not opposed to such a proposal, did indicate that for their purposes it really would make little significant difference. It is understood that the problem in the past has been with Councillors attendance at Community Council meetings, given difficulties of transport, but those have been largely resolved as a result of Council Members being able to find alternative means of participation at Community Council meetings, thereby improving their contribution to meetings and their ability to represent the Islands.
- 4.12 In the meantime, Delting Community Council had already written opposed to a separation of Voe from what has always been considered the parish of Delting in the interest of carving out a sufficient area of the Mainland to align with Whalsay for it to become the new two-member ward.
- 4.13 The combination of these responses could lead to a conclusion that the communities might be best served by making no change from the current status

quo for the three-member wards of the North Isles and the three-member ward for Shetland North. In relation to the central ward, and proposal for this to become a four-member ward, no adverse comments were received apart from the comments in relation to the West ward from Sandsting and Aithsting Community Council and a letter in more detail from Sandness & Walls Community Council. Sandness & Walls has expressed the preference for the status quo to remain whereby the electorate of Whiteness & Weisdale area remain subsumed in the West ward. However, the Boundary Commission have made it clear that deviation from parity in that ward was such that a significant change would be required such as taking in the electorate of the east coast, notwithstanding objections the Council has previously made in that regard.

- 4.14 It is a matter for Members to determine but, on balance and recognising the statutory requirement of the Boundary Commission in the pursuit of electoral parity, it would be difficult for the Council to find a permutation of wards which would achieve that objective whilst retaining the integrity of communities making up the current Central ward. Members may therefore be minded to accept the new proposals for the two-member ward for Shetland West and the four-member ward for Shetland Central.
- 4.15 Turning now to Shetland South. The Council accepted the proposal for this area to be represented by an additional fourth member to address a significant positive deviation from parity which had prevailed since multi-member wards were brought into being. The idea of the area comprising 2 two-member wards foundered because there was no practical way of splitting the relatively high population density found in Channerwick, Clumlie, Hoswick and Sandwick. The Community Councils seem broadly supportive of the change to a four-member ward, except for a question mark which has arisen in relation to the electorate of Gulberwick. Without addressing the electorate in Gulberwick, this would now result in the South ward having a -8 deviation from parity. This situation was addressed in comments received from Sandwick Community Council who suggested that consideration might be given to Gulberwick being included within the South ward. This would be coterminous with the Community Council boundary and the Community Council mentioned other cultural ties, for example Gulberwick participating in the South Mainland Up-Helly-Aa each year. In the meantime, Lerwick Community Council also saw the need to address the question of electoral numbers by suggesting that the Gulberwick electorate could be included in the South Mainland and not in the Lerwick South ward. Their observation was that in order to create a sufficient buffer to anticipate the house building projected for Lerwick South ward, that ward which already had a positive deviation (+9) would be set to worsen in the years to come. In that respect, if the suggestion of these two Community Councils was not embraced at this time, the situation in respect of Gulberwick might simply have to be considered in the next review.
- 4.16 Set against those comments, it also has to be noted that the Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh Community Council indicated in their response that they were reasonable happy with the proposals which would have seen then continuing to be aligned with the town of Lerwick while benefiting from participation of an additional member in the Shetland South ward. Gulberwick, Quarff and Cunningsburgh Community Council are currently considering the implications of the suggestion from Lerwick and Sandwick Community Councils, and I may have more information in that regard to update at today's meeting.

4.17	Leaving aside the “Gulberwick question”, the other wards in Lerwick would remain a three and four-member ward as at present with the only difference being the inclusion of Bressay in the title for Lerwick North.
4.18	Ultimately, it is a matter for Members to determine what our Council’s response to the Boundary Commission should be, but I hope through the above narrative some ideas have emerged as a result of informal consultation with Councillors who largely replicated the comments they had been hearing from the Community Councils and the significance of the Community Councils in this process. Members should determine what their proposal shall be and delegate authority for those representations to be made to the Boundary Commission on your behalf by no later than Friday 20 December 2019.
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Exempt and/or confidential information:</b>
5.1	This debate relates to our consultation in public of a matter affecting Shetland communities. No considerations of exempt or confidential information applies.
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Implications :</b>
<b>6.1 Service Users, Patients and Communities:</b>	<p>The eventual proposal accepted by Scottish Ministers, unless the status quo is confirmed, will affect the groupings of service users, the electorate, and manner in which they are represented by the Councillors they elect. The Boundary Commission are seeking to recommend boundary changes to the Scottish Ministers which provide for effective and convenient governance and the Council, in assisting with that process, have the same objectives. The considerations in this report are closely aligned with the Council’s stated priority in its Corporate Plan of being a properly led and well managed Council.</p> <p>In terms of representation, the Council maintains strong stakeholder engagement through the Association of Community Councils in the matter of Local Government Boundary Reviews. Individual Community Councils have already contributed by way of comment. Both in relation to the Initial Consultation and now the Public Consultation, Community Councils have commented on any proposals to introduce smaller wards and, where this is contemplated, they are concerned about the effectiveness of representation if the makeup of Council wards moved away from the current arrangements of three or four member wards. In such cases these Community Councils expressed support for retaining the status quo by sticking with the current arrangements, although none specifically addressed the question of parity of voters, which underpins the current considerations of the Commission and the Council.</p>
<b>6.2 Human Resources and Organisational Development:</b>	None
<b>6.3</b>	The fundamental principle of seeking to secure parity of voters for each ward is the pursuit, so far as can be achieved, of an



<b>Equality, Diversity and Human Rights:</b>	equivalent weighing for the value of a single voter's vote in securing equality in participation in decision making by individual Councillors. That is a statutory requirement and a laudable principle. However, the pursuit of perfect parity would result in perverse outcomes and that is why the Boundary Commission, with the Council's input, seek to identify boundaries, which also have regard to natural ties, geography, etc.
<b>6.4 Legal:</b>	The Local Government Boundary Commission are a separate legal entity, established and appointed to provide an independent report to Scottish Ministers for the purpose of establishing electoral boundaries in each Local Government area. The purpose of this report is to address changes brought in specifically to assist in the determination of such boundaries when dealing with Councils responsible for inhabited island areas. The new legal provisions were brought in by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 which amended the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
<b>6.5 Finance:</b>	None
<b>6.6 Assets and Property:</b>	None
<b>6.7 ICT and new technologies:</b>	None
<b>6.8 Environmental:</b>	None
<b>6.9 Risk Management:</b>	No strategic or operational risks to the Council have been identified from simply considering the terms of the Boundary Commission's proposals. However, when the final proposals are put to the Scottish Ministers and approved, if there is any resultant complexity, this could run the risk of discouraging candidature for elections and/or the electorate from engaging in the democratic process. If there should occur a significant dislocation between electoral boundaries and identified locality areas used for service delivery, with resultant additional bureaucracy, this could have a detrimental effect, not only for the Council but also for other public service providers. It is difficult to fully evidence at this point what any of these impacts might be, but from the recent engagement with the Boundary Commission and participation from Members, it is clear that those considerations are at the forefront, with each looking to secure boundaries which provide for effective and convenient governance.
<b>6.10 Policy and Delegated Authority:</b>	Participation in Local Government boundary reviews is not a matter which the Council has delegated to any Committee. The proposals put forward by the Commission and alternatives

	suggested in the Council's response would all lead to a need for some changes to the Council's Constitution before the end of the term of this Council. Amendments to the Constitution fall to be determined by the Council and have not been delegated to any other Committee.	
<b>6.11 Previously considered by:</b>	Not Applicable	

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**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Local Government Boundary Review – Local Government Boundary Commission Initial Proposals Report GL-06-19-F

Appendix 2 – Map showing suggested Boundaries for all rural wards comprising 2-member wards

Appendix 3 – Map showing current LGBC proposals

Appendix 4 – Table of responses of individual Community Councils extracted from minutes or with correspondence attached

**Background Documents:**

2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements - <http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/2019-reviews-electoral-arrangements>

END



# Shetland Islands Council

Agenda Item

# 7

<b>Meeting(s):</b>	<b>Shetland Islands Council</b>	<b>15 May 2019</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Local Government Boundary Review – Local Government Boundary Commission Initial Proposals</b>	
<b>Reference Number:</b>	<b>GL-06-19-F</b>	
<b>Author / Job Title:</b>	<b>Executive Manager – Governance &amp; Law</b>	

## 1.0 Decisions / Action required:

That the Council RESOLVES to:-

- 1.1 APPROVE the response attached at Appendix 2, subject to any amendments the Council wishes to make. This response is to be submitted on or before 20 May 2019.

## 2.0 High Level Summary:

- 2.1 This report addresses a resumption of consideration of Council ward boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission to complete its fifth review. Shetland Islands Council was one of six Councils for which the review conducted during the term of the last Council was stalled and, therefore, not applied for the purposes of the election held in 2017.
- 2.2 This was for the purpose of allowing the enactment of provisions then proposed in the Islands Bill to introduce the option of one or two member wards for those Councils who were Islands Authorities or Local Authorities with inhabited islands.
- 2.3 As soon as these provisions were enacted in the Islands Act 2018, the Commission began dialogue firstly with the three Island Authorities. The Commission confirmed that they would apply the new provisions available to them in coming forward with improved proposals in order to complete the fifth review during the current term of this Council. The new boundaries would take effect in time for the election of Local Authority Councillors in May 2022.
- 2.4 When conducting any review, the Boundary Commission will consult with the Local Authority affected in relation to initial emerging proposals in order to determine the number of Members appropriate for that Council and to design boundary proposals to achieve so far as practical electoral parity. This report brings to the attention of Members the proposed response arising from the consultation with our Council. Our contribution at this stage will inform the Commission before they begin a formal public consultation later in the summer 2019.

### **3.0 Corporate Priorities and Joint Working:**

- 3.1 Significant boundary changes can have a greater or lesser effect on delivery of services, depending on the extent to which the changed boundaries remain conterminous with the boundaries of known localities adopted by various public bodies in the delivery of their services in Shetland.
- 3.2 Some of the factors taken into account by the Boundary Commission when making their recommendations to Scottish Ministers is that in seeking to establish electoral parity there will be regard to identifying natural boundaries, maintaining local ties (locality provision will fall within this category) and special geographical circumstances. The Council has previously advised the Commission that maintaining locality boundaries is an important criteria and, whilst the representation need not be exact across boundaries, the perimeter of locality boundaries modified purely in the pursuit of electoral parity could cause unwelcome distortions to the effective delivery of locality services. This could also affect collation of data pertinent to the areas served, for example in the monitoring of performance over time, in order to inform future service delivery.
- 3.3 Community partners may contribute further observations during the public consultation, and the Council at that time also has further opportunity to make its own representations known.

### **4.0 Key Issues:**

#### **Consultation on Initial Proposal**

- 4.1 Although this stage in the process is specifically a consultation with the Council, the Commission did attend to meet and discuss the proposals with Members at a seminar held on 17 April 2019. Ahead of that meeting, there had been an opportunity to discuss the proposals informally with the Chairs of Community Councils at a meeting of the Association of Shetland Community Councils held on 26 March 2019.
- 4.2 The visit by the Commission led by their Chair, Mr Ronnie Hinds, represented a second engagement with the Commission on this stage of their review. It demonstrates a continuing objective on part of the Commission to design wards which, whilst meeting the statutory requirements are, having consulted with the Council and the public, tailored to provide effective governance within the Local Government area.
- 4.3 When consulted in 2015/16 the Council sought to retain existing recognised boundaries, retaining existing wards and aiming to minimise change by continuing with the status quo. This was the position first put by the Council during the last term in the initial stages of the fifth review. However, the Commission are clear that with projections of deviation from electoral parity as wide as -16% in Shetland West ward and a positive deviation from parity of +17% in Shetland South, it is not considered tenable for the existing status quo to continue.
- 4.4 The proposals put forward by the Commissioner are contained in sections 15 and 16 of Appendix 1 by reference to the two maps attached (maps A and B) showing, respectively, the existing 7 wards and the 8 wards now proposed.

- 4.5 In summary the significant changes would entail Whalsay and Skerries becoming a single member ward, resulting in the three remaining north isles of Yell, Unst and Fetlar becoming a two member ward. The significant negative deviation from parity in the Shetland West ward (predicted to be a worsening situation in the future) is largely addressed by reducing that ward to a two member ward for a smaller geographic area. This in turn means including the Whiteness/Weisdale electoral area within the Shetland Central ward to create a four member ward. The remaining proposal are to retain the existing boundaries for Shetland North, Lerwick and Shetland South but increasing the numbers of Members in the Shetland South ward from 3 to 4, thereby changing the very high positive deviation (+17%) to a much lower deviation and now a negative one (-8%).

### **Councillors' Considerations**

- 4.6 When Councillors met with the Commission on 17 April 2019, a number of factors were addressed that had a direct bearing on what the Council might consider to be "effective and convenient government" arising from the proposals being considered. In no particular order of importance, the following aspects emerged: -
- The single member ward proposed for Whalsay/Skerries had potential impact on the amount of time that the Councillor for that ward would have to commit to Council business in order to ensure full representation on all of the Committees to which are delegated the many functions of local government. This could see a return to the issues which had predominated in the past with single member wards throughout Shetland, virtually predetermining that candidates for election required to be retired with a separate form of income to be able to devote virtually all of their time to local government business. Whalsay Community Council did not consider that proposal to merit a change from the current status quo and also in passing confirmed that they would not necessarily see any benefit of Whalsay being attached to one of the existing mainland wards, although they did recognise the difficulty experienced by Councillors resident in Yell or Unst being able to attend frequently at events on Whalsay, for example Whalsay Community Council evening meetings.
  - Similar considerations were put forward in relation to the reduced numbers of Councillors representing the West ward to be formed as a two member ward. Although the issue would be less pronounced, unless there was a change to the Council's constitution, it would still require a considerable input of time and resource shared by fewer Councillors to meet the amount of business generated by the Council in the delivery of its many Local Government Functions.
  - In relation to the proposal for a large four member ward covering the Central area, it was recognised that this achieved the closest electoral parity with a small negative buffer to compensate for an expected increase in the electoral numbers in the central area. It was also recognised that this resolved one of the criticisms of previous proposals which had the West ward stretching all the way across the top of the Central ward to bring in electors on the east coast (Wadbister, Girlsta area). However, the creation of this large ward had the above perceived negative effects on the West ward.
  - Shetland South ward proposals addressed the significant and predicted to worsen deviation from parity by moving the high positive deviation to an acceptable negative deviation. The proposal is for an increase by one member to create a four member ward without altering existing boundaries. It had to be recognised that,

whilst the last election would not necessarily demonstrate a definite trend for all future elections, this ward had not experienced a ballot at the last election, receiving only candidature for three seats, the required amount. For some members this demonstrated a democratic deficit and completely removed the benefit expected to be achieved from the proportional representation for which single transferrable voting (STV) had been introduced. The requirement for the same area to produce a fourth candidate could, it was argued, simply exacerbate that potential problem. It was also commented that this existing ward currently posed some problems, stretching as it did from just south of Gulberwick to the southernmost point of Fair Isle. The travelling times across such a geographic extent of coverage created challenges to ensure effective representation of the whole south mainland area. Arising from that consideration, there was some discussion about the potential of the south mainland benefiting from being two separate two member wards with a suitable line drawn, potentially south of Sandwick.

- 4.7 Out of the same discussions, but with an attempt to balance the various considerations, a Member suggested the possibility of the electorate of Whalsay and Skerries being aligned with the southernmost part of the existing Shetland North ward, thereby incorporating the electorate of Nesting, Lunnasting, Vidlin and Voe to compile a two member ward with the electorate of the remainder of the north ward forming another two member ward. This captured not only the benefit of the focus of the North Isles two member ward being solely on the islands of Yell, Unst and Fetlar, but also tackled the geographic extent of the existing coverage of the North ward from the top of North Roe to the southernmost point of Nesting.
- 4.8 Developing those considerations further, it might be worth exploring with the Boundary Commission, if they would be prepared to contemplate a wider use of the two member ward option by allowing all parts of the rural and Island areas of Shetland, where the predominant question is regarding representativeness over the geographic extent of the area covered. An amended proposal making full use of this option could result in all wards outside of the boundaries of Lerwick (thereby classed as rural) redesigned as 8 x two member wards: -
- Yell, Unst and Fetlar
  - Brae, Mossbank, Hillswick, North Roe, including Muckle Roe
  - Lunnasting, Vidlin, Nesting and Voe, incorporating Whalsay and Skerries
  - Aithsting & Sandsting, Walls & Sandness, including Papa Stour and Foula
  - Whiteness, Weisdale and Tingwall
  - Scalloway, Burra and Trondra
  - Sandwick, Cunningsburgh and Quarff
  - Levenwick, Dunrossness and Fair Isle
- 4.9 A proposal seeking to justify such a proposition would look to develop evidence of the balance that this could create between effective representation of relatively smaller geographic areas, whilst at the same time enabling a division of responsibility across all of the functional Committees of the Council. The aim in such an arrangement would be to still optimise the opportunity for improving gender balance in the makeup of the Chamber and tackling the question of age profile across both genders.
- 4.10 In order to maximise the benefits of the proposal of this nature, the Council would need to refocus attention on the membership of its Committees. It would be appropriate for these considerations to be addressed during the term of this

Council so that the experience of existing Councillors representing a cross section of members can reflect on the issues which currently hamper regular attendance at meetings to provide effective representation for constituents and convenience for Members to participate fully in the significant matters that require corporate decisions by the Council.

4.11 The attached response (Appendix 2) is an attempt to embrace these various factors and capture them in a proposal for an alternative view of representation on the Isles based on discussions with individual Councillors and taking into account the discussion which took place directly with the Commission during their last visit.

4.12 If Members consider that the proposal set out in paragraphs 4.7-4.9 above have sufficient merit to seek to develop them further, we could seek the concurrence of the Commission, in doing so, for a short delay in proceeding with their initial proposals to full public consultation. If Members accept this approach as set out in Appendix 2, this has to be set against the alternative options of either accepting the Commission's proposals as written to enable the next public consultation exercise to commence immediately, or to seek to again justify retention of the status quo, notwithstanding the legal reasoning put forward by the Commission in terms of the constraints within which they require to operate, to pursue electoral parity.

## **5.0 Exempt and/or confidential information:**

5.1 None

## **6.0 Implications :**

### **6.1 Service Users, Patients and Communities:**

The eventual proposal accepted by Scottish Ministers, unless the status quo is confirmed, will affect the groupings of service users, the electorate, and manner in which they are represented by the Councillors they elect. The Boundary Commission are seeking to recommend boundary changes to the Scottish Ministers which provide for effective and convenient governance and the Council, in assisting with that process, have the same objectives. The considerations in this report are closely aligned with the Council's stated priority in its Corporate Plan of being a properly led and well managed Council.

In terms of representation, the Council maintains strong stakeholder engagement through the Association of Community Councils in the matter of Local Government Boundary Reviews. Individual Community Councils have already contributed by way of comment, in particular Whalsay and Walls & Sandness, both of which were concerned about the effectiveness of representation if the makeup of Council wards moved away from the current arrangements of three or four member wards. In both cases these Community Councils expressed support for retaining the status quo by sticking with the current arrangements, although neither addressed the question of parity of voters, which underpins the current considerations of the Commission and the Council.

<b>6.2 Human Resources and Organisational Development:</b>	None
<b>6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights:</b>	The fundamental principle of seeking to secure parity of voters for each ward is the pursuit, so far as can be achieved, of an equivalent weighing for the value of a single voter's vote in securing equality in participation in decision making by individual Councillors. That is a statutory requirement and a laudable principle. However, the pursuit of perfect parity would result in perverse outcomes and that is why the Boundary Commission, with the Council's input, seek to identify boundaries, which also have regard to natural ties, geography, etc.
<b>6.4 Legal:</b>	The Local Government Boundary Commission are a separate legal entity, established and appointed to provide an independent report to Scottish Ministers for the purpose of establishing electoral boundaries in each Local Government area. The purpose of this report is to address changes brought in specifically to assist in the determination of such boundaries when dealing with Councils responsible for inhabited island areas. The new legal provisions were brought in by the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 which amended the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.
<b>6.5 Finance:</b>	None
<b>6.6 Assets and Property:</b>	None
<b>6.7 ICT and new technologies:</b>	None
<b>6.8 Environmental:</b>	None
<b>6.9 Risk Management:</b>	No strategic or operational risks to the Council have been identified from simply considering the terms of the Boundary Commission's initial proposals. However, when the final proposals are put to the Scottish Ministers and approved, if there is any resultant complexity, this could run the risk of discouraging candidature for elections and/or the electorate from engaging in the democratic process. If there should occur a significant dislocation between electoral boundaries and identified locality areas used for service delivery, with resultant additional bureaucracy, this could have a detrimental effect, not only for the Council but also for other public service providers. It is difficult to fully evidence at this point what any of these impacts might be, but from the recent engagement with the



	Boundary Commission and participation from Members, it is clear that those considerations are at the forefront, with each looking to secure boundaries which provide for effective and convenient governance.	
<b>6.10 Policy and Delegated Authority:</b>	Participation in Local Government boundary reviews is not a matter which the Council has delegated to any Committee. The proposals put forward by the Commission and alternatives suggested in the Council's response would all lead to a need for some changes to the Council's Constitution before the end of the term of this Council. Amendments to the Constitution fall to be determined by the Council and have not been delegated to any other Committee.	
<b>6.11 Previously considered by:</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

**Contact Details:**

Jan Riise  
Executive Manager – Governance & Law  
[jan.riise@shetland.gov.uk](mailto:jan.riise@shetland.gov.uk)  
8 May 2019

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – News Release and Summary of the Initial Proposals for Shetland Islands Council Area (March 2019)

Appendix 2 – Shetland Islands Council Proposed Response in Respect of Commission's Initial Proposals

**Background Documents:**

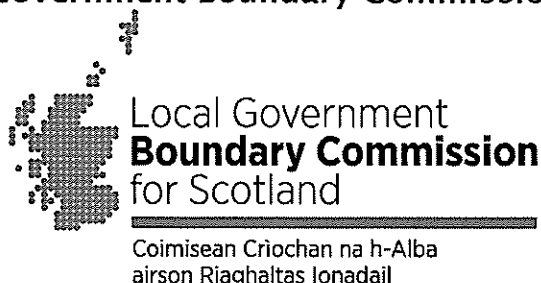
Local Government Boundary Commission's Initial Proposals (including maps showing each ward, as proposed)

END



## News Release

### Issued on behalf of The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland



**Not for Publication, Broadcast or use on Club Tapes  
before 0001 Hours on 20 March 2019**

### **The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland commences its electoral reviews of Islands council areas**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland has today begun its consultation with councils on its proposals for electoral arrangements in Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas. The consultation will run until 20 May 2019.

Ronnie Hinds, Chair of the Commission, said:

"We are pleased to begin our consultation on electoral arrangements with the three councils today and I look forward to engaging with them on our proposals. It is important that electoral arrangements for Scottish councils are effective and our proposals deliver on requirements for electoral parity and as far as possible take account of local ties and special geographical considerations.

"We also welcome the flexibility offered by the Islands (Scotland) Act to use one or two member wards and have used this flexibility as appropriate in our proposals.

"After completion of our consultation with councils we will be seeking public views on our proposals over the summer".

The 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements will make proposals for the electoral arrangements for the six council areas specified in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. These are Argyll and Bute, Highland, North Ayrshire, Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas.

The Commission is conducting the reviews in two phases, focusing firstly on Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas. Consultation with the public is planned for the summer 2019. The Commission will then review Argyll and Bute, Highland and North Ayrshire council areas.

The reviews will result in recommendations for the number of councillors on each council and the number and boundaries of wards for the election of those

councillors. They will not look at the external boundaries of council areas. The new islands legislation allows for use of 1 or 2 member wards, in addition to the current 3 and 4 member wards, where a ward includes an inhabited island.

The Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 requires the Commission to review the six councils as soon as practicable and the Commission will make its recommendations to Scottish Ministers by May 2021, in order that the resulting wards will be available for the local government elections in May 2022.

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 nearly as may be;
- local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary;
- the desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable; and
- special geographical considerations.

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.

**Contact for Further Information:**

Isabel Drummond-Murray

Secretary to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Tel: 0131 244 2001

Information on the review can also be found on the Commission's website:  
[www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)

\*\*\* ends \*\*\*

## Notes Editors

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland (LGBCS), has been responsible for reviewing local government boundaries and electoral arrangements in Scotland since being established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The 1973 Act also defines the constitution and procedures (in Part II and Schedules 4 and 6 of the Act).

LGBCS is an advisory Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) which is sponsored and financed by Scottish Ministers. It is required to conduct electoral reviews of each local authority at intervals of 8 to 12 years. The reviews announced today follow the requirement in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 to review the 6 councils with inhabited islands as soon as practicable.

The Commission is an independent, non-political body which is responsible for reviewing and making recommendations for:

- the number of councillors in each local authority;
- the number of wards for local government elections and their boundaries;
- the extent of council areas.

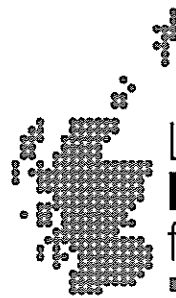
The Commission is also responsible for reviews of Scottish Parliament constituencies and regions.

The electorate data for the review of Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands, and Shetland Islands council areas is based on the December 2017 electoral register.

Full information about the Commission and its work is available on the Commission's website: [www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk).

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Local Government  
**Boundary Commission**  
for Scotland

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Coimisean Crìochan na h-Alba  
airson Riaghaltas Ionadail

**2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements**

**Shetland Islands Council area**

**Initial Proposals Consultation**

**March 2019**

Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HD

0131 538 7510

[lgbcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk](mailto:lgbcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk)

[www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk)

@lgbcs

## **Membership of the Commission**

Chair:	Mr Ronnie Hinds
Deputy Chair:	Prof. Ailsa Henderson
Commissioners:	Mr Roland Bean
	Mr Gordon Macmillan
	Dr Susan Walker
Secretary to the Commission:	Ms Isabel Drummond-Murray



## Introduction

1. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland is an independent, non-political body with responsibility for:
  - carrying out reviews of electoral wards for local authorities;
  - carrying out reviews of the boundaries of local authority areas; and
  - carrying out reviews of constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament.
2. We are tasked by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to undertake reviews of local government electoral arrangements in Scotland every 8 to 12 years. Shetland Islands council area was last reviewed during the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements which reported in 2016. However, the Scottish Government did not accept the recommendations for Shetland Islands because of the expected legislation on the Scottish Islands.
3. This review is required under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. The Act recognises the importance of the Scottish Islands and the particular opportunities and challenges they face. It offers additional flexibility to allow the Commission to create wards that elect 1 or 2 councillors as well as 3 or 4 councillors where such a ward contains an inhabited island.

## This review

4. This review uses the same methodology for determining councillor numbers as was used in the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements.
5. We decide the number of councillors for each council by placing it into a category with other similar councils. Na h-Eileanan an Iar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas are grouped together with a ratio of electors to councillors of 1:800 for this review.
6. We are aware that a large change of councillor numbers in a council area can be disruptive, therefore our methodology also incorporates a 10% change rule. This means that we will not normally propose increasing or decreasing the total number of councillors in a council area by more than 10% as an immediate consequence of the Islands Reviews.
7. For each electoral ward, we make recommendations about its boundary, its name and the number of councillors to represent the ward.
8. When reviewing electoral arrangements the legislation requires us to take account of the following factors:
  - within each council, that each councillor should represent the same number of electors as nearly as may be;
  - the interests of effective and convenient local government;
  - local ties which would be broken by making a particular boundary;
  - the desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable; and
  - special geographical considerations.
9. We developed our proposals using electorate data from 1 December 2017 but must also consider the likely change in the number of electors forecast within a 5 year period. We have prepared our forecasts using data supplied by councils as well as population forecasts from National Records of Scotland.

## **Consultation**

10. The legislation states that we must first of all consult on our proposals with councils for two months. That period runs from 20 March until 20 May 2019. After consideration of responses received, we will conduct a 12-week public consultation on our proposals commencing in the summer of 2019.
11. All comments we receive in response to our consultations will be available to view on our website in due course.

## **Next steps**

12. Depending on the outcome of the consultations, we may further develop and consult on revised proposals before finalising our recommendations.
13. We intend to submit a report containing our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Shetland Islands council area to Scottish Ministers by May 2021, in time for implementation for the next local government elections in May 2022.

## Proposals for wards in Shetland Islands council area

14. We have prepared maps which illustrate our proposals for wards in Shetland Islands council area. We present an electoral arrangement for 23 councillors representing one 1-member ward, two 2-member wards, two 3-member wards and three 4-member wards. We agreed 23 councillors, one more than our methodology proposed because it considered local ties and improves variation from electoral parity throughout the the whole council area.

15. Our proposals for the council area:

- address variation from parity in existing ward 3 (Shetland West) and ward 5 (Shetland South);
- retain the existing Shetland North and Shetland South ward boundaries;
- adopt recognised boundaries throughout the area – Shetland Localities (used by both the Council and NHS Shetland to deliver local services) and existing wards;
- propose five wards coterminous with Shetland Localities (North Isles, Whalsay and Skerries, Shetland North, Shetland West and Shetland Central);
- retain local ties near Lerwick by keeping Gulberwick within a Lerwick ward;
- minimise change to the existing ward boundary in Lerwick by following existing and historical ward boundaries;
- rename the existing Lerwick North ward as Lerwick North and Bressay;
- take account of the Islands (Scotland) Act by using the flexibility offered by 1-member and 2-member wards to better reflect local community ties; and
- consider local ties in the whole council area.

16. The table below details the electorates with actual and forecast variation from parity of the proposed wards.

Ward no.	Ward name	Councillors	Electorate (Dec 17)	Current Variation from Parity	Forecast Electorate (2023)	Forecast Variation from Parity
1	North Isles	2	1,345	-12.8	1,345	-13.5
2	Whalsay and Skerries	1	862	11.8	862	10.9
3	Shetland North	3	2,504	8.3	2,523	8.3
4	Shetland West	2	1,373	-10.9	1,374	-11.7
5	Shetland Central	4	3,030	-1.7	3,077	-1.0
6	Lerwick North and Bressay	3	2,424	4.8	2,426	4.1
7	Lerwick South	4	3,355	8.8	3,414	9.8
8	Shetland South	4	2,836	-8.0	2,852	-8.2
		23	17,729		17,873	







# SHETLAND ISLANDS

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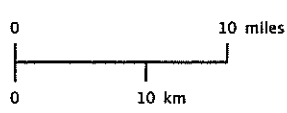
Foula  
Foula

A

C

Sumburgh  
Head

Initial Proposals



6-7h  
8h  
Fair

Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2017)	Current Variation from Parity %	Forecast Electorate (2023)	Forecast Variation from Parity %
1	North Isles	2	1,345	-12.8	1,345	-13.5
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5	Shetland Central	4	3,030	-1.7	3,077	-1.0
6	Lerwick North and Bressay	3	2,424	4.8	2,426	4.1
7	Lerwick South	4	3,355	8.8	3,414	9.8
8	Shetland South	4	2,836	-8.0	2,852	-8.2
		23	17,729		17,873	







Executive Manager: Jan-Robert Riise  
**Director of Corporate Services: Christine Ferguson**

Isabel Drummond-Murray  
Secretary  
Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland  
Thistle House  
91 Haymarket Terrace  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5HD

Governance & Law  
**Corporate Services Department**  
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legal@shetland.gov.uk  
www.shetland.gov.uk

If calling please ask for  
**Jan Riise**  
Direct Dial: 01595 744551

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: JRR/MS/11-5

Date: **TBC**

Dear Isabel

## **Local Government Boundary Review – Commission's Initial Proposals**

Shetland Islands Council is grateful for the opportunity to respond to the Commission on your initial proposals in respect of Local Government Wards for Shetland Islands Area to be effective from May 2022.

Our Council is particularly appreciative of the efforts of the Commission to engage with us, noting that the first meeting in June 2018 was before the Islands Act had even commenced! This engagement continued with the visit by the Commission led by your Chair on 17 April 2019.

The briefing on 17 April 2019 enabled 17 of our 22 Councillors to hear directly from Mr Hinds on the statutory underpinning of your Local Government Boundary Reviews. Mr Hinds explained that, when considering boundaries for Councils which were wholly Islands Authorities or had inhabited islands as part of their Local Government area, the Islands (Scotland) Act 1918 introduced options for one and two member wards thus increasing the tools available to the Commission in devising boundaries. Shetland Islands Council accept that the challenge now is to use those new provisions to enable boundary changes to provide effective and convenient governance whilst respecting the requirement for electoral parity to be achieved so far as practicable.

In view of the two months period offered for this stage in the consultation with our Council and the opportune visit by the Commission during that period, our Council has been able to give serious consideration to the changes you propose. In particular, issues in and around the potential for a single member ward option for Whalsay and Skerries and the two member ward for the remaining North Isles has been addressed as has the attempt to deal with the negative deviation from parity in Shetland West ward.

As part of these considerations our Council notes that the increase in numbers of electorate in the Shetland South ward will continue to impact negatively on the extent of

deviation from parity that that current three member ward experiences. Although the election in May 2017 for members to the South ward resulted in no ballot, as only three candidates emerged for the three member ward, it is acknowledged that increasing the

total number of Councillors by one for the South ward addresses the parity question. It is also accepted that by thus increasing the total number of Councillor to 23, the average electorate for the whole of Shetland reduces and this helps address parity for a number of wards other than the South Mainland ward.

The Council's consideration of your proposals culminated with a report considered by Members at their meeting on 15 May 2019 (a copy of the report is enclosed). Based on that report Members discussed issues arising from maintaining the status quo, the matters discussed during the briefing between the Commission and Council Members in relation to the Commission's initial proposals and the wider option of seeking to address adequacy of representation, quality of candidature and relationship of boundaries with localities. Out of those discussions the Council has concluded that their preference would be for the Commission to further engage with the Council and establish if it would be possible for the coverage of all rural wards, including the individual inhabited islands, by 8 two member wards with Lerwick remaining a three and four member ward.

It is considered that this will address some of the issues which have arisen over recent years with the effectiveness of representation within large geographic areas, whilst retaining the advantages brought about by proportional representation under the single transferrable voting system. It will also address the concerns raised by a number of commentators with the proposal of introducing a single member ward, doubting the capacity of such a Councillor to provide effective coverage across the whole range of Council functions. The Council recognises that, in order to optimise such an arrangement of rural wards, that a review of membership of individual Committees would be required before the end of the term of this Council.

Whilst it is recognised that the arrangements for Community Council schemes are a matter for any Council to determine, the forthcoming Community Council review which our Council intends to undertake, in due course, could seek to achieve practical alignment with the reviewed Local Government ward boundaries, providing the potential for more cohesive representation as between the two distinct levels of democratic representation.

Shetland Islands Council, therefore, would ask the Commission to take a short pause before proceeding to consult on your initial proposals as drafted, to enable a more focused discussion on the possibilities that the rural two member ward model could present in the achievement of parity and effective and convenient governance. Following such further discussions the Commissioner might choose to proceed with its own proposals or amend them in light of these further deliberations.

The Council recognises that the Commission has its own work plan to take forward this review, but requests that the collaboration we have experienced so far, could be taken a step further by seeking, through further collaboration, a plan of ward representation which is achieved without the Council having to proceed by way of objections through the next round of public consultation.

I look forward to hearing further from you in relation to our Council's submission.

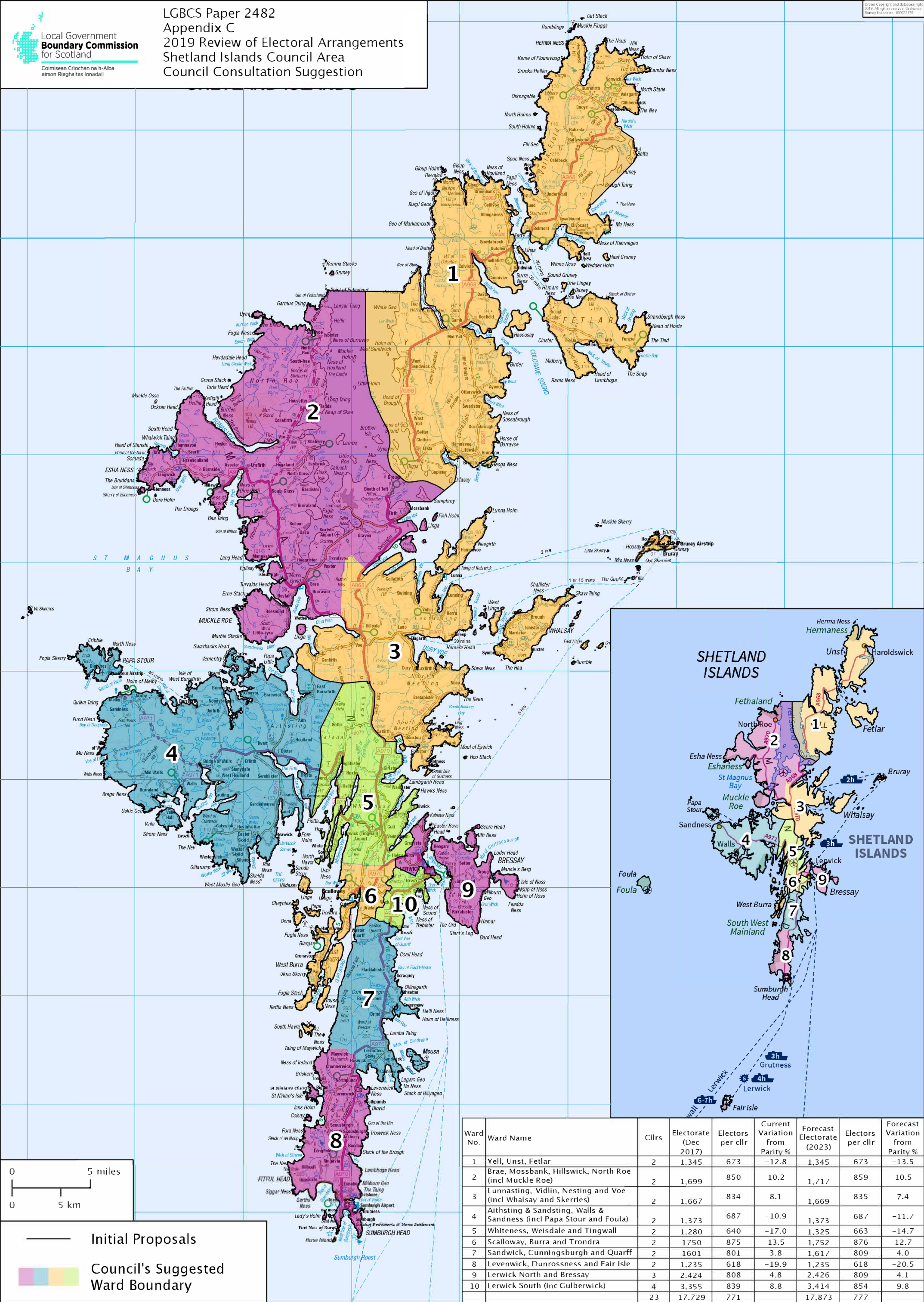
Yours sincerely,

Jan Riise  
Executive Manager – Governance & Law

**Enc.** - Local Government Boundary Review Report GL-06-19-F

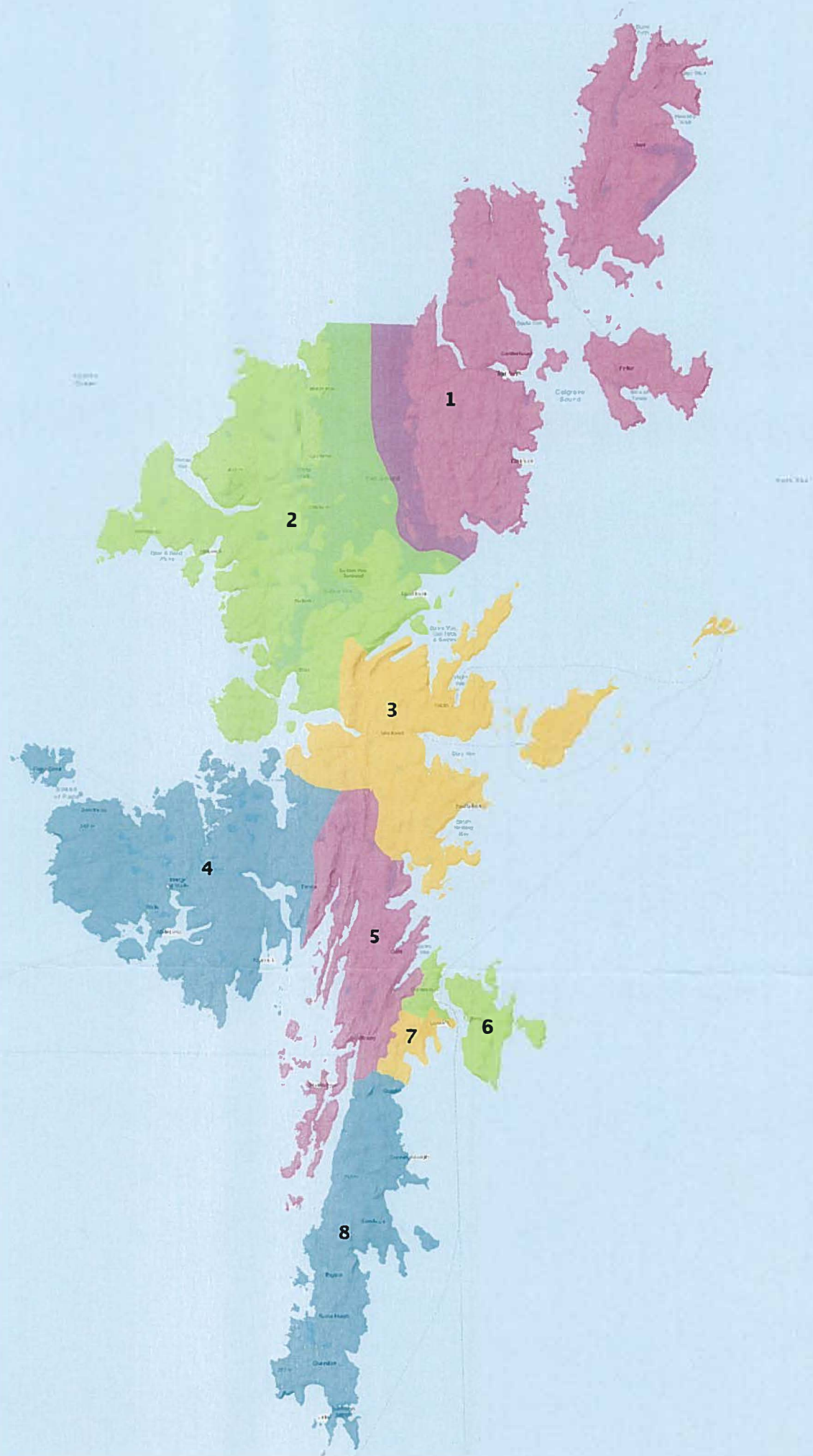












Ward No.	Ward Name	Cllrs	Electorate (Dec 2017)	Current Variation from Parity %	Forecast Electorate (2023)	Forecast Variation from Parity %
1	North Isles	2	1,345	-12.8	1,345	-13.5
2	Shetland North	2	1,699	10.2	1,717	10.5
3	Shetland North East, Whalsay and Skerries	2	1,667	8.1	1,669	7.4
4	Shetland West	2	1,373	-10.9	1,373	-11.7
5	Shetland Central	4	3,030	-1.7	3,077	-1.0
6	Lerwick North and Bressay	3	2,424	4.8	2,426	4.1
7	Lerwick South	4	3,355	8.8	3,414	9.8
8	Shetland South	4	2,836	-8.0	2,852	-8.2

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN





## Boundary Commission responses – Community Councils (2019)

Community Council	Date/meeting considered	Date considered Response
Bressay	CC meeting 12 September 2019	Review of electoral Areas 2019 - members noted that there were no changes to the ward boundary but that it was proposed to include 'Bressay' in the ward name
Burra & Trondra	CC meeting 8 October 2019	(k) <u>2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements</u> Information on the above review had been received by post together with maps. The consultation will run until Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2019.
Delting	CC meeting 26 September 2019  CC meeting 31 October 2019	<b>8.19 The Local Government Boundary Commission</b> – The ASCC held a meeting on 17th September which included an electoral review of the Shetland Islands Council area. They are proposing a Shetland North Ward comprising of Brae, Hillswick, Mossbank and North Roe. They are proposing to put Voe with the North Isles, Lunnasting, Vidlin and Nesting. The public consultation closes on 2nd December. More information and to submit a comment is on <a href="http://www.consult.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk">www.consult.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk</a> The Clerk is to send this to Members and all comments will be discussed at the next meeting. Clerk to progress.  Members discussed this and are unhappy with regards to the proposal of splitting up a community and not having Voe as part of the Delting parish. Voe would be represented by a body which is not necessarily aligned to what is happening in the rest of the parish. These electoral arrangements take no consideration of the Voe community and its associations within Delting.



Community Council	Date/meeting considered	Date considered Response
Nesting & Lunnasting	CC meeting 28 September 2019	<p><b>7.0 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements</b> The new arrangements for electoral wards due in for 2022 were discussed. There will be a reduction of 1 SIC Councillor serving this area, but members are happy with the proposal.</p>
Northmaven	CC meeting 14 October 2019	<p>Review of Electoral Arrangements: Shetland Islands council area – public consultation. This item will be discussed at the next meeting and members were encouraged to review the online information.</p> <p><b>Action</b> – CCLlr D Brown to update members at next meeting. The consultation runs until 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019.</p> <p><b>6. Review of Electoral Arrangements: Shetland Islands council area – public consultation.</b> CCLlr D Brown informed members that for Shetland North this meant reduction of elected members from 3 to 2. Boundary changes are proposed, with Voe being a new area comprising Whalsay, Skerries, Nesting and Vidlin. CCLlr D Brown stated this would make Shetland North the least represented area in Shetland, with each councillor expected to look after 880 people (an increase of 10.2%)</p> <p><b>Action</b> – CCLlr D Brown to send clerk comments to pass on for response to consultation. (closing date 2<sup>nd</sup> December)</p>
Sandness & Walls	CC meeting 1st October 2019	<p><b>15. Boundaries Commission</b> Maps and information relating to the proposed realigned Shetland Wards were distributed and discussed. The following points were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members were concerned that the proposed scheme would create a political imbalance and would lead to greater centralisation.</li> <li>• The Boundaries Commission base their decisions on population statistics and do not take geographical area into consideration.</li> <li>• This has the potential to present difficulties as far as representation on SIC committees are concerned.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> The Clerk was asked to draft a letter to the Boundaries Commission stating the points raised by the members and circulating the letter to members for comment before sending it to the Commission.</p>







Community Council	Date/meeting considered	Date considered Response
Yell	CC meeting 16th September 2019	10.4 Boundary Commission Proposals The proposal which particularly affects the North isles, is the new local authority constituency of The North Isles, Unst, Yell and Fetlar. This would have 2 elected representatives. Whalsay and Skerries would form part of a separate constituency. YCC members felt that it was really useful for elected members to attend CC meetings in order to hear and understand SIC decision making. Members felt that with the current set up of 3 elected representatives, there had been a lack of elected members attending monthly meetings.
	CC meeting 7th October 2019	Mr Odie said that the proposal of one elected member for each island was the YCCs preference however the proposal of two representatives for the North Isles could be acceptable. Again members stated that the lack of elected representatives at the CC meetings were not helpful. F Browne offered to follow up with M Duncan.
	CC meeting 25 November 2019	No further comments.





## SANDNESS & WALLS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

*Chairman:*

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Modesty  
West Burrafirth  
Bridge of Walls  
Shetland  
Tel: Walls 01595 809428  
E-mail: hnpengineers@btconnect.com

*Clerk:*

Mr D Forrest  
1 Kirkidale  
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Shetland  
Tel: Walls 01595 809746  
E-mail: dougatwalls@yahoo.co.uk

26<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Local Government Boundary Commission  
Thistle House  
91 Haymarket  
Edinburgh  
EH12 5HD

Dear Sir or Madam,

### **Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland - Review of Boundaries for Shetland Islands Area**

At the October and November meetings of the Sandness and Walls Community Council, the above matter was discussed.

Members have concerns and were unanimously opposed to the proposed changes to the Shetland West Ward for the following reasons.

1. If there are to be only two elected members for the Shetland West Ward, it will be difficult for the Ward to be represented on all SIC Committees, Boards and Forums thus restricting their influence on matters of importance to the constituents.
2. Members are comfortable with the current boundary and can see no benefits to the Westside in moving it further west.
3. Members are strongly of the opinion that Wards with three or four members are better able to put forward the views of those they represent.  
Should the current proposals be implemented, it is felt that this would serve to create a political imbalance in that the areas of higher population would have a far stronger representation in the Council chamber. Wards 1, 2, 3 & 4 would be represented by eight Councillors and Wards 5, 6, 7, & 8 would be represented by fifteen Councillors. Although on most occasions this may not be of significance, if there were to be a particular issue which required a vote to be taken at a full Council meeting, it is felt that the large geographical areas of lower population may find themselves to be disadvantaged during any decision making process.

4. Community Council members felt that because the proposals put an onus on parity of population, any special geographical considerations are being overlooked. It is thought that the Shetland West Ward, which includes the remote populated Islands of Foula, Papa Stour and Vaila, would be best represented by the status quo of three elected SIC members.

Also, in the Review of Boundaries draft document, under 'Background', it is unclear what is meant by '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.'

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of these points.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas Forrest (Clerk to the Sandness and Walls Community Council)