

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

NUTS boundaries are used for reporting of regional statistics to Eurostat and those statistics are used to inform regional policy. The Scottish Government is proposing to make minimal changes beyond aligning existing NUTS boundaries to Local Authority Boundaries.

Do you have any comments on the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 2 regions?

The Orkney Island Council would not favour the merging of Highlands and Islands with the North Eastern Scotland NUTS 2 area to achieve the population within the recommended threshold, and requests that because of the unique geographical, socio-economic, and cultural circumstances of the Highlands and Islands that the status quo is maintained and they be permitted to deviate from the threshold as per (Article 3(5) of the NUTS Regulations). For the same reasons we do not favour the expansion of the Highlands and Islands NUTS2 area to include all of the Argyll and Bute Local Authority area or the removal of the Isle of Arran and the Cumbraes.

The Orkney Island Council is in favour of retention of the status quo as regards the NUTS 2 area of the Highlands and Islands.

Do you have any comments on the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 3 regions?

The Orkney Island Council does not agree with the proposal to align NUTS 3 regions to Local Authority boundaries as this would diminish the ability of Government and Local Authorities to identify and address particular characteristics/issues of existing smaller NUTS 3 areas.

Eurostat have requested we consider merging the Highlands & Islands with North Eastern Scotland to create a new area that's closer to the recommended population thresholds. The Scottish Government plan to request that these areas should be allowed an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations, i.e. because of particular geographical, socio-economic, historical, cultural or environmental circumstances, especially in the islands and the outermost regions.

Please provide any evidence in favour of or against an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations for Highlands & Islands and North Eastern Scotland NUTS 2 areas?

The Orkney Island Council does not favour the combination of these two NUTS areas because the Highlands and Islands have unique geographical, socio-economic, and cultural circumstances which are quite different to those of the North East. The peripherality of the Highlands and Islands is exacerbated by the extent of its island-based population. In 2001, the inhabited islands had a combined population of 99,494 people living on 90

islands, some 23% of the total H&I population. These island communities experience high cost service provision and market access, which is distinct to insular areas which is not a geographical feature of North Eastern Scotland.

Eurostat have suggested that the Scottish Governments proposals for NUTS 3 should include merging Moray with Argyll & Bute Local Authority to create an area that meets their recommended population ranges.

Please provide any evidence in favour of or against an exemption under Article 3 (5) of the NUTS Regulations for the proposed Moray and Argyll & Bute NUTS 3 areas?

n/a