

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT
Issued on behalf of
The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland



One month left to have your say on council ward boundaries

The public have until 22 October to have their say on proposed council ward boundaries across Scotland.

The Local Government Boundary Commission began a public consultation on its proposals for ward boundaries in Scotland's 32 council areas on 30 July and now the Commission is restating its encouragement to members of the public, community groups, and other local bodies to look at the proposals and submit their views before the deadline.

Ronnie Hinds, Chair of the Commission, said:

“We are over half way through our consultation and have received responses from people and community groups across Scotland. We are grateful for the views received to date, particularly where alternative suggestions have been put forward. Whether you agree with the proposals or not, we do want to hear from you so we have a full picture of local opinion.

“We have also received a number of queries about the current reviews and have published a Q&A on our website to answer some of the most common issues raised. We hope the Q&A will help those considering the ward boundary proposals.”

Full details of the proposals and how to submit views are available online at www.consultation.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk. Paper copies are available at display points provided by Councils and listed on the Commission's website. The Q&A is available at: www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/01_resources/Public_Consultation_QA.pdf

The reviews will result in recommendations to Scottish Ministers for the number of councillors on each council, the number and boundaries of wards, and the number of councillors in each ward.

The Commission expects to make its recommendations to Scottish Ministers in 2016, and that the resulting wards will be available for the local government elections in May 2017.

Contact for Further Information:

Isabel Drummond-Murray, Secretary, Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland. Tel: 0131 538 7510, Twitter: @lgbc. Information on the review can also be found on the Commission's website: www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk

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Notes for News Editors

We are the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, and have been responsible for reviewing local government boundaries and electoral arrangements in Scotland since we were established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

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

- the overall number of councillors in each local authority and number of councillors in each ward (each ward must elect either 3 or 4 councillors);
- the number of wards for local government elections and their boundaries; and
- the extent of council areas.
- We are required to conduct electoral reviews of each local authority at intervals of 8 to 12 years. The current reviews are the 5th reviews since 1974.

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.

We conducted our Fourth Reviews between 2004 and 2006. The Fourth Reviews recommended the multi-member wards for use in local government elections in Scotland in 2007 and 2012. The number of councillors on each council was last reviewed shortly after the councils' establishment in 1996.

Full information about the Commission and its work is available on the Commission's website: www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk .

A general introduction to the Commission and its work appears in our Information Paper "The Commission: a general guide" which is available from the Publications section of the website <http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/publications/> .

Information on this review is available from the **Reviews in Progress** section of the website:

http://www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/.

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
5th Reviews of Electoral Arrangements: public consultation on proposals for ward boundaries

Information on this review is available from the **Reviews in Progress** section of our website: www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral/. Full Q and A is available in our Guidance Booklet on the 5th Reviews, available here: www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/includes/downloadfile.asp?file=/reviews/5th_electoral/01_resources/Guidance_booklet.pdf

The following covers some of the main issues that have arisen in the public consultation.

GENERAL

What are wards?

Every local authority is divided into areas called wards for the purpose of local government elections. Each ward is represented by 3 or 4 councillors elected from that ward. Only residents of the ward who have registered to vote can elect the councillors to represent that ward.

Will your proposals affect my address, postcode, house price, community council, the school my children attend or the council services I can use?

No. The review is concerned with electoral matters only: all the above issues are decided by other organisations or factors. We know of no evidence that our electoral review recommendations have an effect on house prices.

What constitutes a community? How do you define a community?

The Commission has no predefined idea of a community and appreciates that the definition can vary. Local perception of community is probably what matters most. We ask councils to provide us with recognised boundaries that may have a bearing on community identity (e.g. community councils, school catchment areas).

Do you define the areas of community councils?

No. Community councils and their areas of responsibility are defined by local authorities.

Will an electoral review affect who I can vote for?

Yes. The review will determine your ward and at local government elections you can only vote for candidates who stand for election in that ward.

When wards are changed what happens to parliamentary constituency boundaries?

We have no involvement with UK Parliament constituency boundaries or Scottish Parliament boundaries, which are reviewed by the Boundary Commission for Scotland (BCS).

Can the external boundaries of the local authority change?

Not as part of an electoral review. We can conduct an administrative area review of local authority areas, either at the request of Scottish Ministers, at the request of a local authority or other person, or if we identify boundary anomalies which in our view warrant a review.

Why not maintain the status quo?

We are required to conduct electoral reviews of each local authority at intervals of 8 to 12 years, as specified in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

CONSULTATION

How will the Commission consider different viewpoints within a council area?

In making our recommendations to Scottish Ministers, we will aim to reach a balanced view after receiving input from all interested parties. Any alternative opinions will be summarised and published in our final report.

What importance will be placed on representations from members of the public?

Public consultation is a vital part of all Reviews and we consider all public representations. A well-argued representation containing factual information is likely to carry more weight with us.

Can I see maps of the proposed boundaries?

Our proposals are available to view on our website www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk/reviews/5th_electoral and our consultation portal www.consultation.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk. We also make paper copies of maps available through local council offices and libraries.

Do numbers of people matter when you're recommending wards?

Yes. The law specifies that each ward should have "as nearly as may be" the same number of electors per councillor as every other ward in a council area. We refer to this as electoral parity. As a result, when we carry out a review, we look closely at the number of electors in each area.

What about changes to the electorate in the future?

We consider likely changes to electorate over the following 5 years when we conduct a review. To do this, we use information from the local authority on expected new-build and demolitions of dwellings over the period, together with population projections from the National Records of Scotland (formerly the General Register Office for Scotland).

Under what circumstances would the Commission consult on revised proposals or hold a local inquiry?

The Commission would consider further consultation or a local inquiry if it considered that it did not have sufficient information to reach an informed decision about a particular area.

COUNCILLOR NUMBERS

Why do you only propose 3 or 4 member wards?

The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 states that each ward must elect 3 or 4 councillors.

How will the Commission decide on whether to recommend 3 or 4 member wards?

Once the number of councillors for a council has been decided on, the Commission will propose electoral wards. In doing so, it will consider electoral parity, easily identifiable boundaries, local ties and special geographical considerations. Taken together, these will determine the pattern of 3 and 4 member wards.

WARD DESIGN

What is electoral parity?

Electoral parity is having, as nearly as possible, the same number of electors per councillor in all wards of a council area. This is intended to ensure that everyone's vote carries equal weight. The legislation makes electoral parity the most important factor in ward design. However, the Commission may deviate from strict electoral parity to take into account local circumstances, such as special geographical considerations, local ties and strength of boundary. (Examples would be island communities, sparsely populated or remote areas.)

What are "special geographical considerations"?

Special geographical considerations can include a variety of factors of physical and social geography. These can be very sparse population distribution, islands, areas of very concentrated deprivation. We apply special geographical considerations infrequently.

My proposed ward deviates from electoral parity. Is this a mistake?

In order to reflect local factors, we do not try to get exact electoral parity. At our last set of reviews, almost all of our proposed wards were within 10% of exact parity.

How does the Commission name wards?

Once ward boundaries have been determined, the Commission usually accepts names for wards that are suggested by councils.