

Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements

Guidance Booklet

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The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was established under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as an independent body with responsibility for keeping under review local government arrangements in Scotland. In this document, the Commission is referred to as 'we' or 'us'.

This Guidance Booklet has been updated in the light of comments made during our consultation with councils on councillor numbers, and supersedes the version dated February 2014.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide detailed guidance to all those wishing to participate in our Fifth Reviews of Local Government Electoral Arrangements.
- 1.2 The Fifth Reviews are a set of reviews, one for each of Scotland's 32 local authorities. Each review will result in recommendations of the number of councillors on a council and the number and boundaries of wards for the election of those councillors.
- 1.3 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. We conducted our Fourth Reviews between 2004 and 2006. The Fourth Reviews recommended the current multi-member wards which have been used for local government elections in Scotland in 2007 and 2012.
- 1.4 The population, and hence the electorate, of any local authority area is constantly changing, with migration into or out of areas as well as within the same area. As a result of these changes, some councillors may be representing considerably more or fewer electors than their colleagues. These variations in levels of representation are one of the reasons that the legislation requires regular electoral reviews.
- 1.5 An electoral review can only make recommendations about the electoral arrangements for a local authority area, not the extent of a local authority area.
- 1.6 When we conduct an electoral review, we are only considering electoral arrangements for local government. Constituencies for the Scottish Parliament or the United Kingdom Parliament are not affected by our electoral reviews: they result from reviews by the separate Boundary Commission for Scotland.
- 1.7 We conduct electoral reviews of local authorities as specified by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. We are an independent body: Scottish Ministers are not involved in the review process, but are responsible for deciding whether or how to implement our recommendations once we have finished a review and they do consider any views and representations expressed on our Final Recommendations.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The legislation which sets out the rules for electoral reviews is the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. When making our recommendations, we must consider the criteria set out in Section 13 and Schedule 6 of that Act. Section 13 sets out an overall aim of acting in the interests of effective and convenient local government. Schedule 6 sets out more specific requirements. The full text of Schedule 6 is in Appendix A, and its requirements are:
 - the number of electors per councillor in each ward shall be, as nearly as may be, the same;
 - subject to this, we shall have regard to:
 - local ties that would be broken by fixing a particular boundary; and

- the desirability of fixing boundaries that are easily identifiable with the first of these taking precedence over the second;
 - we may depart from the strict application of electoral parity to reflect special geographical considerations.
- 2.2 We undertake reviews in 2 stages: we consult on councillor numbers for each council area before consulting on ward boundaries.
- 2.3 We determine the number of councillors by, firstly, placing each council into a category with other similar councils. For each category, we assign a ratio of councillors to electors in order to calculate the appropriate number of councillors for each council. We apply a consistent methodology across all council areas.
- 2.4 Our proposals will be available on our website and will be placed on deposit in council offices and libraries for public display during our stages of public consultation. We welcome all comments on and local input to our proposals.
- 2.5 The concept of electoral parity means aiming to ensure that the ratio of councillors to electors in each ward within a specific local authority is the same. By law, each ward must elect 3 or 4 councillors, and the size of each ward varies accordingly.
- 2.6 In addition to the statutory criteria, we will also consider factors such as communities, other existing boundaries and the geographic features of a local area such as roads, railways and rivers when determining the boundaries of electoral wards.
- 2.7 The legislation states that we should have regard to any change in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place within the 5 years following the start of a review.

What can be done as part of the Fifth Reviews?

- 2.8 We can make the following recommendations for local authority electoral arrangements:
- the total number of councillors to be elected to the council (known as ‘councillor numbers’);
 - the number and boundaries of wards;
 - whether 3 or 4 councillors should be elected for each ward; and
 - the name of each ward.
- 2.9 Ward boundaries are one factor in the design of polling districts, and the location of polling stations, both of which are decided by the local authority.

What cannot be done as part of the Fifth Reviews?

- 2.10 We cannot make recommendations for changes to the external boundaries between local authorities as part of the Fifth Reviews. Administrative area reviews for this purpose are carried out as a separate exercise.
- 2.11 We cannot make recommendations for changes to the timing of local government elections. This is defined by legislation, and is not part of our responsibilities.
- 2.12 We cannot change UK Parliament constituency boundaries or Scottish Parliament boundaries. These are reviewed by a separate body, the Boundary Commission for Scotland. When reviewing parliamentary boundaries, the

Boundary Commission for Scotland may take account of the ward boundaries put in place as a result of our electoral reviews. Any queries on parliamentary boundaries should be addressed to the Boundary Commission for Scotland.¹

- 2.13 Our electoral review recommendations do not affect local taxes, or result in changes to electors' addresses or postcodes. We know of no evidence that our electoral review recommendations have an effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums, and we do not take account of these factors.

3 Our process

- 3.1 Our approach to conducting the Fifth Reviews is one of consultation and openness. Where possible, we aim to develop recommendations that are influenced by local input and therefore we conduct as much consultation as is practicable in any review. We publicise the review as widely as possible, and ask that local councils, political parties, community groups, residents' associations, other main stakeholders and the general public do the same.

- 3.2 We expect to follow the timetable laid out in Figure 1 for our Fifth Reviews.

Figure 1: Expected Fifth Review timetable

Stage	Start	Finish	Duration
Review commences	February 2014		
1. Commission meets separately with all 32 councils to provide a background to the Review	February 2014	April 2014	2 months
1A. Consultation with councils on councillor numbers	February 2014	April 2014	2 month statutory consultation period
1B. Public consultation on councillor numbers	May 2014	August 2014	12 week consultation period
2A. Commission considers responses and agrees on councillor numbers	September 2014	December 2014*	
2B. Commission develops proposals on ward boundaries	September 2014	December 2014*	
3A. Consultation with councils on ward boundaries	January 2015*	March 2015*	2 month statutory consultation period
3B. Public consultation on ward boundaries	May 2015*	August 2015*	12 week consultation period
4A. (Optional) Development of Revised Proposals for wards	September 2015*	September 2015*	
4B. (Optional) Consultation of Revised Proposals for wards, local inquiry	October 2015*	December 2015*	
5. Commission considers all representations and develops its final recommendations before submitting its Reports to Scottish Ministers	September 2015*	May 2016*	
* Estimated dates			

¹ The Boundary Commission for Scotland is supported by the same Secretariat which supports us. Therefore, it can be contacted using the same contact details as ourselves: its website is www.bcomm-scotland.independent.gov.uk.

- 3.3 We will publicise the start of the review, the consultation on our proposals for councillor numbers, ward boundaries and our Final Recommendations. At the start of the consultation, we will usually issue news releases and public notices, write to interested parties and offer local media interviews with our officials. We will ask for each local authority's help in deciding on the most relevant media, and rely on them to distribute information material.
- 3.4 When the review commences we meet with all 32 councils to explain our approach for the review and open a 2 month statutory consultation period, when the council can provide us with its initial views on councillor numbers. Following this, we conduct a 12 week period of public consultation on councillor numbers. Our proposals will be published on our website and placed on deposit in council offices and libraries for public display. Responses can be made to the Commission by letter, email or via our Consultation Portal.
- 3.5 We analyse and consider all of the representations and information gathered before agreeing on councillor numbers.
- 3.6 We then develop our proposals on ward boundaries. We will use recognised boundary data supplied by each council to develop the proposals, such as community councils, school catchment areas, polling districts, as well as any planned new buildings or demolitions within the next five years.
- 3.7 We consult with councils on ward boundaries for a period of 2 months before commencing a 12 week public consultation on ward boundaries. As before we will publish our proposals on our website and place them on deposit in council offices and libraries for public display. Responses and alternative suggestions to our ward boundaries can be made to the Commission by letter, email or via our Consultation Portal.
- 3.8 We will determine whether to amend our proposals following the responses and consider any alternative suggestions from our consultation. If we decide to significantly change our proposals we may conduct further consultation on specific areas or issues if they are proving controversial and we may hold a local inquiry.
- 3.9 We then prepare our final recommendations and draft our reports for Ministers. We submit our reports to Ministers and provide a copy for each council for public display and make the report available on our website.
- 3.10 We aim for transparency in our work and, to that end, publish on our website the information used in our considerations such as electorate figures, mapping and other appropriate information. In addition, after conducting a consultation, we normally publish on our website all submissions we receive.

4 Determining councillor numbers

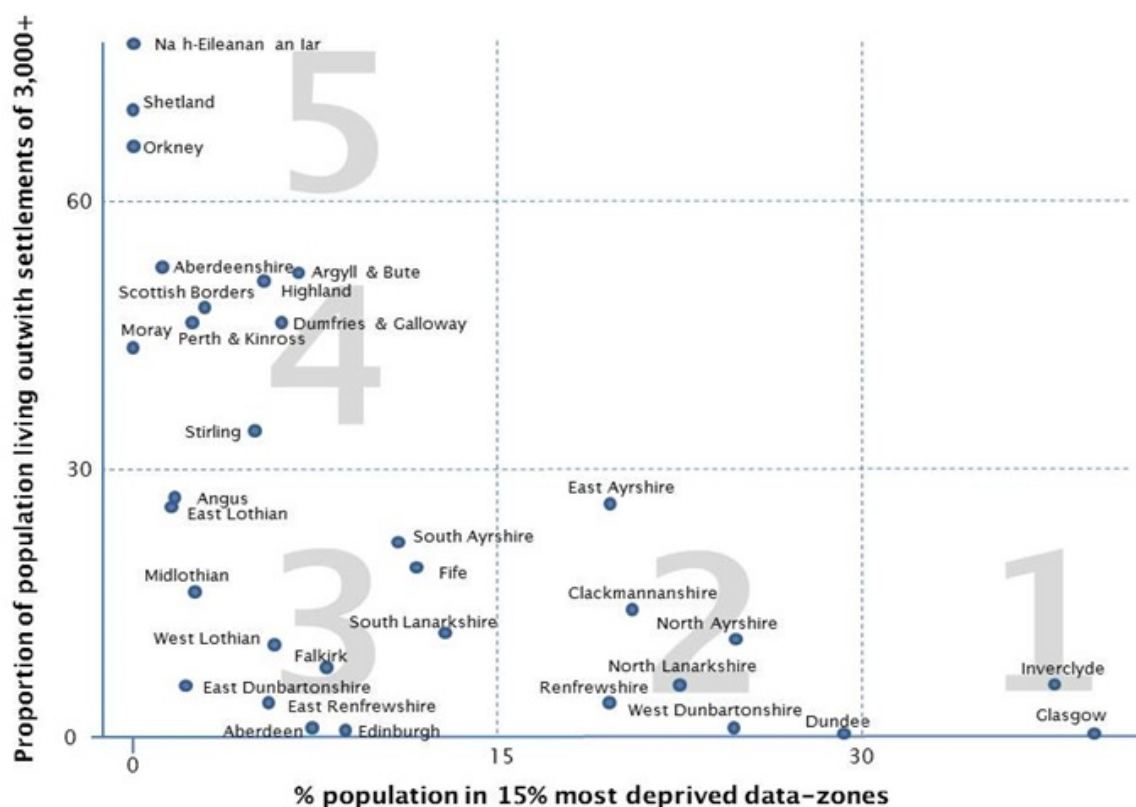
- 4.1 Councillor numbers is the term used to describe the number of councillors elected to a local authority. This determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards of that authority. We cannot consider the patterns of wards without knowing the optimum number of electors per councillor, which is derived from dividing the electorate by the number of councillors on the authority.

- 4.2 For our Third Reviews (which reported in 1998), we categorised council areas by density and distribution of population. At the time, we considered the various difficulties councillors might encounter arising from geographical features, especially in rural areas where there might be problems in gaining access to constituents in the more sparsely populated areas. For our Fourth Reviews (2006), the number of councillors on each council was held fixed, therefore we only reviewed ward boundaries.

Categorising councils

- 4.1 Our methodology is based on categorising each local authority in Scotland, and applying the same formula to all local authorities in a single category. This ensures a consistent approach to councillor numbers across all of Scotland's local authorities.
- 4.2 We have used 5 categories, reduced from the 7 categories used in 1998, following feedback from our consultation on councillor numbers in 2011.
- 4.3 Our methodology to categorise council areas is based on deprivation and population distribution. We believe that population distribution is still an important factor in determining councillor numbers and we believe that deprivation is a reasonable indicator for a range of factors that impact on council services and on the work of councillors.
- 4.4 We used cluster analysis to categorise and group councils into 5 distinct categories, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Categories of council areas based on deprivation and population distribution



- 4.5 Population distribution data is determined by using National Records of Scotland (NRS) settlement data which shows the population living in

settlements of 3,000 or more. We have used this size of settlement since this is used by Scottish Government in its urban-rural classification.

- 4.6 In understanding deprivation we have used data from the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). SIMD is determined independently by Government Statisticians in conjunction with the ScotStat Measuring Deprivation Advisory Group. SIMD combines weighted scores based on seven different dimensions of deprivation: employment, income, geographic access, crime, housing, health and education. These scores are calculated and published every 3 years by the Scottish Government, most recently in 2012 (see <http://simd.scotland.gov.uk/publication-2012/>). SIMD is used by Scottish Government as a policy tool, providing evidence to help target policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation.
- 4.7 The SIMD is published for small areas known as datazones. Each datazone has on average 800 people living in it. Because they are population-based, datazones can vary in extent. For example, datazones in towns and cities can contain only a few streets, while in rural areas they can cover many square miles. The datazone boundaries have stayed the same since their creation in 2004.
- 4.8 We have considered the percentage of people in a council area living in the most deprived 15% of datazones in Scotland. This criterion is used extensively elsewhere. We considered percentages other than 15% (specifically 10%, 20% and 25%) and did not find any significant difference in the resulting categorisation of councils.
- 4.9 We believe that deprivation is a useful indicator for a range of factors that impact on council services and on the work of councillors. Deprivation was one of the factors identified in our 2011 consultation on determining councillor numbers. In its deliberations, the Scottish Local Authority Remuneration Committee (SLARC) recognised the relevance of deprivation: SLARC used service expenditure as a factor in banding councils, since they felt it reflected deprivation among other things.
- 4.10 The proposed ratio of councillors to electors for each category is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Ratio of councillors to electors

Category	Criteria used to classify councils	Ratio	Council area
1	Less than 30% of the population living outwith settlements of 3,000 or more AND 30% or more of the population living in the most deprived areas	2,800	Glasgow City, Inverclyde
2	Less than 30% of the population living outwith settlements of 3,000 or more AND 15% or more and less than 30% of the population living in the most deprived areas	3,000	Clackmannanshire, Dundee City, East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, West Dunbartonshire

Category	Criteria used to classify councils	Ratio	Council area
3	Less than 30% of the population living outwith settlements of 3,000 or more AND less than 15% of the population living in the most deprived areas	3,800	Aberdeen City, Angus, City of Edinburgh, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Fife, Midlothian, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Lothian
4	30% or more and less than 60% of the population living outwith settlements of 3,000 or more AND less than 15% of the population living in the most deprived areas	2,800	Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Dumfries and Galloway, Highland, Moray, Perth and Kinross, Scottish Borders, Stirling
5	60% or more of the population living outwith settlements of 3,000 or more AND less than 15% of the population living in the most deprived areas	800	Eilean Siar, Orkney, Shetland

Minimum and maximum number of councillors

- 4.11 For our Third Reviews it was suggested that there should be a minimum of 18 and maximum of 80 councillors for effective administration. This was based on findings in the Widdicombe Report on the Conduct of Local Authority Business.
- 4.12 For this review we have maintained the minimum number of councillors at 18, as we considered there was no necessity to change this. However we have extended the upper limit of councillors from 80 to 85 to increase the flexibility available to us.

10% change rule

- 4.13 We are aware that a large change of councillor numbers in a council area can be disruptive, therefore we have also incorporated a 10% change rule. This means that we will not propose increasing or decreasing the total number of councillors in a council area by more than 10% as an immediate consequence of the Fifth Reviews.

5 Determining ward boundaries

- 5.1 Once the Commission has agreed councillor numbers, the next stage of the reviews is to determine ward boundaries.

Councillors per ward

- 5.1 The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 specifies that each ward will return either 3 or 4 councillors. We will design each ward so that its number of electors justifies either 3 or 4 members. The choice of the number of councillors for each ward will depend on the overall pattern of wards we feel is appropriate for the area and achieves good electoral parity.
- 5.2 Arguments have been made in the past that if all wards in an authority return the same number of councillors this helps the local electorate to understand and therefore engage with local government. Proposals for a uniform pattern

of wards will need to demonstrate how this meets the complete set of statutory requirements.

Electoral parity

- 5.3 One of the aims of a review is to ensure a good level of electoral parity. Electoral parity means having the same number of electors per councillor in all wards of a council area.
- 5.4 The legislation gives priority to electoral parity over other factors in ward design. In these reviews, as in previous reviews, we do not intend to apply a simple numerical interpretation to the electoral parity requirement.
- 5.5 We work out the optimum number of electors each councillor should represent by dividing the total number of electors by the councillor numbers. This produces a ratio of councillors to electors. The ratio allows us to apply the requirement in the legislation that the number of electors per councillor is "as nearly as may be" the same. For exact parity, a 3-member ward and 4-member ward would have 3 and 4 times this number of electors respectively.
- 5.6 We wish to build our recommendations on locally-derived evidence. We therefore stress that all interested parties who comment on our proposals should consider the effect their suggestions would have on the levels of electoral parity. We will only recommend wards that do not provide a good level of electoral parity if we are satisfied that such recommendations are in the best interests of effective and convenient local government.
- 5.7 In such cases, we need to provide evidence to Scottish Ministers to show this and justify that our proposals for wards represent the most effective way of meeting the statutory criteria collectively. The lower the level of electoral parity, the stronger the evidence required.
- 5.8 Once we have calculated the optimum number of electors per councillor, we can measure how far each ward deviates from that number. When formulating our recommendations, we will be seeking to achieve ratios that are acceptable in every ward. However, we appreciate that the geography and demography of areas can be very different, which may have knock-on effects on the levels of electoral parity we achieve.
- 5.9 In previous reviews, the vast majority of wards which we have recommended have had an electorate within 10% of parity. This is not a strict numerical limit which we apply, but instead appears to us to be a reasonable degree of flexibility in most circumstances. In designing wards, we consider local circumstances, within the constraints of the legislation. To deviate from electoral parity, we need to be aware of evidence which justifies this within the terms of the legislation.
- 5.10 Figure 4 explains how parity is calculated. The total electorate is divided by the total number of elected members. This produces a ratio of electors per councillor. This allows us to calculate any variance from parity.

Figure 4: How parity is calculated

Ward Number	Electorate	Number of Elected Members	Average Electorate per Member	Divergence from Parity
1	7,500	4	1,875	$(1,875-1,750)/1,750$ +7%
2	5,500	3	1,833	$(1,833-1,750)/1,750$ +5%
3	7,000	4	1,750	$(1,750-1,750)/1,750$ 0%
4	5,000	3	1,667	$(1,667-1,750)/1,750$ -5%
5	6,500	4	1,625	$(1,625-1,750)/1,750$ -7%
Total	31,500	18	1,750	

Electorate change

- 5.11 At the start of a review, we obtain the electoral register provided by the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) for the area concerned. This data is supplied with postcodes, which allows us to calculate the electorate for each part of the area under consideration, and hence for each proposed ward.
- 5.12 The rules governing reviews state that we must take into account the likely change in the number or distribution of the local government electorate over a 5 year period from the start of the review when aiming for electoral parity.
- 5.13 Our approach to this requirement is to collect data from each local authority on expected new residential development and demolition within its area over the 5 year period, with as much detail about location as is available. From this data, combined with data on the existing average number of electors per household in the area, we calculate a forecast of electorate for the 5 year period. Our experience has found that an increase in development in one area does not necessarily result in an increase in electorate across the whole authority.
- 5.14 Experience has also shown that this approach alone has often produced forecast electorates that are higher than those occurring in practice. Therefore, to assist us in achieving a better forecast, we also take population projections for the same period from the National Records of Scotland (formerly the General Register Office for Scotland). Using these, we scale the forecast electorate to reflect the projected population change.

Local ties

- 5.15 When designing wards, we aim to reflect local ties, and in particular we aim to avoid breaking local ties. However, other factors - especially electoral parity - may outweigh local ties.
- 5.16 For some, local ties could be defined by the location of public facilities such as doctors' surgeries, hospitals, residents' associations, libraries or schools. We believe that the location of public facilities can provide some evidence of

the existence of local ties but that such arguments cannot be considered in isolation. It will certainly not be the case that merely saying that such facilities exist will alone be sufficient proof of local ties.

- 5.17 For others, an area's history and tradition may be the basis of local ties. However, communities are constantly evolving and historical considerations may not have such importance in areas which have been subject to recent development or population dispersal. Major roads could be seen to be the focus of an area if they are the location of shops or community facilities which people visit regularly. Alternatively, major roads, rivers or railway lines could be seen as physical barriers marking the boundary between different communities. In rural areas, we may have to combine two or more distinct and separate communities within a single ward. Here we would also consider how the communities interact with each other.
- 5.18 We understand that people have strong views about their communities and the impact new wards may have on them. It is important to us that we hear all of these views. However, we ask that, rather than simply asserting that proposals would affect their community, people explain carefully to us in terms that might be understood by those not living in the area, why a particular set of wards we have proposed would – or would not – have an adverse effect on local ties. What may be self-evident to local people who work or live in an area may not be obvious to us. It is for that reason we need to have well-argued evidence of local ties if we are to move away from equality in the number of electors each councillor represents. We will take into account all proposals we receive but those which are supported by argument and evidence are likely to carry more weight.
- 5.19 The requirement on us is to have regard to any local ties that would be broken when defining boundaries. This is a narrower requirement than considering local ties in general. It does not refer to the effect that new boundaries may have in creating ties, nor does it suggest that we should try to reflect existing ties in general. In evidence, we will seek to understand the effect of electoral boundaries on the type of social ties communities often cite.

Easily identifiable boundaries

- 5.20 The legislation requires us to take into account the desirability of fixing boundaries that are and will remain easily identifiable. Whenever possible, boundaries will be defined in such a way that electors whose homes were not completed when the wards were defined are clearly assigned to a ward.
- 5.21 In urban areas, a case can be made to define ward boundaries along roads since they are likely to remain clearly identifiable, and are unlikely to be straddled by new dwellings. As an alternative, drawing a boundary along the rear fences between houses will result in neighbours across a street being in the same ward which may appropriately reflect local ties.
- 5.22 In rural areas, natural features such as watercourses and edges of woodland may be more appropriate or available in an area where a ward boundary is required. Field boundaries may also be used, while recognising that they may be subject to change, particularly in the case of fences.
- 5.23 In upland areas, a watershed may be an appropriate ward boundary feature, particularly along narrow, well-defined ridges.

Special geographical considerations

- 5.24 We can move away from strict adherence to electoral parity for a ward where there are special geographical considerations that make it desirable to do so. Such considerations would include any areas where transport and communication links are slow, infrequent or subject to interference by the weather and seasons. Examples would be island communities, sparsely populated areas and remote areas.
- 5.25 Special geographical considerations can apply to socio-economic factors as well as to physical geography. As a result, deprivation may influence ward boundaries in some areas.

Effective and convenient local government

- 5.26 It is difficult to provide a concise definition of effective and convenient local government. It is, however, the fundamental consideration for recommendations arising from any of our reviews, and is often overlooked as a consideration by people making proposals to us on wards.
- 5.27 Among the factors we recognise as contributing to effective and convenient local government are the ability of local authorities to provide all of the services they are responsible for in an effective and convenient manner, and the ability of individual councillors to effectively represent the ward, as a ward may be so large in terms of area or electorate, or contain such a large number of community councils, to make that difficult. Similarly, councillors are responsible for representing the views of all the residents of their ward. The greater the diversity of a ward, the harder it may be to represent all of those views. Therefore, there may be benefits in some circumstances in drawing ward boundaries to reduce the range of issues that councillors have to deal with for that ward.

6 What happens after we make our recommendations?

- 6.1 The publication of our Final Recommendations marks the end of our role in the electoral review process. We publicise them for anyone to read through local council offices and libraries, local papers and on our website. At the same time, we submit our recommendations to Scottish Ministers, who are responsible for implementing them. They can implement our recommendations with or without modification, decide not to implement them, or ask us to undertake another review of the area involved.
- 6.2 Scottish Ministers cannot make an Order (the legal document which establishes the new electoral arrangements) until at least 6 weeks after publication of our Final Recommendations. We expect that our recommendations from these reviews will be implemented for the local government elections in May 2017.
- 6.3 Scottish Ministers will consider our Final Recommendations and seek further clarification, information and advice as necessary.
- 6.4 While our decision in making our recommendations is final, it may be possible to challenge them in the Courts by judicial review. This would only be possible if we could be shown to have made some procedural error, or to have made a recommendation which could not have followed from the evidence received or from our statutory criteria. The Courts cannot overturn

a recommendation which has been properly reached merely because of a disagreement with that recommendation. The decisions of Scottish Ministers can also be subject to judicial review within similar constraints.

- 6.5 If you have a complaint about the conduct of a review, we have a complaints procedure which is detailed on our website. We come under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman who considers any allegation of maladministration.

7 Frequently asked questions

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.

Is the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland affiliated to any political party or part of the Scottish Government?

No. We are an independent non-departmental body. Commissioners are not permitted to take part in party political activity or be members of any political party.

Will an electoral review affect my house value, council tax, insurance premium, stamp duty, postcode, school catchment area or hospital?

No. The review is concerned with electoral matters only: all the above factors are decided by other organisations or factors.

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.

Will an electoral review affect the polling station I vote at?

Not necessarily, but this is a matter for your council which establishes polling districts for the wards resulting from an electoral review.

Will an electoral review affect the dates or years of elections?

No. These are set down in legislation, and we have no influence over them.

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. As a separate process, 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.

Can I see maps of the proposed boundaries?

We make paper copies of maps available through local council offices and libraries. On our website (www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk) there are PDF files of the maps to

download and zoom in to, which may allow you to see more detail than in print. You may find it helpful to compare our proposals with current electoral boundaries available from our website, your local authority or the www.election-maps.co.uk website.

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.

How does the Commission name wards?

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

How will the Commission take account of communities?

The Commission has no predefined idea of a community and appreciates that the definition varies. Local perception of community is probably what matters most. Therefore as part of the review the Commission asks local authorities to provide evidence on recognised local community boundaries.

When will the Commission's recommendations be implemented?

The Commission plans to complete its reviews and submit its Reports to Ministers by May 2016. This will allow councils and electoral officials 12 months to prepare for the local government elections to be held in May 2017.

Under what circumstances would the Commission hold a Local Inquiry?

The Commission normally holds a Local Inquiry when it considered that it does not have sufficient information to reach an informed decision about a particular area.

Which people do you consider when you're looking at numbers?

The law requires us to use the number of "local government electors". In order to be a local government elector, you have to be over 18, and to be included on the Register of Electors for your area. Find out how to check whether you're registered to vote, and how to register to vote at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/.

What's the difference between local government electorate and parliamentary electorate?

Most people of voting age are entitled to register to vote in all elections. However, some foreign citizens who are resident in the United Kingdom can only register as local government electors. The same applies to members of the House of Lords. United Kingdom citizens living abroad can only register as parliamentary electors. We use the local government electorate for all of our reviews.

How durable will the ward structure be?

The Commission has a duty to review wards every 8-12 years.

What is meant by electoral parity?

Electoral parity is the variation in the number of electors per councillor within a council area. The target figure for a council area is calculated by dividing the total electorate for the council area by the number of councillors. The legislation

requires that the Commission designs wards so that all wards have "as nearly as may be" the same number of electors per councillor.

How far will wards be allowed to deviate from electoral parity?

Deviation from electoral parity will be looked at in the light of local circumstances. The legislation is clear that the Commission must base its design of wards on electoral parity, qualified by consideration of easily identifiable boundaries, local ties and special geographical considerations.

Does SIMD properly identify deprived rural areas?

Scottish Government states that the indicators which make up the SIMD have been chosen because they are measures of deprivation regardless of the geographic area where a person lives. SIMD identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation irrespective of whether they are found in urban or rural areas. However, rural datazones generally cover larger areas than their urban counterparts and so contain a greater mix of deprived and less deprived people. This is compounded by the fact that poverty and deprivation are more spatially dispersed in rural areas than in urban areas. So in rural areas there are fewer small area concentrations of multiple deprivation for the SIMD to identify.

Why only 3 or 4 member wards? Why not 2, 5 or 6 member wards?

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

Will additional councillors be elected from deprived areas?

No. However we may consider deprivation as a special geographical consideration when we design ward boundaries.

Why use 15% SIMD? Why not the 10%, 20% or 30% SIMD datasets?

We have adopted the 15% most-deprived datazone dataset because it is the most commonly used measure of deprivation for policy making within Scottish Government.

Why not design wards first?

We can only design wards once we know how many councillors there are to be elected.

Why use electorate, why not use population and population projections?

The Local Government Scotland Act states that we must use electorate data rather population data. When we design wards we consider 5 year population projections and new developments.

Why have you rounded down your calculations for determining councillor numbers?

We have consistently rounded down the numbers, when applying the 10% limit on change. If we had rounded up our calculations we would have exceeded our 10% rule.

Appendix A - Rules for electoral arrangements

Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

SCHEDULE 6

RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN CONSIDERING ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 1 (1) This Schedule applies to the consideration by the Secretary of State or the Boundary Commission of the electoral arrangements for election of councillors of local government areas.
- (2) Having regard to any change in the number or distribution of electors of a local government area likely to take place within the period of five years immediately following the consideration, the number calculated by dividing the number of local government electors in each electoral ward of that local government area by the number of councillors to be returned in that ward shall be, as nearly as may be, the same.
- (3) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) above, in considering the electoral arrangements referred to in sub-paragraph (1) above regard shall be had to —
- (a) the desirability of fixing boundaries which are and will remain easily identifiable;
 - (b) any local ties which would be broken by the fixing of any particular boundary,
- but if, in any case, there is a conflict between those criteria, greater weight shall be given to the latter.
- 2 The strict application of the rule stated in paragraph 1(2) above may be departed from in any area where special geographical considerations appear to render a departure desirable.