

## Electoral Arrangements – 2019 Interim Reviews

### Purpose

1. Following discussion of paper LGBCS 2485, the Commission agreed to adopt methodology Option A to identify wards for possible interim review. This methodology focusses on wards with a variation from parity in excess of 15%, in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission.
2. This paper considers each ward identified by the Commission's methodology and examines possible reasons for their variation from parity and where those reasons were anticipated by the Commission during the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016. It makes recommendations for those wards which should be subject to interim reviews.

### Background

3. At its meeting of 17 June 2019 the Commission noted that 10 wards across 8 council areas had been identified as having variations from parity in excess of  $\pm 15\%$ .
4. The wards identified are shown in the table below.

Council Area	Ward Number	Electoral Ward	2018 Variation from Parity (%)	2013 Forecast Parity for 2018 (%)
Aberdeen City	6	Tillydrone/ Seaton/ Old Aberdeen	-17.2	0.0
Aberdeen City	8	George St/ Harbour	-19.3	2.6
City of Edinburgh	11	City Centre	-17.8	-10.0
Fife	1	West Fife and Coastal Villages	16.6	9.6
Fife	18	St Andrews	-34.2	-5.8
Midlothian	2	Bonnyrigg	16.3	11.2
Moray	7	Elgin City South	15.7	9.8
Perth and Kinross	4	Highland	-15.2	-14.5
Renfrewshire	11	Bishopton, Bridge of Weir and Langbank	16.5	4.8
Stirling	2	Forth and Endrick	17.3	10.0

### Initial analysis of wards in excess of $\pm 15\%$ variation from parity

#### Aberdeen City Council Area

5. Aberdeen City council area was a Category 3 (see Appendix B) council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and was assigned 45 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral

Arrangements. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 42 councillors. The electorate for Aberdeen City council area in 2018 is 159,043 which is 19,741 (11%) less than was forecast in 2013.

#### Ward 6 – Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen

6. Ward 6 in Aberdeen City is varied from parity by –17.2%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that this ward would be 0.0% varied from parity. The Commission forecast that ward 6's variation from parity would improve from 2013, in fact it has worsened as its electorate has decreased.
7. Since the existing ward boundary came into effect in 2017 the electorate in this ward has dropped by 375 electors and is varied from the 2013 electorate figure for the ward by 3,255 electors. This drop (27%) from the 2013 figure in an area traditionally populated by students could be attributed to the introduction of IER in 2014.
8. This in-ward reduction in electorate should be considered in the context of 12 out of 13 wards in the council showing a reduction in electorate from 2017 to 2018.

#### Ward 8 – George St/Harbour

9. Ward 8 in Aberdeen City is varied from parity by –19.3%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that this ward would be varied from parity by 2.6%. The Commission forecast that ward 8's variation from parity would improve from 2013 however it has worsened as its electorate has decreased.
10. Like its neighbour ward 6, ward 8 has seen a sharp reduction in electorate since 2017. Since the ward boundaries were agreed the ward electorate is 4,208 fewer than the 2013 electorate figures suggested for the ward.
11. Since the existing ward boundary came into effect in 2017 the electorate in this ward has dropped by 761 electors.

#### **City of Edinburgh Council Area**

12. City of Edinburgh council area was a Category 3 council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and assigned 63 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 69 councillors. Both these councillor totals were limited by the maximum amount of change of 10%. The electorate for City

of Edinburgh council area in 2018 is 364,813 which is 380 (0.1%) more than was forecast in 2013.

#### Ward 11 – City Centre

13. Ward 11 in City of Edinburgh council area is varied from parity by –17.8%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that this ward would be varied from parity by –10.0%. The Commission forecast that ward 11's variation from parity would improve from 2013, however it has worsened as its electorate has not increased as quickly as was forecast.
14. The electorate in this ward is nearly 1800 lower than forecast in 2013. Electorates in wards across the council area have been relatively stable in comparison to other council areas however ward 11's electorate has reduced by close to 800 electors (4%) from 2017 to 2018.
15. City Centre ward is a ward with a variety of housing types and different densities of electors and changes in electors in this ward may be attributable to some degree to introduction of Individual Elector Registration (IER) in 2014.

#### **Fife Council Area**

16. Fife council area was a Category 3 council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and assigned 75 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 73 councillors. The electorate for Fife council area in 2018 is 277,323 which is 10,526 (4%) lower than was forecast in 2013.

#### Fife – Ward 1 – West Fife and Coastal Villages

17. Ward 1 in Fife is varied from parity by 16.6%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that parity in this ward would be varied from parity by 9.6%, close to the Commission's stated limit for wards. The Commission forecast that ward 1's variation from parity would improve from 2013 where in fact it has worsened as its electorate has increased slightly since 2013.
18. The electorate in Ward 1 has been relatively static since 2013 but has seen its variation from parity increase as most wards (17) within Fife have seen a reduction in electorate and a reduction in variation from parity. Only 5 wards in Fife have increased in electorate since 2013 as the overall electorate in the council area has dropped.

19. The electorate of Ward 1 in 2018 is only 2% greater than forecast (305 electors) but +7% worse in parity terms due to the changes in the electorate elsewhere in the council area as mentioned above.

#### Fife – Ward 18 – St Andrews

20. Ward 18 in Fife is varied from parity by –34.2%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that parity in this ward would be varied from parity by –5.8%. The Commission forecast that ward 18's variation from parity would improve from 2013 however parity has worsened as its electorate has decreased.
21. Since the existing ward boundary came into effect in 2017 the electorate in this ward has dropped by 217 electors and is varied from the 2013 electorate figure for the ward by 4,519 electors. This drop (32%) from the 2013 figure in an area traditionally populated by students is potentially attributable to the introduction of IER in 2014.
22. The Commission has considered the capricious nature of student electoral registration and may be wary of taking measures to alleviate a ward's variation from parity in an instance where the register of electors could quickly increase should a student body be minded to register en masse. Further information on electoral registration of students is being sought from the Electoral Commission.

#### **Midlothian Council Area**

23. Midlothian council area was a Category 3 council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and assigned 18 councillors (the minimum allowed) as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in 2013. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 19 councillors. The electorate for Midlothian council area in 2018 is 70,739 which is 4,064 (6%) more than was forecast in 2013.

#### Ward 2 – Bonnyrigg

24. Ward 2 in Midlothian is varied from parity by 16.3%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that parity in this ward would be varied from parity by 11.2%. The Commission forecast that ward 2's variation from parity would improve from 2013 and it has, but not at the rate predicted.
25. The Commission was content to allow a variation from parity in excess of 10% and noted in its Final Recommendations of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews "*parity remained high in our proposed Bonnyrigg ward because we made changes at Gladstone Gait that assist in effective and convenient local*

*government by retaining community ties within a housing development, and in addition created easily identifiable boundaries that followed the A6094 and A7 roads.”*

26. Ward 2 (Bonnyrigg) is a mainly urban ward with a large amount of recent housebuilding and has seen a large increase in electorate since the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements commenced, with the ward containing 1,400 more electors than was forecast in 2013. There has been an overall increase in electors across the council area of 6,000 since 2013, an increase of close to 10%. This increase is seen across all wards and the parity in ward 2 has actually decreased since 2017 as the electorate has increased at a greater rate in other wards.

### **Moray Council Area**

27. Moray council area was a Category 4 council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and the methodology assigned 25 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. Following the Review process 26 councillors were recommended. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 26 councillors. The electorate for Moray council area in 2018 is 72,094 which is 1,852 (3%) more than was forecast in 2013.

### Ward 7 – Elgin City South

28. Ward 7 in Moray is varied from parity by 15.7%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that this ward would be varied from parity by 9.8%. The Commission forecast that ward 7's variation from parity would worsen slightly from 2013 however the variation has been greater than predicted as the electorate has grown at a rate greater than forecast.
29. This ward contains 726 more electors than was forecast in 2013 and the council area overall has 1852 more electors than was forecast. Although there is a reduction in electors from 2017 to 2018 across the council area overall, ward 7 alone has increased its variation from parity and is in excess of 15%.

### **Perth and Kinross Council Area**

30. Perth and Kinross council area was a Category 4 council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and assigned 40 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 41 councillors. The electorate for Perth and Kinross council area in 2018 is 114,631 which is 1,807 (1.5%) less than was forecast in 2013.

Ward 4 – Highland

31. Ward 4 in Perth and Kinross council area is varied from parity by –15.2%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that this ward would be varied from parity by –14.5%. The Commission forecast that ward 4’s disparity would improve slightly from 2013 where in actual fact it has worsened as its electorate is less than forecast despite the council area overall showing an increase in electorate.
32. The Commission was content to allow a variation from parity in excess of 10% and noted in its Final Recommendations of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews “*We recognised the existence of special geographic circumstances in the Highland ward. It is a large sparsely populated ward with limited transport links, which makes retaining community ties challenging. We therefore decided to retain 3 councillors in Highland ward.*”

**Renfrewshire Council Area**

33. Renfrewshire council area was a Category 2 council using the Commission’s 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and assigned 43 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 46 councillors. The electorate for Renfrewshire council area in 2018 is 137,803 which is 6,836 (5%) more than was forecast in 2013.

Ward 11 – Bishopton, Bridge of Weir and Langbank

34. Ward 11 in Renfrewshire is varied from parity by 16.5%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that parity in this ward would be 4.8% varied from parity. The Commission forecast that ward 11’s variation from parity would worsen slightly from 2013 levels however it has worsened substantially as its electorate has increased at a far greater rate than was forecast.
35. Ward 11 is a 3 member ward with boundaries unchanged by the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews and an electorate that is 1621 greater than was forecast. Overall the electorate in the council area is 5% greater than forecast with nearly 7,000 electors more than forecast in 2013.
36. This ward has seen a large amount of housebuilding in recent years particularly near Bishopton. Whilst this was built in to the forecast, actual construction in ward 11 appears to have outstripped that which was forecast.

## Stirling Council Area

37. Stirling council area was a Category 4 council using the Commission's 2013 methodology for councillor numbers and assigned 23 councillors as part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews of Electoral Arrangements. Were the same categorisation to be applied using 2018 electorate data the council would be assigned 24 councillors. The electorate for Stirling council area in 2018 is 67,905 which is 676 (1%) less than was forecast in 2013.

### Ward 2 – Forth and Endrick

38. Ward 2 in Stirling is varied from parity by 17.3%. In its Final Recommendations – following the 5<sup>th</sup> Review of Electoral Arrangements published in 2016 – the Commission forecast that parity in this ward would be varied from parity by 10.0%. The Commission forecast that ward 2's variation from parity would improve from 2013 where in actual fact it has worsened as its electorate has decreased.
39. The Commission was content to allow a variation from parity in excess of 10% and noted in its Final Recommendations of the 5<sup>th</sup> Reviews "*that parity in ward 2 was higher than ideal but forecast to decrease to 10%, and that it offered better maintenance of local ties across Stirling Council area*".
40. Ward 2 has seen growth in line with information supplied at the time of the 5<sup>th</sup> reviews although that growth was reduced by the scaling factor applied to all forecasts. That growth has not been matched elsewhere in the council area, as such parity has worsened in this ward.
41. Overall across the council area the actual variance from forecast is only +676 however wards 2, 3, 4 and 7 are all more than  $\pm 700$  varied from forecast suggesting forecasting for the council area was challenging.
42. Ward 4 – Stirling North is the ward with the greatest variation from forecast electorate and is the location of a number of the University of Stirling student residences. Ward 4 has 400 fewer electors than 2013 and 1,155 fewer electors than were forecast for 2018.

## Discussion and next steps

43. In 2010 when the Commission last conducted interim reviews the Commission identified 10 wards across 8 council areas for review. Following the review process, however, recommendations for no change were put forward in 9 cases and only one change was recommended and implemented (West Lothian, ward 8). Reasons for recommending no change in the other cases included forecast improvements to parity, extensive demolition and redevelopment planned, and changes to overall electorate across the council area concerned which would require more

fundamental reconsideration of council size and ward design at a full review.

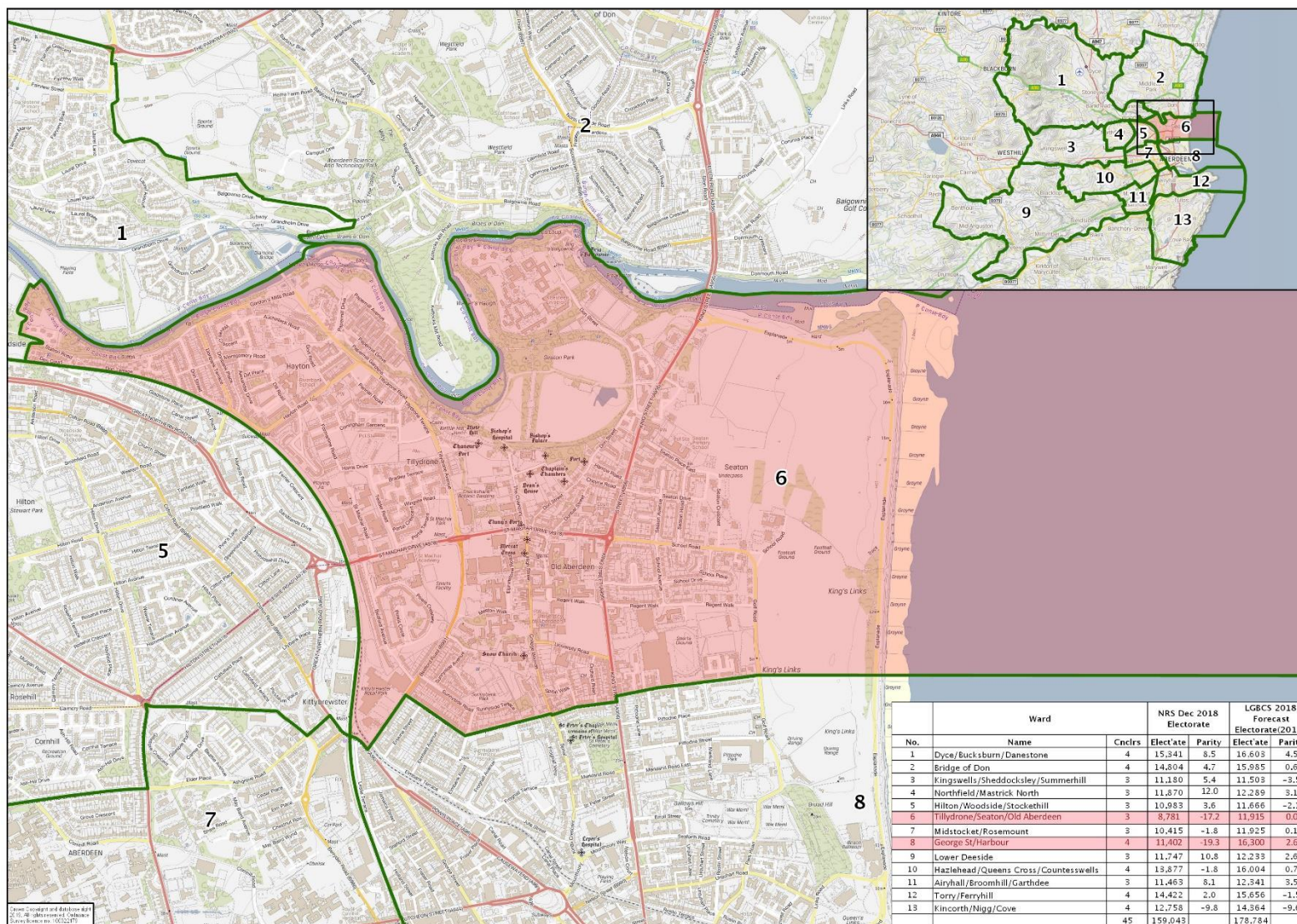
44. The Secretariat has not yet consulted council officials regarding any local reasons for changes in electorates. The Secretariat intends to contact the councils concerned to capture this information as part of the review process. For any wards that the Commission decides should be considered for an Interim Review, a paper that fully explores potential ways of improving the variations from parity will be tabled at the next meeting, to enable the Commission to agree initial proposals for consultation with affected councils.
45. The Commission may wish to consider excluding Perth and Kinross Ward 4 (Highland) from the Interim Review process as although variation from parity is in excess of  $\pm 15\%$  it is the only ward in the 10 identified where the variation from forecast parity is less than 5% (0.7%), the benchmark used in the 2010 methodology.

### **Recommendation**

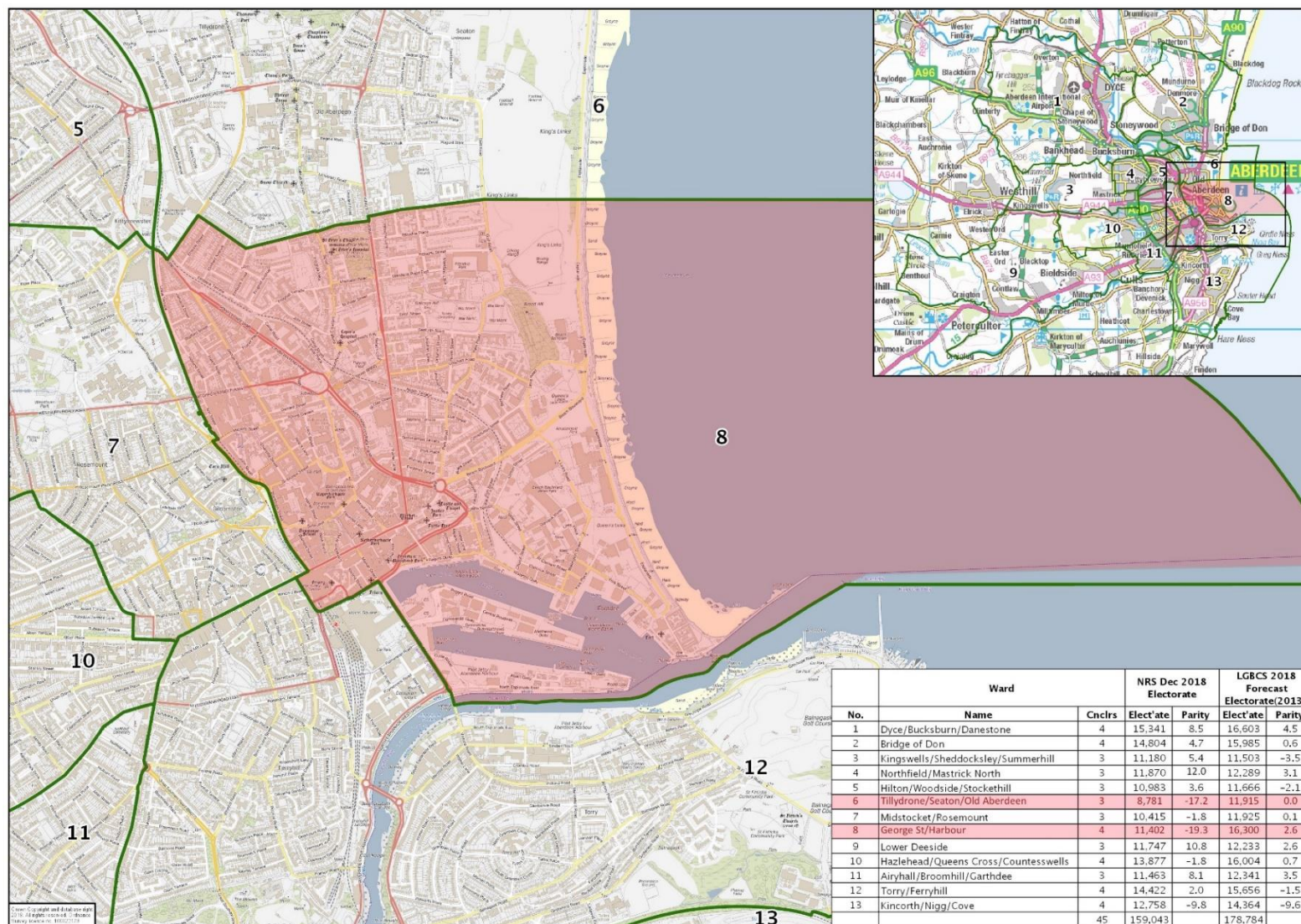
46. The Secretariat recommends that the Commission:

- agree to commence Interim Reviews of all wards listed above unless compelling reasons exist to exclude a ward at this stage;
- where an Interim Review is agreed, ask the Secretariat to make contact with the Councils concerned and seek additional information including ward level information on expected new build and demolitions over the next 5 years with a view to establishing up to date electorate forecasts for the council area concerned;
- ask the Secretariat to use information received from Councils to prepare Option papers for the Commission's September meeting to allow the Commission to agree Initial Proposals for council consultation: and
- ask the Secretariat to write to all Councils regarding the Commission's Interim Reviews process and plans.

### Appendix A – Aberdeen City Ward 6 – Tillydrone/ Seaton/ Old Aberdeen

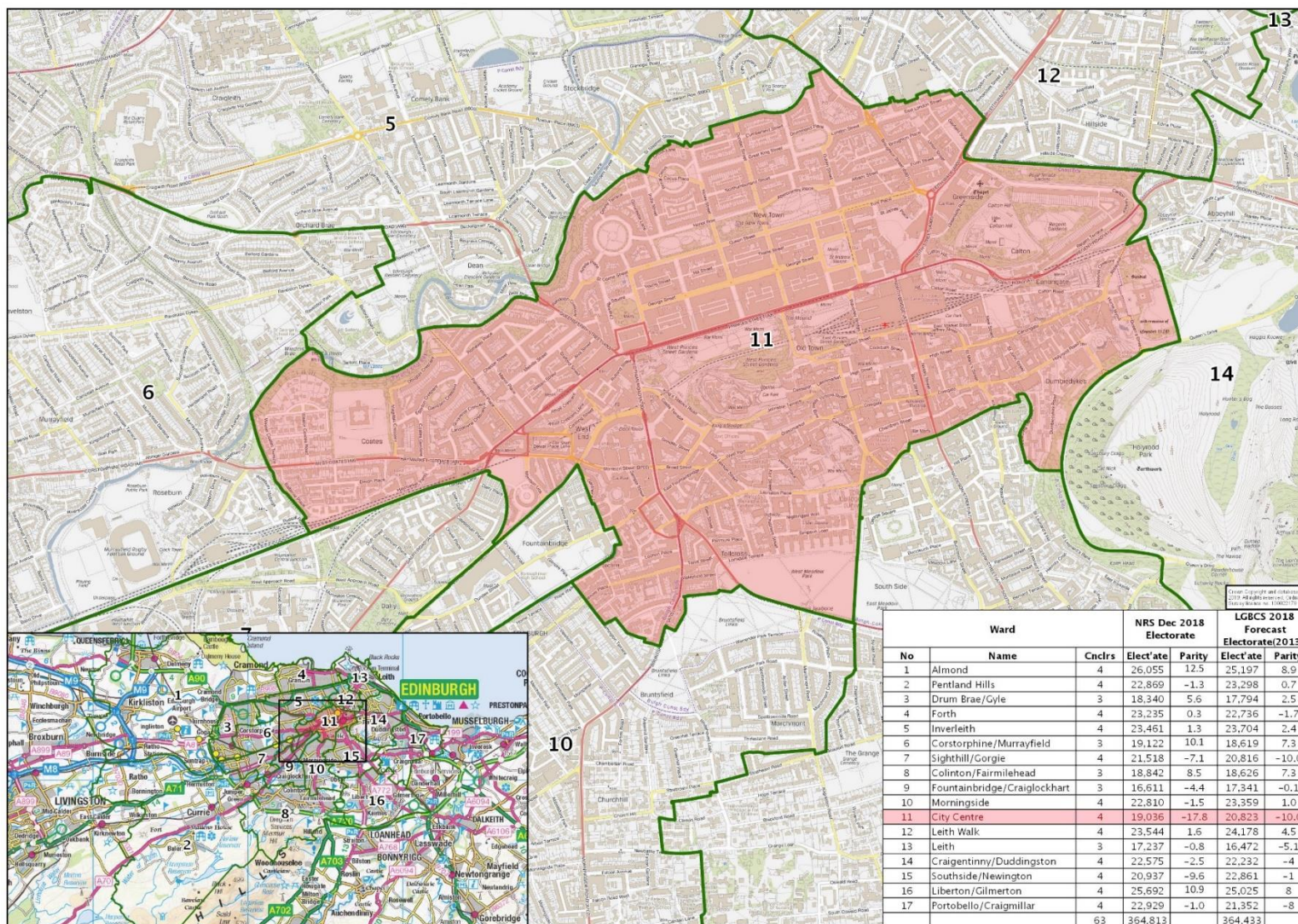


### Aberdeen City Ward 8 George St/ Harbour

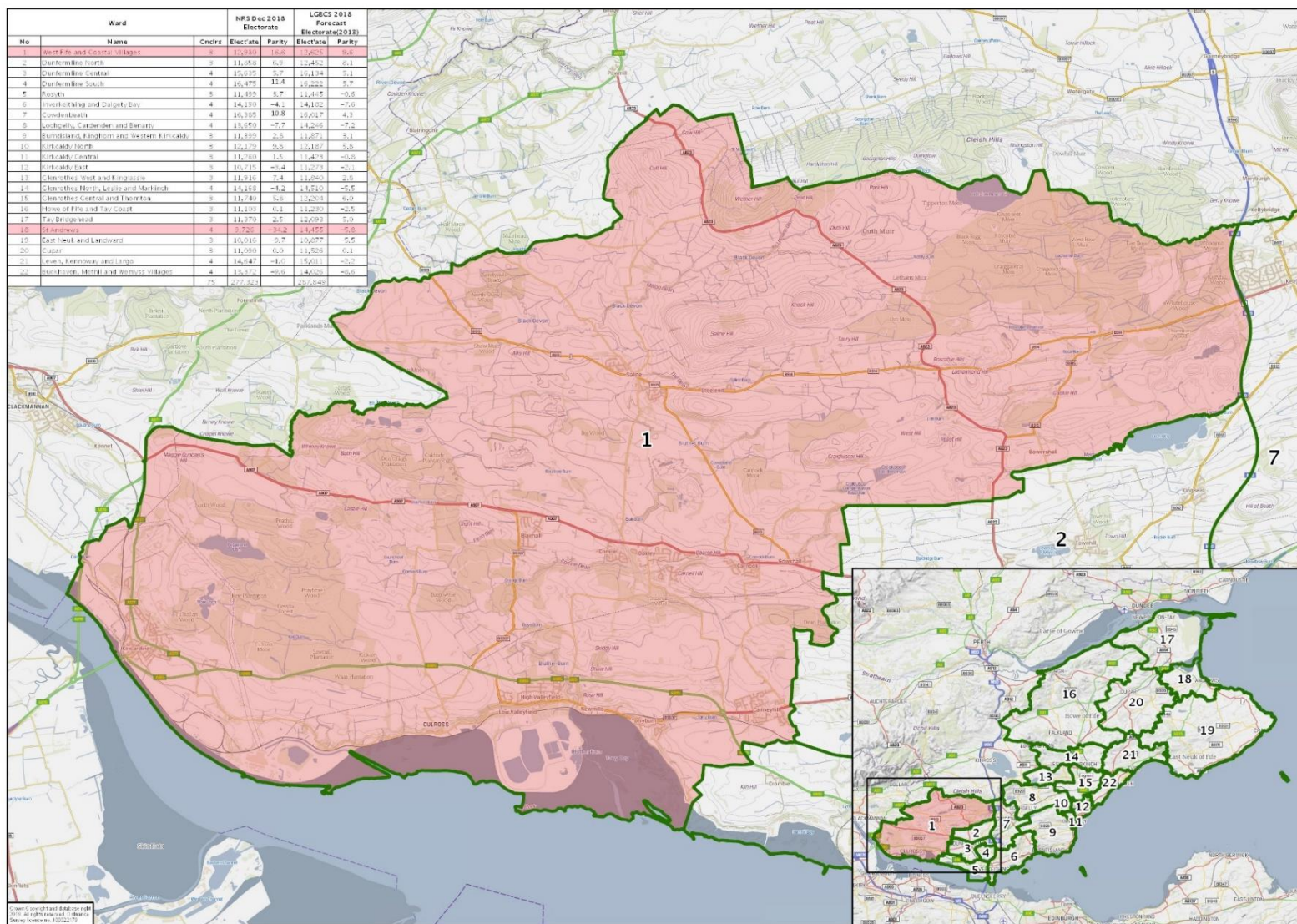


No.	Ward Name	Cnclrs	NRS Dec 2018 Electorate		LGBCS 2018 Forecast Electorate(2013)	
			Elect'ate	Parity	Elect'ate	Parity
1	Dyce/Bucksburn/Danestone	4	15,341	8.5	16,603	4.5
2	Bridge of Don	4	14,804	4.7	15,985	0.6
3	Kingswells/Sheddocksley/Summerhill	3	11,180	5.4	11,503	-3.5
4	Northfield/Mastrick North	3	11,870	12.0	12,289	3.1
5	Hilton/Woodside/Stockethill	3	10,983	3.6	11,666	-2.1
6	Tillydrone/Seaton/Old Aberdeen	3	8,781	-17.2	11,915	0.0
7	Midsocket/Rosemount	3	10,415	-1.8	11,925	0.1
8	George St/Harbour	4	11,402	-19.3	16,300	2.6
9	Lower Deeside	3	11,747	10.8	12,233	2.6
10	Hazlehead/Queens Cross/Countesswells	4	13,877	-1.8	16,004	0.7
11	Airyhall/Broomhill/Garthdee	3	11,463	8.1	12,341	3.5
12	Torry/Ferryhill	4	14,422	2.0	15,656	-1.5
13	Kincorth/Nigg/Cove	4	12,758	-9.8	14,364	-9.6
		45	159,043		178,784	

### City of Edinburgh Ward 11 City Centre

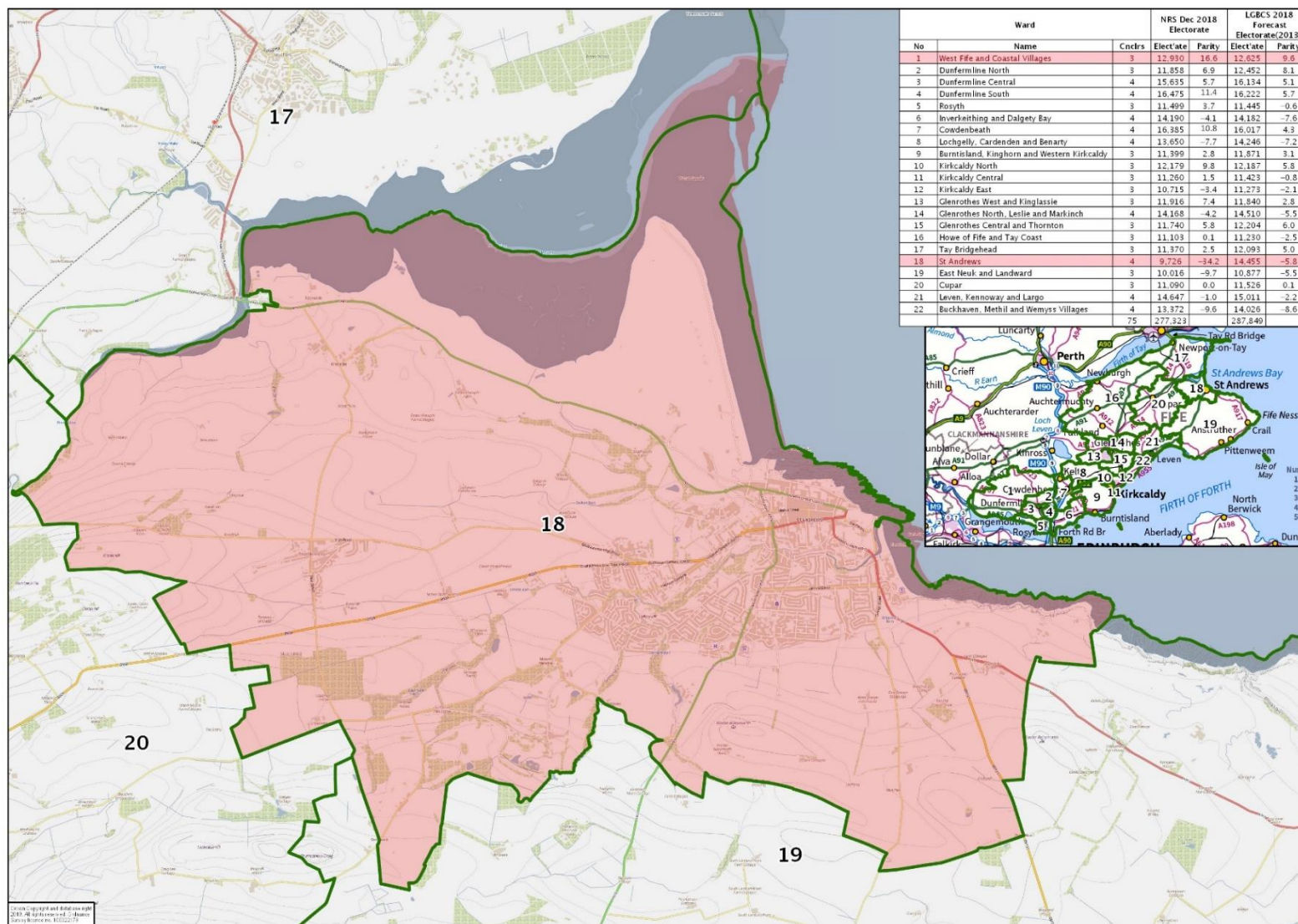


### Fife Ward 1 West Fife and Coastal Villages

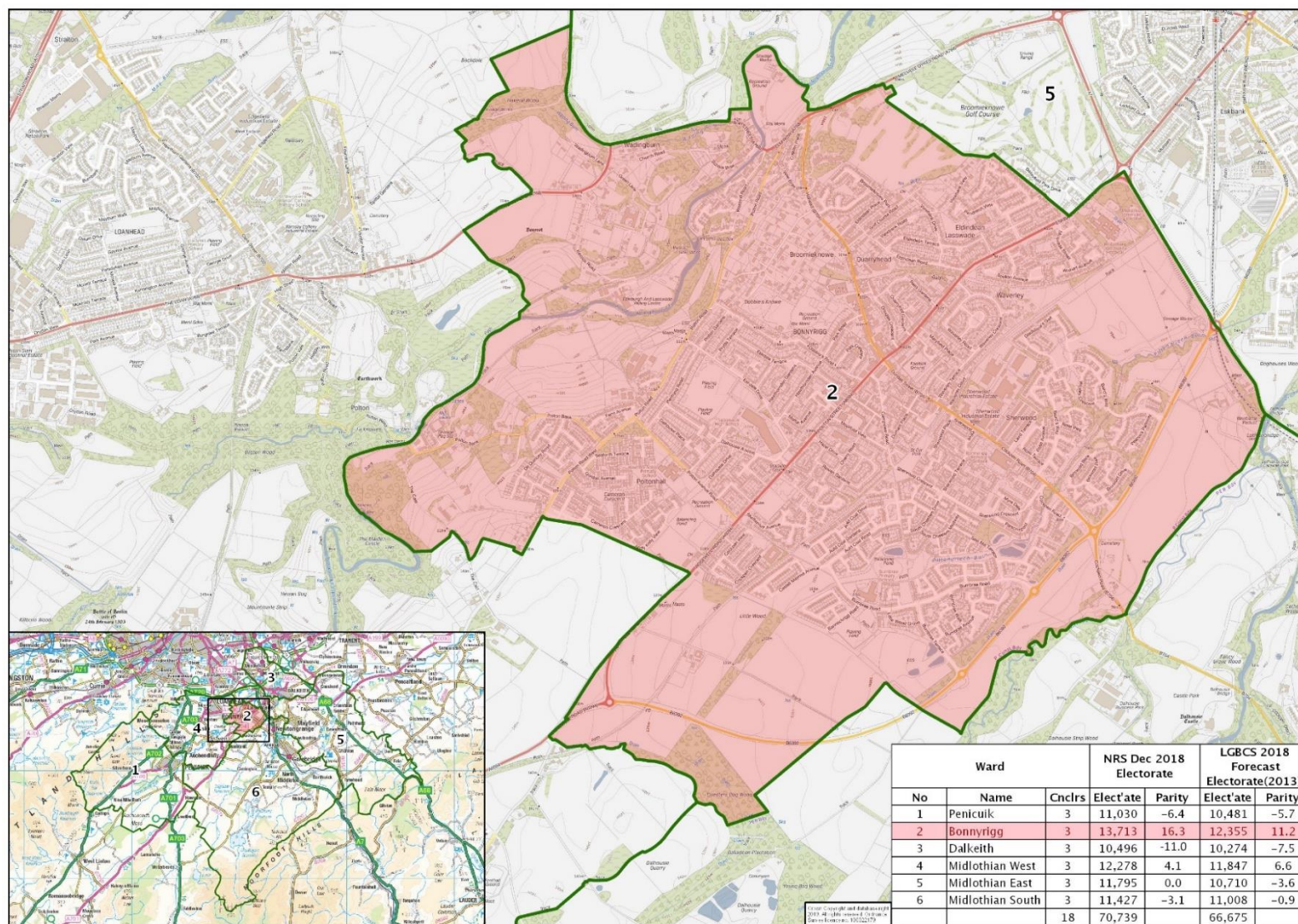


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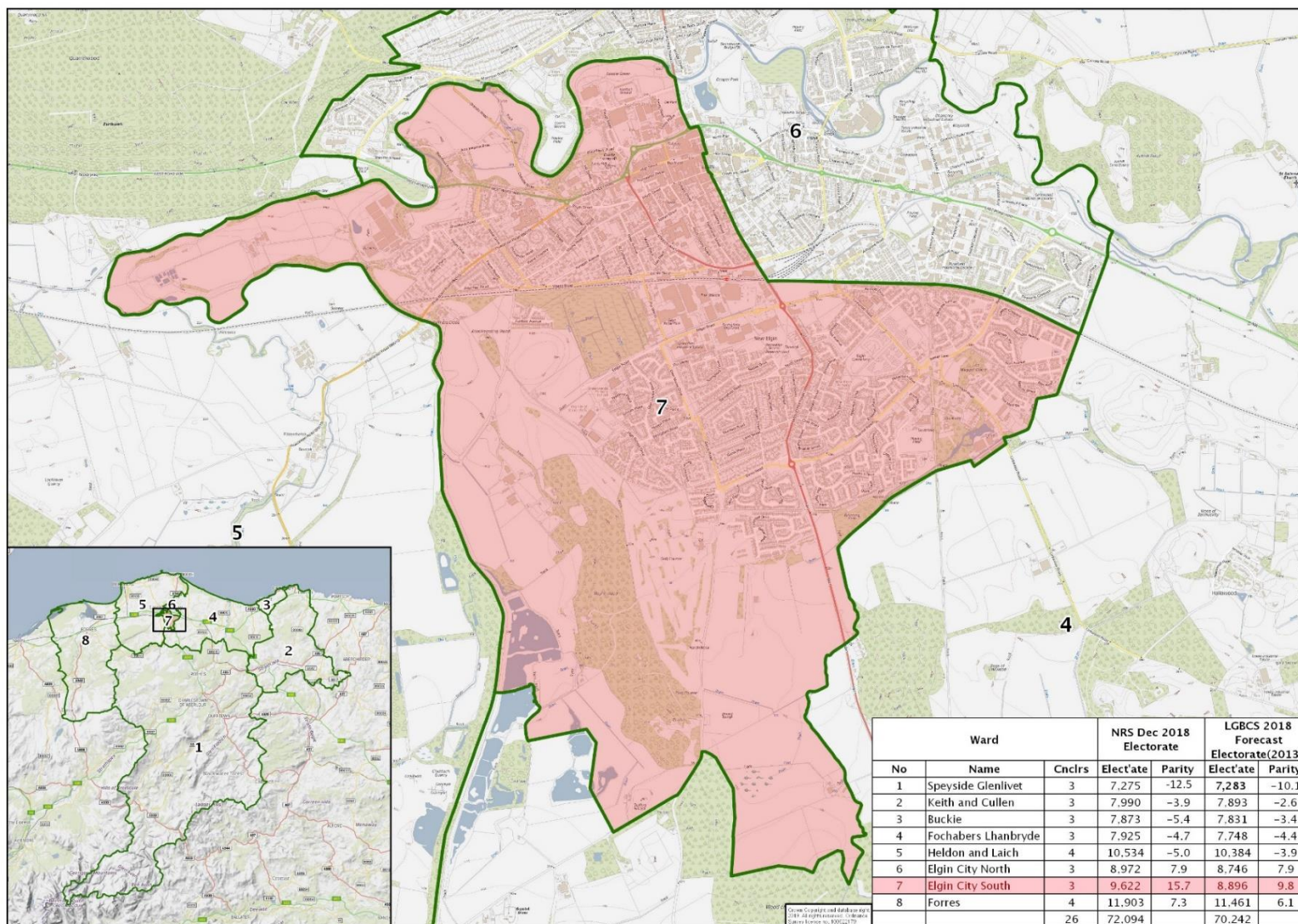
### Fife Ward 18 St Andrews



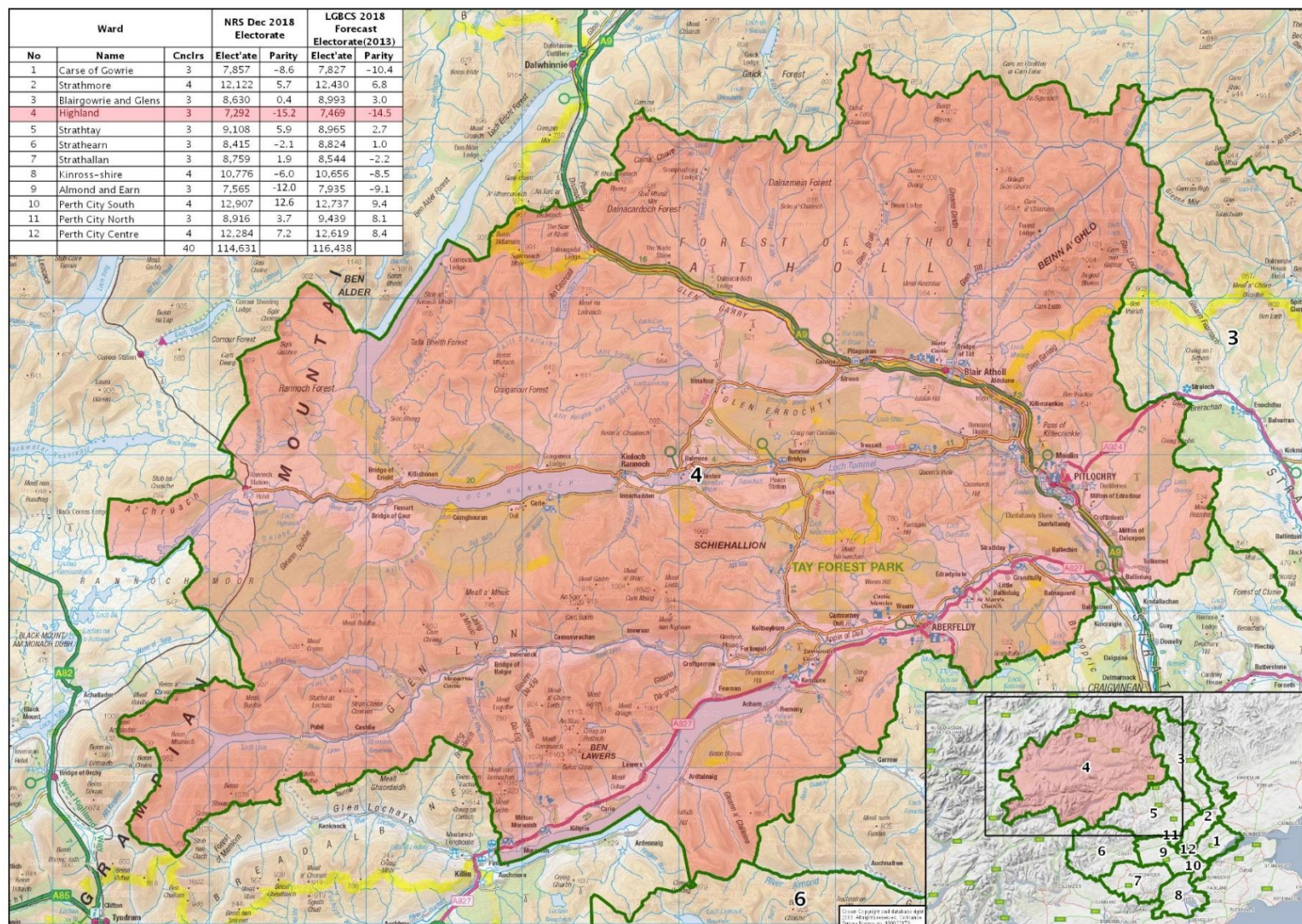
### Midlothian Ward 2 Bonnyrigg



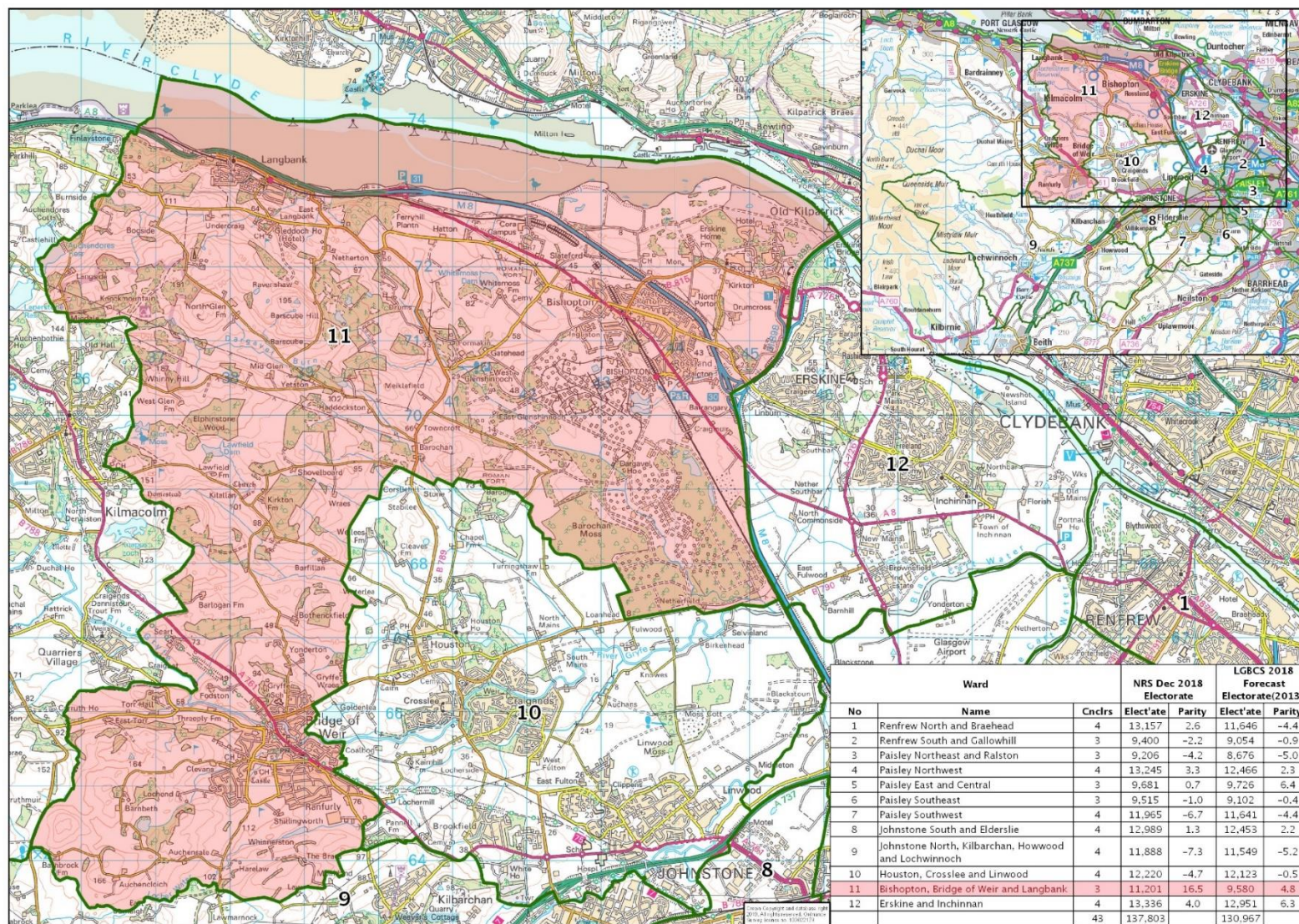
### Moray Ward 7 Elgin City South



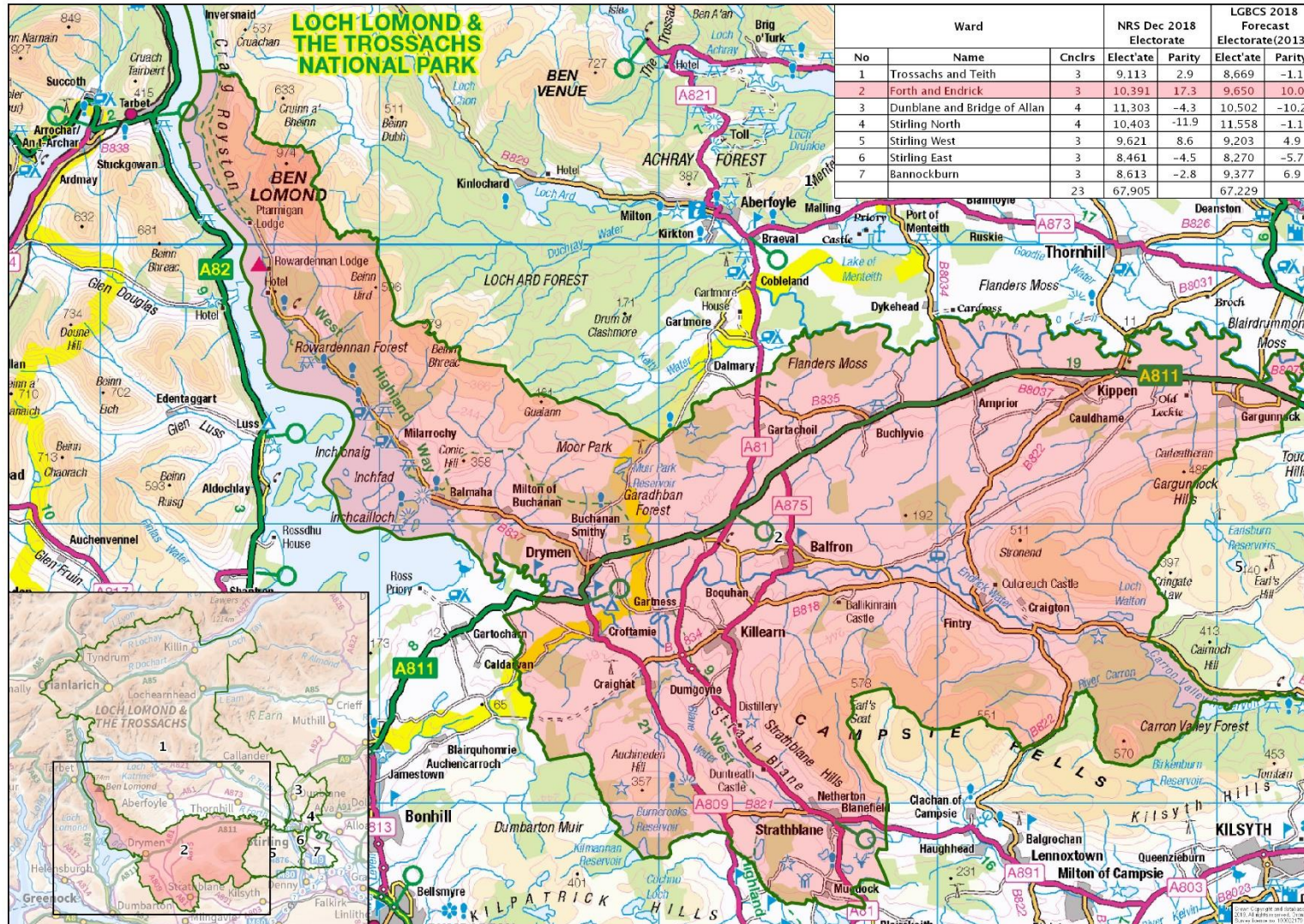
### Perth and Kinross Ward 4 Highland



### Renfrewshire Ward 11 Bishopton, Bridge of Weir and Langbank



### Stirling Ward 2 Forth and Endrick



## Appendix B

### *Ratio of councillors to electors*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Criteria used to classify councils</b>	<b>Ratio</b>
1	Less than 30% of the population living out-with settlements of 3,000 or more AND 30% or more of the population living in the most deprived areas	2,800
2	Less than 30% of the population living out-with 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
3	Less than 30% of the population living out-with settlements of 3,000 or more AND less than 15% of the population living in the most deprived areas	3,800
4	30% or more and less than 60% of the population living out-with settlements of 3,000 or more AND less than 15% of the population living in the most deprived areas	2,800
5	60% or more of the population living out-with settlements of 3,000 or more AND less than 15% of the population living in the most deprived areas	800