

**Local Government  
Boundary Commission for Scotland**

**Information Paper**

**Local government electoral arrangements in  
Scotland: 1974 to 1996**

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This paper is one of a small series of Information Papers developed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland since 2008. The series currently comprises the following titles:

- Emergency service and Health Board boundaries in Scotland
- Local government area boundaries in Scotland: 1995 onwards
- Local government electoral arrangements in Scotland: 1995 onwards
- Local government area boundaries in Scotland: 1974-1996
- Local government electoral arrangements in Scotland: 1974-1996

## Local government electoral arrangements in Scotland: 1974 to 1996

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, with responsibility for keeping under review local government areas and electoral arrangements in Scotland. The Commission has produced this series of Information Papers explaining local government in Scotland since its establishment.

The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 created the 9 Regions, 3 Islands Areas and 53 Districts that existed in Scotland between 1974 and 1996. The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland Information Paper *Local government area boundaries in Scotland: 1974 to 1996* gives more detail of the definition and development of those local authority areas.

Each Region and Islands Area was divided for electoral purposes into a number of Electoral Divisions. When designing Electoral Divisions for Regions, each one had to fit within one of the constituent Districts. Each District was divided into a number of District Wards, with each District Ward contained within an Electoral Division for the parent Region.

Appendix A lists the number of Electoral Divisions or District Wards for each local authority during its existence.

To allow the formation of the Councils, Electoral Divisions and District Wards were set out in a series of Directions by the Secretary of State for Scotland in November 1973, under powers in Schedule 2 of the 1973 Act, and were used in the initial elections on 7 May 1974. These electoral areas continued in use until the completion of the Commission's Initial Statutory Reviews of Electoral Arrangements, with any necessary amendments made by further Directions by the Secretary of State.

The 1973 Act specified when elections would take place. During the 1970s, elections always took place on the first Tuesday in May, but from the 1980s this was changed to be the first Thursday. For Regional and Islands Councils elections took place every 4 years, i.e. 1974, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990 and 1994. For District Councils the interval was 3 years at first to separate them from the Regional elections, and then every 4 years: elections took place in 1974, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1988 and 1992.

The Commission's Initial Statutory Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for each local authority were carried out between 1976 and 1985. Electoral Divisions resulting from those Initial Reviews were used for the Islands Councils elections in May 1978, and for subsequent elections every 4 years up to and including May 1990.

The Initial Statutory Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for Regions were completed in time for the elections in May 1982, and the resulting Electoral Divisions were also used in subsequent elections in May 1986 and May 1990.

The Initial Statutory Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for Districts were completed between 1978 and 1985, with the resulting District Wards for 20 Districts used in the election of May 1980, and those for all Districts (except Gordon District whose

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review was not completed until 1985) used in the elections of May 1984. These District Wards were also used in the elections of May 1988 and May 1992.

After the completion of the Initial Statutory Review of Electoral Arrangements for a local authority, in some cases the Commission completed an interim review of one or more Electoral Division or District Ward boundaries. These interim reviews resulted in a change to the number of Electoral Divisions or District Wards, or modification to an Electoral Division or District Ward boundary.

In addition to amendments arising from the Commission's Initial Reviews and Interim Reviews of Electoral Arrangements, amendments were made to Electoral Divisions and District Wards whenever a local authority boundary was modified as a result of an administrative area review by the Commission. Amendments to local authority boundaries are detailed in the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland Information Paper *Local government area boundaries in Scotland: 1974 to 1996*.

The Commission carried out its Second Statutory Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for each local authority between 1989 and 1994. The revised Electoral Divisions for Regions and Islands Areas were used in the elections of May 1994. The resulting Wards for Districts had been intended to be used in elections in May 1996, but the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994 resulted in the abolition of Regions, Islands Areas and Districts before that date. However, the District Wards recommended in the Second Statutory Reviews of Electoral Arrangements did form the basis of the wards used in 1995 for elections on the formation of the local authorities established by the 1994 Act, as detailed in the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland Information Paper *Local government electoral arrangements in Scotland: 1995 onwards*.

**Appendix A – Number of electoral areas by local authority**

The tables below list the number of electoral areas for each local authority during its existence. These areas are termed Electoral Divisions for Regions and Islands Areas and District Wards for Districts.

The full text of the Directions by the Secretary of State, Statutory Notices and reports by the Commission which resulted in the definition of these electoral areas are available on the Commission's website.

<b>Islands Area</b>	<b>1974 Electoral Divisions</b>	<b>1978 Electoral Divisions</b>	<b>1994 Electoral Divisions</b>
Orkney	23	24	28
Shetland	22	25	26
Western Isles	30	30	30
<b>Scotland total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>84</b>

<b>Region</b>	<b>1974 Electoral Divisions</b>	<b>1982 Electoral Divisions</b>	<b>1994 Electoral Divisions</b>
Borders	23	23	27
Central	34	34	35
Dumfries and Galloway	35	35	35
Fife	42	45 <sup>1</sup>	46
Grampian	53	54 <sup>2</sup>	57
Highland	47	52	54
Lothian	49	49	49
Strathclyde	103	103	104
Tayside	46	46	46
<b>Scotland total</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>441<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>453</b>

Note that the Initial Reviews of District Wards were completed for the 1980 elections for some Councils, and for the 1984 elections for others. Also note that the District Wards recommended in the 2nd Review were never used for elections to the District Councils. The figures are included here for completeness.

<b>District</b>	<b>1974 District Wards</b>	<b>Initial Review</b>		<b>2nd Review District Wards<sup>4</sup></b>
		<b>1980</b>	<b>1984</b>	
Aberdeen, City of	48		50 <sup>5</sup>	50
Angus	22		21	22
Annandale and Eskdale	16	16		18

<sup>1</sup> Fife – no. of Electoral Divisions increased to 46 from 1986 elections (LGBCS report 93).

<sup>2</sup> Grampian – no. of Electoral Divisions increased to 57 from 1986 elections (LGBCS reports 95 and 98).

<sup>3</sup> Total no. of Electoral Divisions increased to 445 from 1986 elections (see notes 1 and 2 above).

<sup>4</sup> Not implemented – see text.

<sup>5</sup> Aberdeen – no. of District Wards increased to 52 from 1988 elections (LGBCS report 95).

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Appendix A - Number of electoral areas by council

District	1974 District Wards	Initial Review		2nd Review District Wards <sup>4</sup>
		1980	1984	
Argyll and Bute	26		26	27
Badenoch and Strathspey	10	10 <sup>6</sup>		11
Banff and Buchan	18		18	18
Bearsden and Milngavie	10		10	10
Berwickshire	12	12		10
Caithness	16 <sup>7</sup>	16		14
Clackmannan	12	12		12
Clydebank	10		12	11
Clydesdale	14		16	16
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	10		12	15
Cumnock & Doon Valley	10		10	10
Cunninghame	24	30		30
Dumbarton	15		16	17
Dundee, City of	44		44	40
Dunfermline	30		34	34
East Kilbride	15		16	20
East Lothian	17		17	18
Eastwood	12		12	15
Edinburgh, City of	64	62		58
Ettrick and Lauderdale	16	16		18
Falkirk	36	36		36
Glasgow, City of	72		66	90
Gordon	12		16 <sup>8</sup>	16
Hamilton	20 <sup>9</sup>		20	25
Inverclyde	23		20	20
Inverness	24	28		32
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	16		18	20
Kincardine and Deeside	12		12	13
Kirkcaldy	36		40 <sup>10</sup>	40
Kyle and Carrick	25		25	25
Lochaber	12		15	15
Midlothian	15	15		15
Monklands	20 <sup>11</sup>		20	20
Moray	18		18	18
Motherwell	30 <sup>12</sup>		30	30
Nairn	10	10		10
Nithsdale	28	28		26
North East Fife	18	18		18
Perth and Kinross	29		29	31

<sup>6</sup> Badenoch and Strathspey - no. of District Wards increased to 11 from 1984 elections (LGBCS report 88).

<sup>7</sup> Caithness - no. of District Wards reduced to 15 from 1977 elections (LGBCS report 11).

<sup>8</sup> Gordon - Initial Review completed for 1988 elections onwards.

<sup>9</sup> Hamilton - no. of District Wards increased to 21 from 1977 elections (LGBCS report 3).

<sup>10</sup> Kirkcaldy - no. of District Wards set by Initial Review as 38 (LGBCS report 45), but increased to 40 before 1984 elections (LGBCS report 93).

<sup>11</sup> Monklands - no. of District Wards increased to 21 from 1977 elections (LGBCS report 7).

<sup>12</sup> Motherwell - no. of District Wards reduced to 29 from 1977 elections (LGBCS report 7).

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District	1974 District Wards	Initial Review		2nd Review District Wards <sup>4</sup>
		1980	1984	
Renfrew	40		45	45
Ross and Cromarty	20		22	24
Roxburgh	16		16	18
Skye and Lochalsh	10	11		12
Stewartry	12	12		12
Stirling	20	20		22
Strathkelvin	14		15	20
Sutherland	12 <sup>13</sup>	14		14
Tweeddale	10	10		12
West Lothian	21		24	27
Wigtown	14	14		14
<b>Scotland total</b>	<b>1116<sup>14</sup></b>	<b>1155<sup>15</sup></b>		<b>1214</b>

<sup>13</sup> Sutherland – no. of District Wards increased to 14 from 1977 elections (LGBCS report 11).

<sup>14</sup> Total no. of District Wards increased to 1118 at 1977 elections (see notes above).

<sup>15</sup> This is total of District Wards arising from Initial Reviews. Because of the progressive completion of the Initial Reviews, and Interim Reviews, the number of wards at elections was 1980: 1127; 1984: 1152; 1988: 1158; 1992: 1158.