



Aberdeen City Council Area and Aberdeenshire Council Area

Introduction

1. Aberdeen City Council area is currently covered by 3 burgh constituencies, 2 of which are contained wholly within the Council area. A very small part of the third, Aberdeen North, lies in Aberdeenshire Council area. Aberdeenshire Council area is currently covered by 4 constituencies. Banff and Buchan county constituency and West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine county constituency are wholly contained within Aberdeenshire Council area. Gordon county constituency also comprises part of Moray Council area, although approximately 90 per cent of the electorate of the constituency is within Aberdeenshire Council area. During the course of the Review there was an amendment to the boundary between Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area and consequently the current Aberdeen North burgh constituency also comprises a very small part of Aberdeenshire Council area containing 47 electors (see paragraph 23). The electorates of the 6 constituencies at the start and finish of the previous and current reviews are provided at Appendix C.

Initial Considerations

2. In forming our provisional proposals for Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area we had in mind the following considerations:

2.1 At the enumeration date of June 2001, Aberdeen City Council area contained 163,156 parliamentary electors, giving the Council area a theoretical entitlement of 2.3 seats.

2.2 At the enumeration date of June 2001, Aberdeenshire Council area contained 173,613 parliamentary electors, giving the Council area a theoretical entitlement of 2.5 seats.

2.3 The combined electorate for Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area was 336,769, giving a theoretical entitlement of 4.8 seats.

3. We noted that, if within each Council area the theoretical number of seats was rounded up or down, this would result in revised constituencies which would, on average, deviate from the electoral quota by more than 15 per cent, which we considered unacceptable.

However, providing 5 constituencies for the combined Council areas allowed the formulation of provisional recommendations for revised constituencies which, on average, would be around 4 per cent below the electoral quota. Accordingly, we decided that the combined Council areas should be allocated 5 constituencies.

4. At the time of the Third Periodical Review of Parliamentary Constituencies in Scotland, parts of the area now covered by Aberdeen City Council had been included in both the Gordon constituency and the Kincardine and Deeside constituency. The remainder of the City was divided into two constituencies on a north/south basis. It seemed, therefore, that although a number of options for designing revised constituencies were possible, there was potential to re-unite part of Aberdeen City Council area with the existing Gordon constituency and divide the remainder of the urban area on a north/south basis to form two burgh constituencies. We considered that adopting this approach would provide scope for constituencies which closely approximated to the electoral quota and reduced the need for more than one constituency to straddle the boundary between Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area. Accordingly, we proposed that Aberdeen City Council area wards 1-7 should be transferred to form part of a revised Gordon constituency; that Aberdeen City Council area wards 8-24 and 28 should form a constituency to be named Aberdeen North with 66,642 electors; and that the remaining Aberdeen City Council area wards 25-27 and 29-43 should be combined to form a revised Aberdeen South constituency with 69,332 electors.

5. At the start of our review, the existing Banff and Buchan constituency comprised wards 1-24 within Aberdeenshire Council area with around 58,000 electors. We concluded that Aberdeenshire Council area wards 25-28 should be added to the existing Banff and Buchan constituency, effectively returning to it an area comprising Turriff, Upper Ythan and Fyvie/Methlick, which had largely been incorporated within that constituency prior to the Fourth Periodical Review. This raised the electorate of the proposed constituency to around 66,000. However, we noted a continuing downward trend in the electorate in the existing Banff and Buchan constituency which contrasted with recent trends elsewhere in the combined Council areas. Bearing in mind the geography, topography, settlement patterns and communication links within and across the combined Council areas, we agreed that the revised Banff and Buchan constituency could be further increased in size. We examined a number of options and concluded that an area comprising Aberdeenshire Council area wards 48 (Huntly West) and 49 (Huntly East) lying to the south and west of wards 25-28 offered the best solution. Accordingly, we agreed that these 2 wards should be included in the revised Banff and Buchan constituency. Including these 2 wards in the revised constituency increased the electorate to 71,275. We also agreed that the constituency name should be revised to "Banff, Buchan and Huntly", which better reflected the geography of the area.

6. In considering options for constituencies in the remainder of Aberdeenshire Council area, we noted that ward 45 (Kinellar and Westhill North) and ward 50 (Strathbogie) lay partly within both the existing Gordon constituency and the existing West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency. Our general policy is that wards should be wholly contained within a single constituency. Therefore, we decided that ward 50, together with Aberdeenshire

Council area wards 29-42 and Aberdeen City Council area wards 1-7, should form a revised Gordon county constituency with an electorate of 67,353. We concluded also that ward 45 should be contained wholly within a revised West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency together with Aberdeenshire Council area wards 43, 44, 46, 47 and 51-68. We noted that, although the electorate of the revised West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency is 62,167, recent trends indicated that continued growth could be expected.

Provisional Proposals

7. On 7 February 2002 we published our provisional proposals for 2 burgh constituencies and 3 county constituencies in the combined Council areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire as follows:

Constituencies	Comprising	Electorate (June 2001)
Aberdeen North BC	Electoral wards in Aberdeen City Council area	
	8 Newhills	4,231
	9 Auchmill	3,781
	10 Cummings Park	3,915
	11 Springhill	3,608
	12 Mastrick	3,902
	13 Sheddocksley	3,920
	14 Summerhill	3,646
	15 Hilton	3,653
	16 Woodside	3,431
	17 St. Machar	3,335
	18 Seaton	3,409
	19 Kittybrewster	4,050
	20 Stockethill	3,645
	21 Berryden	3,476
	22 Sunnybank	3,701
	23 Pittodrie	3,231
	24 Midstocket	4,097
	28 Castlehill	3,611
	Total	66,642
Aberdeen South BC	Electoral wards in Aberdeen City Council area	
	25 Queens Cross	3,527
	26 Gilcomston	3,293

27	Langstane	3,950
29	Hazlehead	3,700
30	Peterculter	3,897
31	Murtle	3,920
32	Cults	3,817
33	Seafield	4,112
34	Ashley	3,812
35	Broomhill	3,978
36	Garthdee	3,851
37	Gairn	3,963
38	Duthie	3,812
39	Torry	3,770
40	Tullos Hill	3,859
41	Kincorth West	3,951
42	Nigg	3,778
43	Loirston	4,342
	Total	69,332

Banff, Buchan and Huntly CC

Electoral wards in Aberdeenshire
Council area

1	Durn	2,315
2	Banff West and Boyndie	2,244
3	Banff	2,331
4	Aberchirder	2,265
5	Macduff	2,185
6	Gamrie-King Edward	2,409
7	Buchan North	2,286
8	Fraserburgh West	2,284
9	Fraserburgh North	2,286
10	Fraserburgh East	2,306
11	Fraserburgh South	2,511
12	Buchan North East	2,164
13	South Buchan	2,453
14	Central Buchan	2,614
15	Lonmay and St Fergus	2,378
16	Mintlaw-Old Deer	2,300
17	Mintlaw-Longside	2,353
18	Boddam-Inverugie	2,717
19	Blackhouse	2,661
20	Buchanhaven	2,388
21	Peterhead Central-Roanheads	2,172
22	Clerkhill	2,537

23	Dales-Towerhill	2,373
24	Cruden	2,342
25	Turriff West	2,508
26	Turriff East	2,048
27	Upper Ythan	2,219
28	Fyvie-Methlick	2,321
48	Huntly West	2,416
49	Huntly East	2,889
	Total	71,275

Gordon CC

Electoral wards in Aberdeen City
Council area

1	Pitmedden	3,950
2	Bankhead/Stoneywood	3,959
3	Danestone	4,075
4	Jesmond	4,198
5	Oldmachar	4,016
6	Bridge of Don	3,957
7	Donmouth	3,027

Electoral wards in Aberdeenshire
Council area

29	Tarves	2,920
30	Ythan	2,868
31	Ellon Town	2,463
32	Logie Buchan	2,802
33	Meldrum	2,622
34	Udny-Slains	2,779
35	Belhelvie	2,676
36	Insch	2,745
37	Chapel and Gadie	2,536
38	Inverurie North	2,374
39	Inverurie Central	2,533
40	Inverurie South and Port Elphinstone	2,691
41	Kintore and Keithhall	2,680
42	Newmachar and Fintray	2,998
50	Strathbogie	2,484
	Total	67,353

West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine CC	Electoral wards in Aberdeenshire Council area	
	43	Kemnay 2,778
	44	Echt 2,712
	45	Kinellar and Westhill North 2,801
	46	Westhill Central 3,303
	47	Elrick 2,486
	51	Donside and Cromar 2,660
	52	Alford 2,719
	53	Upper Deeside 2,582
	54	Aboyne 2,646
	55	Mid Deeside 3,069
	56	Banchory West 2,695
	57	Banchory East and Crathes 2,508
	58	Lower Deeside 2,709
	59	Portlethen North 2,784
	60	Portlethen South 2,595
	61	Newtonhill, Muchalls and Cammachmore 2,579
	62	Stonehaven North and Fetteresso 2,528
	63	Stonehaven Central 2,723
	64	Stonehaven South 2,649
	65	Mearns North 2,645
	66	Mearns Central 2,461
	67	Inverbervie, Gourdon and Johnshaven 2,746
	68	Mearns South 2,789
		Total 62,167

Representations on Provisional Proposals

8. During the statutory consultation period, we received 54 representations, including 3 petitions with a total of approximately 630 names, regarding our provisional proposals. Most objections focused on the following main issues:

8.1 Whether to include Aberdeenshire Council area ward 48 (Huntly West) and ward 49 (Huntly East) in the Banff, Buchan and Huntly constituency.

8.2 Whether to include Aberdeen City Council area wards 1-7 in the Gordon constituency.

8.3 The proposed boundaries of the constituencies within the Aberdeen City Council area.

Local Inquiry

9. As a consequence of the objections to our proposals from the local authorities, as well as the number of electors objecting, we recognised that we had a statutory duty to hold a local inquiry. At our request, you agreed to appoint Sheriff Principal Sir Stephen S T Young, Bt QC, Sheriff Principal for Grampian, Highland and Islands, as Assistant Commissioner at the inquiry into our provisional proposals. The inquiry was held in Aberdeen Council Chambers, on 10 and 11 September 2002.

10. In the period up to the start of the local inquiry, the number of representations received increased to 60. All the representations were seen by the Assistant Commissioner and copies were made available at the inquiry.

11. Following the inquiry, a verbatim transcript of the proceedings and the Assistant Commissioner's Report were made available on our web site.

Assistant Commissioner's Report and Recommendations

12. In his Report to us, the Assistant Commissioner noted that our decision to allocate 5 constituencies to the combined council areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire was accepted by all parties. It was also acknowledged that within Aberdeen City Council area there would be 2 complete constituencies and at least one other constituency comprising part of Aberdeen City Council area and part of Aberdeenshire Council area. He commented that a major point of contention at the inquiry was whether there should be one or 2 constituencies which crossed the council boundary.

13. The Assistant Commissioner concluded that, in delimiting the area of a constituency, the Rules required that we should take care to avoid crossing the boundary of a local authority area in the absence of a substantial reason for doing so. He noted that, if we did not have to take care to this extent, it was difficult to see why we should be required to have regard to boundaries of council areas in the first place. He recognised that we had stated earlier in the review that we would make every effort to keep to a minimum recommendations for constituencies which crossed local authority boundaries. He considered that, given the terms of Rule 4(1)(b) and its position in the hierarchy of rules, it could scarcely be maintained that we were not entitled to pursue this policy, provided that we took account of Rules 5, 6 and 7.

14. The Assistant Commissioner accepted that the evidence offered at the inquiry demonstrated that there were strong links between the Bridge of Don and the remainder of Aberdeen City, and that without reference to the Rules a powerful case could be made for incorporating the Bridge of Don wards in an Aberdeen City constituency. However, he believed that the argument that the 3 Deeside wards (Aberdeen City Council area ward 30 (Peterculter), ward 31 (Murtle) and ward 32 (Cults)) should similarly form part of an Aberdeen City constituency was no less strong. The Assistant Commissioner was not persuaded that any consideration with regard to Rules 6 or 7 would support a departure from the broad

proposition that, in the light of Rules 4 and 5 and the stated policy of the Commission, there should be only one constituency crossing the council boundary between Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area. He stated that, in principle, it would seem appropriate that our provisional recommendation to incorporate Aberdeen City Council area wards 1-7 into the Gordon constituency should be adopted.

15. With regard to the boundary between our proposed Aberdeen North and Aberdeen South constituencies in Aberdeen City centre, the Assistant Commissioner was content with our provisional proposals. He commented that, in order for us to comply with Rule 5, we had to take a robust view of the issues. He noted that boundaries had to be drawn somewhere and in the middle of the city it is more or less inevitable that these may appear somewhat arbitrary.

16. In relation to Aberdeenshire Council area ward 48 (Huntly West) and ward 49 (Huntly East), the Assistant Commissioner concluded that these wards should be transferred from our proposed Banff, Buchan and Huntly constituency to our proposed Gordon constituency. He noted that, if the amendment was adopted without any further adjustments, there would be an excessive imbalance in the electorates between the Banff and Buchan constituency and the Gordon constituency, and also between the Gordon constituency and the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency. To correct this, he recommended that Aberdeen City Council area ward 7 (Donmouth) should be transferred from our proposed Gordon constituency to our proposed Aberdeen North constituency.

17. The Assistant Commissioner considered that the proposals of the Scottish Labour Party did not always sit easily with the Rules to which we were bound to give effect.

Consideration of the Assistant Commissioner's Report and Recommendations

18. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner concurred with our decision to design 2 constituencies contained wholly within Aberdeen City Council area, 2 constituencies contained wholly within Aberdeenshire Council area and one parliamentary constituency which crossed the boundary between the 2 council areas.

19. We noted that there was almost complete unanimity in support of the view that Aberdeenshire Council area ward 48 (Huntly West) and ward 49 (Huntly East) should be transferred from our proposed Banff, Buchan and Huntly constituency to our proposed Gordon constituency. Accordingly we agreed to amend our provisional proposals in line with the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation.

20. We also agreed with the Assistant Commissioner that there would be an imbalance of electorates if there was no compensatory transfer of wards from the enlarged constituency. The Assistant Commissioner had recommended that Aberdeen City Council area ward 7 (Donmouth) be transferred from the proposed Gordon constituency to the proposed Aberdeen North constituency in order to achieve the required balance of electorates. We

considered this recommendation carefully, being aware that ward 7 is divided by the River Don. We noted that the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation would mean that a very small part of the proposed Aberdeen North constituency would lie north of the River Don and that local ties between ward 7 and the rest of the Bridge of Don wards would be broken. We examined other options that might resolve the disparity between electorates but were not persuaded by their merits. We therefore accepted the Assistant Commissioner's recommendation with regard to ward 7 (Donmouth).

21. We noted the Assistant Commissioner's suggestion that, given a significant proportion of the electorate of the proposed Gordon constituency would be resident in the Bridge of Don area, there might be a case for renaming the constituency "Gordon and the Bridge of Don". We considered this suggestion but agreed with the Assistant Commissioner's comment that whilst the name might give explicit recognition to the Bridge of Don area, people might think it odd that the Bridge of Don itself is situated in ward 7 (Donmouth), outside the constituency. Therefore, we decided not to rename the proposed Gordon constituency.

Publication of Revised Recommendations

22. On 16 January 2003 we published a notice stating that, having considered the Assistant Commissioner's Report, we had decided to revise 3 of our proposals for parliamentary constituencies in the combined Council areas of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire.

23. The notice also stated that the boundary between Aberdeen City Council area ward 8 (Newhills) and Aberdeenshire Council area ward 45 (Kinellar and Westhill North) had been amended by The Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council Boundaries (Blackburn) Amendment Order 2002. This administrative change transferred 47 electors from Aberdeen City Council area to Aberdeenshire Council area. This reduced the electorate of Aberdeen City Council area ward 8 (Newhills) from 4,231, when the provisional proposals were published on 7 February 2002, to an electorate of 4,184 on publication of the revised recommendations. It also increased the electorate of Aberdeenshire Council area ward 45 (Kinellar and Westhill North) from 2,801 to an electorate of 2,848. This small boundary change in the Blackburn area was incorporated into our revised recommendations which were:

Constituencies	Comprising	Electorate (June 2001)
Aberdeen North BC	Electoral wards in Aberdeen City Council area	
	7 Donmouth	3,027
	8 Newhills	4,184
	9 Auchmill	3,781

	10	Cummings Park	3,915
	11	Springhill	3,608
	12	Mastrick	3,902
	13	Sheddocksley	3,920
	14	Summerhill	3,646
	15	Hilton	3,653
	16	Woodside	3,431
	17	St. Machar	3,335
	18	Seaton	3,409
	19	Kittybrewster	4,050
	20	Stockethill	3,645
	21	Berryden	3,476
	22	Sunnybank	3,701
	23	Pittodrie	3,231
	24	Midstocket	4,097
	28	Castlehill	3,611
		Total	69,622
Aberdeen South BC		Unaltered from provisional proposals	69,332
Banff and Buchan CC		Electoral wards in Aberdeenshire Council area	
	1	Durn	2,315
	2	Banff West and Boyndie	2,244
	3	Banff	2,331
	4	Aberchirder	2,265
	5	Macduff	2,185
	6	Gamrie-King Edward	2,409
	7	Buchan North	2,286
	8	Fraserburgh West	2,284
	9	Fraserburgh North	2,286
	10	Fraserburgh East	2,306
	11	Fraserburgh South	2,511
	12	Buchan North East	2,164
	13	South Buchan	2,453
	14	Central Buchan	2,614
	15	Lonmay and St Fergus	2,378
	16	Mintlaw-Old Deer	2,300
	17	Mintlaw-Longside	2,353
	18	Boddam-Inverugie	2,717
	19	Blackhouse	2,661
	20	Buchanhaven	2,388

21	Peterhead Central-Roanheads	2,172
22	Clerkhill	2,537
23	Dales-Towerhill	2,373
24	Cruden	2,342
25	Turriff West	2,508
26	Turriff East	2,048
27	Upper Ythan	2,219
28	Fyvie-Methlick	2,321
	Total	65,970

Gordon CC

Electoral wards in Aberdeen City
Council area

1	Pitmedden	3,950
2	Bankhead/Stoneywood	3,959
3	Danestone	4,075
4	Jesmond	4,198
5	Oldmachar	4,016
6	Bridge of Don	3,957

Electoral wards in Aberdeenshire
Council area

29	Tarves	2,920
30	Ythan	2,868
31	Ellon Town	2,463
32	Logie Buchan	2,802
33	Meldrum	2,622
34	Udny-Slains	2,779
35	Belhelvie	2,676
36	Insch	2,745
37	Chapel and Gadie	2,536
38	Inverurie North	2,374
39	Inverurie Central	2,533
40	Inverurie South and Port Elphinstone	2,691
41	Kintore and Keithhall	2,680
42	Newmachar and Fintray	2,998
48	Huntly West	2,416
49	Huntly East	2,889
50	Strathbogie	2,484

	Total	69,631
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West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine CC	Electoral wards in Aberdeenshire Council area	
	43	Kemnay 2,778
	44	Echt 2,712
	45	Kinellar and Westhill North 2,848
	46	Westhill Central 3,303
	47	Elrick 2,486
	51	Donside and Cromar 2,660
	52	Alford 2,719
	53	Upper Deeside 2,582
	54	Aboyne 2,646
	55	Mid Deeside 3,069
	56	Banchory West 2,695
	57	Banchory East and Crathes 2,508
	58	Lower Deeside 2,709
	59	Portlethen North 2,784
	60	Portlethen South 2,595
	61	Newtonhill, Muchalls and Cammachmore 2,579
	62	Stonehaven North and Fetteresso 2,528
	63	Stonehaven Central 2,723
	64	Stonehaven South 2,649
	65	Mearns North 2,645
	66	Mearns Central 2,461
	67	Inverbervie, Gourdon and Johnshaven 2,746
	68	Mearns South 2,789
		Total 62,214

Representations on Revised Recommendations

24. Following publication of the revised recommendations, we received 31 representations, including 2 petitions containing approximately 1,110 names. Some representations remarked on more than one aspect of our revised recommendations. The representations fell broadly into the following categories:

24.1 Two representations supported our revised proposals.

24.2 Two representations supported the inclusion of Aberdeenshire Council areas wards 48 (Huntly West) and ward 49 (Huntly East) in our revised Gordon constituency.

24.3 One representation supported our revised proposal to include Aberdeen City Council area ward 7 (Donmouth) in the Aberdeen North constituency.

24.4 Two representations supported our revised proposals which included the Bridge of Don area within the revised Gordon constituency.

24.5 Two representations considered that the Assistant Commissioner had wrongly interpreted Rule 4(1)b.

24.6 One representation contended that Aberdeenshire Council area ward 50 (Strathbogie) should be included in the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency.

24.7 Twenty-two representations, including petitions containing approximately 1,110 names, objected to Aberdeen City Council area wards 3-6 (Bridge of Don area) being included in the Gordon constituency.

24.8 Seven representations objected to Aberdeen City Council area ward 7 (Donmouth) being detached from the rest of the Bridge of Don area.

24.9 Two representations objected to Aberdeen City Council area ward 24 (Midstocket) being located in a different constituency from ward 25 (Queens Cross) and ward 26 (Gilcomston).

24.10 Three representations considered that there were alternative proposals that better satisfied the statutory requirements.

24.11 Four representations contended that Aberdeen City Council area ward 30 (Peterculter), ward 31 (Murtle) and ward 32 (Cults) should be included in the West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine constituency.

Consideration of Representations on Revised Recommendations

25. With regard to Rule 4(1)(b), we were satisfied that the Assistant Commissioner had not erred in his interpretation. At the beginning of the review we stated that, because of the fundamental changes to the Rules and to comply as far as is reasonably practicable with the Rule regarding the electoral quota, we had decided that it might be necessary to make recommendations for constituencies that crossed local authority boundaries. We also stated that we would make every effort to keep such proposals to a minimum. We are content that an overall balanced constituency design has been created within the terms of the Rules by having only one constituency (Gordon) crossing the council boundary.

26. In relation to the representations regarding the inclusion of the 4 Bridge of Don wards (Aberdeen City Council area wards 3-6) in the Gordon constituency, and the inclusion of Aberdeen City Council area wards 30-32 in the Aberdeen South constituency, we considered that the issues had been fully discussed at the local inquiry and that the further representations did not advance any new arguments. We were satisfied that, in order to

achieve a balanced solution across the combined council areas within the terms of the Rules, it was necessary to include parts of the Bridge of Don area within the Gordon constituency. We noted the strength of local feeling in the Bridge of Don area regarding our revised recommendations but we were not persuaded to amend them.

27. We considered the representations concerning the breaking of local ties between Aberdeen City Council area ward 7 (Donmouth) and the rest of the Bridge of Don area. We acknowledged that breaking these local ties was less than satisfactory but we were aware that, in order to design constituencies over a larger geographical area and to satisfy the terms of the statutory requirements, it was sometimes necessary to break ties between wards in some areas. We therefore concluded that the inclusion of ward 7 in the recommended Aberdeen North constituency was a necessary part of the constituency design in the combined council areas. Similarly, we decided against making any amendments to our recommendations for Aberdeen City Council area ward 24 (Midstocket) in relation to ward 25 (Queens Cross) and ward 26 (Gilcomston).

Final recommendations

28. On 11 December 2003 we announced that we were making no further changes to our proposals for 2 burgh constituencies and 3 county constituencies covering Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area and that these were to be our final recommendations.

29. We accordingly recommend the adoption of our proposals for 2 burgh and 3 county constituencies for Aberdeen City Council area and Aberdeenshire Council area, as set out in paragraph 23 above.

