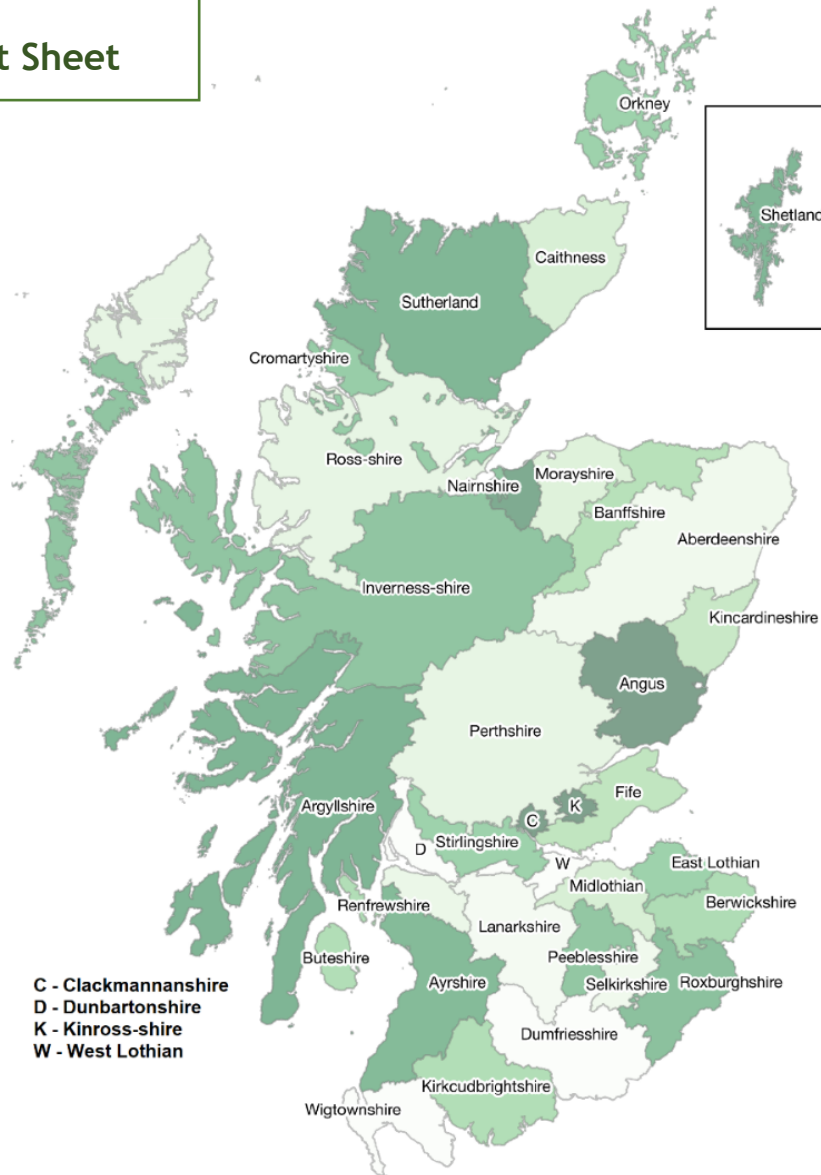


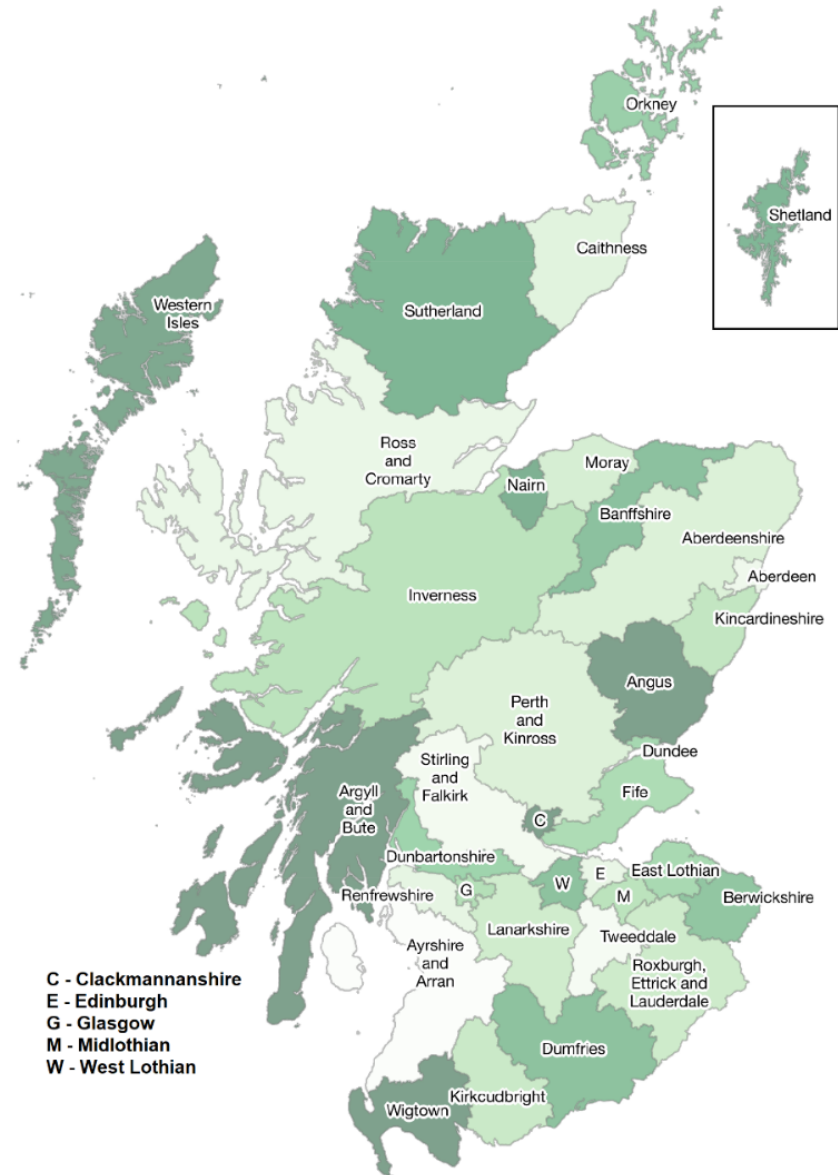


Fact Sheet

The lieutenancies of Scotland and their relationship to the historic counties



Historic counties of Scotland



Lieutenancy areas of Scotland

1. Introduction

This document clarifies what the lieutenancies of Scotland are and their relationship to the historic counties. The office of lord-lieutenant is often thought of as having a close association with the historic counties. This is particularly so in relation to Scotland, the lieutenancies of which are sometimes thought to be more closely aligned with the historic counties than are those of England and Wales. In fact, there are many significant differences between them.

The cover page presents a map of the lieutenancy areas of Scotland compared to the historic counties. There are many similarities between the two sets of areas. This reflects the fact that the lieutenancies were once based on the historic counties but have been, especially since 1975, amended to reflect changes to local government areas. Whilst a majority of the 35 lieutenancies do still bear an historic county name, only 15 of them have an area reasonably close to that historic county.

The lieutenancies of Scotland are not generally based on current local government areas. Most are defined as a combination of pre-1996 local government districts which have been given the name of the historic county to which they are most similar in area. The resulting set of lieutenancy areas gives the impression of being based on the historic counties, but is actually significantly different to them.

There is no reason why the lieutenancies could not be based directly on the historic counties rather than on long-defunct local government districts:

- Though some lieutenancy offices are based in council offices, they are not local government posts and most do not cover a council area. Some lieutenancies are based within a local solicitor's office;
- The wide range in populations between the historic counties can be dealt with via the option of appointing a vice-lieutenant and deputy-lieutenants as required.

A return to basing lieutenancies on the historic counties should be viewed as the appointment of a dignitary to each historic county in recognition of their importance to our history, heritage and culture. The office of lord-lieutenant has never defined the counties, most of which pre-date its creation by many centuries, and should not be seen as such.

To properly align the lieutenancies with the historic counties, the lieutenancy areas of the *Lieutenancies Act 1997*^[2] should be defined in terms of the *Historic Counties Standard*^[1], widely recognised (e.g. by the Office for National Statistics^[7]) as the standard definition for the names and areas of the historic counties. Small differences between the historic counties and the lieutenancies can be accommodated in this way, e.g. the lieutenancy role of the Lords Provost of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The lieutenancies of England and Wales could be based on the historic counties by similar means.

Section 2 describes the history and purpose of the office of lord-lieutenant. Section 3 describes the current legislation which governs them. Section 4 compares the current lieutenancy areas to the historic counties. Section 5 discusses an approach to basing the lieutenancy areas directly on the historic counties. Section 6 presents some concluding remarks. The Appendix relates each current lieutenancy areas to the historic counties.

2. The office of lord-lieutenant

A lord-lieutenant is appointed by The Queen and is Her Majesty's representative in their lieutenancy area. The role is voluntary and apolitical. The office was created in England in the 1540s for the purpose of organising a county's militia. The *Militia Act 1797*^[7] extended this system to Scotland. The office has never defined the counties, which pre-date its creation by many centuries.

Prior to 1888, lord-lieutenants were appointed to serve within each historic county. There were always exceptions to this, e.g. the Lord Provosts of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee are, by virtue of office, the lord-lieutenant of their respective city. From 1890, lord-lieutenants were appointed to the new administrative areas created by the *Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889*^[4]. Since the *Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994*^[6], lord-lieutenants have been appointed to a set of "lieutenancy areas" which are defined in terms of a mixture of current and former local government areas.

The duties of lord-lieutenants are broadly to:

- Arrange visits by members of the Royal family and to escort Royal visitors;
- Present medals, awards and certain honours on behalf of Her Majesty;
- Encourage and assess nominations for personal honour;
- Promote and support the Queens Award for Enterprise;
- Support and liaise with local units of the armed forces and their reserve and cadet forces;
- Promote and support all forms of useful community and voluntary roles and groups.

A lord-lieutenant appoints a Clerk of the Lieutenancy to be responsible for the administration of the lieutenancy. Whilst this work is often undertaken by staff located within council offices, it is not a local government post and can be held by any person of standing and integrity. In some lieutenancies the role of clerk is undertaken by a local solicitor.



The Lord Lieutenants of Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale (left) and Nairnshire (right) undertaking their duties

3. Legislation governing the lieutenancies of Scotland

The *Lieutenancies Act 1997*^[2] governs the organisation of the lieutenancies of Great Britain. According to Section 1 of the Act:

“(1) A Lord-Lieutenant shall be appointed by Her Majesty for each county in England, each county in Wales and each area in Scotland (other than the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow).”

(2) The Lord Provost of each of the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow is, by virtue of his office, Lord-Lieutenant for that city.

(3) Her Majesty may appoint lieutenants (in addition to the Lord-Lieutenant) for any county or area.

(4) Schedule 1 to this Act (which identifies the areas which are counties in England and Wales and areas in Scotland for the purposes of the lieutenancies) shall have effect; and in this Act “county” and “area” shall be construed accordingly.”

It should be noted that the areas to which lord-lieutenants are appointed in England and Wales are referred to as “counties” by the Act, whereas those of Scotland are referred to as “areas”. Section 7 and 8 of Schedule 1 lays out the lieutenancy areas for Scotland.

“7 The areas in Scotland for the purposes of this Act are—

(a) the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow; and

(b) the areas specified in an Order in Council under paragraph 8.

8 Her Majesty may by Order in Council divide Scotland (apart from the cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow) into such areas for the purposes of this Act as She thinks fit.”

Hence, the lieutenancy areas of Scotland are actually determined by an *Order in Council*. The current order is the *Lord-Lieutenants (Scotland) Order 1996*^[3] which came into force on 1st April 1996. Changes were made to the lieutenancy areas to coincide with the local government reorganisation of the *Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994*^[6] which happened on that date. Some of the revised set of lieutenancy areas were based on the new (1996) local government areas, most were defined in terms of local government areas which had existed either immediately prior to the enactment of the 1994 Act or, in several cases, local government areas which had existed prior to the enactment of the *Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973*^[5].

The Appendix presents the lieutenancy areas as defined by Schedule 1 of the *Lord-Lieutenants (Scotland) Order 1996*^[3], relating them to the historic counties.

4. Comparison of the lieutenancy areas to the historic counties

Of the 35 lieutenancy areas of Scotland, 15 bear an historic county name and are a close or reasonably close match to the historic county whose name they bear.

Only three lieutenancy areas bear an historic county name and are a perfect match to that historic county: Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland.

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the Caithness lieutenancy area to the historic county whose name it bears. The lieutenancy area and the historic county have exactly the same area.

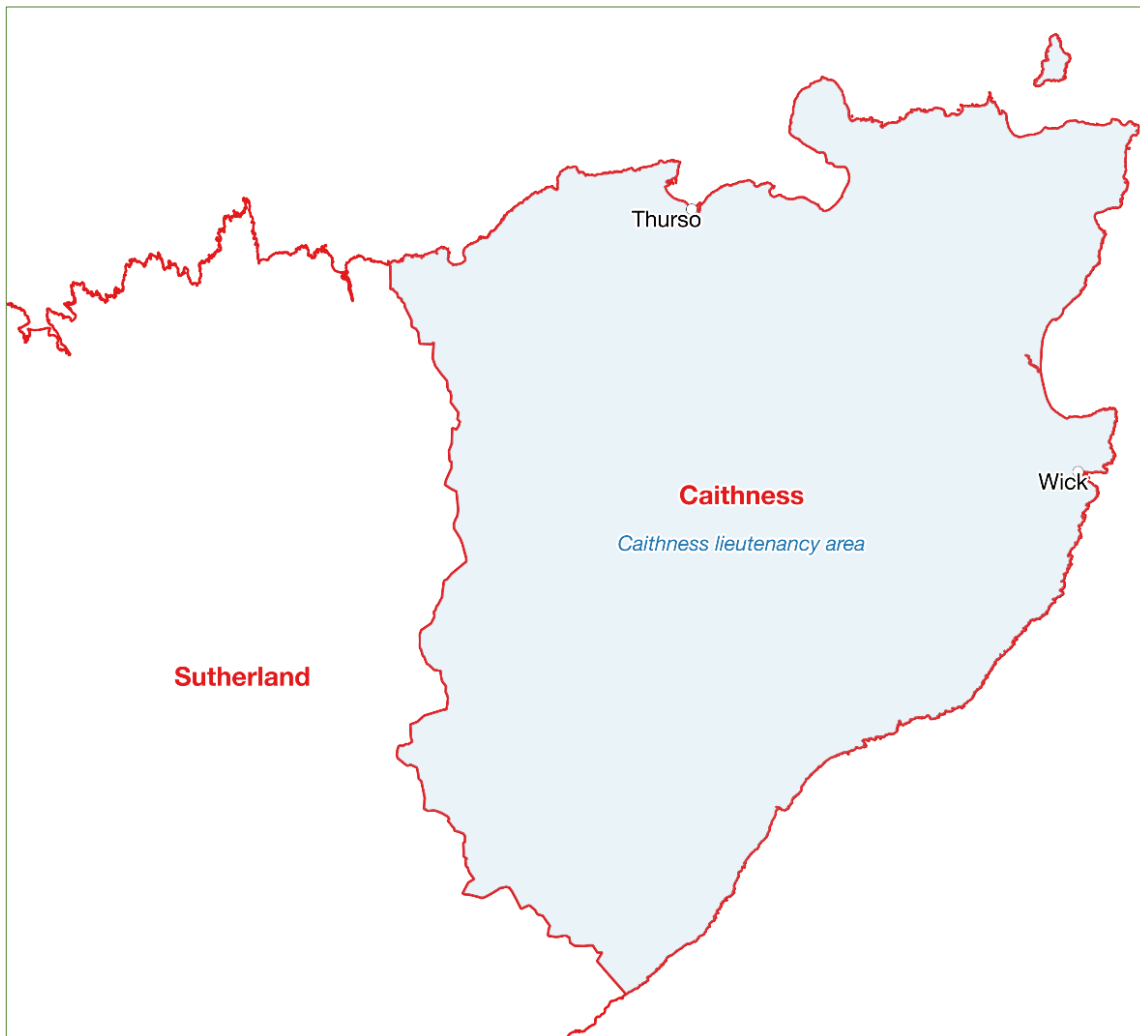


Figure 1. Comparison between Caithness (historic county - red borders and red label) and the Caithness lieutenancy (coloured shading)

A further 12 lieutenancy areas bear an historic county name (some without the 'shire' suffix) and are a reasonable match to that historic county: Aberdeenshire, Angus, Banffshire, Clackmannan, Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Fife, Kincardineshire, Lanarkshire, Nairn, Renfrewshire and Sutherland.

Figure 2 shows a comparison of the Kincardineshire lieutenancy area to the historic county whose name it bears. The lieutenancy area does not include two small areas of the historic county: the southern part of the City of Aberdeen; and a small area north-east of Banchory.



Figure 2. Comparison of Kincardineshire (historic county) to the Kincardineshire lieutenancy area

A further 8 lieutenancy areas bear an historic county name but are significantly different in area to that historic county: Berwickshire, Dumfries, Inverness, Midlothian, Renfrewshire, Kirkcudbrightshire, West Lothian and Wigtown.

Figure 3 is a comparison of the Berwickshire lieutenancy area to the historic county of whose name it bears. The lieutenancy area excludes a large area (Lauderdale) in the west of the historic county.



Figure 3. Comparison of Berwickshire (historic county) to the Berwickshire lieutenancy area

Another four historic counties have their name used as part of a lieutenancy area. Within these, it might be considered that three historic county names are used appropriately:

- ‘Perth and Kinross’ includes the whole of Kinross-shire (though only about 77% of Perthshire);
- ‘Ayrshire and Arran’ is a close match to Ayrshire along with the Isle of Arran (Buteshire);
- ‘Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale’ does contain the whole of Roxburghshire.

Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale also provides an example of the use of a name which is not based on any historic county name. It is hard to be precise about how many of the lieutenancy areas have such names since it is not clear whether names without the ‘shire’ suffix (e.g. ‘Argyll and Bute’) are intended to be some kind of reference to the historic county. Certainly, ‘Stirling and Falkirk’ and ‘Western Isles’ apparently have no pretension to be based on any historic county. ‘Tweeddale’ is close in area to Peeblesshire but has not been given the historic county’s name.

Figure 4 is a comparison of the Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale lieutenancy area to the historic counties of the area. The lieutenancy area includes the whole of Roxburghshire and almost all of Selkirkshire (though Selkirk is not referred to in the name). It also includes parts of Berwickshire, East Lothian, Midlothian, East Lothian and Peeblesshire.

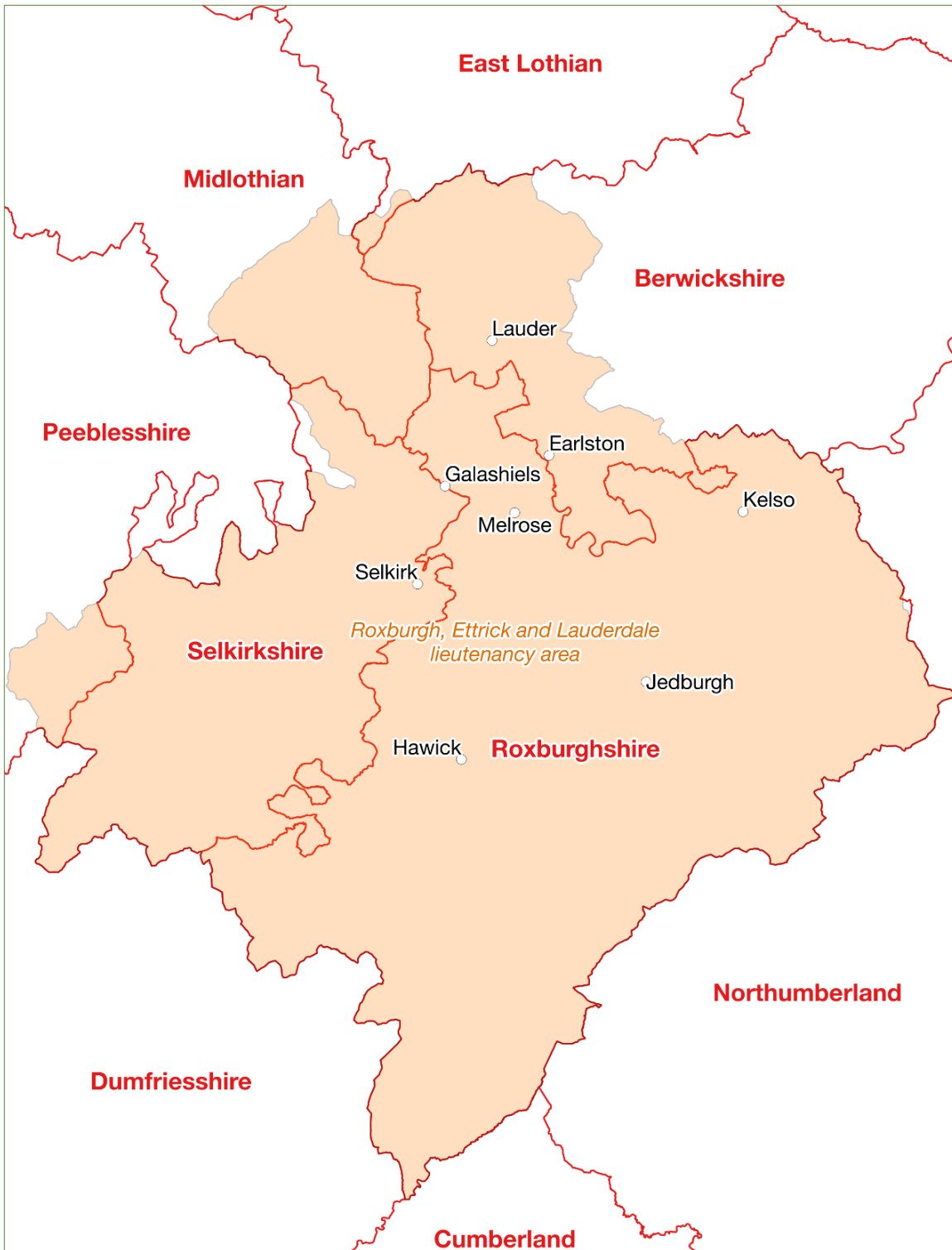


Figure 4. Comparison of the Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale lieutenancy area to the historic counties of the area

5. Basing lieutenancy areas on the historic counties

A move to base the lieutenancies directly on the historic counties would promote the identities of the historic counties and their role in our history, heritage and culture. It would also provide further Government recognition of the importance of both the historic counties and the office of lord-lieutenant. There is no practical problem with doing this:

- Most of the lieutenancies are based on long-defunct local government districts in any case. Though some lieutenancies are based in council offices, they are not local government posts and the administration does not cover the council area. Some lieutenancies are based in solicitors' offices;
- The current lieutenancies cover a wide range in populations and area. This presents no problem given the options to appoint a vice-lieutenant and a number of deputy-lieutenants.

Any such change should be done in a way which makes clear that the office of lord-lieutenant is not defining the historic county. This could be achieved by basing the definition of the lieutenancy areas on the Historic Counties Standard^[1] and by a continued use of the phrase "lieutenancy area". Small differences between the historic counties and the lieutenancies can be accommodated by this approach, e.g. the lieutenancy role of the Lords Provost of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The Historic Counties Standard^[1] provides the standard definition for the names and areas of the historic counties and is widely used in many reference works (e.g. by the Office for National Statistics in its *Index of Place Names in Great Britain*^[8]). Pragmatically the lieutenancies should be defined in terms of Definition A of the Historic Counties Standard^[1], whereby detached parts of counties are not separately identified, but are associated with their host county. This could be achieved by replacing Schedule 1, Section 7 of the Lieutenancies Act 1997^[2] with:

"Areas in Scotland

7 The areas in Scotland for the purposes of this Act are -

- (a) The cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow*
- (b) The historic counties of Scotland as defined by Definition A of the Historic Counties Standard published by the Historic Counties Trust in 2022."*

Section 8 would need to be deleted. There would no longer be a need to define or amend these areas via an Order in Council.

This approach could also be taken with the lieutenancies in England and Wales.

6. Concluding Remarks

A return to appointing lord-lieutenants to the historic counties would provide Government recognition of the importance of both the historic counties and this office. Prior to 1889 these officers were appointed directly to the historic counties. Their areas remained very close to the historic counties until 1974. There is no practical obstacle to a return to this approach. To continue to appoint them to groupings of long-defunct local government areas is to confound history, geography and cultural identity.

References

- [1] Historic Counties Trust, 2022, [The Historic Counties Standard](#)
- [2] [Lieutenancies Act 1997](#)
- [3] [Lord-Lieutenants \(Scotland\) Order 1996](#)
- [4] Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889
- [5] [Local Government \(Scotland\) Act 1973](#)
- [6] [Local Government etc. \(Scotland\) Act 1994](#)
- [7] Militia Act 1797
- [8] Office for National Statistics, 2021, [Index of Place Names in Great Britain](#)

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The Association of British Counties is the national body representing the 92 historic counties of the United Kingdom. ABC believes that the link that the historic counties provide between our present and our distant past adds great value to the life of the nation and should be cherished by us all. We promote the identities of the historic counties and the important part they play in our culture, heritage and geography.



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Appendix: The lieutenancy areas of Scotland as defined by the Lord-Lieutenants (Scotland) Order 1996^[3], related to the historic counties. Comparison to the historic counties is based on Definition A of the Historic Counties Standard^[1]

Lieutenancy area	Definition in terms of current/former local government areas	Relation to historic county
Aberdeenshire	The pre-1975 county of Aberdeen except those parts within the new local government area of Aberdeen City	Fairly close in area to Aberdeenshire (ignoring the City of Aberdeen).
Angus	The current local government area of Angus	Fairly close in area to Angus (ignoring the City of Dundee).
Argyll and Bute	The pre-1996 district of Argyll and Bute	Does not include the whole of Argyllshire or Buteshire, but includes area of Inverness-shire.
Ayrshire and Arran	The pre-1996 districts of Kilmarnock & Loudoun, Cumnock & Doon Valley, Cunninghame and Kyle & Carrick	Very close in area to Ayrshire along with the Isle of Arran (in Buteshire).
Banffshire	The pre-1975 county of Banff	Fairly close in area to Banffshire.
Berwickshire	The pre-1996 district of Berwickshire	Not close in area to Berwickshire; does not include the western part of the historic county (Lauderdale) but includes an area of East Lothian.
Caithness	The pre-1996 district of Caithness	Identical to Caithness.
Clackmannan	The pre-1996 district of Clackmannan	Fairly close in area to Clackmannanshire.
Dumfries	The pre-1996 districts of Nithsdale and Annandale & Eskdale	Not close in area to Dumfriesshire. Includes the whole of Dumfriesshire but also sizeable part of the east of Kirkcudbrightshire.
Dunbartonshire	The pre-1996 districts of Dunbarton, Clydebank, Bearsden & Milngavie, Strathkelvin, Cumbernauld & Kilsyth and the South Lenzie/Waterside district ward of Strathclyde region	Fairly close in area to Dunbartonshire.
East Lothian	The pre-1996 district of East Lothian	Fairly close in area to East Lothian.
Fife	The pre-1996 Fife region	Fairly close in area to Fife.

Inverness	The pre-1996 districts of Lochaber, Inverness and Badenoch & Strathspey	Not close in area to Inverness-shire. Does not include Skye or Harris. Includes parts of Argyllshire and Morayshire.
Kincardineshire	The pre-1975 county of Kincardine except the electoral division of Nigg	Fairly close in area to Kincardineshire (ignoring the City of Aberdeen).
Lanarkshire	The pre-1996 districts of Monklands, Motherwell, Hamilton, East Kilbride, and Clydesdale and specified electoral divisions of then pre-1996 Strathclyde region	Fairly close in area to Lanarkshire (ignoring the City of Glasgow).
Midlothian	The pre-1996 district of Midlothian	Not close in area to Midlothian (even ignoring the City of Edinburgh). Does not include sizeable areas in the south-west and the south-east of the historic county.
Moray	The pre-1975 county of Moray except those parts which, on the passing of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, formed part of Highland Region	Not close in area to Morayshire. Does not include large area in south-west of the historic county.
Nairn	The pre-1996 district of Nairn	Fairly close in area to Nairnshire.
Orkney	The current local government area of Orkney	Identical to Orkney.
Perth and Kinross	The current local government area of Perth and Kinross	Includes about 77% of Perthshire, along with the whole of Kinross-shire.
Renfrewshire	The pre-1996 districts of Eastwood, Renfrew and Inverclyde	Fairly close in area to Renfrewshire.
Ross and Cromarty	The pre-1996 districts of Ross & Cromarty and Skye & Lochalsh	Includes most of Cromartyshire but does not include Lewis (Ross-shire). Does include large area of Inverness-shire (including Skye).
Roxburgh, Etrick and Lauderdale	The pre-1996 districts of Roxburgh and Etrick & Lauderdale	Includes the whole of the area of Roxburghshire, nearly all of Selkirkshire and parts of Berwickshire, Midlothian and Peeblesshire.
Shetland	The current local government area of Shetland	Identical to Shetland.

Stirling and Falkirk	The pre-1996 districts of Stirling and Falkirk	Includes most of Stirlingshire along with 23% of Perthshire.
Sutherland	The pre-1996 district of Sutherland	Fairly close in area to Sutherland.
The Stewartry of Kirkcudbright	The pre-1996 district of Stewartry	Not close in area to Kirkcudbrightshire. Does not include sizeable areas in the west and east of the historic county.
Tweeddale	The pre-1996 district of Tweeddale	Fairly close in area to Peeblesshire.
West Lothian	The pre-1996 district of West Lothian	Not close in area to West Lothian. Does not include part in the north-west of the historic county. Includes sizeable area of Midlothian.
Western Isles	The current local government area of Western Isles	Comprises parts of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire.
Wigtown	The pre-1996 district of Wigtown	Not close in area to Wigtownshire. Includes whole of Wigtownshire but also sizeable part of the west of Kirkcudbrightshire.