

ORDNANCE SURVEY GB

BOUNDARY-LINE – USER GUIDE

Version history

Version	Date	Description
1.16	29/08/2012	Amendment to product release note and updates to the User Guide.
2.0	17/07/2019	Updated content.
3.0	04/05/2021	Introduction of vector tiles. Removal of the European Region layer. Addition of the English Region, Country Region and Historic European Region layers.

Purpose of this document

This is the User Guide for the Boundary-Line product. This Guide provides greater insight into this product and its potential applications. For information on the contents and structure of Boundary-Line, please refer to the Technical Specification.

The terms and conditions on which Boundary-Line is made available to you and your organisation are contained in that Ordnance Survey customer contract. Please ensure your organisation has signed a valid current customer contract to be able to use Boundary-Line.

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I. About Boundary-Line

Boundary-Line provides a representation of the hierarchy of administrative and electoral boundaries and their names for England, Scotland and Wales. Boundary-Line for England and Wales was initially digitised from Ordnance Survey's boundary record sheets at 1:10 000 scale (or, in some cases, at larger scales).

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) codes are supplied by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and General Register Office for Scotland (GROS).

Appropriate software is needed to use the data for your intended application.

I.1 Boundary-Line benefits

The high specification of Boundary-Line offers you the following benefits:

- Full coverage of Great Britain, supplied as England, Scotland and Wales.
- The key boundary dataset for Great Britain, suited to multiple applications using a geographical information system (GIS) and other digital mapping systems.
- The full hierarchy of boundaries.
- Structured vector format, offering great functionality.
- [GSS codes](#), where available, allow you to link Boundary-Line polygons with GSS information.
- Area values for every polygon.
- Mean high water (springs) mark enables you to build and explicitly identify dry land areas within coastal polygons.
- Documented updates via bi-annual releases allow you to easily identify relevant changes.
- Unique administrative area identifiers are retained at each update, allowing revised boundaries to be related to your existing data.

I.2 Boundary-Line applications

Boundary-Line can be used for GIS analysis to support a wide range of business decision-making, such as:

- Political analysis
- Environmental analysis
- Statistical analysis for social or marketing decision-making
- Geo-demographic analysis
- Asset management
- Planning applications
- Legal work
- Reference and research
- Customised graphic output

1.3 Requirements to utilise Boundary-Line

1.3.1 Transfer formats

Boundary-Line is created in the following formats:

- Esri shapefile
- MapInfo Tab file
- GeoPackage
- GML
- Vector tiles (MBTiles)

1.3.2 Supply mechanism

Boundary-Line is supplied as an online download, which is available with no registration required. Data can be downloaded in various formats from the Ordnance Survey Data Hub: [Boundary-Line™ Vector Map Download | All of GB | Free OS Data downloads](#).

1.3.3 Product update schedule

Boundary-Line is now updated twice a year, in spring and autumn, allowing a choice as to which update is preferred.

The spring update represents boundaries (as defined and modified by Orders, Acts and Statutory Instruments) at the date of the May local elections.

The autumn update also represents boundaries at the date of the May local elections and is operative from the previous spring/May to autumn/October release.

Unlike changes to other boundaries, changes to Westminster constituency (parliamentary) boundaries do not come into operation on a defined date (see [effective date](#) and [operative dates](#)) and it is therefore difficult to timetable such changes into the spring or autumn updates. Therefore, any forthcoming Westminster constituency (parliamentary) boundary changes that have been approved by Government will be supplied as a separate file (in MapInfo or Esri formats only) as part of the updates until they are included in the product.

2. Overview of Boundary-Line

2.1 Data overview

2.1.1 Basic principles

Boundary-Line is the key dataset of administrative and voting boundaries in Great Britain. It is a representation in computer-readable form of a specialist large-scale map, including real-world objects, which may be tangible (such as the [mean high water](#) mark) or intangible (such as a district boundary).

GIS software provides the functionality to store, manage and manipulate this digital map data. The properties of the data make it suitable as a key base for users wishing to develop applications. Boundary-Line is also suitable for use within other digital mapping systems. It's coordinated on the [National Grid](#), which allows for the easy superimposition of other datasets.

Polygons are continuous areas defined by sets of bounding closed lines. They are representational of areas, such as electoral wards, and have relationships to administration collection features in order to convey descriptive characteristics of the polygon. These are explicit within the data and can be viewed and manipulated with appropriate software.

2.1.2 Boundary-Line data source

Boundary-Line is currently updated by mapping against OS VectorMap Local (1:10 000 scale) and, in certain cases, large-scale sources.

2.2 Boundary-Line features

A list of the features within Boundary-Line includes:

- Civil parish (England) and community (Wales)
- County
- District
- Electoral division (county and unitary)
- English Region
- Greater London Authority
- Greater London Authority Assembly constituencies (the London proportional representation voting areas)
- London borough (including the county of the City of London)
- Metropolitan district

- Scottish parliamentary constituency and electoral region
- Unitary authority
- Ward (district, unitary, metropolitan and London borough)
- Welsh Assembly constituency and electoral region
- Westminster (parliamentary) constituency
- [Extent of the realm](#) (EOR): either [mean low water](#) mark (England and Wales), [mean low water springs mark](#) (Scotland) or seaward boundary extensions
- [Mean high water mark](#) (England and Wales) and/or [mean high water springs mark](#) (Scotland): both are abbreviated to MHW in this user guide
- Distinctive names
- GSS codes in England, Wales and Scotland for all units with exception of Greater London Authority, county electoral divisions and non-civil-parish areas
- Area measurements
- Unique administrative unit, link and polygon identifiers
- Annual updates of the dataset

2.3 Supplementary layers in Boundary-Line

There are several supplementary layers included alongside the main Boundary-Line product. These supplementary layers sit separately to the main GB Boundary-Line folder and are included as separate directories in the shapefile and MapInfo TAB file formats.

Features included as supplementary in the supplementary directory are:

- Historical Counties
- Ceremonial Counties
- Historical European Regions (frozen as of 1 April 2021)
- Country

2.4 Boundary-Line folder directory structure

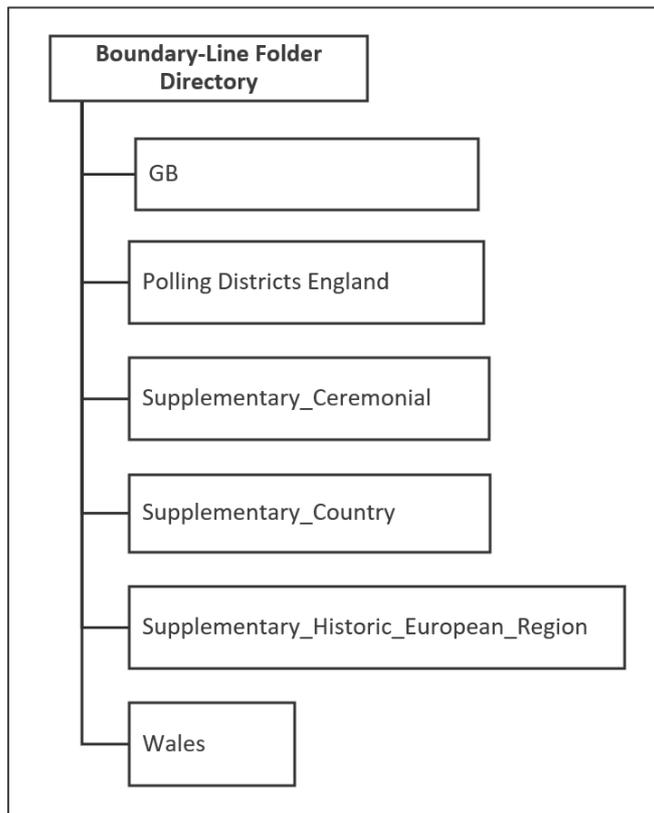


Figure 1: Boundary-Line folder directory structure.

2.5 Feature information

2.5.1 Feature classes

Boundary-Line has three feature classes:

- Administrative units with attributes
- Polygon features with attributes
- Polyline features with attributes

Each feature has the following component:

- Feature attribute data

Each geometric feature has an additional component:

- Feature position

2.5.2 Feature position

The geometry of map features is defined in terms of coordinates. All coordinates used in Boundary-Line are based on the Ordnance Survey [National Grid](#) (NG) coordinate referencing system and are quoted to a 0.1 m resolution. Despite this, Boundary-Line data can be no more accurate than its source, primarily the generalised 1:10 000 scale mapping.

There will be positional differences between the boundaries in Boundary-Line and Ordnance Survey large-scale topographic products. This is due to the large-scale products being surveyed to a higher degree of accuracy and associated to ground surface features, at scales such as 1:1250 and 1:2500.

Boundary-Line has been created as a more generalised set of administrative and electoral boundaries for the whole of Great Britain. It has been digitised against Ordnance Survey (generalised) 1:10 000 scale OS VectorMap Local mapping. The process of generalising for 1:10 000 scale mapping may have caused certain features to be moved from their true ground position for the purposes of map clarity. The result being that Boundary-Line and large-scale boundaries will not always be coincident.

2.5.3 Feature attribute data

An attribute is the descriptive characteristic of a feature, that is, a non-spatial element. In Ordnance Survey map data terms, an attribute can be a feature type (these are character codes), or a distinctive name, number or code, for example, *Bassett Ward* or *145.232 hectares*.

2.5.4 Area codes

Each administrative unit is classified by means of an area code (AC). These area codes are allocated when each feature is initially interpreted and captured from source. This means that a county is distinguished from a ward by the area code allocated to it. The polygon features can be classified by tracing their relationships to administrative units. Consequently, links can be classified by tracing their relationships to polygons.

2.5.5 Other attributes

It is possible, with appropriate software, for you to add other names or values of your own choice as attributes of features.

2.5.6 Unique identifiers for link and polygon

There are two identifiers in Boundary-Line that help you identify features, and which are provided to create consistent references between successive releases of Boundary-Line data. They are unique within each feature type throughout the whole dataset and maintained through successive annual updates. These identifiers are never modified – only created or deleted. If a feature is deleted from the Boundary-Line database, then the identifier ceases to exist.

The two attributes are LINK_ID and POLYGON_ID.

2.5.7 Text

There is no direct cartographic text in Boundary-Line. Names, area values and GSS codes are held as attributes.

3. Boundary-Line explained

3.1 Relationships of administrative areas

The Boundary-Line product supplies the administrative area relationships.

A district is a division of a county; a civil parish is a division of a district. A county is divided for voting purposes into electoral divisions (EDs) and a district is divided for voting purposes into district wards.

3.1.1 Unitary authorities

With the introduction of unitary authorities, there are now two- and three-tier local government hierarchies. The three-tier system remains unchanged. The two-tier system has unitary authorities replacing the county and district levels of administration.

Unitary authorities may be divided into civil parishes or communities (except in Scotland), and unitary authority wards or unitary authority EDs for voting purposes. In Wales, the voting area is the unitary authority ED; in Scotland it is the unitary authority ward and in England it is the unitary authority ward or unitary authority ED.

3.1.2 Metropolitan districts

England also has metropolitan districts; these have no county administration. These districts are divided for voting purposes into metropolitan district wards.

3.1.3 Greater London Authority & London borough

With the introduction of the regional government for London, in this document called the Greater London Authority, the proportional representation voting area for this new administration is the Greater London Authority Assembly constituency. The existing London borough structure also has a relationship with the new Greater London Authority and each London borough is divided for voting purposes into London borough wards.

3.1.4 Scottish Parliamentary constituency and electoral regions

Scotland is divided into parliamentary constituencies for voting purposes to elect Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). The Scottish parliamentary electoral region is a grouping of Scottish parliamentary constituencies.

3.1.5 Welsh Assembly constituency and electoral regions

Wales is divided into assembly constituencies for voting purposes to elect assembly members (AMs) to the Welsh Assembly. The Welsh Assembly electoral region is a grouping of Welsh Assembly constituencies.

3.1.6 English regions

The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 1 January 2021 resulted in the repeal of the European Regions as active electoral areas. For the purposes of Boundary Review, the original European Regions in England have been retained as nine English Regions in the Boundary-Line product. A frozen layer of European Region features, preserved as of 1 April 2021, is available as a supplementary historical dataset.

3.1.7 Westminster (parliamentary) constituency

England, Scotland and Wales are divided into parliamentary constituencies for voting purposes to elect members (MPs) to the Westminster Parliament. Parliamentary constituencies are made up of combinations of wards (or electoral divisions in Wales).

3.2 Structure of Boundary-Line

Boundary-Line data is output in a layered structure. This is a simplified file structure whereby the boundaries are supplied as individual files; for example, the county file contains only counties.

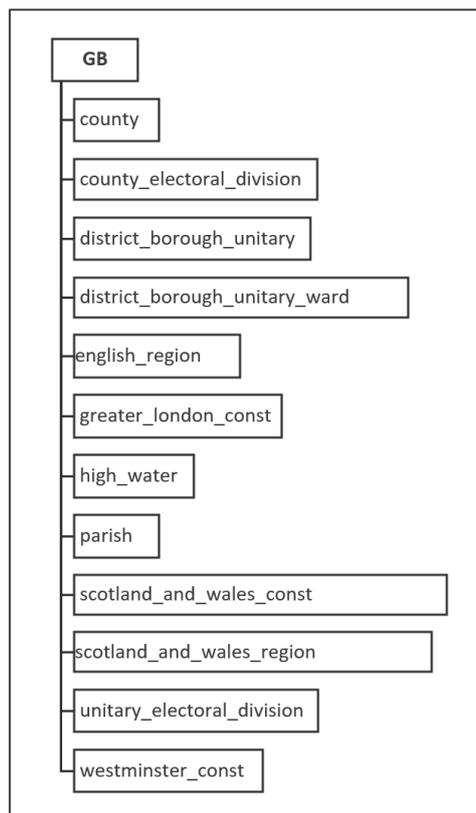


Figure 2a: An example of the GB directory and layered files.

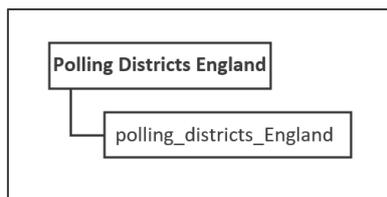


Figure 2b: An example of the Polling Districts England directory and layered files.

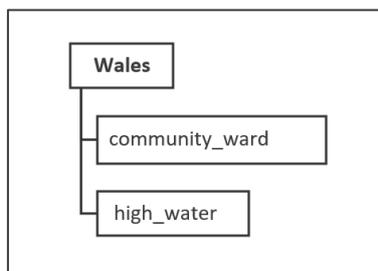


Figure 2c: An example of the Wales directory and layered files.

Note: Ceremonial and Historical counties are provided in separate directories called *Supplementary_Ceremonial* and *Supplementary_Historical*, respectively. Historic European Regions are provided in a separate *Supplementary_Historic_European_Region* directory and Country outlines are provided in a separate *Supplementary_Country* directory.

3.3 Boundary-Line principles and features

This section explains the representation of features in Boundary-Line and describes various definitions and exceptions.

3.3.1 Administrative area

This term is used by Ordnance Survey to refer to all public administrative areas. For the Boundary-Line dataset, the following are included under this term:

- **In England**
 - County
 - Unitary authority
 - Metropolitan district
 - District
 - Civil parish (Note: Depicted if appropriate notification has been received. Not all parishes have councils.)
 - English region
 - Parliamentary (Westminster) constituency
 - Electoral division (of county or unitary authority)
 - Ward (of district, metropolitan district, London borough, unitary authority)
 - London borough (including the county of the City of London)
 - Greater London Authority
 - Greater London Authority Assembly constituency

- **In Wales**

- Unitary authority
- Community (*Note: Depicted if appropriate notification has been received.*)
- Parliamentary (Westminster) constituency
- Electoral division (of unitary authority)
- Welsh Assembly constituency
- Welsh Assembly electoral region

- **In Scotland**

- Unitary authority
- Parliamentary (Westminster) constituency
- Ward (of unitary authority)
- Scottish parliamentary constituency
- Scottish Parliament electoral region

3.3.2 Area values

Area values exist for every polygon in Boundary-Line; area values are quoted to the current Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) specification of 0.001 hectare. The value is subject to the inherited accuracies of the generalised 1:10 000 scale published mapping used as the source for Boundary-Line.

3.3.3 Boundary

A boundary is the limit of a pre-set and established area whose limit is determined by one or more lines. For example, in Boundary-Line, an administrative unit boundary is represented by a county area boundary.

3.3.4 Ceremonial counties

A ceremonial county is an area that has an appointed Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff. Ceremonial counties are not explicitly represented in Boundary-Line.

3.3.5 Complex polygons

Complex polygons are polygons that wholly enclose other polygons. They only occur when an administrative unit wholly encloses one or more others at the same level, for example, a rural district surrounding an urban district.

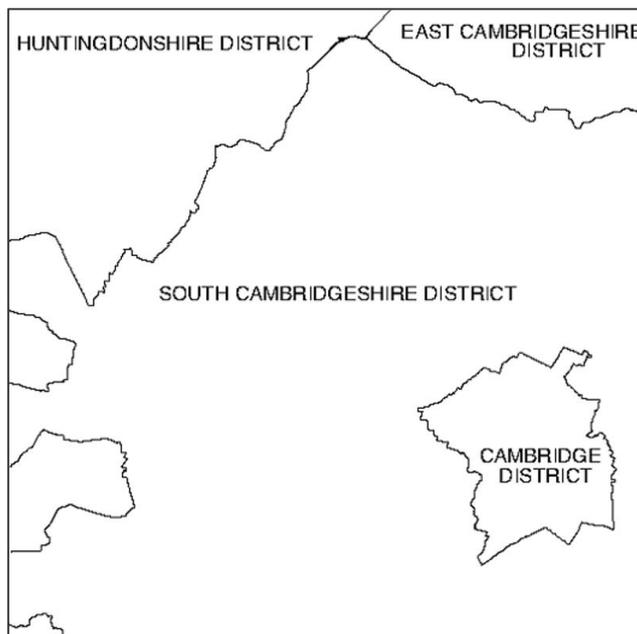


Figure 3: A complex polygon: Cambridge District surrounded by South Cambridgeshire District.

3.3.6 Detached parts

The description 'Detached (Det)', only applies to portions of local government or parliamentary constituency areas which are separated from the main area, being completely surrounded by other local government or parliamentary constituency areas and not connected by direct access on the ground.

The description will not be applied to islands or parts of islands in the sea.

Detached parts have the same GSS code (where applicable) as the main area.

3.3.7 Divorcement

Part of a boundary separated from another, originally on the same alignment. Divorcements are created by the revision of one boundary and not the other.

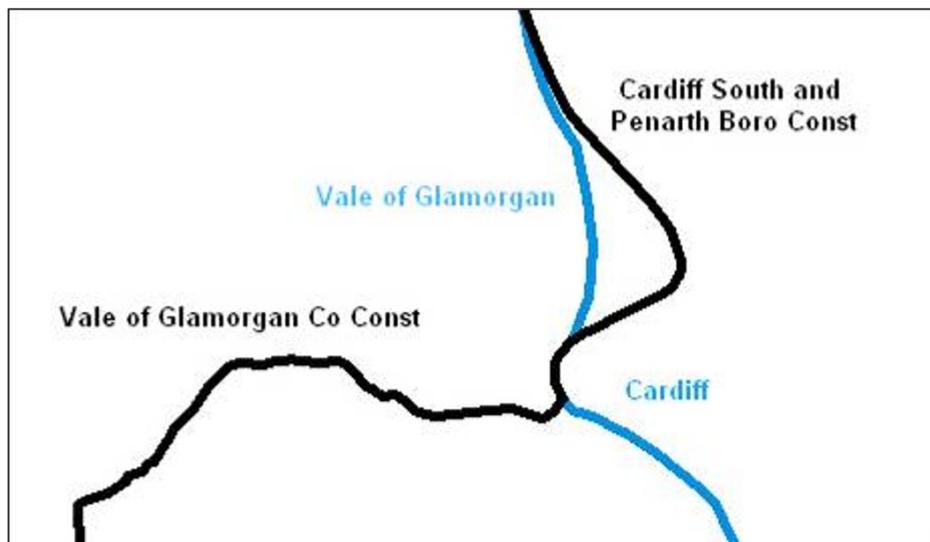


Figure 4: Divorced boundaries

Figure 4 shows a boundary divorcement. The unitary boundary between Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff has been realigned, whilst the parliamentary (Westminster) constituency boundary has remained in its original position. It is likely that the parliamentary (Westminster) constituency boundary will also be realigned at some time in the future.

3.3.8 Effective date

These are the dates on which an Act, Order or Statutory Instruments are 'effective'. They may or may not be the same as the operative date or the appointed day or days. The term is particularly applied to parliamentary (Westminster) constituency changes that are effective at the date of the next general election after the operation of the order making change. This is the 'effective' date, that is, the date of the proclamation dissolving an existing Parliament and calling a new Parliament.

3.3.9 Exception areas

The following are specific exceptions to the normal rules:

Greater London and the metropolitan counties:

- Greater London covers the area of the 32 London boroughs plus the City and county of the City of London.
- Greater London is no longer a county. The Greater London Authority, which has no authority over the autonomous London boroughs, is held as one named file with all the sub-levels of boundary within it.
- The London boroughs and the City and county of the City of London have been classified as London boroughs.

The metropolitan districts within the former metropolitan counties (disbanded in 1985) are classified as metropolitan districts:

- Greater Manchester
- Merseyside
- South Yorkshire
- West Yorkshire
- Tyne and Wear
- West Midlands

For further detail, refer to [Annex C: Exception areas](#).

3.3.10 Government Office Regions

Government Office Regions (GORs) in England are **not** represented as specific boundary features in Boundary-Line; however, the boundaries that are used to define the GORs are represented as **English Regions**. A full list of the counties and unitary authorities that represent each English Region which the GORs are based on can be found in the Boundary-Line release note on the [OS Boundary-Line support page](#).

Additional GOR information can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk/official and <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/geography/ukgeographies/administrativegeography/england>. This will identify the GORs defined by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), which only covers England.

Note: The Government Office Network closed on 31 March 2011.

3.3.11 Honorary titles

Honorary titles granted to local government areas such as city and town are not included in Boundary-Line.

Boroughs in England have been identified, as from the October 2006 release, with (B) in the file name and (B) in the Name attribute, for example:

`CITY_OF_SOUTHAMPTON (B)` = File name

`CITY OF SOUTHAMPTON (B)` = NAME attribute

The borough (B) will only be depicted on unitary authorities, district and metropolitan districts. This addition is to purely denote which boundaries have borough status in England without creating polygons or altering the specification in any way.

3.3.12 National boundaries

The boundaries between England and Wales and England and Scotland are represented by the boundaries between countries in the supplementary Country layer. These are maintained boundary extents based off local authority boundaries.

3.3.13 Government Statistical Service codes

GSS codes are a unique system of referencing for administrative units.

All types of units are coded in Boundary-Line except for Greater London Authority, county electoral divisions and non-civil-parish areas. The County ED code for Greater London Authority is set at 999999999. The code is blank when the administrative unit does not have a code, for example, non-civil-parish areas.

The codes are allocated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales and by the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) for Scottish areas.

3.3.14 Operative dates

This is a calendar date, given in an Order, Act or Statutory Instrument, on which the specified boundary changes will come into operation. Dates given may be up to four years after the publication of the Order, Act or Statutory Instrument and may apply to any type of boundary other than parliamentary or European regions.

Note: The Westminster (parliamentary) constituency boundaries have an [Effective date](#), rather than an Operative Date 'The Effective Date will be the date of a general election, meaning any changes to these boundaries will apply as and from the date of the next election.'

3.3.15 Order, Act or Statutory Instrument

A document signed by the relevant Secretary of State or a local authority letter describing and giving legal authority for boundary changes. Other Acts and Orders can affect the addition of new boundary information, for example, seaward extensions and harbour acts.

3.3.16 Superseded date

This is the last date on which a boundary was current. Where an effective date applies, the superseded date will be the day before the next dissolution of Parliament, or the day before the next European Assembly election in the United Kingdom.

Boundaries are no longer shown in Boundary-Line if they have been superseded at the time of the annual snapshot of boundaries that each release of Boundary-Line represents.

3.3.17 Survey change

When changes occur to tidelines, rivers or streams caused by natural and gradual forces, any boundaries that are linked to these altered features will move with them. When the movement of a boundary, MHW or EOR alignment in Boundary-Line reflects such changes, this will be noted in the update notes that accompany each release of Boundary-Line.

3.3.18 Unannexed areas

This is an area within the realm that is not included in all the relevant administrative units. The area will remain unannexed until further legislation changes its situation and the polygon represents a hole in that level of administration.

3.3.19 Unitary authorities

Unitary authorities and counties effectively create a contiguous layer of administrative units throughout the whole of Great Britain. They represent single-tier administrations with responsibility for all areas of local government.

3.4 The coastline and associated items

3.4.1 Extent of the realm

The external bounding line of the Boundary-Line dataset is the extent of the realm (EOR). This means the boundary extent is digitised on the alignment of the mean low water (springs)(MLWS) for the seaward extent. Boundary-Line does not contain a separate mean low water (springs) (MLWS), only CODE 0071 representing the mean high water (MHW).

Note: To display the EOR, both MHW and another type of boundary (for example, European electoral region or Westminster constituency) need to be displayed together.

The *Territorial Waters Jurisdiction Act 1878* and the *Territorial Waters Order in Council 1964* confirm that the EOR of Great Britain as used by Ordnance Survey is properly shown to the limit of mean low water for the time being, except where extended by Parliament.

This means that the EOR will be:

- The [mean low water mark](#) (mean low water springs in Scotland) except when landward of a [seaward extension](#) or as shown in Figure 5a and indicated as [Point B](#).
- The [mean high water mark](#) (mean high water springs in Scotland), where coincident with mean low water or mean low water springs, but not when landward of a seaward extension or Point B.
- Point B
- Seaward extensions

In Figure 5a, the EOR follows mean low water (springs), crossing the estuaries at LWL.

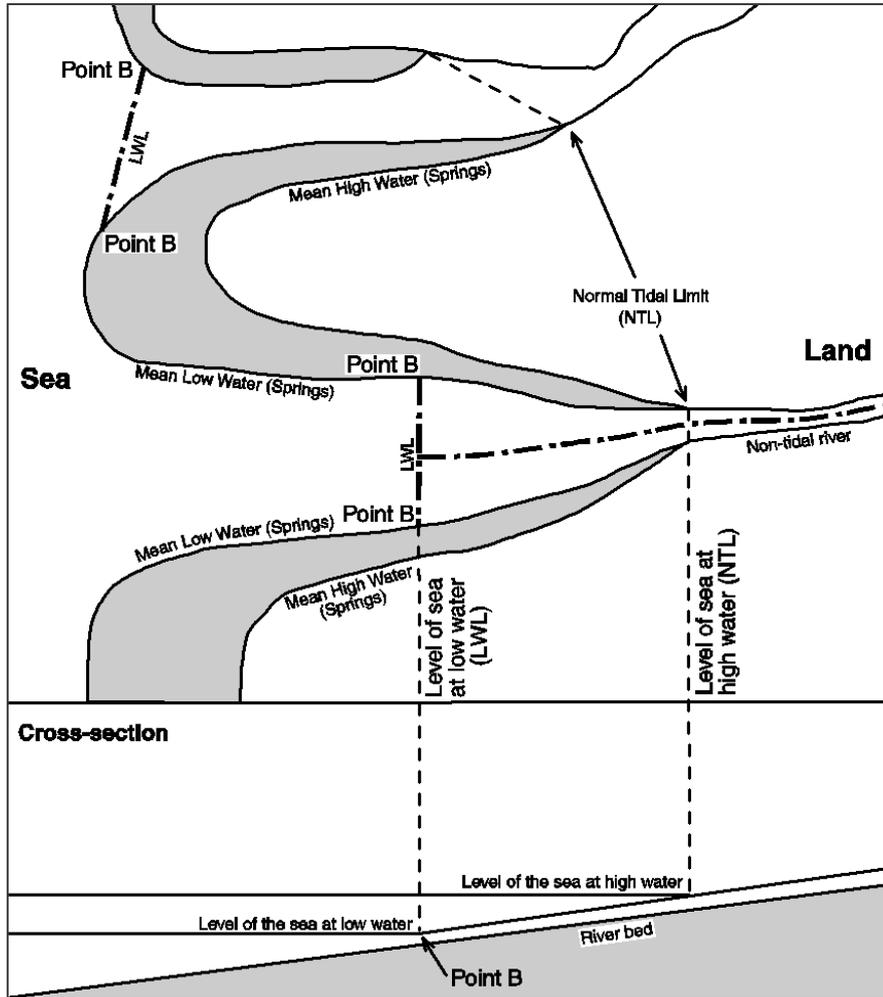


Figure 5a: Treatment of boundaries in estuaries.

Figure 5b shows how the features depicted in Figure 5a are represented in Boundary-Line.

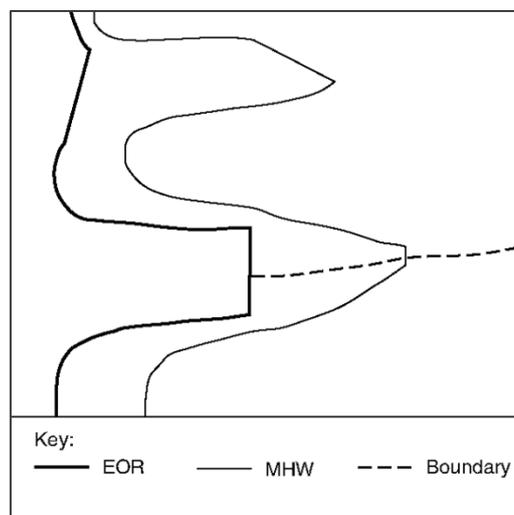


Figure 5b: Treatment of estuaries in Boundary-Line.

3.4.2 Foreshore

The foreshore is taken to be the area of land between [mean high water \(springs\)](#) mark and the [EOR](#) which will include:

- Tidal water within a [seaward extension](#).
- Tidal water above [Point B](#) (Figure 5a), to the [normal tidal limit](#) (NTL), together with the area between mean high water (springs) mark and the edge of the channel at [mean low water \(springs\)](#).

Mean high water (springs) mark is represented in Boundary-Line by a polyline feature with CODE 0071. Mean low water (springs) mark is not shown, although it is generally coincident with the EOR.

The area of non-inland is referenced within each administrative unit using the NA attribute.

3.4.3 Islands and rocks in the sea

The following rules govern the representation in Boundary-Line of offshore islands and rocks in the sea:

- Offshore rocks and islands will be shown if 0.4 hectares or more in area at high tide.
- Offshore islands with buildings will always be shown, irrespective of size.

Offshore islands or rocks will not be shown if they are:

- Beyond the defined EOR, irrespective of size.
- Covered at high tide.

If an offshore island or rock is shown, it will be contained within all the relevant administrative unit collections.

3.4.4 Mean high water (springs)

The mean high water (springs) mark is shown to NTL.

Areas of salt marsh, mudflats and so on often have very complicated tide lines. For ease of digitising and to reduce data volumes, mean high water may be generalised in these areas (not Scotland).

Mean high water (springs) mark is represented in Boundary-Line by a polyline feature with CODE 0071.

Mean high water (springs) mark is subject to continuous change but the captured alignment of a tide line is a snapshot on one day. It is not practical to revise tide lines very frequently.

3.4.5 Mean low water (springs)

Mean low water (springs) mark is shown as the EOR, except when contained within a seaward extension, when it is then omitted.

Banks of sand, mud, shingle or rock separated from the main line of mean low water (springs), and covered at high tide, are not shown. When there are large areas of these banks separated from the main foreshore by narrow channels, the channels are ignored and the whole bounded by mean low water (springs).

The extension of the line of mean low water (springs) into a channel above [Point B](#) becomes edge of channel and is not shown.

Mean low water (springs) mark, and hence [EOR](#) is subject to continuous change but the captured alignment of a tide line is a snapshot on one day. It is not practical to revise tide lines very frequently.

3.4.6 Normal tidal limit

The normal tidal limit (NTL) is the point at which the level of a river or stream ceases to be affected by the tidal flow. This point is often an artificial barrier such as a lock or weir.

3.4.7 Pier

A pier under which water flows is not normally considered to be within the realm. There are some cases, however, where a structure has specifically been included within the realm by act or order, in which case mean high water (springs) mark and EOR are shown around the limits of the structure.

3.4.8 Point B

This is the intangible line across a channel where the level of the river meets the level of the sea at low water.

Within large channels or estuaries, Point B is defined on the source documents for Boundary-Line and is therefore shown as the [EOR](#).

In small channels, Point B is not shown on the source documents, so is assumed to be along the general line of low water and is shown as the EOR.

3.4.9 Seaward extensions

These are artificial extensions to the realm that have been made by an Act of Parliament. They extend the local government and parliamentary areas seaward of mean low water (springs) mark.

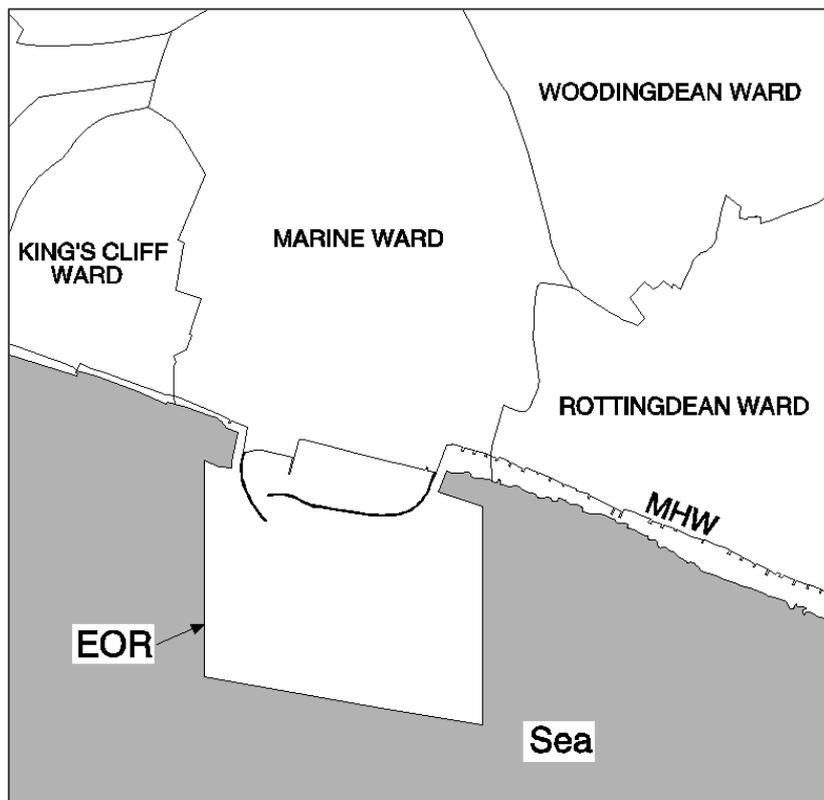


Figure 6: A seaward extension.

3.4.10 Structures in the sea

Breakwaters are structures of wood, stone, metal or other material built to break the force of waves. They can be separate from or joined to the mainland. If joined, they are generally included in the local government and parliamentary areas. If separate, they are not part of the local government and parliamentary area unless they are placed therein by legislation of some kind; for example, Plymouth breakwater is included in the local government area, whilst the centre portion of the Portland Harbour breakwater is not.

Permanent or solid structures in the sea, such as the forts in the Solent off Portsmouth Harbour and Brighton Marina, are usually included in local government and parliamentary areas.

Annex A: Case studies

Creating the right environment for data management: The Welsh Environmental Data Interface (WENDI)

Agriculture, forestry and woodland account for 90% of Wales' land use, generating a wealth of insightful statistical information. The National Assembly for Wales uses this data to inform policy, assist decision-making and help deliver a wide range of services to rural communities.

Sharing data across the NHS to improve patient services

NHS North West was established under government policy to strengthen primary care trusts (PCTs) and give GPs greater ability to commission or purchase health services directly for their patients. The organisation replaced the three former strategic health authorities in Cumbria and Lancashire, Cheshire and Merseyside, and Greater Manchester. Association of Greater Manchester PCTs is taking forward a data analysis and reporting tool called the TIS Analyser, which was developed by Greater Manchester health organisations as part of the Tactical Information Service (TIS).

Read more at: <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/business-and-government/case-studies/index.html>

Annex B: Metadata

INSPIRE compliant metadata in conjunction with UK Location Programme is available to access as either:

- [XML format](#) on the main Ordnance Survey website
- OR
- [XML](#) and [HTML](#) format on the data.gov.uk website.

Annex C: Exception areas

The Inner and Middle Temples

The 'places' known as 'The Inner and Middle Temples' are within the City of London only for some purposes. They are not shown in Boundary-Line, but their areas have been wholly included within the city and its wards for this dataset. There are two distinct areas with other areas held jointly, and the boundaries are so intermixed that they have never been published by Ordnance Survey separately. A record of these boundaries is, however, held in the Boundary Record Library for reference purposes.

Parish/community wards

Divisions of parishes (England) and communities (Wales) not included in Boundary-Line.

Lands common to the Parishes of...

These are areas where the limits of the parishes concerned have not been determined and the area itself is common to (or belongs to) two or more parishes. In Boundary-Line, they are classified as separate parishes with the name *LANDS COMMON TO THE PARISHES OF...* applied (sometimes abbreviated to *LCPs...*).

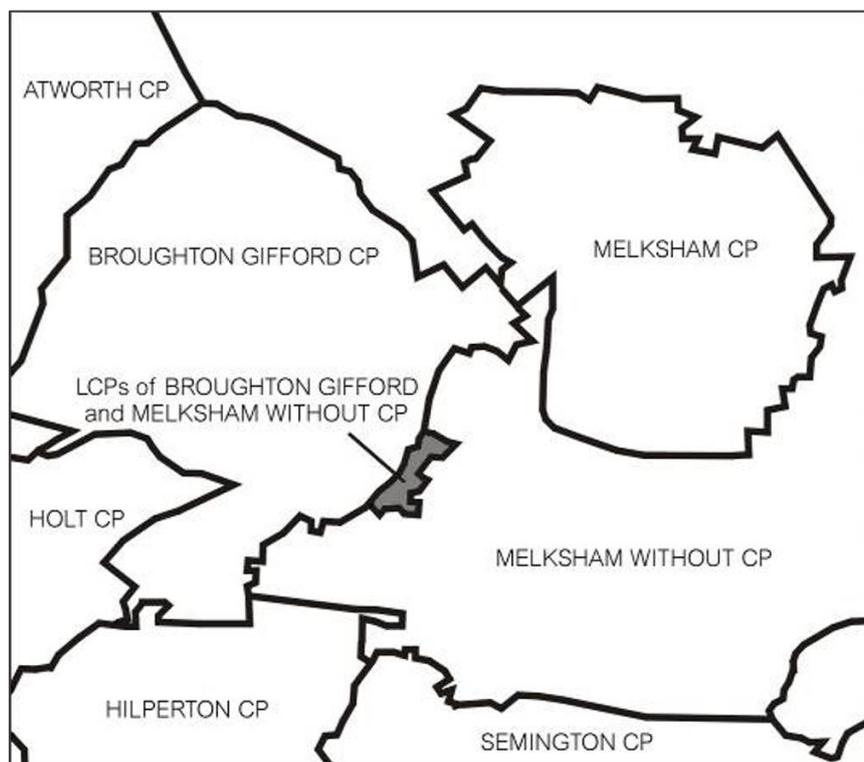


Figure 7: An example of lands common to the parishes of Broughton Gifford and Melksham without CP.

River Dee

The boundary between Wirral metropolitan district in the former county of Merseyside and Cheshire West and Chester unitary authority in the former county of Cheshire and the Flintshire unitary authority area has not been determined, and the line adopted in Boundary-Line is for the purposes of Ordnance Survey only, so that polygons can be created.

River Mersey

Certain sections of the boundary between the former county of Merseyside (containing the metropolitan districts of Liverpool and Wirral), and in the former county of Cheshire, now Cheshire West and Chester, and Halton have never been determined.

For the purposes of Boundary-Line and by agreement with DCLG:

1. The district boundaries of those parts of Cheshire West and Chester that abut the Mersey estuary have been made coincident with the limits of the relevant district's wards at the centre of the channel at high water (CCHW).
2. The undetermined part of the southern boundary of Liverpool district, in the Mersey estuary, has been made coincident with the limits of that district's wards at the CCHW.
3. The undetermined part of the county boundary between the former county of Merseyside and the former county of Cheshire in that part of the estuary between the new Cheshire West and Chester and Liverpool has been made coincident with the limits of the wards at the CCHW.
4. The northern limit of the parliamentary constituency of Ellesmere Port and Neston is the mean high-water mark on the south side of the Mersey estuary.

The wards of Windsor Castle

These 'wards', which include the personal apartments of the Sovereign have no relevance to the election of councillors to electoral areas and are wholly included within the district of Windsor and Maidenhead and its wards.

Annex D: Glossary

accuracy

The closeness of the results of observations, computations or estimates to the true values or the values accepted as being true. Accuracy relates to the exactness of the result and is the exactness of the operation by which the result is obtained.

administrative area

A blanket term used by Ordnance Survey to refer to all public administrative areas, specifically local government management and electoral areas.

administrative unit

A single administrative area.

area

A spatial extent defined by circumscribing lines that form a closed perimeter that does not intersect itself.

attribute

An attribute is a property of an entity, usually used to refer to a non-spatial qualification of a spatially referenced entity. For example, a name or descriptive code indicating what an entity represents or how it should be portrayed.

boundary

Boundaries define the areas of the various national, local government and some European authorities.

code

An alphanumeric attribute code used in digital map data to describe each feature in terms either of the object surveyed or its representation on the map (or both).

coding

Allocation of a feature code to a feature being created from constituent construction data: points and/or segments; with optional linking to an existing feature of the same feature code.

coordinates

Pairs of numbers expressing horizontal distances along original axes. Alternatively, triplets of numbers measuring horizontal and vertical distances. Row and column numbers of pixels from raw imagery are not considered coordinates for the purpose of the standard.

currency

An expression of the up-to-dateness of data.

data structure

The defined logical arrangement of data as used by a system for data management; a representation of a data model in computer form.

distinctive name

A text feature consisting of text string(s) which form(s) a proper name.

entity

Something about which data is stored in a databank or database, for example, boundary and name. The data may consist of relationships, attributes, positional and shape information and so on. Often synonymous with feature.

explicit

Data that is directly represented in digital form. For example, the relationship between two objects is explicit if recorded by such means as pointers and does not have to be deduced by further analysis of the data.

feature

An item of detail within a map that can be a point and/or symbol, text or line.

geographical information system (GIS)

A system for capturing, storing, checking, integrating, analysing and displaying data that is spatially referenced to the Earth. This is normally considered to involve a spatially referenced computer database and appropriate applications software.

layer

A subset of digital map data selected on a basis other than position. For example, one layer might consist of all features relating to counties and another to wards. Also known as a *level*.

level

A level corresponds to a single type of administrative unit (for example, a ward or a district) and is conceptual in form. See also *layer*.

line

A series of connected coordinated points forming a simple feature with homogeneous attribution.

line feature

The spatial abstraction of an object in one dimension. Lines may intersect with other lines. They are defined as a series of two or more coordinate pairs and may be curved or straight. Curved lines consist of a series of very short straight-line segments. As an object abstraction, a line has no width.

link or edge

Links are the representation of line features. They are made up of one or more consecutive non-intersecting link segments with common attributes between two terminating nodes. Links have no connection with other links except at the start or end, via common (shared) terminating nodes (points). All links contain their terminating coordinates. Links may form the boundaries of polygons and may be shared between polygons.

name

The proper name or label of an object (real world) or feature (object abstraction). The descriptive name might consist of one or more text strings or be an attribute of the object or object abstraction.

National Grid

A unique referencing system that can be applied to all Ordnance Survey maps of Great Britain (GB) at all scales. It is used by Ordnance Survey on all post-war mapping to provide an unambiguous spatial reference in Great Britain for any place or entity whatever the map scale. The National Grid is defined by the OSGB36 spheroid.

object

A collection of entities which form a higher-level entity within a specific data model.

object (real world)

A recognisable discrete part of the real world.

operative date

The date the order was made; not necessarily the day it becomes 'live and in use'.

origin

The zero point in a system of rectangular coordinates.

polygon

Polygons are a representation of areas. A polygon is defined as a closed line or perimeter completely enclosing a contiguous space and is made up of one or more links. At least one node occurs on the perimeter of a polygon where the bounding link completes the enclosure of the area. There may be many nodes connecting the bounding links of a polygon. Links may be shared between polygons. Polygons may wholly contain other polygons; or be contained within other polygons.

positional accuracy

The degree to which the coordinates define a point's true position in the world, directly related to the spheroid and/or projection on which the coordinate system is based.

record

A set of related data fields grouped for processing.

rectangular coordinates

Also known as X-Y coordinates and as eastings and northings. These are two-dimensional coordinates that measure the position of any point relative to an arbitrary origin on a plane surface, for example, a map projection.

relative accuracy

The measure of the internal consistency of the positional measurements in a dataset. For many local area purposes (for example, records of utility plant), relative accuracy is more important than absolute accuracy. In this case, accurate measurement of offsets from fixed points is required rather than knowledge of the true position in space.

resolution

A measure of the ability to detect quantities. High resolution implies a high degree of discrimination but has no implication as to accuracy. For example, in a collection of data in which the coordinates are rounded to the nearest metre, resolution is 1 metre, but the accuracy may be ± 5 metres or worse.

segment

A chord defined by two consecutive coordinates in a line string.

Statutory Instrument

An order made by a Minister under delegated power from Parliament. Contains changes to boundary information, the alignment, type or relationship to a named area (amalgamation) or a change of name to an area are made by order.

transfer format

The format used to transfer data between computer systems. In general usage, this can refer not only to the organisation of data, but also to the associated information, such as attribute codes, which are required in order to successfully complete the transfer.

vector

A straight line joining two data points.

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