

# District Councils

## Background

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The Public Health Act 1848 and the Local Government Act 1858 empowered local ratepayers to create Local Boards of Health (Sanitary Authorities after 1858) to control public services such as sanitation, water supply, and burial grounds. Most sanitary authorities began in urban areas. In some rural areas the responsibility was given to the Board of Guardians. The Local Government Act 1894 renamed urban and rural sanitary authorities as urban and rural district councils. There were some boundary changes and new districts created. These district councils remained intact until 1974 (see *How to Find the Records* below for a list). After 1974 the old district councils were abolished and 6 new larger authorities were created with new powers.

The Local Boards of Health (1848-1858) had control over the following areas:

- Water supply & sewerage
- Street cleaning and maintenance
- Burial grounds
- Public toilets
- Slaughterhouses
- Controlling the spread of diseases – including appointing inspectors of public health and inspectors of nuisances

Sanitary Authorities (1858-1894) had control of the above, plus:

- Fires and fire prevention
- Removal of ruined or dangerous buildings
- Public parks, clocks & baths (swimming pools)
- Regulation of taxis
- Naming streets and numbering houses

District Councils (1894-1974) had control of the above, plus:

- Hospitals until 1948 (usually together with a Hospital Board or Authority).
- Planning
- Council housing

District Councils (1974 onwards) also regulated: [\*shared with County Council]

- Allotments
- Cemeteries
- Environmental health & refuse collection
- Housing
- Markets & fairs
- Local planning\*
- Rate collection (council tax)
- Museums & galleries, tourism\*
- Footpaths, traffic, highways & public transport\*

## What records are there?

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The number of records that have survived varies greatly across the councils. You may find that there are lots of records on sanitation and water supply but no records for planning. There could potentially be records relating to any of the above functions of the district councils. Some records may still be held by the council in question or the successor body.

## How to Find the Records

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### Pre-1974 District Councils

|      |                          |      |                          |
|------|--------------------------|------|--------------------------|
| DA1  | Awre Urban               | DA23 | North Cotswold Rural     |
| DA2  | Bisley Urban             | DA24 | East Dean Rural          |
| DA3  | Charlton Kings Urban     | DA25 | West Dean Rural          |
| DA4  | Cirencester Urban        | DA26 | Dursley Rural            |
| DA5  | Coleford Urban           | DA27 | Gloucester Rural         |
| DA6  | East Dean Urban          | DA28 | Lydney Rural             |
| DA8  | Kingswood Urban          | DA30 | Newent Rural             |
| DA9  | Leckhampton Urban        | DA31 | Northleach Rural         |
| DA10 | Mangotsfield Urban       | DA32 | Pebworth Rural           |
| DA11 | Nailsworth Urban         | DA33 | Sodbury Rural            |
| DA12 | Newnham Urban            | DA34 | Stow-on-the-Wold Rural   |
| DA15 | Stow-on-the-Wold Urban   | DA35 | Stroud Rural             |
| DA16 | Stroud Urban             | DA36 | Tetbury Rural            |
| DA17 | Tetbury Urban            | DA37 | Tewkesbury Rural         |
| DA18 | Westbury-on-Severn Urban | DA38 | Thornbury Rural          |
| DA19 | Barton Regis Rural       | DA39 | Warmley Rural            |
| DA20 | Campden Rural            | DA40 | Westbury-on-Severn Rural |
| DA21 | Cheltenham Rural         | DA41 | Wheatenhurst Rural       |
| DA22 | Cirencester Rural        | DA42 | Winchcombe Rural         |

An urban district council covered one parish; rural district councils covered more than one. Therefore the place which was covered by an urban district council may not have been a town. The functions of the district councils in Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury were taken on by the borough councils (references: GBR, CBR and TBR respectively).

Records are arranged in the catalogues by function and type. There is a classification scheme which gives each type of record a number. These include:

- Minutes & administrative records (100-199)
- Records relating to burial grounds (200-209)
- War time records (220-239)
- Accounts (300-499)
- Rating & valuation records (500-599)
- Housing records (600-699)
- Planning records (700-799)
- Records of the Public Health Inspector (800-889)

References will consist of the district council's collection number followed by the record classification number, e.g. records relating to WW2 for Nailsworth will be held under the references DA11/220 to DA11/239. Each item will then be given a unique sub-number to identify it.

### **Post-1974 District Councils**

Records of the post-1974 district councils (Cheltenham Borough, Cotswold DC, Forest of Dean DC, Gloucester City Council, Stroud DC and Tewkesbury Borough) are held under the reference DC.

To view a list of records please use our online catalogue at:

[www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives](http://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives)

For guidance on how to use the online catalogue please see the Help page and FAQs. Or you can watch a short YouTube tutorial.