

South Cambridgeshire DC Liberal Democrat Group



The Review Officer (South Cambridgeshire)
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor Millbank Tower
21-24 Millbank
London

25 July 2016

Dear Sir or Madam,

Boundary Review of South Cambridgeshire - Consultation Response

I am pleased to be able to enclose the comments of the Liberal Democrat Group of South Cambridgeshire District Council to the consultation on the draft recommendations in the district.

Number of three- and two- member wards

The draft recommendations propose 5 three-member wards, 10 two-member wards and 10 single-member wards. This means that only 22% of councillors are in single-member wards, with the rest in multi-member wards. By contrast, the submission of the Liberal Democrat Group had 16 single-member wards and only 3 three-member wards.

There is no obvious advantage to the LGBCE proposals over our proposals except that there are fewer wards with over 10% variance. It would be perfectly possible to support our proposals if preference is given to single-member wards and to creating wards that have some geographical coherence. For an entirely rural area like ours where parishes are almost always indivisible, a strict adherence to keeping wards within the 10% variance is detrimental to the creation of good and sustainable relationships between councillors and their residents.

The Council, supported by the Liberal Democrat Group, chose to have all-up elections rather than elections by thirds because this would enable us to have the highest number of single-member wards. The LGBCE's insistence on having so few wards with a variance over 10% means that this has not happened. Instead, the district is dominated with 2- and 3-member wards, but we are now stuck with the instability that all-up elections will bring.

We urge you to revisit your proposals and increase the number of allowed wards with a variance of more than 10%.

Proposed Fen Ditton and Fulbourn Ward

The proposed three-member ward is unwieldy, bringing together villages with no other links. We urge you to return to our proposal for a single-member Fen Ditton and Teversham ward along with a two-member Fulbourn and Wilbrahams ward.

The only objection to our proposal was from Teversham Parish Council. We argue that our proposal would not, in fact, entail 'splitting communities'. Teversham Foxgloves is an entirely separate settlement that has much more in common with Fulbourn Beechwood, being on the edge of the Cambridge urban area.

This area has several new developments that are at various stages of the planning process. It is essential that each part of this area has appropriate representation, and this can be secured most effectively by having two wards with clearer links between councillors and smaller areas.

Proposed Harston and Comberton Ward

Again, the proposed three-member ward is very damaging to good representation on the Council. It in no way reflects existing (or potential) community links. It includes villages on three different radial routes into Cambridge. There are several complex ongoing changes to the environment, with new residential areas and infrastructure projects being built or proposed. It is essential that each group of two to three villages is properly represented, which this proposal makes less likely.

We recognise that our proposal for three single-member wards includes two which have a variance of over 10%. We believe that this is acceptable because it allows coherent wards to be created.

However, if you insist that this isn't possible, we would like to propose an alternative, with one two-member ward and one single-member ward:

Comberton - 1 Member

PA1 - Barton	708
PB1 - Comberton	1853
PC1 - Coton	704
Total	3265
Variance:	12.8%

Harston and Haslingfield - 2 Members

PD1 - Grantchester	441
PF1 - Harlton	251
TA1 - Harston	1411
PG1 - Haslingfield	2351
TB1 - Hauxton	1097
Total	5551
Variance:	-4.1%

Our preference remains for three single-member wards.

Yours sincerely,

Aidan Van de Weyer
on behalf of the South Cambridgeshire DC Liberal Democrat Group