

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council

Summary

Who we are:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas.

Electoral reviews:

The purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, the names, number and boundaries of wards – for a local authority.

Why Fenland?

We are conducting an electoral review of Fenland District Council to deliver improved levels of electoral equality for local voters.

Fenland currently has high levels of electoral inequality so that the value of your vote - in district council elections - varies depending on where you live in the district.

Council size

The Commission is minded to recommend that Fenland District Council should be represented by 39 councillors in future: one fewer than under the current arrangements.

We consider that a council size of 39 members will ensure the council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively and will provide for a pattern of wards that reflects community identities across Fenland.

To view the proposals in detail, visit: consultation.lgbce.org.uk

You can view the full report and maps at: www.lgbce.org.uk

We will also make hard copies available in council buildings and libraries.

Electoral arrangements

Our draft recommendations propose that Fenland's 39 councillors should represent four three-member wards, six two-member wards and 15 single-member wards across the district.

The Commission believes its draft recommendations meet its obligations - which are set out in law - to:

- Deliver electoral equality for voters.
- Reflect local community interests and identities.
- Promote effective and convenient local government.

The Commission welcomes proposals for alternative boundaries that better reflect the three criteria above.

Stage starts	Description
13 March 2012	Submission of proposals for ward patterns to the Commission by District Council
4 May 2012	Commission's formulation of draft recommendations
23 October 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
7 January 2012	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

Prior to the publication of these draft recommendations, the Commission received a submission from Fenland District Council which put forward proposed ward boundaries for the whole district.

The submission can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

General analysis

The Commission's draft recommendations for new ward boundaries are broadly based on the proposals presented to us by the District Council with a number of minor modifications.

Whittlesey

The Commission proposes to adopt the council's recommendations in this part of the district for five single-member wards called: Whittlesey Central, Whittlesey East, Whittlesey North, Whittlesey North East and Whittlesey West. We also propose a two-member Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward.

We propose one amendment to the council's proposals so that the areas of White Acres, Otago Close and Otago Road should be part of Whittlesey Central ward and not Whittlesey North East. The change would improve electoral equality for local voters while maintaining local community ties.

Chatteris

In this part of the district, we are proposing to base our recommendations on the submission made to us by the council. As such, our recommendations are for four single-member wards called: Birch, Slade Lode, The Mills and Wenneye.

We propose some changes to the council's scheme which would mean including Lindsells Walk into Birch ward so that Curlew Avenue has good access to the rest of the ward. In order to ensure that such a pattern of wards delivers electoral equality, we also propose to include The Shrubbery as part of the Wenneye ward.

We also propose to include the area to the south of Station Road as part of The Mills ward and not Slade Lode ward as proposed by the council. The council's scheme in this area would have created a parish ward containing only 70 electors.

March, Christchurch and Elm

The Commission's proposals for this part of the district are for three three-member wards called: March East, March North and March West as well as a two member ward called Christchurch & Elm.

The Commission had concerns about linking the parishes of Christchurch and Elm as there are no direct road links between them. However, the Commission concluded that there were no other options that better met its statutory criteria and we are putting forward this proposal for consultation.

Doddington and Wimblington

The Commission proposes a two-member Doddington & Wimblington ward for this part of the district. We considered the possibility of two single-member wards here but concluded that a two-member ward would deliver higher levels of electoral equality.

Wisbech

We propose five single-member wards for this part of the district.

The recommendations are based on the council's proposals and include wards called: Clarkson, Kirkgate, Medworth, Peckover and Staithe.

The Commission proposes some small changes to the council's scheme to improve electoral equality for voters. As such, we propose that Peckover Drive should form part of Staithe ward and not Octavia Hill ward.

We also propose that the even numbered properties on Coleville Road should form part of Kirkgate ward which provides access for the Trafford Park area into the rest of the ward.

What happens next?

There will now be an eleven-week consultation period on the draft recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by **7 January 2013**.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Fenland and welcome comments relating to the proposed ward boundaries, ward names and number of councillors representing those wards.

Write to us:

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View the proposals and maps in detail and have your say at:
consultation.lgbce.org.uk

The full report and accompanying maps are also available at:
www.lgbce.org.uk

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament in April 2010. It is independent of government and political parties, and is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas

The
Local Government
Boundary Commission
for England