



# EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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*This matter is being dealt with by:*

John Hill

Telephone: [REDACTED]

My Ref: [REDACTED]

JH/Is/

Your ref

Dear Mr Hinds

## **East Cambridgeshire District Council response to Cambridgeshire County Council Boundary Review Draft Recommendations**

Please find attached East Cambridgeshire District Councils response to the draft recommendations for the electoral review of Cambridgeshire County Council.

The Council strongly opposes the LGBCE proposals predominately on the basis that they do not reflect the identity and interest of local communities across the district and proposes an alternative division pattern. We also support the CCC view that 63 county councillors would best enable effective and convenient local government.

Should you require any further information or have any questions please contact Sally Bonnett, Project Officer for the ECDC Review, on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
John Hill  
**Chief Executive**

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## **East Cambridgeshire District Council response to Cambridgeshire County Council boundary review draft recommendations**

In its draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council published in May 2015, the Local Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) sets out proposals for a council size of 61 and a division pattern to accommodate this number of councillors.

For East Cambridgeshire these proposals return 8 county councillors and recommend 6 new electoral divisions.

East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) wishes to make the following points relating to the proposed council size and division pattern and in support of single member divisions.

### **Council Size**

In its submission to the LGBCE in July 2014, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) set out the case for a council size of 63 councillors.

CCC considered the expected increase in population and the impact that major infrastructure projects to support this growth and the increasing emphasis on localism and partnership working will have on councillors' workloads. CCC has also undergone significant internal governance changes, and whilst it is too soon to accurately quantify the impact of these changes, they may also lead to an increase in Councillors' workload.

However, owing to the current financial climate, CCC also faces an unprecedented reduction in its budget and resources, which must be acknowledged. With that in mind, CCC gave serious consideration to reducing the number of councillors, which will result in savings. Such a reduction would be in line with the outcomes of recent reviews of other two-tier county authorities.

Having weighed up these factors and tested scenarios for 57, 59, 61 and 63 councillors, CCC proposes a reduction in the number of councillors from 69 to 63. Of the various scenarios, this was considered to be the most workable, based on the options developed on possible division boundaries, based on single Member Divisions (see <http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Agendaltem.aspx?agendaItemID=10062> for details of this scenario testing).

ECDC concur with CCC that a council size of 63 will best help the county council deliver effective and convenient local government. In two-tier government the effectiveness of the county council has a significant impact on the lower tier local authorities.

At the district level, being represented by 9 rather than 8 county councillors will give the residents of East Cambridgeshire better access to their elected representatives and have less

impact on the workloads of county councillors for the district, enabling more effective engagement with local residents, due to the lower average electorate they represent.

### Single-member divisions

ECDC supports the CCC view that it is appropriate to abolish its existing two Member divisions. ECDC agrees that single member divisions are more transparent and accountable, and give greater clarity to both the electorate and local organisations (e.g. Parish, Town and City Councils) as to where the responsibility lies. Two member divisions can cause confusion, especially where Members have differing views on local issues.

### Division pattern

ECDC strongly opposes the pattern of divisions proposed by the LGBCE because it does not reflect the identity and interests of local communities, nor does it enable effective and convenient local government. This view is echoed by many of the parish councils in the district.

The market towns of Ely, Littleport and Soham have very distinct identities and communities and there is little evidence of any shared links or associations, infrastructure or facilities. It is imperative that they are kept within separate electoral divisions and not merged as in the LGBCE proposal.

Equally the rural villages have very different characteristics to the market towns and as such careful consideration should be given when aligning them in divisions. The proposed Littleport East and Soham South division incorporates such a large and varied area of the district that all sense of individual community identity is lost. Similarly, the proposed Littleport West Division would cover 13 Parish Councils, with different identities.

ECDC proposes an alternative division pattern which better reflects local communities and will enable CCC members to better serve the local community.

This arrangement keeps the three market towns separate, aligning them only with adjacent communities. Whilst there are no examples of coordinated events, or groups between the market towns and the only shared facilities are the sixth form college and the hospital, each has numerous examples of these within its own community. Ely, Littleport and Soham have their own secondary school, health facilities, sports centres, and countless community groups and organisations all specific to each community. Each has its own local events, e.g. Ely Eel Festival, Ely Apple Day, Ely Folk Festival, The Littleport Show, Soham Pumpkin Fair, most of which are a celebration of their distinct local identity.

We also believe that keeping the market town communities together will allow for more effective and convenient local government as it will reduce the range of differing views on local issues and result in a greater focus of work for county councillors. The smaller parishes are more likely to have similar issues to each other (e.g. lack of public transport and employment opportunities) than they are with the market towns.

In terms of the other divisions it proposes, ECDC feels these are more relevant to the local communities than those suggested by the LGBCE.

East Cambridgeshire can be broadly defined into two subareas. The northern part of the district is predominantly intensively farmed fenland, with many settlements located on higher ground on the old 'islands' in the fen. The south of the district is dominated by the horseracing industry with large areas of farmland converted to stud use. Residents mainly look to Newmarket and Cambridge for services and facilities.

The ECDC proposals reflect this by arranging the southern areas into 2 separate divisions and doing the same with the northern ones. This arrangement also largely reflects secondary school catchment boundaries as these facilities act as a hub for the local communities, offering additional benefits such as meeting rooms and other facilities.

ECDC proposal: 63 members – 9 single member wards

**Scenario 1: 63 Members - 9 single Member Divisions**

<b>Division Name</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Electorate 2020</b>	<b>Variance 2020 (%)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>EC_1 Littleport</b>	1	8,350	0.9	Littleport East, Littleport West, Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow	Our proposal retains the identity of Littleport by keeping it together in one Division.
<b>EC_2 Ely West</b>	1	9,063	9.5	Ely West, Ely South (less 2-62 Cambridge Road, Samuels Way, Cambridge Court, Marriott Drive, Houghton Gardens, Tower Road) and polling district HF2 to left of Lynn Road only.	Our proposal divides Ely into West and East, utilising the strong and well recognised boundary lines of the two main roads into Ely, with some minor acceptable deviations as detailed.
<b>EC_3 Ely East</b>	1	7,857	- 5	Rest of Ely	Our proposal divides Ely into West and East, utilising the strong

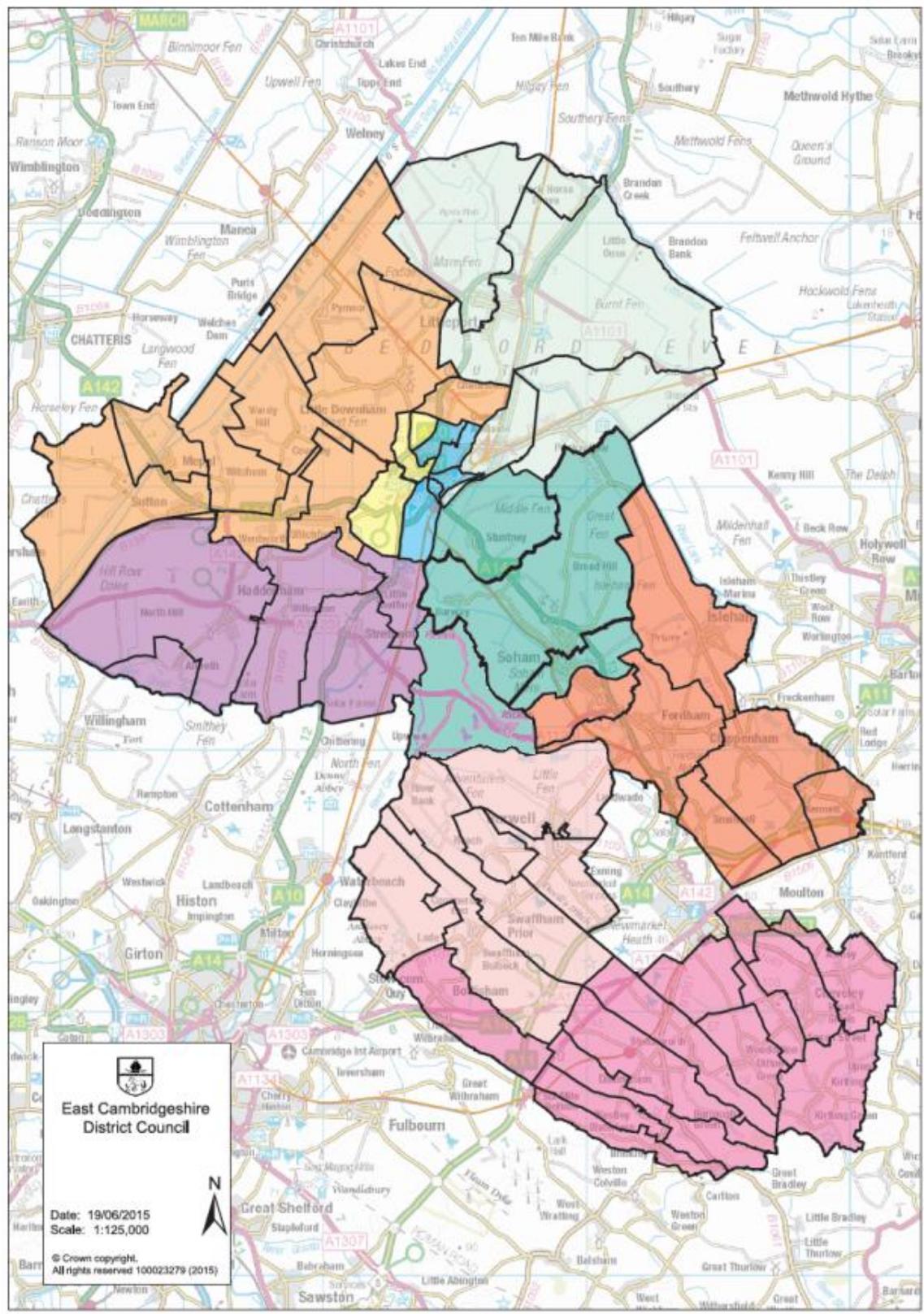
					and well recognised boundary lines of the two main roads into Ely, with some minor acceptable deviations as detailed.
EC_4 <b>Sutton North &amp; Downham Villages</b>	1	7,464	- 9.8	Chettisham, Downham South, Pymoor, Witchford, Coveney, Witcham, Mepal, Wentworth and part of Sutton, north of Station Road, High Street and along B1381 to The America.	Sutton Parish Council is opposed to the proposal to include Ely North within its boundaries and stated that it identifies more with other rural villages. Our proposal divides Sutton into North and South, utilising the strong highway boundary of Station Road, High Street and the B1381 to The America, roads that lead naturally into each other. Sutton has a strong relationship and community links with the villages to both the north and south. Dividing Sutton into two facilitates good electoral equality throughout the District, but also has the benefit of retaining working

					relationships of Sutton with the villages to both the north and south of it. Sutton has worked collaboratively on a number of projects with the villages proposed for inclusion, such as youth provision and campaigning for improved infrastructure such as safety improvements and a cycleway on the A142. Little Downham is connected to Chettisham via ancient drove routes.
<b>EC_5 Sutton South &amp; South Ely Villages</b>	1	7,456	-9.9	Little Thetford, Stretham, Wilburton, Haddenham, Aldreth, and part of Sutton, south of Station Road, High Street and along B1381 to The America.	Our proposal divides Sutton into North and South, utilising the strong highway boundary of Station Road, High Street and the B1381 to The America, roads that lead naturally into each other. Sutton has a strong relationship and community links with the villages to both the north and south. Dividing Sutton into two facilitates good electoral equality

					throughout the District, but also has the benefit of retaining working relationships of Sutton with the villages to both the north and south of it. Sutton has worked collaboratively on a number of projects with the villages proposed for inclusion, such as youth provision and campaigning for improved infrastructure such as safety improvements and a cycleway on the A142.
<b>EC_6 Soham North</b>	1	8,400	1.5	Wicken, Stuntney, Soham North and rest of Soham Central	Wicken Parish Council strongly stated their desire to retain long established links with Soham, including use of educational, health and retail facilities. Our proposal divides Soham into north and south.
<b>EC_7 Soham South &amp; South Soham Villages</b>	1	7,580	-8.4	Soham South, Isleham, Fordham, Kennett, Chippenham, Snailwell and part of Soham Central (Brook Dam Lane,	Our proposal divides Soham into north and south. The villages in this Division look to Soham.

				College Close, Ennion Close, Frank Bridges Close, Gidney Lane, High Street (no.s 2-16 and 7-13), Ranthorne Mews, Red Lion Square, Regent Place, Sand Street, The Causeway)	
EC_8 <b>Burwell</b>	1	7,760	- 6.2	Burwell, Reach, Swaffhams, Lode	Our proposal retains Burwell's identity, particularly in relation to use of educational facilities, as being separate from Soham South and Fordham Villages, which look towards a different secondary school. There are many community links between the villages in this Division, with residents using the retail facilities in Burwell, (supermarkets, petrol station, Barclays Bank) as well as the GP surgery in Burwell. The vast majority of young people also attend the same Secondary School, Bottisham Village College.

					In common with other villages in the Division, Lode is a flat village and is on the edge of the fens; Lode is to the north of the B1102, therefore placing it in the Burwell Division provides for efficient local government in geographical terms.
EC_9 <b>Woodditton</b>	1	7,720	- 6.7	Cheveley district ward, Dullingham Villages district ward, Bottisham district ward excluding Lode.	Our proposal uses the existing Woodditton Division boundaries excluding Lode, in order to achieve good electoral equality (see above for comments about Lode).



  
**East Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

Date: 19/06/2015  
Scale: 1:125,000

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ECDC would like to reiterate that the above proposal is the Council's preferred option. However, should the LGBCE be minded to confirm 61 councillors for CCC in its final recommendations, ECDC would like to propose an alternative arrangement to the LGBCE proposals on the basis that it better reflects community identity for the reasons given above. The arrangement comprises 8 single member divisions, the reasons the Councils supports single member divisions are detailed above.

ECDC proposal: 61 members – 8 single member wards

Division Name	Number of Councillors	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020 (%)	Description
EC_1	1	8,774	2.7	Littleport, Chettisham, Pymoor and Downham Drovers and Prickwillow
EC_2	1	9,367	9.6	Little Downham (excluding the Drovers), Witchford, Ely West (excluding Walsingham Way, Beald Way, St Ethelwolds Close) and part of HF2 to left of Lynn Road (King Edgar Close, Orchard Estate, Sherriffs Gardens, Buckingham Drive, Wensum Way, Chelmer Way, the Medway)
EC_3	1	9,270	8.5	Haddenham, Aldreth, Sutton, Wilburton, Wentworth, Coveney, Little Thetford, Witcham, Mepal
EC_4	1	8,915	4.3	Ely South, Ely East (HG1, HH1, HK1) rest of HF1 (2643), plus part of Ely West (Walsingham Way, Beald Way, St Ethelwolds Close)
EC_5	1	9,210	7.8	Stretham, Wicken, Burwell, Reach, Swaffhams
EC_6	1	8,460	-1	Existing Woodditton Division
EC_7	1	8,276	-3.2	Fordham Villages, Soham South, Isleham, part of Soham Central (Angle Common, Brook Dam Lane, Clay Street, College Close, College Road, Dobede Way, Ennion Close, Frank Bridges Close, Gidney Lane, High Street (no.s 2-16 and 7-13), Line Close, Lode Close, Mill Corner, Ranthorne Mews, Red Lion Square, Regent Place, Sand Street, St Andrews Park, Thomas Mews, The Causeway)
EC_8	1	9,378	9.7	Soham North, rest of Soham Central, Stuntney, Queen Adelaide, rest of HF2

				(1187) plus part of HF1 (Canute Crescent, Bishop Laney Drive, Langham Way, Thirlby Gardens, Goodwin Gardens, Kings Avenue (part), Longchamp Drive, Alix Way, Merrivale Way, Orford Close, Turner Drive, Allen Road, Carey Close)
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