Mr Alex Hinds  
Review Officer  
Local Government Boundary Commission for England  
14th Floor, Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London  
SW1P 4QP

6 July 2015

Dear Alex,

Fenland District Council response on LGBCE Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire: Draft Recommendations

Fenland District Council ward boundaries have recently been reviewed by LGBCE which was followed by a Community Governance Review for Whittlesey and Chatteris. Through these two comprehensive processes, the warding arrangements established and reflected community identity and provided for effective and convenient local government. Through the Electoral Review of Cambridgeshire, the draft recommendations conflict in many areas with the community identity that has been clearly established and agreed previously by LGBCE and we wish to raise the following concerns:

*Until recently, all levels of local government were coterminous with each other. This provided the benefit of increased elector understanding and accessibility to the electoral process and ensured each level of government represented coherent communities of interest. Since the FDC Electoral Review we were able to maintain having Parishes wholly contained within District wards. We are concerned that in some areas the Electoral Division Review is dissecting parish and district wards and believe for these Electoral Divisions to properly reflect community identity and provide for effective and convenient local government that Parish and District wards should be wholly contained within Electoral Divisions.

*In relation to the above, we have particular concerns for the draft arrangements for March which is proposing to carve the town into the three separate electoral divisions, connecting many urban parts of the town with the more rural hinterland, some of which more naturally identify with other towns. We have particular concerns regarding the proposed arrangements for the Whittlesey South Division which will request some voters to vote for March Town Council, March North or March West District and then Whittlesey South Electoral Division. This Division does not represent a coherent community of interest. Our towns have strong local identities and to ask a March elector to vote for a Whittlesey County Councillor will result in the disenfranchisement of a number of voters. The towns are 12 miles apart and are very separate in their outlook and identity. We would recommend that an Electoral Division(s) reflects the parish of March.
*We are also concerned by the increase in the number of warded parishes in both March and Whittlesey. This creates substantial electoral inequality at a parish level, for example within March Town, the Councillor for Rural North will be representing 176 electors whilst the three Councillors for East will be representing 5724 electors. In Whittlesey, the Councillor for St Mary’s North will be representing 391 electors whilst the Councillor for Stonald will be representing 1993 electors. Stonald is also reducing from the existing 2 Councillors to 1 Councillor with an electorate of 1993, whilst Bassenhally with have 3 Councillors with only a slightly increased electorate of 2429.

*We are concerned about the impact on the democratic process at a parish level with the creation of small warded parishes. For a by-election to be called within a warded parish area it requires 10 signatures from electors living in the warded parish, then each candidate requires 2 signatures. There is a significant risk that 10 electors may not come forward in small warded parishes and therefore these electors will not be able to exercise their democratic right.

*We are concerned regarding the size of the proposed 2 member ward for March North and Waldersey. This is a massive geographical area covering a disparate set of communities, which is unfair to both the electorate and the prospective Councillors for this area in that it is too large for any meaningful community engagement around local issues and for Councillors to meaningfully represent their constituents. There are also significant geographical barriers in the A47 and River Nene dividing the communities identified for this ward which do not comply with your criteria for electoral divisions to reflect community interests and identities. The disparate communities within this proposed division do not affiliate with each other, correspond with each other or have travelling routes between them. Therefore, we recommend that this is split into two single member wards.

*We object to the splitting of Wisbech St Mary parish between two electoral divisions. As established within the Fenland Electoral Review, Wisbech St Mary is a defined community of interest with its own primary school, shops, services and facilities focusing the parish on the main village and drawing those from the rest of the parish to the village centre. In splitting the parish, you are driving a massive wedge through the heart of a very coherent community. Furthermore, Wisbech St Mary has clear affiliations with Parson Drove as areas of similar geography, as established through the Fenland Electoral Review which resulted in a dual member ward covering both parishes.

I hope you are able to take into consideration our submission within the final warding arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Councillors Clark, Seaton, Mrs Bucknor, Booth and Mrs Mayor
Fenland District Council Working Group
AGENDA ITEM NO. 10

MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CHRIS BODEN REGARDING REVIEW OF COUNTY DIVISION BOUNDARIES IN FENLAND

COUNCIL - 23 July 2015
NOTICE OF MOTION UNDER PART 4 RULE 1 PARAGRAPH 10

This Council notes:

1. that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently conducting a review of electoral arrangements in Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)
2. that CCC proposed a reduction in Council size from 69 to 63, a reduction which the LGBCE stated that it was minded to accept.
3. that the LGBCE has subsequently recommended a scheme of divisions for Cambridgeshire with a Council size of 61.
4. that within Fenland, the LGBCE's draft recommendations include several proposals (listed in Schedule one) which neither reflect the identities of local communities nor promote efficient and effective local government.

This Council therefore agrees to submit to the LGBCE (as part of its consultation process) the following resolutions (including schedules):

a) that it would be preferable, to ensure both the effective and the efficient management of CCC, that its Council size be reduced from 69 to 63.
b) if the LGBCE continues to be minded to ignore the evidence submitted by CCC in support of a Council size of 63, that the number of County Councillors should not be reduced below 62.
c) that the draft recommendations from the LGBCE relating to boundaries for county divisions in Fenland are unacceptable, and that the LGBCE's draft recommendations are therefore opposed by Fenland District Council for the reasons given in Schedule 1a to this motion.
d) that all of the County Councillors representing divisions in Fenland should represent single-member divisions, since these smaller single-member divisions reflect communities' identities better than much larger two-member divisions.
e) that, if the LGBCE agrees to a Council size of 63 for CCC, Fenland District Council recommends the scheme of divisions for Fenland listed in Schedule two, for the reasons given in Schedule 2a
f) that, if the Commission remains minded to propose a Council size of 61 for CCC, Fenland District Council recommends the scheme of divisions listed in Schedule three, for the reasons given in Schedule 3a.

Schedule One - LGBCE Draft Recommendations for Fenland

1. **Chatteris** - the whole of the Town of Chatteris
2. **March North & Wadiersey** - The parishes of Christchurch & Elm, together with the parish of Wisbech St Mary (excluding Morrow) together with the whole of March North ward (except Westry and the area west of Westry) together with the whole of March East ward (except Cavalry Drive and the roads off Cavalry Drive) together with that part of March West ward which is north of the river and east of the Peas Hill roundabout.
3. **March South & Rural** - the parishes of Manea & Wimblington together with, from March East Ward, Cavalry Drive and the roads off Cavalry Drive, together with that part of March West ward south of the river and east of the A141.

4. **Roman Bank & Peckover** - the Wards of Peckover and Roman Bank, together with the parish of Parson Drove, together with Murrow from the parish of Wisbech St Mary.

5. **Whittlesey North** - the wards of Bassenhally and Stonald, together with, from the District ward of St Andrews, the whole of the Town ward of St Andrews, together with, from the District ward of St Andrews, that part of the Town Ward of St Marys to the west of King's Dyke and the rear of the properties on Garden Grove, Turners Lane and St Mary's Street.

6. **Whittlesey South** - the parish of Doddington, together with the wards of Lattersey and Benwick, Coates & Eastrea, together with, from the District ward of St Andrews, that part of the Town Ward of St Marys to the east of King's Dyke and the rear of the properties on Garden Grove, Turners Lane and St Mary's Street, together with, from March Town, Westry and all of March Town west of Westry and west of the Isle of Ely Way.

7. **Wisbech North** - Kirkgate, Staithe and Waterlees Village wards.

8. **Wisbech South** - Clarkson, Octavia Hill and Medworth wards.

**Schedule 1a - Weaknesses in the LGBCE Draft Recommendations for Fenland**

a) The proposed two-member Division of March North and Waldersley, with a projected 2020 electorate of 18,351, is a massive division comprising almost two-thirds of the urban population of March together with the far more rural areas of Elm, Christchurch and Wisbech St Mary. This proposed division is not a cohesive area sharing a commonality of interests.

b) The proposal to split the parish of Wisbech St Mary between two different divisions artificially splits a parish and fails to reflect local shared identity within the parish.

c) The proposal to change boundaries within Wisbech, separating Octavia Hill ward from Staithe ward fails to recognise the links between these two wards (for example, the number of children from Octavia Hill ward attending Meadowgate School in Staithe ward).

d) The proposal to split St Mary's Town ward in Whittlesey between two divisions, with a very poorly defined boundary at the rear of properties on three roads, fails to recognise established local communities, will create uncertainty as to the boundary and is not conducive to efficient and effective local government.

e) The inclusion of electors from Westry and from parts of Burrowmoor Road, Gaul Road and Knight's End Road in the LGBCE's proposed Whittlesey South division fails to recognise that these areas look exclusively towards March not Whittlesey, that they are an integral part of the Town of March and that their inclusion in a Whittlesey division would be regarded as bizarre by those who live there.
## Schedule Two - Fenland District Council's proposals for Fenland (10 divisions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDC</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Electorate</th>
<th>2020 Variance* (based on 62 divisions)</th>
<th>Variance** (based on 63 divisions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FDC1</td>
<td>Chatteris</td>
<td>Town of Chatteris</td>
<td>8980</td>
<td>6.79%</td>
<td>8.51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC2</td>
<td>Fenland North</td>
<td>Roman Bank Ward; Peckover Ward</td>
<td>7450</td>
<td>-11.40%</td>
<td>-9.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC3</td>
<td>Waldersey</td>
<td>Parson Drove &amp; Wisbech St Mary Ward; Elm Parish; the Town Wards of March Rural South and March Rural North (as proposed in the LGBCE’s draft recommendations)</td>
<td>7460</td>
<td>-11.29%</td>
<td>-9.86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDC4</td>
<td>Wisbech Riverside</td>
<td>Medworth, Clarkson &amp; Waterlees Village Wards</td>
<td>8610</td>
<td>2.39%</td>
<td>4.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC6</td>
<td>March North East</td>
<td>Octavia Hill, Staithe &amp; Kirkgate Wards</td>
<td>8240</td>
<td>-2.01%</td>
<td>-0.43%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC6</td>
<td>March North East</td>
<td>March North Ward (less the proposed &quot;Rural North&quot; Town Ward);</td>
<td>7720</td>
<td>-8.19%</td>
<td>-6.72%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>that part of Polling District BA1 north of Creek Road</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>that part of Polling District BC1 east of the A141 and west of Waveney Drive / Pentland Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC7</td>
<td>March Central</td>
<td>that part of PD BA1 south of (and including) Creek Road;</td>
<td>7600</td>
<td>-9.62%</td>
<td>-8.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>that part of PD BC1 East of Waveney Drive / Pentland Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Polling Districts BA2, BA4;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC8</td>
<td>March South East &amp; Rural</td>
<td>Manea Ward; Christchurch Parish; Wimblington Parish;</td>
<td>7850</td>
<td>-6.65%</td>
<td>-5.15%</td>
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</table>

Polling District BC4 east of the A141

Polling District BC2_3 east of the A141

Polling District BA3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDC9</th>
<th>Whittlesey</th>
<th>The District Wards of Bassenhally and Stonald;</th>
<th>7596</th>
<th>-9.67%</th>
<th>-8.22%</th>
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</thead>
</table>

the St Andrews Town Ward in Whittlesey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDC10</th>
<th>South West Fenland</th>
<th>The St Marys Town Ward in Whittlesey</th>
<th>7594</th>
<th>-9.69%</th>
<th>-8.24%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Lattersey Ward and Benwick, Coates & Eastrea Ward

the Parish of Doddington

79100
the electoral variance for each proposed division is calculated using a County-wide average electorate in 2020 of 8409, being 521,380 divided by 62

** the electoral variance for each proposed division is calculated using a County-wide average electorate in 2020 of 8276, being 521,380 divided by 63

Schedule 2a - Advantages of Fenland District Council's proposals for Fenland (10 divisions)

a. This scheme of divisions avoids the massive 2-member division contained within the LGBCE's draft recommendations.

b. No part of the Town of March is included within a Whittlesey Division.

c. Octavia Hill and Staithe Wards are not split between divisions.

d. That part of Walsoken within the District is united in a single division.

e. There is a better split between predominantly "rural" and predominantly "urban" divisions than in the LGBCE's draft recommendations

f. No parish council area is split between divisions.

g. Within Whittlesey, no Town ward is split between divisions.

h. The boundary between divisions in Whittlesey is far more clearly defined than in the LGBCE's draft recommendations
## Schedule Three - Fenland District Council's proposals for Fenland (9 divisions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2020 Electorate</th>
<th>Variance*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FDC1</td>
<td>Chatteris, Town of Chatteris</td>
<td>8980</td>
<td>5.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC2</td>
<td>Fenland North, Roman Bank Ward; Peckover Ward; Parson Drove Parish</td>
<td>8470</td>
<td>-0.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC3</td>
<td>Waldersey, Wisbech St Mary Parish; Manea and Elm &amp; Christchurch Wards;</td>
<td>8580</td>
<td>0.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC4</td>
<td>Wisbech Riverside, Medworth, Clarkson &amp; Waterlees Village Wards</td>
<td>8610</td>
<td>0.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC5</td>
<td>Wisbech East, Octavia Hill, Staithe &amp; Kirkgate Wards</td>
<td>8240</td>
<td>-3.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC6</td>
<td>March South-East, from March North Ward: Polling District BB1 PD BB3 (east of Norwood Road)</td>
<td>9220</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC7</td>
<td>March North-West, from March North Ward: Polling District BB2</td>
<td>9200</td>
<td>7.64%</td>
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</table>
**PD BB3 (west of Norwood Road)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDC8</th>
<th>Whittlesey</th>
<th>Bassenhally, Stonald &amp; St Andrews Wards</th>
<th>8700</th>
<th>1.79%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doddington &amp; Wimbington; Benwick, Coates &amp; Eastrea Ward and Lattersey Ward</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDC9</th>
<th>South West Fenland</th>
<th>9100</th>
<th>6.47%</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

|            |                             |                                        | 79100|

* the electoral variance for each proposed division is calculated using a County-wide average electorate in 2020 of 8547, being 521,380 divided by 61.

**Schedule 3a - Advantages of Fenland District Council's proposals for Fenland (9 divisions)**

a. This scheme of divisions avoids the massive 2-member division contained within the LGBCE's draft recommendations.

b. No part of the Town of March is included within a Whittlesey Division.

c. Octavia Hill and Staithe Wards are not split between divisions.

d. That part of Walsoken within the District is united in a single division.

e. There is a better split between predominantly "rural" and predominantly "urban" divisions than in the LGBCE's draft recommendations.
f. No parish council area is split between divisions.

g. Within Whittlesey, no District or Town ward is split between divisions.

h. The boundary between divisions in Whittlesey is far more clearly defined than in the LGBCE’s draft recommendations

i. This scheme achieves division boundaries which are 88% co-terminous with District ward boundaries. This is significantly better than the 75% co-terminosity achieved in the LGBCE’s draft recommendations. Co-terminosity is a good indicator of reflecting community identity and of achieving efficient and effective local government, primarily because these statutory objectives were significant factors when the LGBCE itself created the District ward boundaries. The LGBCE is obliged to seek to provide for co-terminosity between district wards and county divisions in accordance with Paragraph 2 (3) (d) of Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Chris Boden