

Local Government Boundary Commission - Review of Cambridgeshire County Council

East Cambridgeshire - Conservative Party Response from South East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association (SECCA)

Summary

1. We believe that single Member Divisions provide for the most effective local government in East Cambridgeshire, giving greater clarity to the electorate and to City, Town and Parish Councils and other local organisations.
2. Our preferred scenario (scenario 1) is based on 63 Members, meaning that 9 will be in East Cambridgeshire. This proposed scenario allows for provision of single Member Divisions, achieves good electoral equality, provides for convenient and effective local government and offers the best solution, by some margin, in terms of reflecting community interests and identity.
 - 2.1. We strongly believe that the Boundary Commission's proposal for two 2 Member Divisions (within the 61 Member scenario) has made serious compromises to both community interests and identity and to convenient and effective local government, markedly so for the proposed Littleport West Division (Division 16). The geographical size and marked difference in service needs of different parts of this Division could cause conflict in Members' ability to represent the whole of the Division effectively.
 - 2.2. Sutton, and particularly the villages to the south of Sutton (Wentworth, Witchford, Haddenham, Aldreth, Wilburton, Stretham and Little Thetford) are totally remote from Littleport - geographically (residents of those areas look to Ely and Cambridge and do not use or travel to Littleport), culturally (residents of those areas do not link themselves in any way to Littleport), demographically and in terms of service need (educational, economic and health and wellbeing needs are markedly different).
 - 2.3. The Commission's proposed Littleport West Division (Division 16) would cover 13 Parish Councils and proposes a very large area geographically that we believe seriously compromises effective and convenient local government. There are a number of extremely rural areas within the proposed Division which score badly in the national deprivation indices and we are concerned that these areas could be neglected in such a large Division. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the Division is proposed to have two Members who may or may not be willing to work in co-operation. If the two Members were to work in co-operation, we believe that such a large area would inevitably be divided geographically between them, highlighting the need to split the Division into single Member Divisions in the first place. If the two Members are not willing or able to work co-operatively the size of the Division each Member would be trying

to represent and service would be too large. Further, we believe that this would make it very difficult to find people willing to stand for election, with people being deterred by the geographical difficulties and the sheer amount of time required both in terms of campaigning to become elected as well as afterwards if successful; this is particularly acute for single Independent (or single political party) candidates. We believe this is bad for democracy.

- 2.4. We believe that the Boundary Commission's proposed Littleport East & Soham South Division (Division 15), (we assume the Commission has named this proposed Division inaccurately and that it should in fact be named Littleport East & Soham *North*), seriously compromises community interests and identity.
 - 2.5. We also believe that the Boundary Commission's proposed Fordham Villages & Soham South Division (Division 14) also compromises community interests and identity.
3. If the Commission is resolute on providing for 61 Members however, meaning that 8 will be in East Cambridgeshire, we have also offered our preferred option for this scenario (scenario 2). This scenario again allows for provision of single Member Divisions, achieves good electoral equality, makes less compromise on reflecting community interests and identities than the Boundary Commission's proposal, and provides for more convenient and effective local government than the Boundary Commission's proposal.
 - 3.1. We believe that, although compromises have had to be made with regard to community identity (notably, placing Stretham with Wicken and areas to the south and removing Wicken from Soham), these compromises are less severe than those in the Boundary Commission's proposal. We also believe that it achieves a significantly better solution to convenient and effective local government than the Boundary Commission's proposal, due in part to its achievement of single Member Divisions and the arguments rehearsed at 2.3 above.

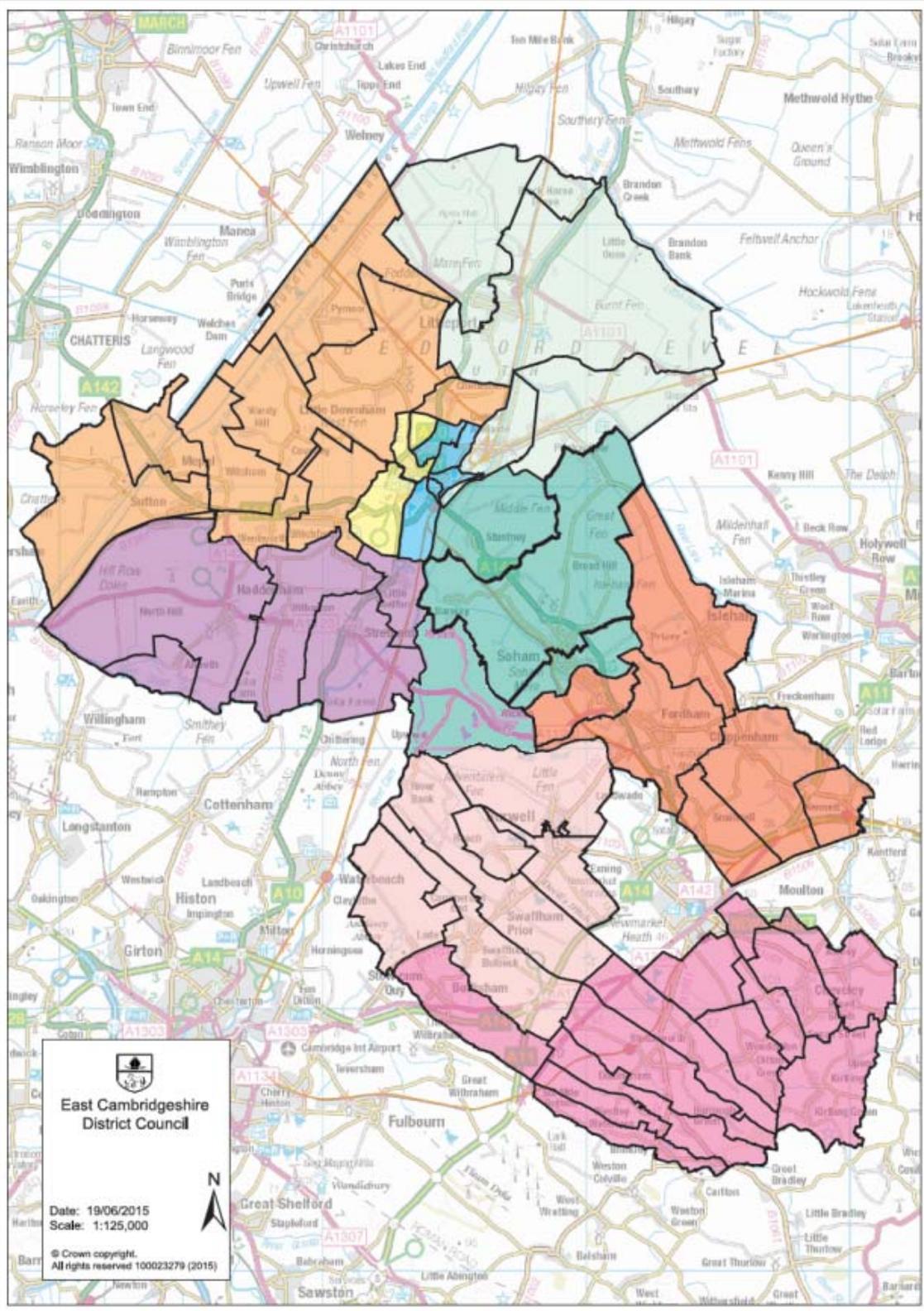
Scenario 1: 63 Members - 9 single Member Divisions

Division Name	Number of Councillors	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020 (%)	Description	Detail
EC_1 Littleport	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.
EC_2 Ely West	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.
EC_3 Ely East	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 Sutton North & Downham Villages	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.
EC_5 Sutton South & South Ely Villages	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.
EC_6 Soham North	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.
EC_7 Soham South & South Soham Villages	1	7,580	-8.4	Soham South, Isleham, Fordham, Kennett, Chippenham, Snailwell and part of Soham Central (Brook Dam Lane, 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)	Our proposal divides Soham into north and south. The villages in this Division look to Soham.

<p>EC_8 Burwell</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>7,760</p>	<p>- 6.2</p>	<p>Burwell, Reach, Swaffhams, Lode</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>EC_9 Woodditton</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>7,720</p>	<p>- 6.7</p>	<p>Cheveley district ward, Dullingham Villages district ward, Bottisham district ward excluding Lode.</p>	<p>Our proposal uses the existing Woodditton Division boundaries excluding Lode, in order to achieve good electoral equality (see above for comments about Lode).</p>



Scenario 2: 61 Members - 8 single Member Divisions

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)

