

**Cambridgeshire County Council's Response to the Local Government
Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) proposals for revised electoral
arrangements for the Council**

Date: 22/07/15

Officer Contact: Michael Soper, Research Team Manager.



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) wrote to the Chief Executive in July 2013, to advise that it would be reviewing the electoral arrangements for Cambridgeshire County Council. A cross-party Electoral Review Working Group was set up to work on this on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 In July 2014, following recommendations from the Electoral Review Working Group, full Council approved a formal submission to the LGBCE on a proposed Council size of 63, based on single Member divisions. Indicative maps were submitted alongside that submission, but these were illustrative and not a proposal per se, showing how a Council size of 63 could work.
- 1.3 On 12 May 2015 the LGBCE published its draft recommendations for the electoral review of Cambridgeshire County Council, this was based on a Council size of 61, including four two-Member divisions, and included maps showing proposed Division boundaries¹. Following discussion at the County Council Group Leaders' meeting on 18th June 2015, it was agreed that the Electoral Review Working Group would be reconvened to produce a draft submission for consideration by full Council.
- 1.4 The deadline for submissions to the LGBCE was 6th July 2015. However, in light of Council meeting dates, LGBCE agreed to extend this deadline for the County Council's submission. LGBCE advised that this extension was exclusive to the County Council in view of the timing of the full Council meeting and did not extend to any individual or group responses.
- 1.5 At a meeting of the Electoral Review Working Group held on 3rd July, the following issues were considered:
 - Whether to restate the original CCC submission recommending 63 single Member divisions;
 - If alternative proposals for boundaries should be put forward, examining the proposals for the divisions within each District in turn. The group's subsequent work was then submitted to full council for approval.
- 1.6 Full council met on the 21st July 2015 and considered the working group proposals together with a number of amendments. The County Council's official response given in the remainder of this document represents the results of these considerations.

Full details of the debate / amendments proposed can be found on the County Council website.

<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=1011>

¹ <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-county-council>

2. Council Size

Cambridgeshire County Council voted in favour of a Council size of 63 elected members. The Council strongly urges the LGBCE to use 63 members as a basis for the review.

- 2.1 The case for 63 single Member divisions was laid out in full within the County Council's previous submission to the LGBCE. The County Council would like the LGBCE to reconsider this evidence.
- 2.2 There is an acknowledgement that Cambridgeshire is the most rapidly growing County in the country, with a population expected to increase, by almost 9% between now and 2020; this bringing with it numerous challenges which will increase Councillors' workload. However, owing to the current financial climate, the Council also faces an unprecedented reduction in its budget and resources, which must be acknowledged. With that in mind, the County Council Working Group gave serious consideration to a number of scenarios reducing the number of Councillors, which would result in savings. The Working Group noted that such a reduction would be in line with the outcomes of recent reviews of other two-tier county authorities. The group reached the conclusion that a council size of 63 was the lowest acceptable Council size given these circumstances.
- 2.3 It is noted that the LGBCE draft proposals for 61 as opposed to 63 members is based upon the LGBCE stated difficulties in creating electoral parity, particularly in Fenland, with the 63 member model². The County Council strongly believes that 63 single member divisions are achievable for Cambridgeshire as shown within the remaining parts of this response document.

3. Single Member Divisions

Cambridgeshire County Council voted in favour of having single member divisions for the entirety of the Council. The council is strongly opposed to having any two member divisions.

- 3.1 The case for single Member divisions was laid out in full and approved by full Council in July 2014. The County Council would like the LGBCE to reconsider this evidence.

The Council believes that because single member divisions are more transparent and accountable, and give greater clarity to both the electorate and local organisations (e.g. Parish and Town Councils) as to where the responsibility lies. Two Member divisions can cause confusion, especially where Members have differing views on local issues.

² Paragraph 19, page five Ibid

4. Cambridge

Cambridgeshire County Council voted to approve a division proposal for Cambridge City, broadly accepting the LGBCE boundaries, but abolishing the two-Member division of Castle and Newnham, creating two separate Divisions, and altering the Arbury boundary slightly (to maintain electoral parity), as detailed in Table 1 and Map 1 below.

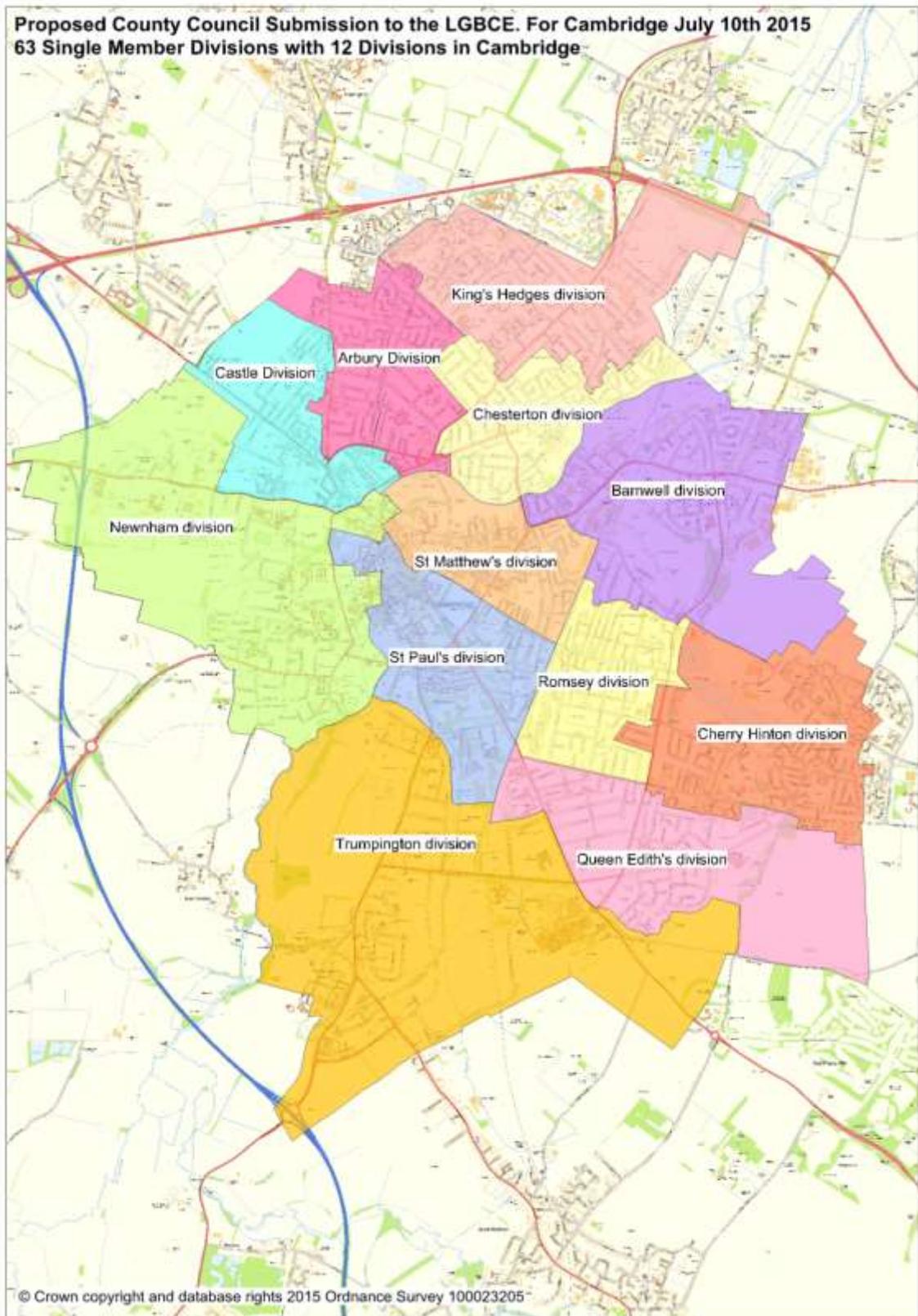
Additional Comments

For Cambridge the County Council Working Group agreed that the LGBCE proposals for creating a two Member division in the north-west of Cambridge, titled 'Castle and Newnham' were unacceptable.

Table 1: County Council Approved Scenario for Cambridge

	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020 (%)
Arbury	7,724	-7.0%
Barnwell	8,538	3.0%
Castle	8,712	5.0%
Cherry Hinton	8,839	7.0%
Chesterton	8,977	8.0%
King's Hedges	8,996	9.0%
Newnham	9,037	9.0%
Queen Edith's	7,828	-5.0%
Romsey	8,670	5.0%
St Paul's	8,231	-1.0%
St Matthew's	8,490	3.0%
Trumpington	7,708	-7.0%
Total	101750	n/a

Map 1: County Council Approved Scenario for Cambridge



5. East Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire County Council rejected the LGBCE proposals for East Cambridgeshire.

Council voted instead to adopt the proposal shown in Table 2 and Map 2 below.

Additional Comments

For East Cambridgeshire, within the Working Group there were serious concerns expressed relating to the LGBCE draft proposals around a number of the divisions. Specifically opposition was expressed to the LGBCE proposed two Member division named Littleport West, the proposed arrangements for Ely, the proposed creation of a Littleport East & Soham North Division and the proposed two Member division of Soham South & Fordham Villages

Table 2: County Council Approved Scenario for East Cambridgeshire

Division Name	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020 (%)
Littleport	8,350	0.9
Ely West	9,063	9.5
Ely East	7,857	- 5
Downham Villages and Sutton North*	7,464	- 9.8
Haddenham and Sutton South*	7,456	-9.9
Soham North	8,400	1.5
Fordham Villages and Soham South*	7,580	-8.4
Burwell	7,760	- 6.2
Woodditton	7,720	- 6.7
Total	73670	n/a

** Note the County Council voted to amend the naming of these divisions compared to how these are named within other similar submissions that the LGBCE may have received.*

Map 2: County Council Approved Scenario for East Cambridgeshire

Proposed County Council Submission to the LGBCE, For East Cambridgeshire, July 10th 2015.
Scenario B.



6. Fenland

Cambridgeshire County Council rejected the LGBCE proposals for Fenland.

Council voted instead to approve the proposal shown in Table 3 and Map 3 below (based on 63 single member divisions, 10 divisions in Fenland) and also approve the submission of an alternative shown in Table 4 and Map 4 (based upon 9 divisions in Fenland) should LGBCE not accept 63 members.

Separately, the Council considered a number of proposals for the division boundaries in Wisbech and voted to approve the scenario shown in Map 5.

Additional Comments

For Fenland, concerns were expressed over the proposed LGBCE boundaries for a number of the divisions, most notably in March and Whittlesey and the creation of a two member division of March North & Waldersey. Concern was also expressed regarding the lack of co-terminosity with Fenland District Council Wards.

Members of the Working Group strongly supported that a submission based on 63 single-member divisions should be put forward to full Council for consideration at its meeting on 21 July 2015. However it was minded to propose that full Council also considered submitting a secondary position for 62 single Member divisions as being preferential compared to the draft LGBCE proposal of 61. The working group's secondary position for 62 Member divisions is achieved by a reduction of one division in Fenland therefore two scenarios are included for consideration here.

Generally, given the limitations of the LGBCE review rules, all members of the Working Group felt that these proposals are better than those proposed by the Commission in its draft recommendations.

Table 3. County Council Approved Scenario for Fenland based on 10 divisions.

ED	Electorate 2020*	Variance 2020 (%)*
Chatteris	8980	8.5
Fenland North	7450	-9.9
Waldersey	7460	-9.8
Two Wisbech Divisions	16850	n/a
March North East	7720	-6.7
March Central	7600	-8.2
March South East & Rural	7850	-5.1
Whittlesey	7596	-8.2
South West Fenland	7594	-8.2
Total	79100	-

Map 3. County Council Approved Scenario for Fenland based on 10 divisions.

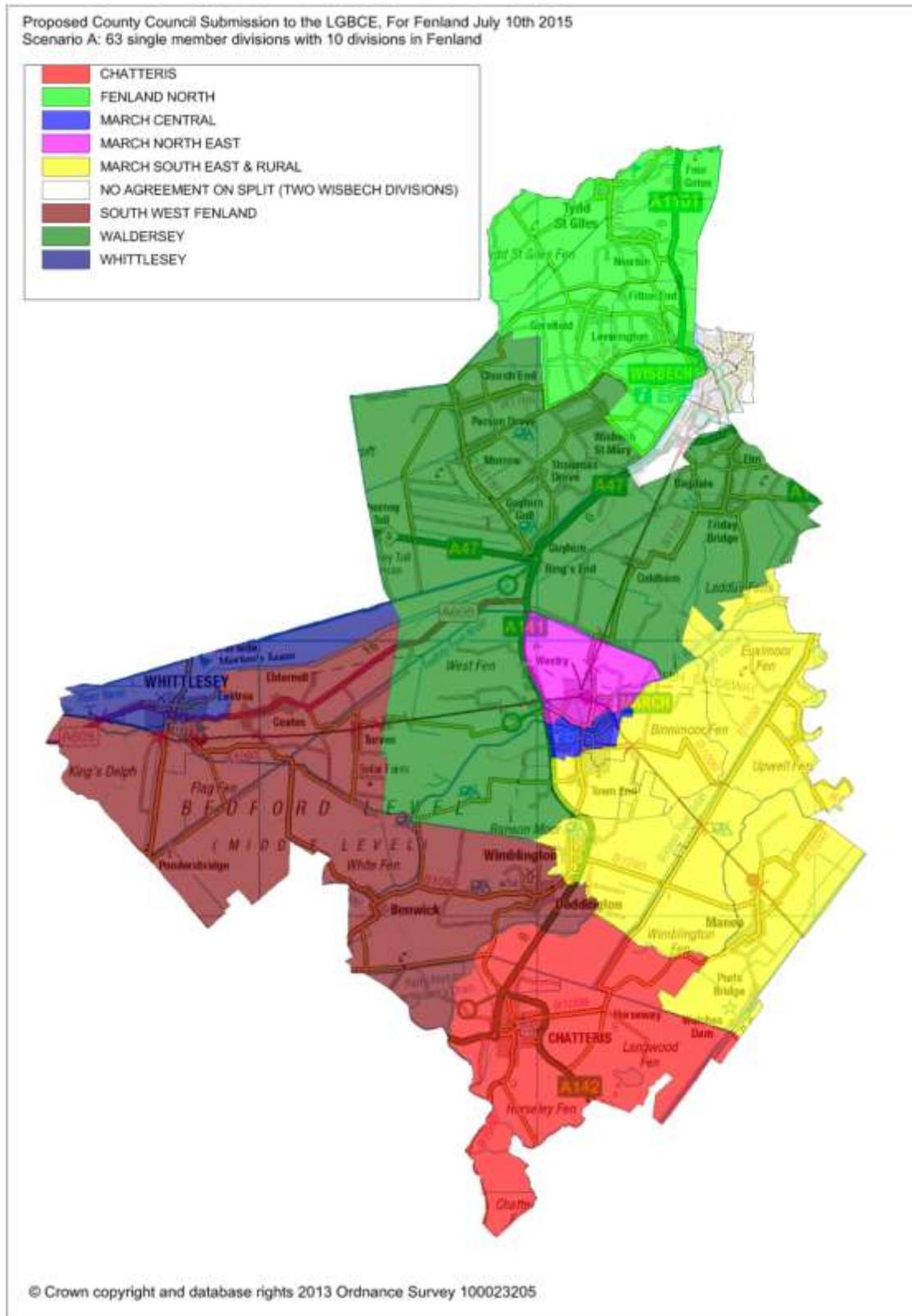


Table 4. County Council Approved Scenario for Fenland based on 9 divisions; should the LGBCE not accept 63 members.

ED	Electorate 2020*	Variance 2020 (%)*
Chatteris	8980	5.1
Fenland North	8470	-0.9
Waldersey	8580	0.4
Two Wisbech Divisions	16850	n/a
March South East	9220	7.9
March North West	9200	7.6
Whittlesey	8700	1.7
South West Fenland	9100	6.5
Total	79100	-

**Map 4. County Council Approved Scenario for Fenland based on 9 divisions;
should the LGBCE not accept 63 members.**

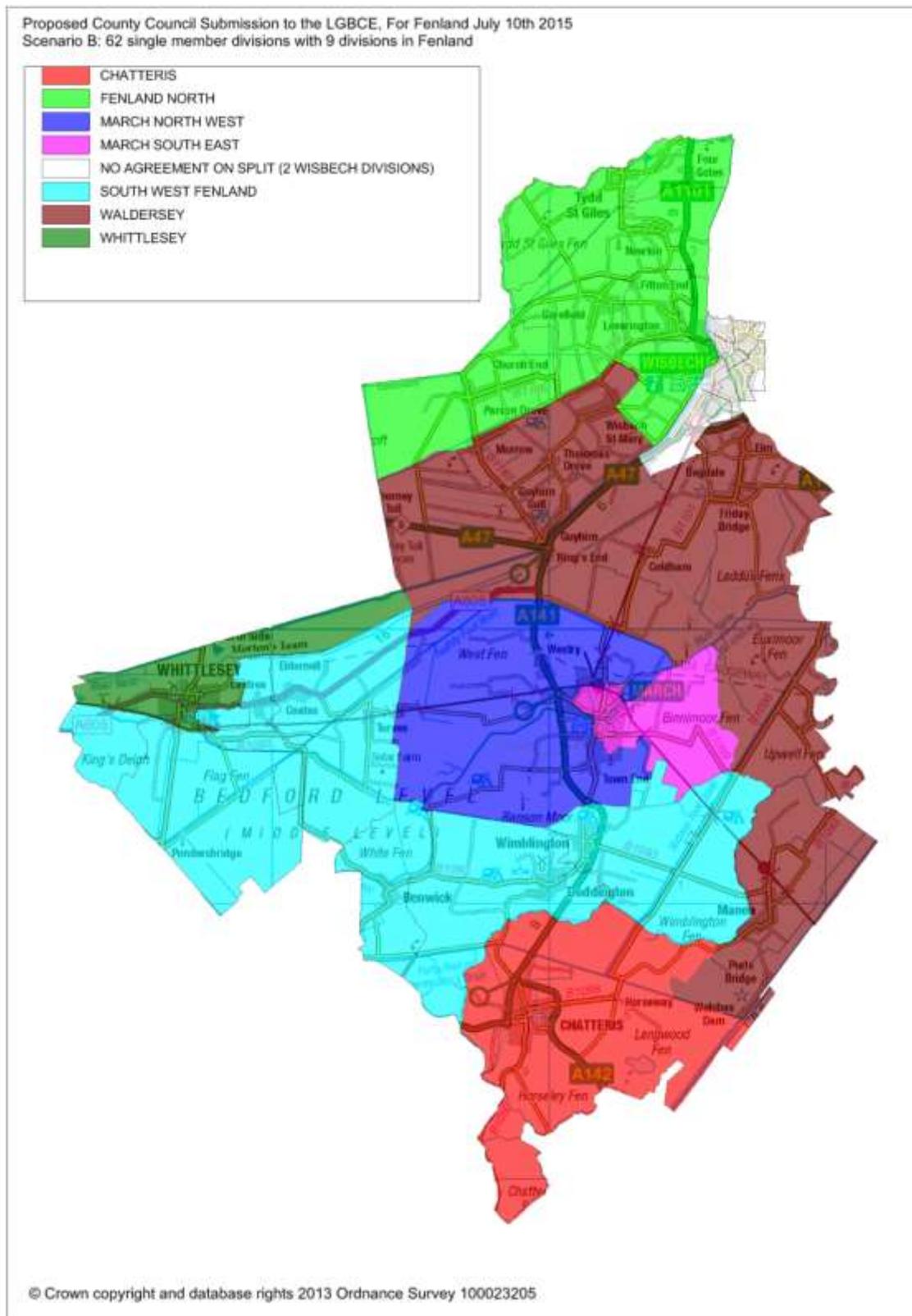
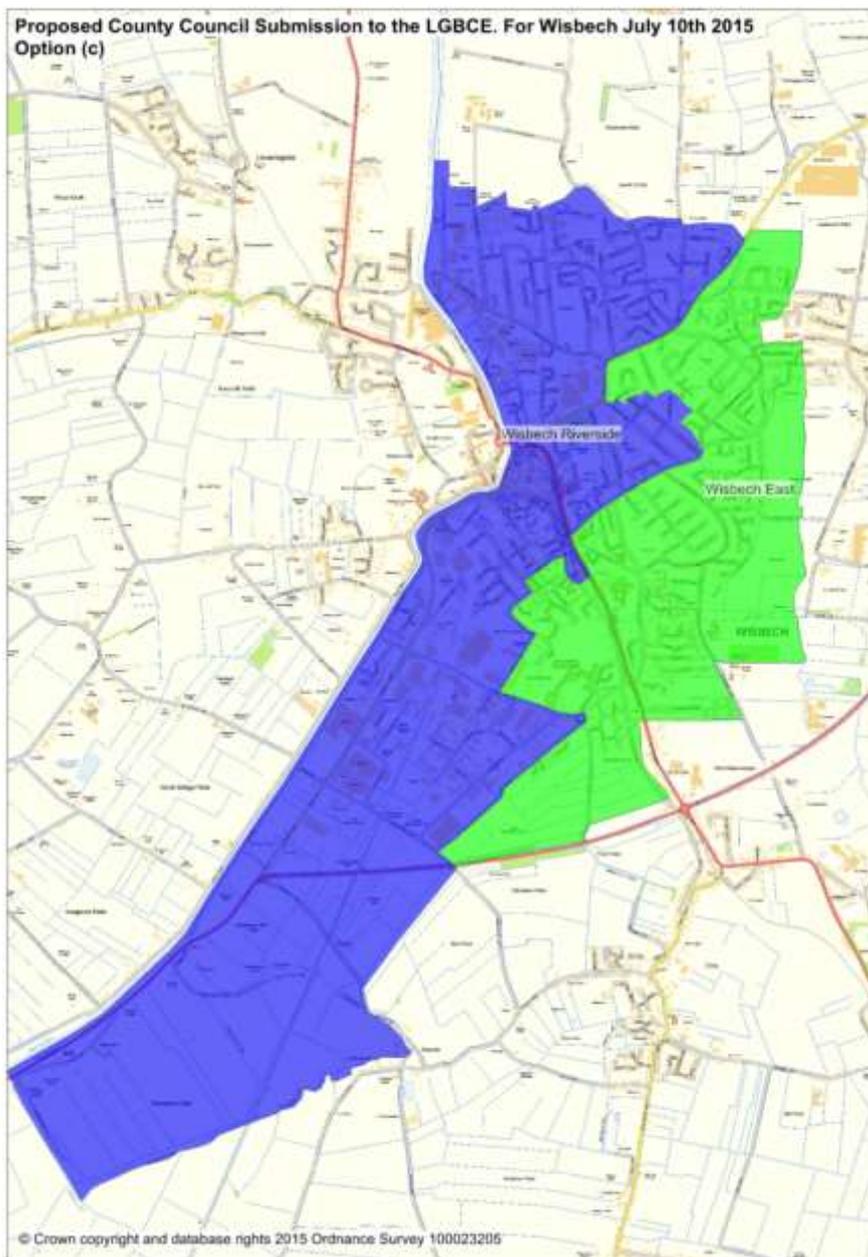


Table 5. County Council Approved Scenario for Wisbech

	2020	variances based on Council size:		
	Electorate	63	62	61
Wisbech Riverside	8610	4.04%	2.39%	0.74%
Wisbech East	8240	-0.43%	-2.01%	-3.59%

Map 5. County Council Approved Scenario for Wisbech



7. Huntingdonshire

Cambridgeshire County Council rejected the LGBCE proposals for Huntingdonshire apart from the proposed arrangement for St Neots.

Council voted instead to approve the proposal shown in Table 6a and Map 6 below apart from approving an amendment to adopt the LGBCE proposal for St. Neots (Table 6b).

Additional Comments

For Huntingdonshire, the working group was particularly concerned with the LGBCE proposal to include Wyton-on-the-Hill in the Somersham & Earith division.

Wyton-on-the-Hill comprises part of a redundant airfield site. Plans are being drawn up for inclusion in the HDC Local Plan to 2036, for considerable future housing expansion. Locally it is felt essential that this new community has democratic, social, economic and transport links with the west of St Ives as its close neighbour. This position is supported by Huntingdonshire District Council. Further Wyton on the Hill has no connection with the Somersham & Earith Division, the principle population areas of which are to the east of St Ives.

It is acknowledged that this would leave the Somersham & Earith Division at around the -10% electoral population in 2020, but this is felt to be justified in consideration of the LGBCE requirement to consider 'Community Identity' and 'Provide for effective and convenient local government'. If necessary, a possible remedy compared to the proposal below is to include the settlement of Broughton within the Somersham & Earith (as now).

Table 6a: County Council Approved Scenario for Huntingdonshire (excluding St Neots)

ED	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020 (%)
HDC_1	7,769	-6
HDC_2	7,460	-10
HDC_3	8,750	6
HDC_4	8,830	7
HDC_5	8,560	3
HDC_6	7,430	-10
HDC_7	8,140	-2
HDC_8	8,320	1
HDC_9	7,990	-3
HDC_10	8,310	0
HDC_11*	7,860	-5
HDC_12	8,861	7
HDC_13	8,100	-2

HDC_14*	7,870	-5
HDC_15	9,093	10
HDC_16	8,867	7
HDC_17*	9,570	16
Total	141,780	-

* Divisions amended; see separate St Neots proposal.

The above proposal for Huntingdonshire creates a division (HDC_17) within St Neots that will have 16% electoral variance in 2020, an amount outside of that normally accepted by the Boundary Commission.

It was agreed to further amend this proposal to be consistent with the division pattern for St Neots proposed by the Boundary Commission within their draft recommendations published 12th May, 2015.

Table 6b: Approved amendment to table 6a above changing HDC 11, HDC 14 and HDC 17 divisions to the following:

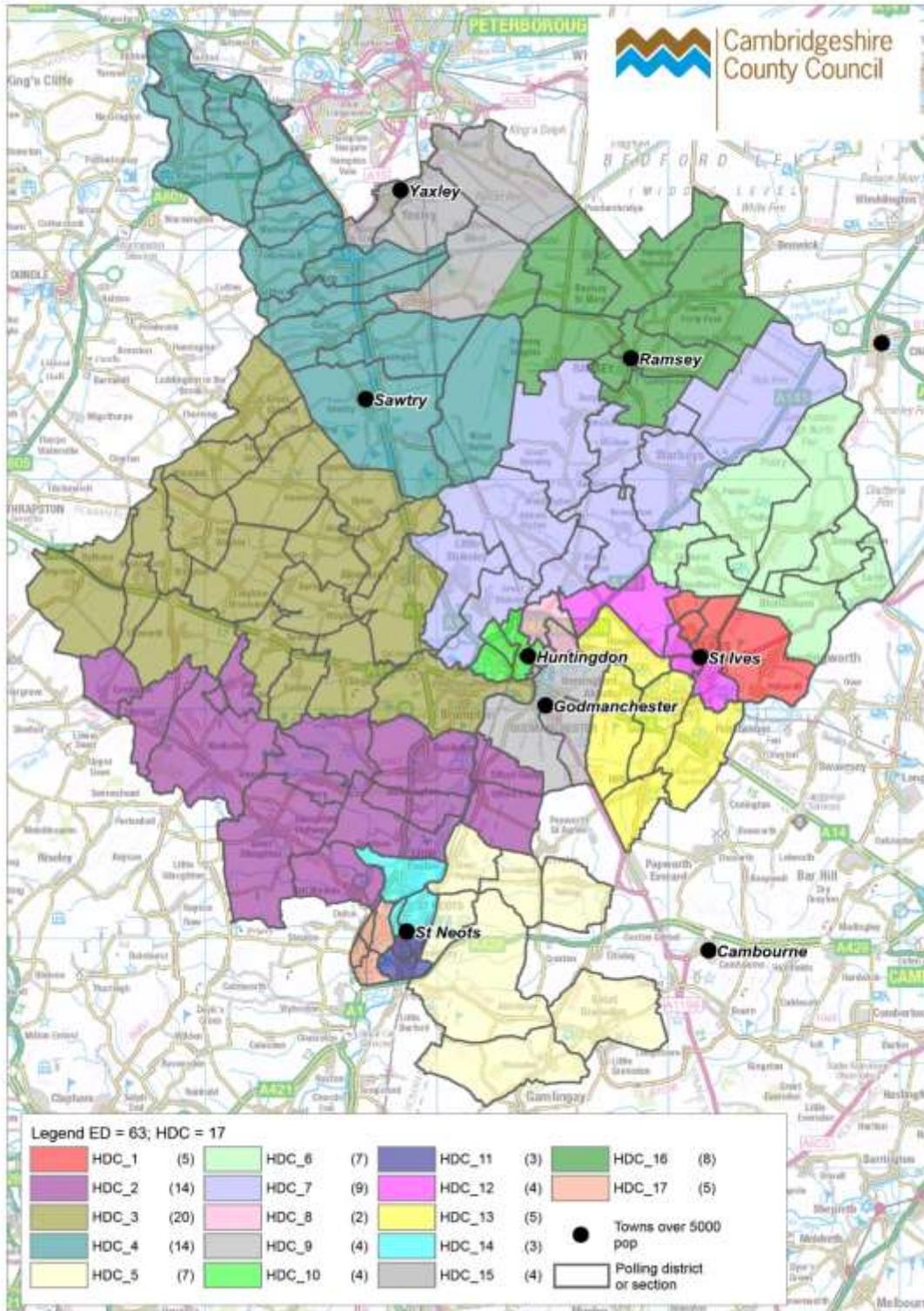
Division	Electorate 2020*	Electoral Variance 2020 (based on 63 Members)
St Neots Priory Park and Little Paxton	8,723	5%
St Neots The Eatons	8,466	2%
St Neots Eynesbury	8,111	-2%

* Source: LGBCE, May 2015

The amendment does not have any impact on arrangements beyond the St Neots divisions specified above.

Map 6: County Council Approved Scenario for Huntingdonshire (excluding St Neots)

Electoral Divisions Review 2014 Version 4.0 Scenario for 63 Members - HDC



8. South Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire County Council voted to approve the LGBCE proposals for South Cambridgeshire.