

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council

Electoral review

March 2013

Translations and other formats

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Contents

Summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Analysis and final recommendations	5
Submissions received	6
Electorate figures	6
Council size	6
Electoral fairness	7
General analysis	7
Electoral arrangements	8
Whittlesey	8
Chatteris	10
March, Elm and Christchurch	10
Doddington and Wimblington	11
Wisbech	12
Roman Bank, Wisbech St Mary and Parson Drove	12
Conclusions	13
Parish electoral arrangements	13
3 What happens next?	17
4 Mapping	19
Appendices	
A Table A1: Final recommendations for Fenland District Council	20
B Glossary and abbreviations	22

Summary

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body that conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. The broad purpose of an electoral review is to decide on the appropriate electoral arrangements – the number of councillors, and the names, number and boundaries of wards or divisions – for a specific local authority. We conducted an electoral review of Fenland District Council to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the authority.

The review aimed to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same. The Commission commenced the review in February 2012.

This review was conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
13 March 2012	Submission of proposals of ward arrangements to the LGBCE
4 May 2012	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
23 October 2012	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
7 January 2013	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Draft recommendations

Our draft recommendations were for a council size of 39 members comprising 15 single-member wards, six two-member wards and four three-member wards, based largely on a submission from the Council. We proposed a number of minor amendments to improve electoral equality and provide stronger boundaries. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Submissions received

During the consultation on our draft recommendations for Fenland, we received nine submissions. These included a district-wide submission from Fenland District Council. Whilst the Council acknowledged that the draft recommendations were based mainly on its proposals, on further consideration it now felt that the consequential creation of a number of small parish wards was undesirable and, therefore put forward a number of amendments, especially in relation to March. Chatteris, Wisbech and Whittlesey town councils all made representations, broadly reflecting the Council's concerns. All submissions can be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

Fenland District Council has forecast an increase in electorate of approximately just over 6% across the district by 2018. While this is a relatively large increase in the electorate, on balance we are persuaded that several large developments – in March, Chatteris and Whittlesey – are likely to go ahead and therefore that the electoral projection is reasonable.

Following publication of our draft recommendations, we did not receive any comments on the electorate figures. Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are content that the Council's projected figures are the best available at the present time. These figures form the basis of the final recommendations.

General analysis

We have considered all submissions received during the consultation on our draft recommendations. After careful consideration, and despite the level of change from the draft recommendations, we have been persuaded to accept amendments for the March area. Accordingly, we are adopting the Council and March Town Council's proposal to revert to the existing wards. These wards secure good electoral equality and have recognisable boundaries.

The Council did not put forward full proposals for Whittlesey but objected to the Drybread Road area being in a large rural ward, concerns also reflected by Whittlesey Town Council. As a result of the evidence received, we propose modifications to the Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward to transfer the Drybread Road area into the town. We also propose a number of further amendments to accommodate this transfer and to secure good electoral equality and strong boundaries. In Wisbech the Council and Wisbech Town Council proposed a number of minor amendments to strengthen boundaries. We are adopting these proposals without amendment.

In the remainder of the district we are confirming our draft recommendations as final.

What happens next?

We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament and will be implemented subject to Parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Fenland District Council, in 2015.

We are grateful to all those organisations and individuals who have contributed to the review through expressing their views and advice. The full report is available to download at www.lgbce.org.uk

You can also view our final recommendations for Fenland on our interactive maps at consultation.lgbce.org.uk

1 Introduction

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body which conducts electoral reviews of local authority areas. This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Fenland District Council's electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the authority.

2 We wrote to Fenland District Council as well as other interested parties inviting the submission of proposals on warding arrangements for the Council. A submission received from the Council during the preliminary period of the review informed our *Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council*, which were published on 23 October 2012. Consultation on our draft recommendations took place until 7 January 2013.

What is an electoral review?

3 The main aim of an electoral review is to try to ensure 'electoral equality', which means that all councillors in a single authority represent approximately the same number of electors. Our objective is to make recommendations that will improve electoral equality, while also trying to reflect communities in the area and provide for effective and convenient local government.

4 Our three main considerations – equalising the number of electors each councillor represents; reflecting community identity; and providing for effective and convenient local government – are set out in legislation¹ and our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why are we conducting a review in Fenland?

5 We decided to conduct this review because, based on the December 2010 electorate figures, more than 30% of the existing wards have 10% more or fewer electors per councillor than the district average. In addition, Bassenhally has 36% fewer electors than the district average.

How will the recommendations affect you?

6 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some instances, which parish or town council wards you vote in. Your ward name may change, as may the names of parish or town council wards in the area. If you live in a parish, the name or boundaries of that parish will not change as a result of our recommendations.

¹ Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

7 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL
Sir Tony Redmond
Dr Colin Sinclair CBE
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Alan Cogbill
Director of Reviews: Archie Gall

2 Analysis and final recommendations

8 We have now finalised our recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council.

9 As described earlier, our prime aim when recommending new electoral arrangements for Fenland is to achieve a level of electoral fairness – that is, each elector’s vote being worth the same as another’s. In doing so we must have regard to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009,² with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- provide for equality of representation
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities, in particular
 - the desirability of arriving at boundaries that are easily identifiable
 - the desirability of fixing boundaries so as not to break any local ties

10 Legislation also states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

11 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum. We therefore recommend strongly that in formulating proposals for us to consider, local authorities and other interested parties should also try to keep variances to a minimum, making adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. As mentioned above, we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral fairness over a five-year period.

12 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different divisions or wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single division or ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

13 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Fenland District Council or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. The proposals do not take account of parliamentary constituency boundaries and we are not therefore able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Submissions received

14 Prior to, and during, the initial stage of the review, we visited Fenland District Council and met with members, parish council representatives and officers. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received two submissions from the Council, one on council size and one during information gathering on warding arrangements. We received a further eight submission during our consultation on the draft recommendations, including a further submission from the Council. All submissions may be inspected at our offices and those of the Council. All representations received can also be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

15 As part of this review, Fenland District Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2018, projecting an increase in the electorate of just over 6% over the six-year period from 2011–18. While this is a relatively large increase in the electorate, we are satisfied that several large developments accounted for in March, Chatteris and Whittlesey are realistic.

16 Having considered the information provided by the Council, we are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our final recommendations.

Council size

17 Fenland District Council currently has 40 councillors elected from 27 district wards, comprising 18 single-member, five two-member and four three-member wards. During preliminary discussions on council size, the Council proposed the retention of the existing council size of 40. It put forward evidence relating to its governance and management structure, scrutiny of the council, work on outside bodies and members' representational role.

18 We carefully considered the evidence received and concluded that the Council had put forward a strong rationale arguing for the retention of the existing council size. Its submission included evidence about members' role and workload.

19 We considered that the Council's existing governance and management structures appeared to work satisfactorily, as did its scrutiny and committee functions. Although the scrutiny and committee functions have a relatively large membership, we noted that overall, a council size of 40 enables the Council to function effectively whilst maintaining effective representation of electors.

20 On the basis of the evidence received, we recommended a council size of 40 members and asked the Council to explore warding arrangements based on this council size.

21 During its deliberations on warding patterns, however, the Council concluded that a council size of 39 enabled a warding pattern that 'better reflected LGBCE criteria'. On this basis, it submitted proposals based on a 39-member council.

22 We considered the Council's revised council size and explored the allocation of members between the various towns and rural areas. In doing so, we noted that both 39 and 40 members provide reasonable allocation, but accepted the Council's view that, on balance, 39 members enabled a stronger warding pattern. We therefore adopted this as part of our draft recommendations.

23 During the consultation on the draft recommendations one respondent suggested that the existing council size of 40-members should be retained. We have considered this, but note that this would require a large-scale redrawing of the boundaries put forward in draft recommendations. Given the general support for a 39-member council, albeit subject to a number of revised ward boundaries, we are basing our final recommendations on a council size of 39.

Electoral fairness

24 Electoral fairness, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. It is expected that our recommendations will provide for electoral fairness, reflect communities in the area, and provide for effective and convenient local government.

25 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor. The district average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the district (75,402 in 2011 and 80,267 by 2018) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 39 under our final recommendations. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our final recommendations is 1,933 in 2011 and 2,058 by 2018.

26 Under our final recommendations, only one of our proposed 25 wards (Benwicks, Coates & Estrea with 12% fewer electors than the district average by 2018) will have electoral variances of greater than 10% from the average for the district by 2018. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Fenland.

General analysis

27 During the information gathering stage, we received one submission on warding arrangements for Fenland. The Council submitted a district-wide proposal based on a council size of 39 which was supported by evidence of community identity.

28 The Council's proposals resulted in good levels of electoral equality across the district and generally used good boundaries. We adopted its proposals subject to a number of minor amendments to improve electoral equality and/or provide stronger ward boundaries. We proposed 15 single-member, six two-member and four three-member wards.

29 During consultation on our draft recommendations we received nine submissions, including one from the Council. The Council acknowledged that the draft recommendations were broadly based on its proposals, but proposed changes that would avoid the creation of a number of additional parish wards and reduced

coterminosity between the proposed ward boundaries and division boundaries. It also proposed additional minor changes to provide stronger boundaries.

30 The Council proposed minor changes to the ward boundaries in Chatteris and Wisbech. It proposed reverting to the existing three three-member wards in March. In Whittlesey it put forward amendments for the south of the town, but did not put forward any proposals for the remainder of the area. Submissions were also received from the respective town councils objecting to the creation of additional parish wards and the lack of coterminosity between ward and electoral division boundaries.

31 We note that a number of the Council's amendments to the draft recommendations were designed to reduce the number parish wards in the town council areas. While we understand the concerns about the creation of parish wards, we cannot consider these over the need to reflect our statutory criteria at ward level. In addition, while some of the parish wards created in our draft recommendations were relatively small, they can still be considered viable within the terms set out in our guidance. We have therefore considered each of the proposed amendments on their merit in relation to our statutory criteria and any moves away from the draft recommendations reflect such criteria. These are discussed below.

32 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and the large map accompanying this report.

Electoral arrangements

33 This section of the report details the submissions we have received, our consideration of them, and our final recommendations for each area of Fenland. The following areas of the authority are considered in turn:

- Whittlesey (pages 8 – 9)
- Chatteris (page 10)
- March, Elm and Christchurch (pages 10 – 11)
- Doddington and Wimblington (page 11)
- Wisbech (page 12)
- Roman Bank, Wisbech St Mary and Parson Drove (pages 12 – 13)

34 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Table A1 on pages 20 – 21 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Whittlesey

35 Whittlesey is a town in the west of Fenland district. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals, subject to a minor amendment to improve electoral equality between its Whittlesey Central and Whittlesey North wards to improve electoral equality. Our draft recommendations were for single-member Whittlesey Central, Whittlesey North, Whittlesey North East, Whittlesey West and a two member Benwick, Coates & Eastrea wards with 1% fewer, 6% more, 1% fewer, 1% more, 7% more and 3% fewer electors than the district average by 2018, respectively.

36 We received three submissions relating to this area during the consultation on our draft recommendations. The Council put forward amendments to the south of Whittlesey, but not to the north. It argued that its proposals reduced the number of parish wards in the town. In addition, it stated that our proposed Drybread parish ward should be included in a town ward as this area will be subject to development that will mean it will associate more with the town than the rural Benwick, Coates & Eastrea area. It also stated that its proposals utilised stronger boundaries, including the A605, B1040, rail and rivers.

37 Whittlesey Town Council objected to the draft recommendations. It stated that the existing 40-member council should be retained. It also stated that the ward boundaries should reflect natural boundaries including the A605, B1040, rail and rivers. It also argued that our proposed Drybread parish ward should be included in a ward with the town area. Finally, it also requested that the wards should have locally recognisable names. A local resident also argued that the Drybread parish ward should be in a ward with the remainder of the town.

38 We acknowledge the evidence concerning Drybread parish ward. Having examined this, we accept that this area of future development would best be served by being in an urban ward. However, removing this area from Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward would leave the ward with 12% fewer electors than the district average by 2018. Such a level of electoral equality is higher than we would generally consider. However, in this instance, given the strength of evidence about the Drybread Road area, we accept that such a variance could be justified.

39 While we support the principal of transferring Drybread Road area, this is dependent on securing an acceptable warding pattern for the rest of the town. We note that the Council supported our Whittlesey East ward, but proposed a revised Whittlesey Central ward. In the remainder of the area we note that it did not provide any proposals.

40 We have therefore had to explore the feasibility of creating revised electoral arrangements that can accommodate the transfer of Drybread Road area while retaining strong boundaries and securing good electoral equality. To reflect evidence of community identities put forward by the Council, we therefore propose that Whittlesey North ward should additionally include the Finkle area of our draft Whittlesey Central ward. This ward would have 7% more electors than the district average. In the remaining area we propose combining the remainder of our Whittlesey Central with Whittlesey North East wards and Drybread Road area. This would create a two-member Whittlesey North East ward with 6% more electors than the district average by 2018. We do not propose to make any changes to our draft recommendations for Whittlesey West ward.

41 Finally we propose amending the proposed wards ward names, giving names that reflect the local area. As a result, Whittlesey North East ward is named Bassenhally ward; Whittlesey East ward is named Lattersey ward; Whittlesey North West ward is named Stonald ward; and Whittlesey South West is named St Andrews. These wards would have 6% more, 6% more, 7% more and 7% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively.

42 Our final recommendations for Whittlesey can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Chatteris

43 Chatteris is a town in the south of Fenland district. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals subject to a number of minor amendments to provide stronger boundaries and avoid the creation of a number of unviable parish wards. Our draft recommendations were for single member Birch, Manea, Slade Lode, The Mills and Wenneye wards with 7% more, 7% fewer, 4% more, 10% more and 9% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively.

44 We received comments on our draft recommendations from the Council and Chatteris Town Council. The Council proposed amendments between Birch and Slade Lode wards to remove the need for Birch and Curf parish wards. It also put forward some community identity evidence to justify this amendment. The Council also argued that The Shrubbery should be transferred from Wenneye ward to Birch ward, citing community links.

45 Chatteris Town Council objected to the creation of seven parish wards as part of the draft recommendations for the town area, requesting the retention of the existing wards. It stated that if this was not possible it supported the Council's amendments.

46 We have given consideration to the evidence received. We note that the Council's proposals to transfer Curf Terrace and Wiley Terrace to Birch ward appears inconsistent with the evidence it provided earlier in the review. The Council argued that these areas had links into Slade Lode. In addition, the Council's amendment would worsen electoral equality in Slade Lode from 4% in 2018 to 10%. We consider that this amendment has mainly been proposed to address the issue of parish warding. We note the concerns about parish warding but consider that the parish wards at issue, while small, are viable and within the tolerances set out in our guidance. On the basis of the worsening of electoral equality and limited community identity argument, therefore, we are not adopting this amendment.

47 We also note the Council's proposals to transfer The Shrubbery from Wenneye ward to Birch ward would result in the ward having 11% more electors than the district average by 2018.

48 On the basis of the limited evidence received and the detrimental effect on electoral equality we have decided against adopting the Council's revised proposals for Chatteris. We are therefore confirming our draft recommendations as final. Birch, Manea, Slade Lode, The Mills and Wenneye wards would have 7% more, 7% fewer, 4% more, 10% more and 9% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively. Our draft recommendations for Chatteris can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

March, Elm and Christchurch

49 March is a town in the centre of the district. Our draft recommendations for this area were based on the Council's proposals without amendment. Our draft recommendations were for a two member Elm & Christchurch ward and three three-member wards of March East, March North and March West. These wards would have 5% fewer, 6% fewer, 5% more and equal to the average number of electors for

the district by 2018, respectively.

50 We received comments on our draft recommendations from this area from the Council, March Town Council and Councillor Cornwell (March North ward). The Council proposed reverting to the existing three three-member wards in the March area arguing that this avoided the need for unnecessary parish wards. It also stated that the existing wards are locally recognised and long established. It recommended no change to the draft recommendations for Elm & Christchurch ward.

51 March Town Council also objected to the draft recommendations, particularly the creation of additional parish wards to accommodate the revised warding arrangements put forward in the draft recommendations. The Town Council supported the Council's request for the retention of the existing wards. Councillor Cornwell expressed a preference for single-member wards, but did not put forward specific proposals.

52 We have given consideration to the evidence received. We note that there were no objections to the Christchurch & Elm ward and are therefore confirming this ward as final. Elm & Christchurch ward would have 5% fewer electors than the district average by 2018.

53 Councillor Cornwell did not provide any proposals or much in the way of evidence for his suggestion of single-member wards for March.

54 We note the objections to the draft recommendations for March. We are disappointed that these proposals were not put forward at an earlier stage. However we note that there is support for retaining the existing wards and that they secure good levels of electoral equality. Although the retention of the existing wards is a significant shift from the draft recommendations we acknowledge that these have the support of both the Council and March Town Council. In addition they are already locally known. We are therefore adopting the Council's proposal for the retention of the existing wards as part of our final recommendations.

55 Our three three-member wards of March East, March North and March West would have 2% fewer, 5% fewer and 6% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively. Our final recommendations for March, Elm and Christchurch can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Doddington and Wimblington

56 The two rural parishes of Doddington and Wimblington lie just south of March. Our draft recommendations were based on the Council's proposals without amendment. Our draft recommendations were for a two-member Doddington & Wimblington ward with 10% fewer electors than the district average.

57 Our proposed Doddington & Wimblington ward would have 10% fewer electors than the district average by 2018. We received no objections to our proposals for this ward during the consultation on our draft recommendations. We are therefore confirming it as final. Our final recommendations for Doddington & Wimblington ward can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Wisbech

58 Wisbech is a town in the north-east of Fenland district. We based our draft recommendations for this area on the original proposals of the Council, subject to a number of amendments to improve electoral equality and provide for stronger boundaries. Our proposals for this area were for single member Clarkson, Kirkgate, Medworth, Peckover and Staithe wards with 3% more, 5% more, 6% more, 2% fewer and 1% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively. In addition we recommended two-member Octavia Hill and Waterlees Village wards, with 4% more and 6% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively.

59 We received comments on our proposals for this area from the Council and from a group of Town and District Councillors (Councillor V Bucknor, Councillor M Bucknor, Councillor Cox and Councillor Patrick) representing the town area and Councillor Hoy (Wisbech Town Council and Cambridgeshire County Council). The Council objected to the creation of Market parish ward, which contained few electors. It also put forward a number of small boundary amendments primarily designed to provide stronger boundaries and to secure good levels of electoral equality. The district councillors put forward the same amendments at the Council.

60 We have given consideration to the evidence received. We note the support for the boundaries of the Waterlees Village ward and are proposing these as final. We also note that Councillor Hoy stated that the area was not a village and the ward should be called Waterlees ward. However, no other respondent objected to the ward name so we are therefore confirming Waterlees Village ward as final. We also note there were no objections to Peckover ward and are therefore confirming this ward as final. Peckover and Waterlees Village wards would have 2% fewer and 6% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively.

61 We note the Council's proposal to transfer our proposed Market parish ward from Clarkson ward to Medworth ward and, in the process, merge the parish wards. In addition it proposed minor boundary amendments between Kirkgate and Clarkson wards, Staithe and Octavia Hill wards and Medworth and Octavia Hill wards. Its amended Clarkson, Kirkgate, Medworth, Octavia Hill and Staithe wards would have 1% more, 1% fewer, 6% more, 8% more and 3% more electors than the district average by 2018, respectively. We note that these wards provide stronger boundaries and ensure reasonable levels of electoral equality and are therefore adopting them as part of our final recommendations.

62 Our final recommendations for Wisbech can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Roman Bank, Wisbech St Mary and Parson Drove

63 This area lies to the north and west of Wisbech. We based our draft recommendations for this area on the original proposals of the Council without amendment. Our proposals for this area were for a two-member Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary ward and three-member Roman Bank ward, with 1% more and 10% fewer electors than the district average by 2018, respectively.

64 We received no objections to our proposals for these wards during the consultation on our draft recommendations. We therefore confirm these wards as

final. Our final recommendations for this can be seen on Table A1 (on pages 20 – 21) and on Map 1 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

65 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2011 and 2018 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2011	2018
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	24	24
Average number of electors per councillor	1,933	2,058
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	3	1
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

Final recommendation

Fenland District Council should comprise 39 councillors serving 24 wards, as detailed and named in Table A1 and illustrated on the large map accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

66 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

67 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, Fenland District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

68 To meet our obligations under the 2009 Act, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parishes of Chatteris, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

69 Chatteris Town Council is currently represented by 12 parish councillors representing four parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the

2009 Act, we proposed revised parish electoral arrangements for the draft recommendations for Chatteris parish.

70 We note that the Council and Chatteris Town Council both objected to our proposals for the creation of seven parish wards, including the creation of a two member Birch and single-member Curf ward. In addition, we note the request that Manea parish ward be renamed How Fen.

71 As stated in the discussion of warding arrangements (paragraph 46) removing these parish wards and transferring the respective areas into Slade Lode and Birch wards would significantly worsen electoral equality in the district wards. We are therefore not adopting this amendment. We are confirming our draft recommendations for the parish ward boundaries in Chatteris as final, subject to renaming Manea parish ward as How Fen parish ward.

Final recommendations

Chatteris Town Council should return 12 parish councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Birch (returning two members); Curf (returning one member); Curlew (returning one member); How Fen (returning one member); Slade Lode (returning two members); The Mills (returning two members); and Wenneye (returning three members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

72 Whittlesey Town Council is currently represented by 14 parish councillors, representing seven parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we proposed revised parish electoral arrangements for the draft recommendations for Whittlesey parish.

73 As stated in the discussion of warding arrangements (paragraph 40 – 41) we are proposing a number of amendments to the district ward arrangements for the Whittlesey area. As a result we are making amendments to the parish ward boundaries, including merging our proposed Drybread and Finkle parish wards with neighbouring parish wards. We also propose adjusting the allocation of councillors to reflect these changes.

Final recommendations

Whittlesey Town Council should return 14 parish councillors, as at present, representing eight wards: Bassenhally (returning three members); Coates & Eastrea (returning three members); Delph (returning one member); Elm (returning one member); Lattersley (returning two members); St Andrews (returning one member); St Marys (returning one member); and Stonald (returning two members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

74 Wisbech Town Council is currently represented by 18 members, representing seven parish wards. As a result of our proposed electoral ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we proposed revised parish electoral arrangements for the draft recommendations for Wisbech parish.

75 As stated in the discussion of warding arrangements (paragraph 60 – 61) we are proposing a number of amendments to the district ward arrangements for the Wisbech area. As a result we are making amendments to the parish ward boundaries, including merging our proposed Market ward with neighbouring parish ward. We also propose adjusting the allocation of councillors to reflect these changes.

Final recommendations

Wisbech Town Council should return 18 parish councillors, as at present, representing seven wards: Clarkson (returning two members); Kirkgate (returning two members); Medworth (returning two members); Octavia Hill (returning four members); Peckover (returning two members); Staithe (returning two members); and Waterlees Village (returning four members). The proposed parish ward boundaries are illustrated and named on Map 1.

3 What happens next?

76 We have now completed our review of electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements which will come into force at the next elections for Fenland District Council in 2015.

Equalities

77 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

4 Mapping

Final recommendations for Fenland

78 The following map illustrates our proposed ward boundaries for Fenland District Council:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Fenland District Council.

You can also view our final recommendations for Fenland on our interactive maps at consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for Fenland District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Bassenhally	2	3,865	1,933	0%	4,364	2,182	6%
2	Benwick, Coates & Eastrea	2	3,494	1,747	-10%	3,604	1,802	-12%
3	Birch	1	2,173	2,173	12%	2,209	2,209	7%
4	Clarkson Ward	1	1,914	1,914	-1%	2,072	2,072	1%
5	Doddington & Wimblington	2	3,545	1,773	-8%	3,707	1,854	-10%
6	Elm & Christchurch	2	3,796	1,898	-2%	3,904	1,952	-5%
7	Kirkgate Ward	1	1,833	1,833	-5%	2,033	2,033	-1%
8	Lattersey	1	2,166	2,166	12%	2,179	2,179	6%
9	Manea	1	1,745	1,745	-10%	1,924	1,924	-7%
10	March East	3	5,902	1,967	2%	6,044	2,015	-2%
11	March North	3	5,651	1,884	-3%	5,846	1,949	-5%
12	March West	3	5,599	1,866	-3%	6,540	2,180	6%
13	Medworth Ward	1	1,941	1,941	0%	2,187	2,187	6%

Table A1 (cont): Final recommendations for Fenland District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2012)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2018)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14	Octavia Hill	2	4,243	2,122	10%	4,444	2,222	8%
15	Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary	2	3,912	1,956	1%	4,140	2,070	1%
16	Peckover	1	1,923	1,923	-1%	2,014	2,014	-2%
17	Roman Bank	3	5,352	1,784	-8%	5,538	1,846	-10%
18	Slade Lode	1	1,922	1,922	-1%	2,147	2,147	4%
19	St Andrews	1	2,117	2,117	9%	2,198	2,198	7%
20	Staithe	1	2,094	2,094	8%	2,118	2,118	3%
21	Stonald	1	2,073	2,073	7%	2,193	2,193	7%
22	The Mills	1	2,220	2,220	15%	2,254	2,254	10%
23	Waterlees Village	2	4,174	2,087	8%	4,373	2,187	6%
24	Wenneye	1	1,748	1,748	-10%	2,235	2,235	9%
	Totals	39	75,402	–	–	80,267	–	–
	Averages	–	–	1,933	–	–	2,058	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Fenland District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Appendix B

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral imbalance	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections

Local Government Boundary Commission for England or LGBCE	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is responsible for undertaking electoral reviews. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England assumed the functions of the Boundary Committee for England in April 2010
Multi-member ward or division	A ward or division represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	The 13 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and can be found at www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward

Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Commission for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England
Political management arrangements	The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enabled local authorities in England to modernise their decision-making process. Councils could choose from two broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet or a cabinet with a leader
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average

Ward	A specific area of a district or district, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the borough or district council
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