

# New electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council Draft Recommendations

March 2022

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### **A note on our mapping:**

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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# Introduction

## Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.<sup>1</sup> We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Susan Johnson OBE
- Peter Maddison QPM
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Jolyon Jackson CBE (Chief Executive)

## What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More detail regarding the powers that we have, as well as the further guidance and information about electoral reviews and review process in general, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Why Fenland?

7 We are conducting a review of Fenland District Council ('the Council') at the request of the Council. This is as a result of recent and future housing developments in the district. Additionally, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in Fenland are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

## Our proposals for Fenland

9 Fenland should be represented by 42 councillors, three more than there are now.

10 Fenland should have 17 wards, seven fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all wards should change; none will stay the same.

## How will the recommendations affect you?

12 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 cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the district or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

## Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for a 10-week period, from 29 March 2022 to 6 June 2022. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 6 June 2022 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 25 for how to send us your response.

## Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for Fenland. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
19 October 2021	Number of councillors decided
26 October 2021	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
10 January 2022	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
29 March 2022	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
6 June 2022	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
6 September 2022	Publication of final recommendations





## Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation<sup>2</sup> states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors<sup>3</sup> there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with exactly the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each individual local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown on the table below.

	2021	2027
Electorate of Fenland	76,809	85,944
Number of councillors	42	42
Average number of electors per councillor	1,829	2,046

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'good electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for Fenland will have good electoral equality by 2027.

## Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2027, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2022. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 12% by 2027.

25 The Council worked with the review team in order to develop their electoral forecasts, using Cambridgeshire County Council population forecasts coupled with new housing data. They expect a large amount of growth to take place in the district and have a significant number of planned housing developments.

<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

26 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at the present time. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

## Number of councillors

27 Fenland District Council currently has 39 councillors. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that increasing by three councillors to 42 will ensure the Council can carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 42 councillors: for example, 42 one-councillor wards, 14 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

29 We received three submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on warding patterns. All three submissions objected to an increase in the number of councillors, but none proposed an alternative council size or provided any evidence to justify an alternative council size. The Fenland Independents Alliance (FIA) warding pattern was based on a council size of 41 councillors. The FIA considered that this council size allowed a better balance of councillors between the rural areas of Fenland and the towns of the district. We discuss this submission in the section below. We have based our draft recommendations on a 42-councillor council.

## Ward boundaries consultation

30 We received 38 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two district-wide proposals from the Council and the FIA. The warding proposal from the Council provided for 42 councillors across the district and proposed a mixed pattern of single-, two- and three-councillor wards. The warding proposal from the FIA provided for 41 councillors across the district in a mixed pattern of two- and three-councillor wards. The FIA argued that this warding pattern facilitated the best retention of the existing warding pattern, particularly in the rural areas. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements across the district.

31 We carefully considered the proposals received and were of the view that both proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used clearly identifiable boundaries. Consequently, we have based our draft recommendations on a combination of the two warding patterns with a council size of 42 councillors.

32 Our draft recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas we considered that the proposals did not provide for the best balance between our statutory criteria and so we identified alternative boundaries.

33 As a result of the restrictions arising from the Covid-19 outbreak, there was a detailed virtual tour of Fenland. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the draft recommendations.

## Draft recommendations

34 Our draft recommendations are for 10 three-councillor wards, five two-councillor wards and two single-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

35 The tables and maps on pages 8–19 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Fenland. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>4</sup> criteria of:

- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

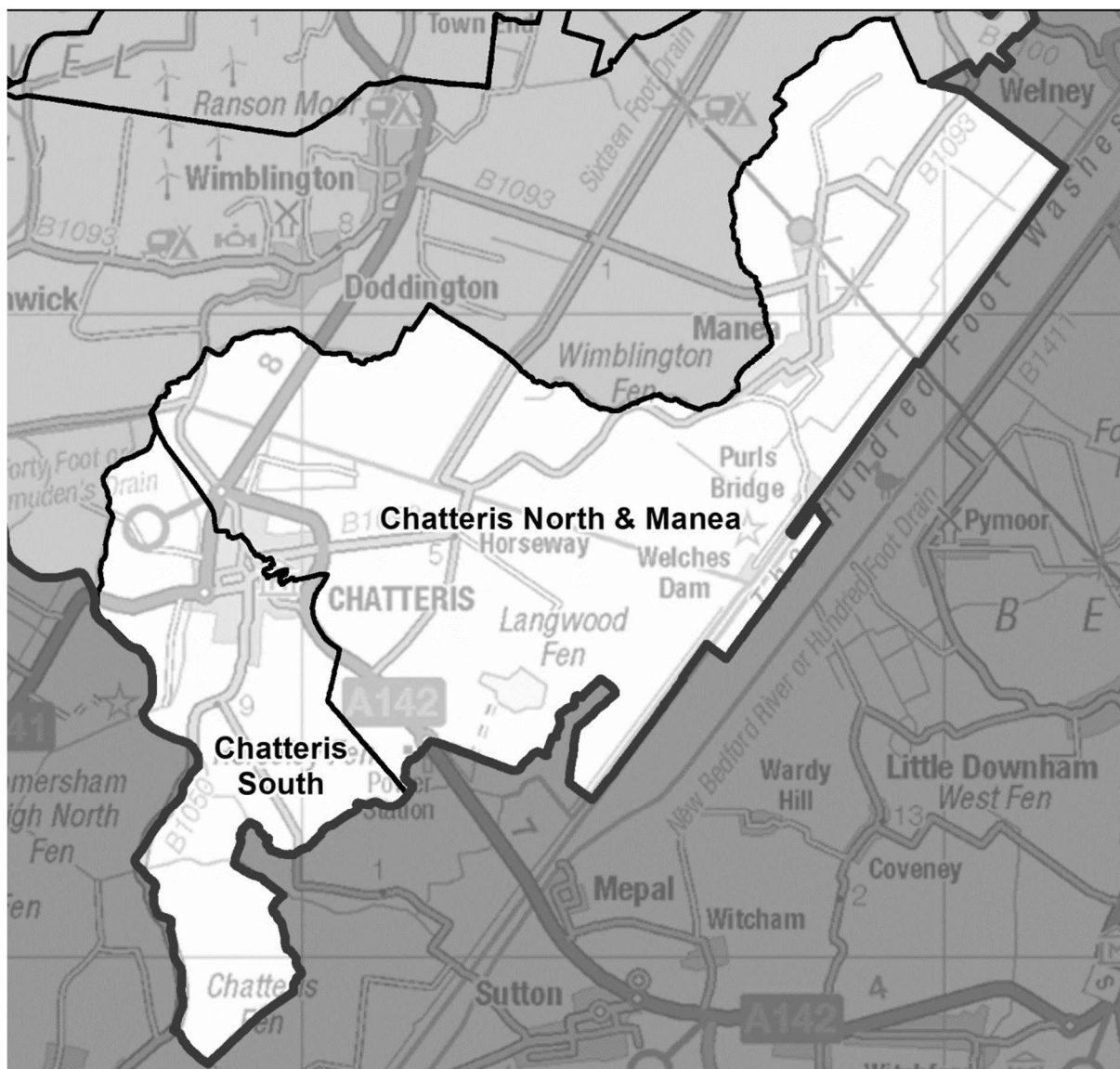
36 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 31 and on the large map accompanying this report.

37 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries, and the names of our proposed wards.

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<sup>4</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Chatteris and surrounding parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Chatteris North & Manea	3	3%
Chatteris South	3	3%

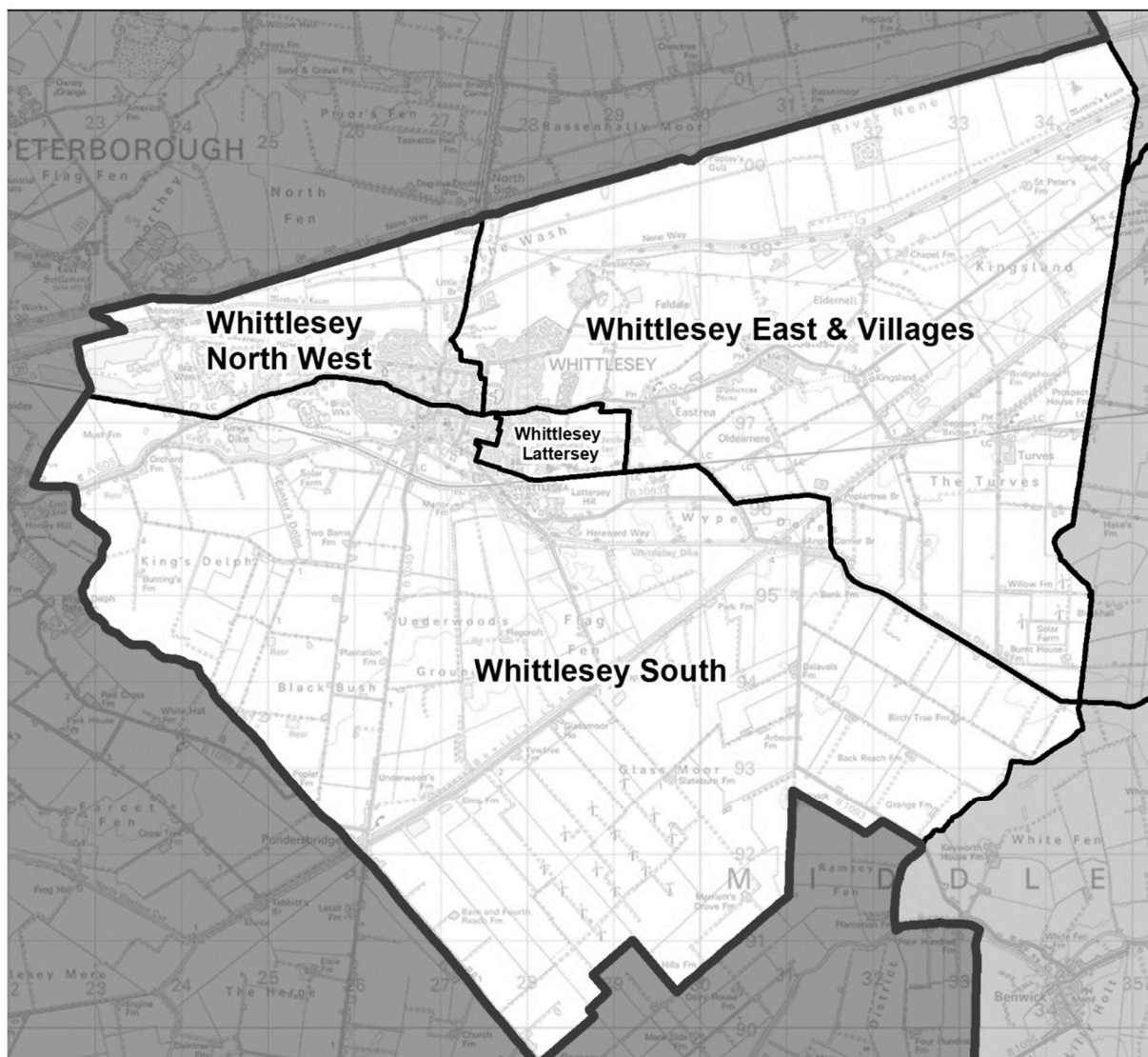
### *Chatteris North & Manea and Chatteris South*

38 The two submissions we received for this area from the Council and the FIA proposed identical boundaries. Both proposed two three-councillor wards of Chatteris North & Manea and Chatteris South. Chatteris North & Manea was proposed to be comprised of the existing Birch ward, the existing Manea ward (coterminous with Manea parish) and the northern part of the existing Slade Lode ward. Chatteris South was proposed to be comprised of the existing wards named The Mills and Wenneye as well as the southern part of Slade Lode ward.

39 We received three other submissions that referred to Manea parish. Two of these respondents proposed changes to the external boundaries of the parish. Changing the external boundaries of a parish is outside of the scope of this review and falls within the responsibility of the local authority under the Community Governance Review framework. The other local submission stated that Manea had ties to Christchurch, due to its proximity, but provided no further evidence to support this assertion. Having carefully considered the submissions and looked at the area in detail, we agree that the two wards proposed by both the warding patterns we received reflect all three of our statutory criteria in this area. We have therefore adopted them as our draft recommendations for the Chatteris and Manea area.

40 Our draft proposals are for two three-councillor wards of Chatteris North & Manea and Chatteris South with electoral equality of 3% and 3%, respectively, by 2027.

## Whittlesey



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Whittlesey East & Villages	3	-6%
Whittlesey Lattersey	1	-5%
Whittlesey North West	2	-4%
Whittlesey South	2	-7%

### *Whittlesey East & Villages, Whittlesey Lattersey, Whittlesey North West and Whittlesey South*

41 The two full warding pattern submissions we received for this area proposed significantly different boundaries.

42 The FIA proposed a warding pattern that was similar to the existing wards in the town. They proposed wards of Whittlesey Central, East and North and maintained most of the existing ward of Benwick, Coates & Eastrea. Their proposed

Whittlesey East ward is based on the existing ward of Bassenhally, with the exception of the new housing development to the north of Eastrea Road, which they proposed to include in a Whittlesey Central ward. The FIA's proposed Whittlesey Central ward also included the entirety of the existing Lattersey ward as well as the area of St Andrews ward around the town centre and Market Square. Their proposed Whittlesey North ward was comprised of the entirety of the existing Stonald ward and the part of St Andrews ward to the north of Briggate River. The area currently in St Andrews ward to the south of the river was proposed to be included in the FIA's proposed Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward.

43 The Council's proposed warding pattern differed from the FIA proposal and the existing wards in some significant ways. The Council proposed a Whittlesey North West ward that is comprised of the existing Stonald ward plus the electors in the existing Bassenhally ward to the east of the Alderman Jacobs Primary School, Sir Harry Smith Community College and Drybread Road. They proposed to include the remainder of the electors in the existing Bassenhally ward in a Whittlesey East & Villages ward along with the villages of Coates, Eastrea and Turves. The Council also proposed a single-councillor Whittlesey Lattersey ward, which included the new development to the south of Eastrea Road. Their proposed Whittlesey South ward included all of the existing St Andrews ward plus parts of Bassenhally and Lattersey wards and the electors to the south of a boundary that would follow the main railway line, Wype Road, Wype Drove and Whittlesey Dyke. This proposed ward did not include Benwick parish, which they proposed to include in a ward with Doddington and other parishes on the basis of community ties and effective and convenient local government. We discuss this in the section below.

44 Whittlesey Town Council made a submission as part of our consultation. They stated their support for the proposals for Whittlesey made by the Council. They noted their support was due to the proposed wards being coterminous with the parish of Whittlesey, as well as the fact that the proposal removed Benwick parish from a ward that also included parts of Whittlesey parish. The Town Council strongly supported the use of the A605 as the boundary throughout the urban area of the parish as proposed by the Council. They also supported the continued inclusion of the villages of Turves and Coates in the same ward and the unification of the community around the B1040 and B1093 roads. The Town Council argued that communities shared ties along those roads.

45 We received two further submissions that referred to wards within Whittlesey parish. Both of these submissions stated that the two-councillor Bassenhally ward was too large and required an additional councillor. This is something that was addressed by both full warding pattern submissions.

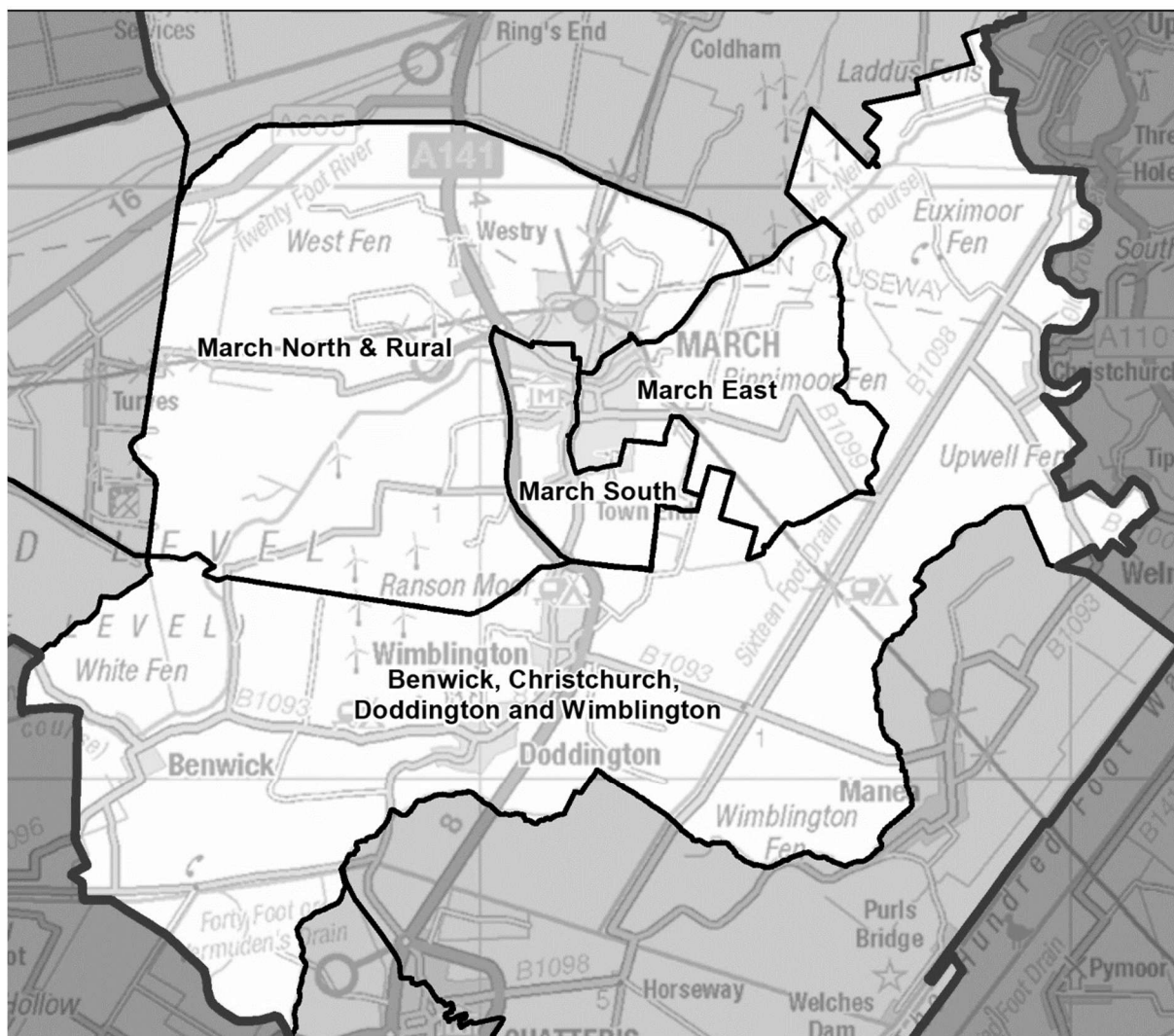
46 Having considered all of the proposals for this area, we have concluded that the warding pattern proposed by the Council best meets our statutory criteria in this

area. We noted the strong support for this warding pattern from Whittlesey Town Council, including helpful comments on where they considered the submission was particularly strong in terms of community identity. We also agree that there is strong evidence that Benwick parish lacks community ties to Whittlesey and is best placed in a ward with Doddington parish.

47 Our draft recommendations for the Whittlesey area are for a single-councillor Whittlesey Lattersey ward with an electoral variance of -5%, two two-councillor wards of Whittlesey North West and Whittlesey South with electoral equality of -4% and -7%, respectively, and a three-councillor Whittlesey East & Villages ward with a variance of -6%. All four wards will deliver good electoral equality by 2027.



## March



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington	3	-3%
March East	3	-3%
March North & Rural	3	10%
March South	3	7%

### *Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington*

48 Of the seven submissions we received that discussed parishes in this ward, the two full warding patterns proposed significantly different boundaries. The Council proposed that Benwick and Christchurch parishes be added to the existing two-councillor Doddington & Wimblington ward to recognise their community identity with Doddington and Wimblington parishes. They noted, in particular, that the only internal road access available to Christchurch parish is via the B1098 to Wimblington parish, and that to travel from Christchurch to any other parish requires leaving the

district. Benwick parish has strong transport links to Doddington along the B1093 Benwick Road. The Council also stated that all four of these parishes border March parish and look towards that town for their service needs.

49 The FIA proposed to retain the existing Doddington & Wimblington ward, maintaining Benwick parish in a Whittlesey ward and Christchurch in a ward with Elm parish. The view of the FIA was that the existing arrangement continues to represent the best reflection of community identity and electoral equality. They stated that Christchurch would be isolated in a ward with Doddington and Wimblington parishes, with access through March and extensive travel times for councillors and electors. The FIA did not suggest any reasons why Benwick should remain in a Whittlesey ward other than it is the current arrangement.

50 Doddington Parish Council suggested that the current warding arrangement should be retained. They argued that a ward with an additional councillor would not adequately represent all four parishes as the Council have suggested. Wimblington Parish Council proposed that Doddington parish and Wimblington parish should be separated and have their own councillors. A local resident noted that the current parish boundary between Wimblington and March divided the properties of 67 and 69 March Road and placed them in separate wards and separate parishes.

51 Having considered the submissions, we have adopted the Council's three-councillor Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington ward as part of our draft recommendations. Whilst both Doddington parish and Wimblington parish could be proposed as single-councillor wards, at this stage we are not of the view that we have received sufficiently compelling evidence to propose this arrangement. We were persuaded by the evidence offered that Benwick and Christchurch shared community ties with Doddington and Wimblington, respectively, and we were particularly persuaded by the evidence that Benwick parish does not have ties with Whittlesey.

52 Our draft recommendations are for a three-councillor Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington ward with electoral equality of -3% by 2027.

#### *March East, March North & Rural and March South*

53 The two warding patterns we received for the town of March, from the Council and the FIA, were similar both to each other and the existing wards. The Council proposed two changes to the existing wards in March. They proposed to move the boundary between March East and March West from along the rear of Olivers Way and Worsley Chase to the rear of properties on The Causeway and Ireton Way and down the centre of Cavalry Park. The Council also proposed to move the boundary between March North and March West from the main railway line and the B1099 to the A141. This proposed arrangement would include all of the electors to the south

of the railway line in the west of the parish in their proposed March North & Rural ward.

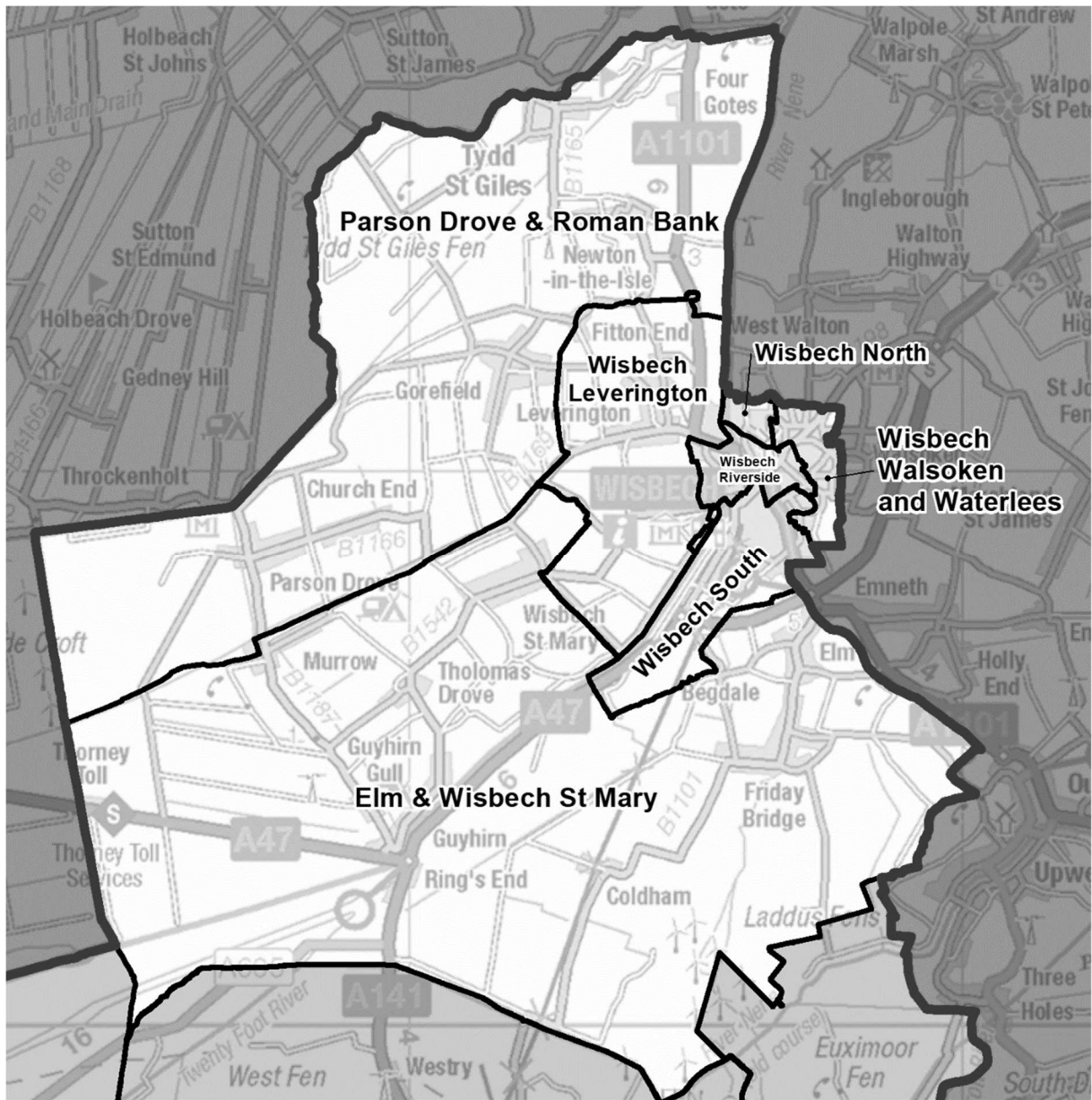
54 The FIA proposed a March East ward that included all of Town End in the same ward, where it is currently divided between March East and March West wards. They also proposed to move the boundary between March East and March North from the B1101 Station Road and the railway line to Creek Road. The FIA's proposed March South ward relocated the boundary between the existing March West and March North wards from the B1099 Dartford Road/Wisbech Road to Maple Grove and Robingoodfellow's Lane. The proposed boundary between March North and March South followed the River Nene (old course).

55 We also received a submission that informed the Commission that the current parish boundary between Wimblington and March divided 67 and 69 March Road between parishes and they should both be included in the same parish and ward. As part of this review, we have no power to amend the boundaries of a parish. This can be done by the local authority by means of a Community Governance Review.

56 We carefully considered both these warding patterns. As part of our draft recommendations, we have been persuaded to adopt the boundaries proposed by the FIA, subject to a modification. We are of the view that this suggested arrangement used more clearly identifiable boundaries, particularly the B1101 road in the south of the town. However, we have made an amendment to the proposed boundary between March North and March South. While we considered the FIA's proposal to use the River Nene (old course) as the ward boundary in the rural area, this would create a parish ward with 84 electors in it, with no developments for the area included in the electorate forecasts. We do not consider that parish wards with fewer than 100 electors provide for effective and convenient local government. We therefore propose to use the A141 as the boundary between March North and March South.

57 Our proposed draft recommendations for March are for three three-councillor wards of March East, March North & Rural and March South, with electoral equality of -3%, 10% and 7%, respectively, by 2027.

## Wisbech and surrounding parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Elm & Wisbech St Mary	3	10%
Parson Drove & Roman Bank	2	-4%
Wisbech Leverington	2	-2%
Wisbech North	1	-4%
Wisbech Riverside	2	-5%
Wisbech South	3	0%
Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees	3	-3%

*Wisbech Leverington, Wisbech North, Wisbech Riverside, Wisbech South and Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees*

58 The two warding pattern submissions we received for Wisbech proposed significantly different boundaries, particularly regarding the placement of Leverington parish. The FIA proposed to retain Leverington parish in their proposed Roman Bank ward along with the parishes of Gorefield, Newton and Tydd St Giles, as is the current arrangement. Their proposed wards for Wisbech itself were based on combining the existing wards in the town. They combined Kirkgate and Waterlees Village wards to form Wisbech North; Octavia Hill and Staithe wards to form Wisbech East; and Clarkson, Medworth and Peckover to form Wisbech West. The FIA's main argument for this arrangement was to maintain 'existing elector comprehension of warding arrangements', as well as meeting the Commission's criteria of electoral equality and effective and convenient local government.

59 The Council's proposal was quite different and included the parish of Leverington in a Wisbech Leverington ward along with parts of the existing Peckover ward. They stated that Leverington parish has very strong community ties to Wisbech and is considered by many to be a continuation of the built-up area of Wisbech. The Council added that excluding the parish from a Wisbech ward would fail to recognise those ties.

60 The Council also proposed a single-councillor Wisbech North ward, which recognised the area as a specific community and gave it its own ward. They also proposed a three-councillor Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees ward, arguing that this arrangement would recognise the community ties of electors in the east of Wisbech currently divided between three wards.

61 The Council additionally proposed a two-councillor Wisbech Riverside ward, arguing that it reflected the community of electors that have connections and concerns with the River Nene. Their proposed Wisbech South ward would include electors in the current wards of Medworth and Octavia Hill. The Council argued that this ward would unite electors who share community ties across the south of the town.

62 We also received a submission from Wisbech Town Council. This offered strong support for the warding pattern proposed by the Council. The Town Council stated that they considered the proposed boundaries would give the town good electoral equality whilst recognising communities. They also strongly supported the inclusion of Leverington parish in a Wisbech ward, considering it to be an integral part of the town despite it having its own parish council. The Town Council also argued that a lot of local electors do not realise there is an administrative boundary between the two areas. They viewed the proposed ward of Wisbech Leverington as sensibly uniting the most rural part of Wisbech parish with the more rural parish of Leverington.

63 Wisbech Town Council also commented on the remaining wards as proposed in the Council's warding pattern, stating that Wisbech Riverside reflects the River Nene as a focal point for communities on both sides of the river. They additionally argued that the Council's proposed Wisbech North ward recognised the long-established community in that area and was similar to a previous warding pattern still widely understood in the area. They noted that the proposed Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees and Wisbech South wards would also be reflective of their local communities, with the former uniting the Walsoken community in a single ward unlike the existing warding pattern.

64 Wisbech Town Council also cited the Council's use of particular boundaries as being strong and clearly defined, including the 'use of Mount Pleasant and Brigstock Roads to form the boundary between Wisbech North and Wisbech Riverside Wards; the use of Churchill and Norwich Roads to create a clear boundary between Wisbech South and Wisbech Riverside Wards; the use of both sides of Boyces Road to form a clear eastern boundary between Wisbech South and Wisbech Riverside Wards; and the unification of both sides of Money Bank to provide a clear strong boundary between Wisbech South and Wisbech Walsoken and Waterlees Wards.'

65 Having considered the submissions received, we have adopted the warding pattern proposed by the Council as part of our draft recommendations. We noted the strong support from Wisbech Town Council for the submission made by Fenland District Council and their detailed explanation of how the proposed wards met our statutory criteria. We were particularly convinced by the strong argument to include Leverington parish in a Wisbech ward. However, we have made one small modification to the proposed by the Council within our draft recommendations. We have maintained Lynn Road as the boundary between Wisbech Riverside and Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees wards. While the Council proposed to run the boundary to the rear of numbers 185–235 Lynn Road, this would create a parish ward of only 53 electors.

66 Our proposed draft recommendations for Wisbech are for a single-councillor Wisbech North ward, two two-councillor wards of Wisbech Leverington and Wisbech Riverside and two three-councillor wards of Wisbech South and Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees. These wards will have electoral equality of -4%, -2%, -5%, 0% and -3% by 2027, respectively.

#### *Elm & Wisbech St Mary and Parson Drove & Roman Bank*

67 In this area we again received two warding proposals that differed in a number of respects. The FIA proposed to maintain the existing wards of Elm & Christchurch, Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary and Roman Bank. The Council proposed to add the parish of Parson Drove to Roman Bank ward to replace Leverington parish, which they included in a Wisbech ward. They proposed to name this ward Parson

Drove & Roman Bank. The Council also proposed a three-councillor ward that comprised the parishes of Elm and Wisbech St Mary called Elm & Wisbech St Mary.

68 We received a number of submissions that objected to the Council's proposal to include Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary in different wards, citing the impact of the village of Murrow and its community ties to Parson Drove.

69 The village of Murrow is currently divided between the parishes of Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary and we looked at the proposals to explore whether we could retain a warding pattern that contained Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary parish in the same ward. We noted that the proposals from the FIA achieved this aim. However, while we acknowledge the arguments from the community, we are unable to adopt the proposals from the FIA in this area and provide for electoral equality, given our decision to include Leverington parish in a Wisbech ward. As discussed earlier in this report, we also propose to include Christchurch parish in a ward with Wimblington, and therefore we are also unable to adopt the FIA's proposal to retain Elm & Christchurch ward.

70 We considered other options, including an arrangement that includes the existing parish ward for Murrow in Parson Drove & Roman Bank ward. This, however, would not provide for good electoral equality, creating an electoral variance in Parson Drove & Roman Bank ward of 16% more electors than the average for the district by 2027. We also considered whether we could propose a three-councillor ward containing Parson Drove parish, Wisbech St Mary parish and the three parishes of Gorefield, Newton and Tydd St Giles. This proposal would require Christchurch parish to be retained in Elm & Christchurch ward as in the current warding pattern. However, this three-councillor ward would have poor electoral equality of 16% more electors than the average for the district by 2027. We do not consider we have received sufficient evidence to justify proposing wards with those levels of electoral inequality.

71 Our proposed wards for this area are, therefore, a two-councillor Parson Drove & Roman Bank ward with electoral equality of -4% and a three-councillor Elm & Wisbech St Mary ward with electoral equality of 10%. These are the wards that were proposed by the Council.

72 We are particularly interested to hear further evidence in this area regarding the community identity of electors in these parishes.





## Conclusions

73 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in Fenland, referencing the 2021 and 2027 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found at Appendix A to the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided at Appendix B.

### Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2021	2027
Number of councillors	42	42
Number of electoral wards	17	17
Average number of electors per councillor	1,829	2,046
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	5	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	1	0

#### Draft recommendations

Fenland District Council should be made up of 42 councillors serving 17 wards representing two single-councillor wards, five two-councillor wards and 10 three-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

#### Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for Fenland District Council. You can also view our draft recommendations for Fenland District Council on our interactive maps at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

### Parish electoral arrangements

74 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.

75 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.

76 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech.

77 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Chatteris parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Chatteris Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Birch	3
Slade Lode North	2
Slade Lode South	1
The Mills	3
Wenneye	3

78 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for March parish.

**Draft recommendations**

March Town Council should comprise 12 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	3
North	4
Rural	1
South	2
Town End	1
West End	1

79 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Whittlesey parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Whittlesey Town Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Bassenhally	3
Coates & Eastrea	2
Lattersey	2
St Andrews	2
South	2
Stonald	3

80 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Wisbech parish.

**Draft recommendations**

Wisbech Town Council should comprise 18 councillors, as at present, representing 10 wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Clarence	1
Claremont	1
Clarkson	2
Medworth	2
North	2
Octavia Hill	4
Peckover East	1
Peckover West	1
Staithe & Kirkgate	3
Walsoken	1



## Have your say

81 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole district or just a part of it.

82 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Fenland, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

83 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps. You can find it at [www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

84 Submissions can also be made by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk) or by writing to:

**Review Officer (Fenland)**  
**The Local Government Boundary Commission for England**  
**PO Box 133**  
**Blyth**  
**NE24 9FE**

85 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Fenland which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

86 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

87 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in Fenland?

88 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

89 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

90 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk) A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

91 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation, we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures, or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

92 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

93 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which

brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for Fenland in 2023.





## Equalities

94 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.



# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Draft recommendations for Fenland District Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington	3	5,399	1,800	-2%	5,967	1,989	-3%
2 Chatteris North & Manea	3	5,799	1,933	6%	6,336	2,112	3%
3 Chatteris South	3	4,741	1,580	-14%	6,303	2,101	3%
4 Elm & Wisbech St Mary	3	6,155	2,052	12%	6,731	2,244	10%
5 March East	3	5,857	1,952	7%	5,942	1,981	-3%
6 March North & Rural	3	6,344	2,115	16%	6,749	2,250	10%
7 March South	3	4,998	1,666	-9%	6,555	2,185	7%
8 Parson Drove & Roman Bank	2	3,796	1,898	4%	3,912	1,956	-4%
9 Whittlesey East & Villages	3	4,844	1,615	-12%	5,800	1,933	-6%
10 Whittlesey Lattersey	1	1,273	1,273	-30%	1,942	1,942	-5%

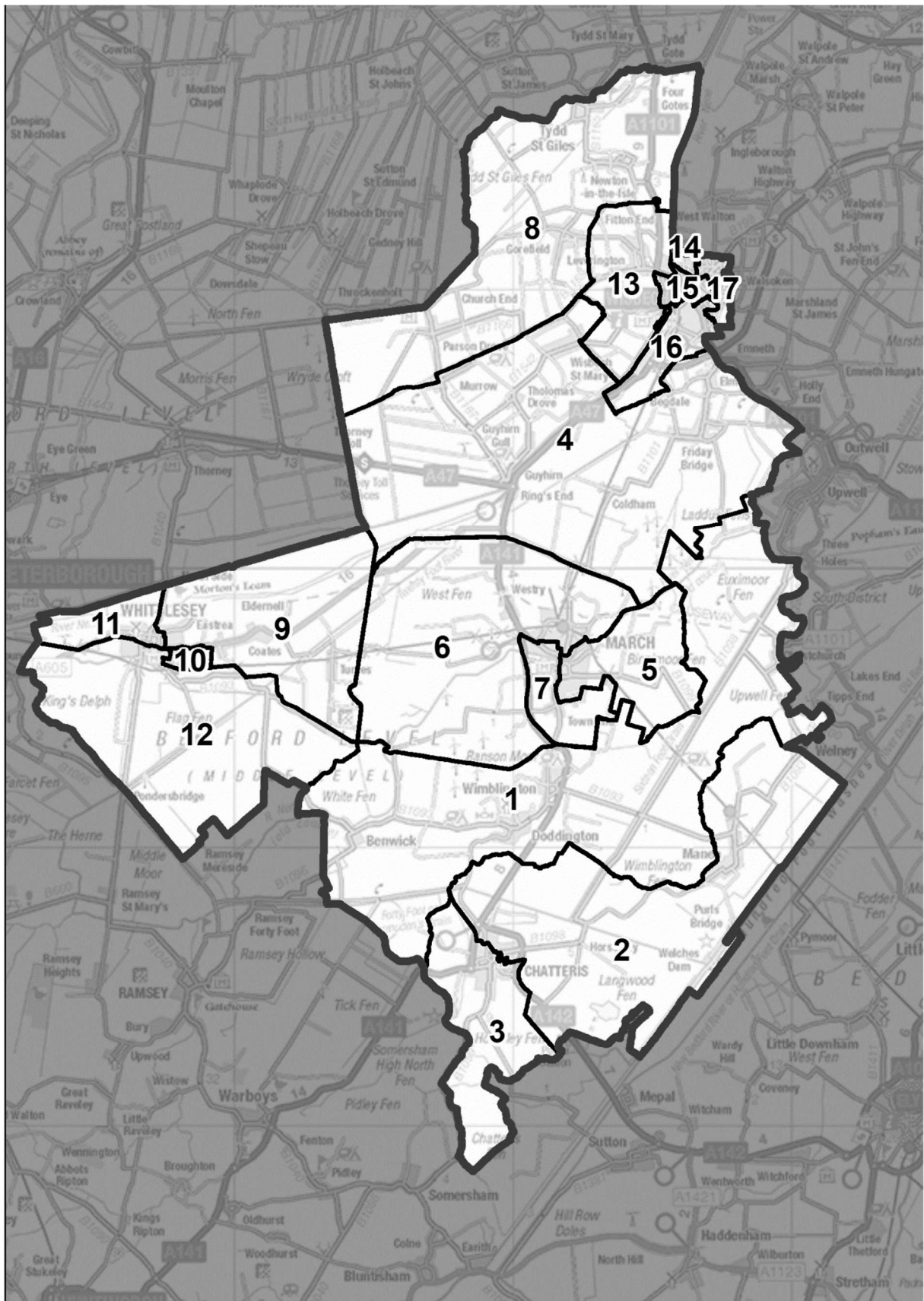
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Whittlesey North West	2	3,777	1,889	3%	3,940	1,970	-4%
12	Whittlesey South	2	3,705	1,853	1%	3,792	1,896	-7%
13	Wisbech Leverington	2	3,554	1,777	-3%	4,026	2,013	-2%
14	Wisbech North	1	1,977	1,977	8%	1,968	1,968	-4%
15	Wisbech Riverside	2	3,585	1,793	-2%	3,884	1,942	-5%
16	Wisbech South	3	5,663	1,888	3%	6,157	2,052	0%
17	Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees	3	5,342	1,781	-3%	5,940	1,980	-3%
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>76,809</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>85,944</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>Averages</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,829</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>-</b>

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 district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# Appendix B

## Outline map



Number	Ward name
1	Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington
2	Chatteris North & Manea
3	Chatteris South
4	Elm & Wisbech St Mary
5	March East
6	March North & Rural
7	March South
8	Parson Drove & Roman Bank
9	Whittlesey East & Villages
10	Whittlesey Lattersey
11	Whittlesey North West
12	Whittlesey South
13	Wisbech Leverington
14	Wisbech North
15	Wisbech Riverside
16	Wisbech South
17	Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: [www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/fenland](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/fenland)

## Appendix C

### Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:  
[www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/fenland](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/fenland)

#### *Local Authority*

- Fenland District Council

#### *Political Groups*

- Fenland Independents Alliance (Fenland District Council)

#### *Local Organisations*

- Murrow Street Pride Volunteer Group (MSP)
- Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speed Watch

#### *Parish and Town Councils*

- Doddington Parish Council
- Elm Parish Council
- Parson Drove Parish Council
- Whittlesey Town Council
- Wimblington Parish Council
- Wisbech Town Council
- Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

#### *Local Residents*

- 27 local residents

## Appendix D

### Glossary and abbreviations

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 inequality	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. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
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 can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
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 borough, 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 district or borough council

The  
Local Government  
Boundary Commission  
for England

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) was set up by Parliament, independent of Government and political parties. It is directly accountable to Parliament through a committee chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is responsible for conducting boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government.

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