

New electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council Final Recommendations

September 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.¹ 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.

¹ 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

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 43 councillors, four more than there are now, and an increase of one from our draft recommendations.

10 Fenland should have 18 wards, six fewer than there are now.

11 The boundaries of all but two wards should change; Doddington & Wimblington and Elm & Christchurch will stay the same.

12 We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for Fenland.

How will the recommendations affect you?

13 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.

14 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 take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Review timetable

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

16 The review was 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 began analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
6 September 2022	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and final recommendations

17 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ 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.

18 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.

19 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	43	43
Average number of electors per councillor	1,786	1,999

20 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

21 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

22 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.

23 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.

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

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

24 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 final recommendations.

Number of councillors

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

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

27 In response to our first consultation, we received warding patterns for 41 councillors and 42 councillors, both of which had support from other submissions. Our draft recommendations were based on a 42-councillor council. We considered a warding pattern based on this council size provided for the best balance of our three statutory criteria of electoral equality, community identity and ties and effective and convenient local government.

28 During the consultation on our draft recommendations, we received further support for a warding pattern represented by 41 councillors. These submissions argued that a warding pattern of 41 councillors provided a reflection of communities in the rural areas of the district. We also received a lot of support for our proposals in the main towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech, which were based on a warding pattern with a 42-councillor council.

29 Upon development of our final recommendations, we identified that a warding pattern of 43 councillors would allow us to take account of the submissions we received relating to the rural areas as well as reflect support for our draft recommendations in other areas of the district. These submissions provided a great deal of evidence regarding the communities in the Murrow and Parson Drove area, Leverington parish, the Wisbech St Mary and Elm and Christchurch areas and the parishes of Doddington and Wimblington.

30 We have therefore based our final recommendations on a 43-councillor council, an increase of four from the current council size and an increase of one from our draft recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

31 We received 38 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two district-wide proposals from the Council and the

Fenland Independents Alliance (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 their proposed 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.

32 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 based our draft recommendations on a combination of the two warding patterns with a council size of 42 councillors.

33 Our draft recommendations also took 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.

34 Prior to the publication of the draft recommendations, we carried out a detailed virtual tour of Fenland. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the draft recommendations.

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

Draft recommendations consultation

36 We received 181 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations. These included responses on the whole district from Fenland District Council, Fenland Independents Alliance (FIA), North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association and Peterborough & Fenland Liberal Democrats.

37 The Council wrote in support of the majority of our draft recommendations but suggested a revised warding pattern in the March area that they considered better reflected the communities in that area. North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association wrote in favour of this revised submission. The FIA reiterated their support for the 41-councillor warding pattern they had submitted during the earlier consultation on warding patterns. Peterborough & Fenland Liberal Democrats wrote

in support of the FIA's suggested arrangement.

38 The majority of the other submissions focused on specific areas, particularly our proposals in the Murrow, Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary areas, as well as the proposals for the parish of Leverington.

39 Our final recommendations are based on the draft recommendations with a modification to the wards in the March area. We have also made amendments to arrangements in the Murrow, Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary areas, as well as to Leverington parish.

40 In the March area we were persuaded that the revised proposal submitted by the Council provided a better balance of our statutory criteria, subject to one amendment to the parish of Benwick, discussed later in this report. We also propose a revised warding pattern for the parishes of Christchurch, Elm, Gorefield, Leverington, Newton, Parson Drove, Tydd St Giles and Wisbech St Mary to reflect the strong community evidence we received in this area.

41 As a result of submissions we received, we decided to carry out a second detailed tour of Fenland at this stage of the review. This helped to clarify issues raised in submissions and assisted in the construction of the final recommendations.

Final recommendations

42 Our final recommendations are for a council size of 43 councillors, an increase of one from our draft recommendations. These councillors should represent nine three-councillor wards, seven two-councillor wards and two single-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

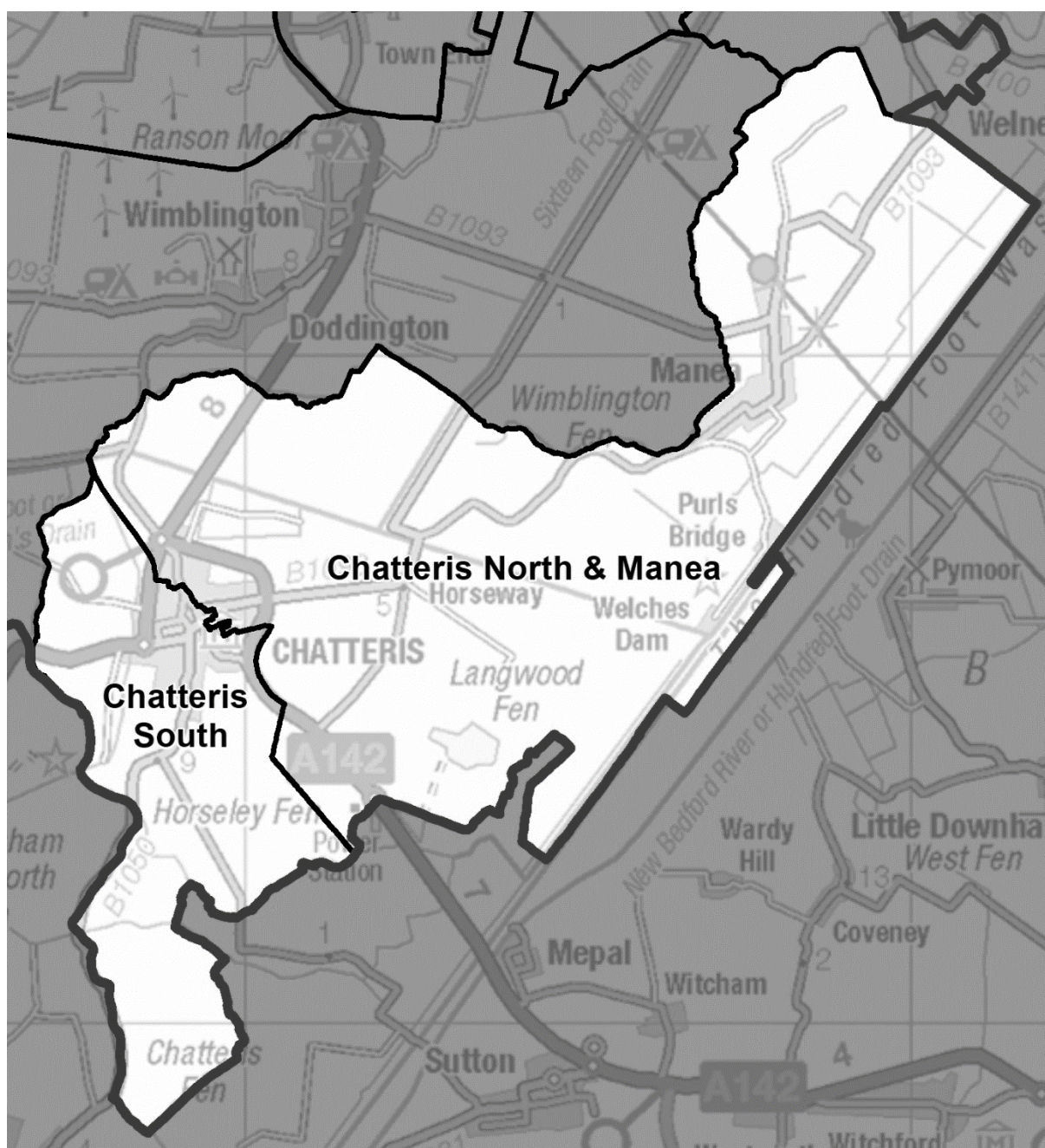
43 The tables and maps on pages 9–22 detail our final recommendations for each area of Fenland. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

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

44 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.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Chatteris and surrounding parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Chatteris North & Manea	3	6%
Chatteris South	3	5%

Chatteris North & Manea and Chatteris South

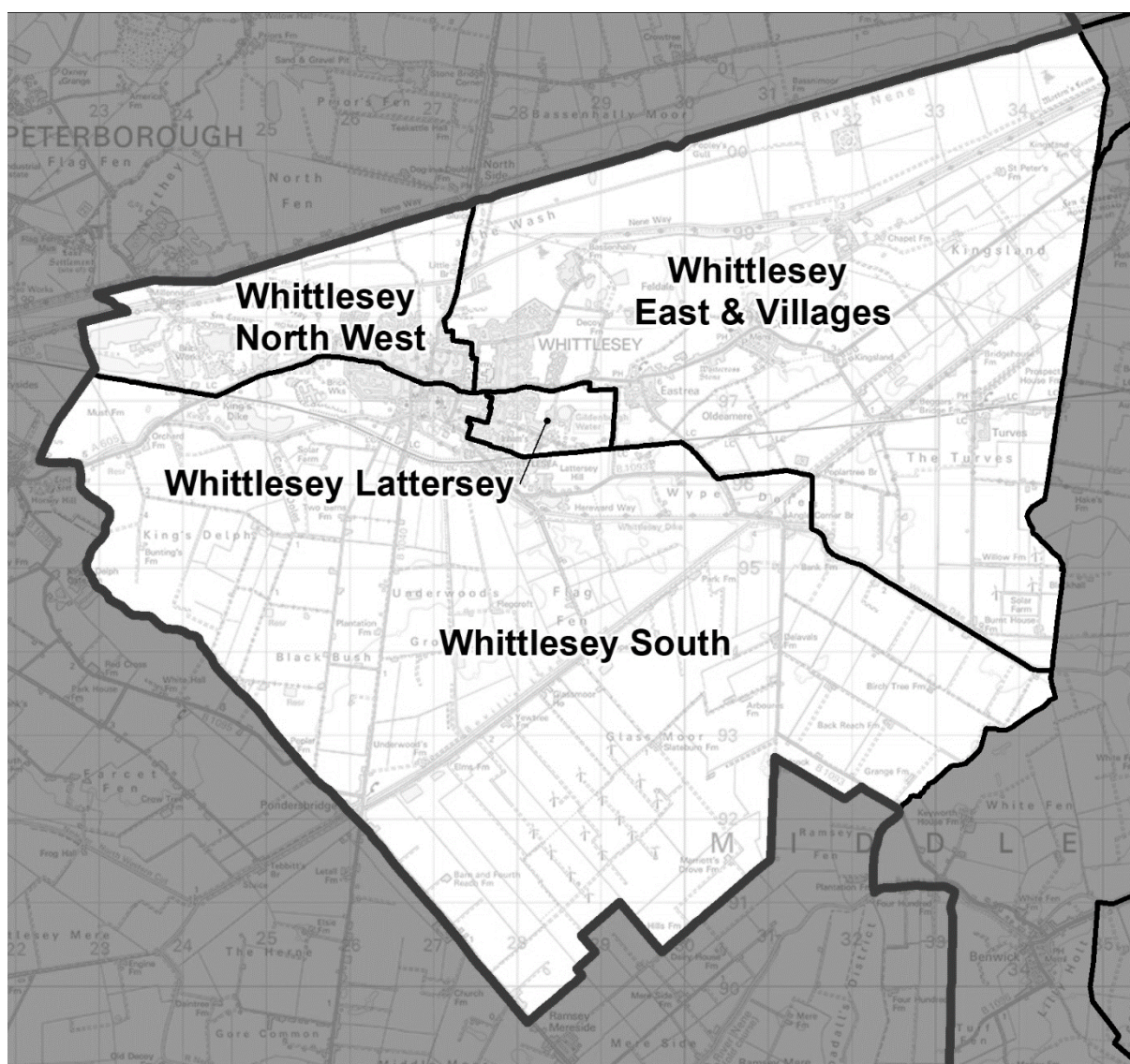
45 Fenland District Council supported our proposed draft recommendations for Chatteris North & Manea and Chatteris South, as well as the revised parish wards within Chatteris. North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association, Councillor Boden and a local resident also wrote in support of these two wards.

46 The Fenland Independents Alliance (FIA) stated that the proposal to include Manea in a Chatteris ward was unpopular in feedback they had received. They argued that residents did not consider that they shared an identity with Chatteris and instead looked towards March for their service needs.

47 We considered the support for these two wards from the four submissions that directly referenced the area, as well as the opposition from the FIA. The FIA had proposed that Manea be included in a Chatteris ward in their earlier submission and, whilst they stated that had received feedback opposing its inclusion, they did not provide any examples of the feedback they had received, and we received no further submissions from local residents

48 On balance, we have therefore decided to confirm our draft recommendations for this area as final. Our final proposals are for two three-councillor wards of Chatteris North & Manea and Chatteris South with electoral variances of 6% and 5%, respectively, by 2027.

Whittlesey



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

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

49 Fenland District Council fully supported the four wards proposed in Whittlesey. The North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association supported our proposal not to include Benwick parish in a Whittlesey ward.

50 Fenland District Councillors Boden, Laws, Mason, Mayor, Mockett and Whittlesey Town Councillor Nawaz all wrote in support of the draft recommendations

for the town. They highlighted a number of areas within the draft recommendations that reflected communities across Whittlesey. These included the decision not to include Benwick parish in a Whittlesey ward, the inclusion of the King's Delph, Lattersey Hill and Pondersbridge areas in Whittlesey South, the use of the A605 as the boundary within Whittlesey itself, and the continued linkage of Turves to the villages of Coates and Eastrea.

51 The majority of the councillors also made proposals regarding the parish wards for Whittlesey Town Council, suggesting that Stonald parish ward should be named North West to reflect the name of the district council wards with which it would be coterminous. Submissions also stated that there should be a single parish ward covering the Whittlesey South ward rather than a South parish ward and St Andrews parish ward.

52 A local resident wrote in support of the Fenland Independents Alliance (FIA)'s 41-councillor proposal, which sought to maintain the existing Benwick, Coates & Eastrea ward, stating that these villages had more ties to each other and fewer with the more urban areas in Whittlesey. Two local residents queried the creation of a single-councillor Whittlesey Lattersey ward and suggested it be merged with a neighbouring area.

53 Having carefully considered the evidence, we noted the strong support for the wards across Whittlesey. In our view, compelling evidence was offered in support of our draft recommendations from a number of local councillors, as well as the support for this warding pattern expressed by Whittlesey Town Council during the previous phase of consultation. We also noted the support for the FIA's 41-councillor proposal.

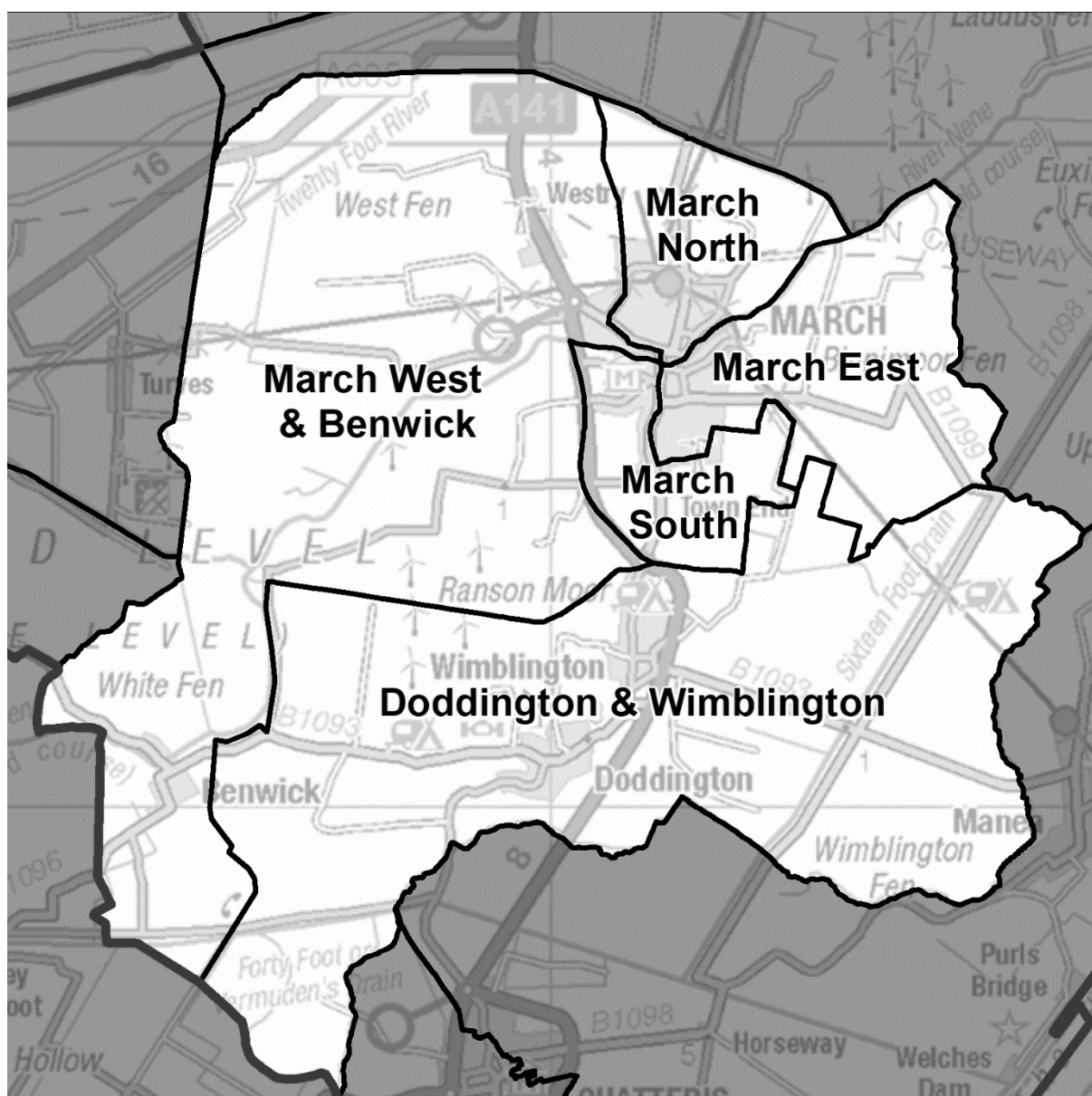
54 On balance, we are of the view that the draft recommendations provide for the strongest balance in our statutory criteria for Whittlesey, particularly the placing of Benwick parish outside of the Whittlesey area. This arrangement reflects its lack of links to Whittlesey, particularly its lack of public transport connections.

55 We agree with the submissions from councillors that it is more appropriate to use the same name for town council wards and district council wards where they share the same boundary. We therefore propose to rename the Stonald town council ward to North West. We investigated whether we could propose a single town council ward that covered South district ward. However, we are unable to do this as our proposed South ward is divided between two Cambridgeshire County Council divisions and, therefore, we are required to provide a separate parish ward for the St Andrews area.

56 Our final recommendations for the Whittlesey area are, as per our draft recommendations, a single-councillor Whittlesey Lattersey ward with an electoral

variance of -3%, two two-councillor wards of Whittlesey North West and Whittlesey South with electoral variances of -1% and -5%, respectively, and a three-councillor Whittlesey East & Villages ward with a variance of -3%. All four wards will deliver good electoral equality by 2027.

March



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Doddington & Wimblington	2	8%
March East	3	-6%
March North	3	6%
March South	2	-4%
March West & Benwick	2	7%

Doddington & Wimblington and March West & Benwick

57 Our proposed ward of Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington & Wimblington, as initially suggested by Fenland District Council, received significant opposition during the consultation on draft recommendations. In a revised submission, the Council stated that due to concerns over the size of the proposed ward, councillors had

reconsidered the warding pattern and suggested revised proposals for this area. The Council therefore proposed to retain the existing two-councillor Doddington & Wimblington ward, with Benwick parish included in a ward with the western part of March town. They further proposed that Christchurch parish be included in a ward with the eastern part of March town. The Council argued that the revised proposal better reflects the community identity and service areas for these parishes. The Council also proposed some changes to our draft recommendations in the centre of March, discussed in the next section. North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association wrote to support the Council's revised proposal to include Benwick in a March ward. Councillor Count also wrote in support of the Council's revised proposal.

58 In Fenland Independents Alliance (FIA)'s submission, they strongly opposed the District Council's proposal to include Christchurch in a March East ward, discussed in detail in the next section. In their submission, Wimblington Parish Council continued to support no change to the existing ward. A number of local residents also opposed the inclusion of Christchurch parish in this ward, as discussed below.

59 In preparing these final recommendations, we undertook an in-person tour of Fenland to examine the suggestions that had been made to us. This helped us take a view on the differing options we were presented with. We visited the parish of Benwick and assessed its likely community ties based on evidence we saw on the ground as well as the arguments made in the submissions we received. Following this assessment, we accept the arguments made in submissions that Benwick's links to Whittlesey are limited and its inclusion in a Whittlesey ward would not reflect community identity in the area. We noted that Benwick's road network does link to the parish of Doddington, but we agree with the Council's submission that a two-councillor Doddington & Wimblington ward would better reflect our statutory criteria for those two parishes.

60 We have therefore concluded that the Council's proposal to include Benwick in a March West & Benwick ward would provide for the strongest reflection of the parish's community identity, particularly its use of March as a service centre. We also propose to adopt the Council's revised boundary in the town centre of March for March West & Benwick, discussed fully below.

61 Our final recommendations in this area are for a two-councillor Doddington & Wimblington ward with an electoral variance of 8% by 2027 and a two-councillor March West & Benwick ward with an electoral variance of 7% by 2027.

March East, March North and March South

62 The Council proposed a revised warding pattern in March as part of their response. The Council considered that our draft recommendations divided

communities in the centre of the town due to the use of Maple Grove and Robingoodfellow's Lane as boundaries. The Council proposed to use the River Nene as the boundary through the town, with the river forming the boundary between their proposed wards of March West & Benwick and March South, as well as between March North and March East & Christchurch. In addition, the Council proposed that the B1099 Wisbech Road and Norwood Road should form the boundary between March North and March West & Benwick wards.

63 As mentioned above, the FIA objected to the Council's proposed March East & Christchurch ward. They contended that the Council's rationale for including Christchurch in a ward with March was incorrect. Rather than Christchurch looking towards March for services, the FIA instead argued that Christchurch looks towards Wisbech, as well as outside of the district, for its service needs and the wider Norfolk area for healthcare.

64 We also received a number of submissions opposed to the inclusion of Christchurch in a ward with Benwick, Doddington and Wimblington parishes, or in a March ward. These submissions all argued that the existing arrangement of Elm & Christchurch should remain. The submission from Christchurch Parish Council reiterated the parish's longstanding ties to Elm parish, stating that the two parishes had a good working relationship that included the sharing, at times, of a parish clerk. A number of other submissions argued for the retention of the existing ward in the context of also retaining the parishes of Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary in the same ward. We will discuss those submissions in the next section.

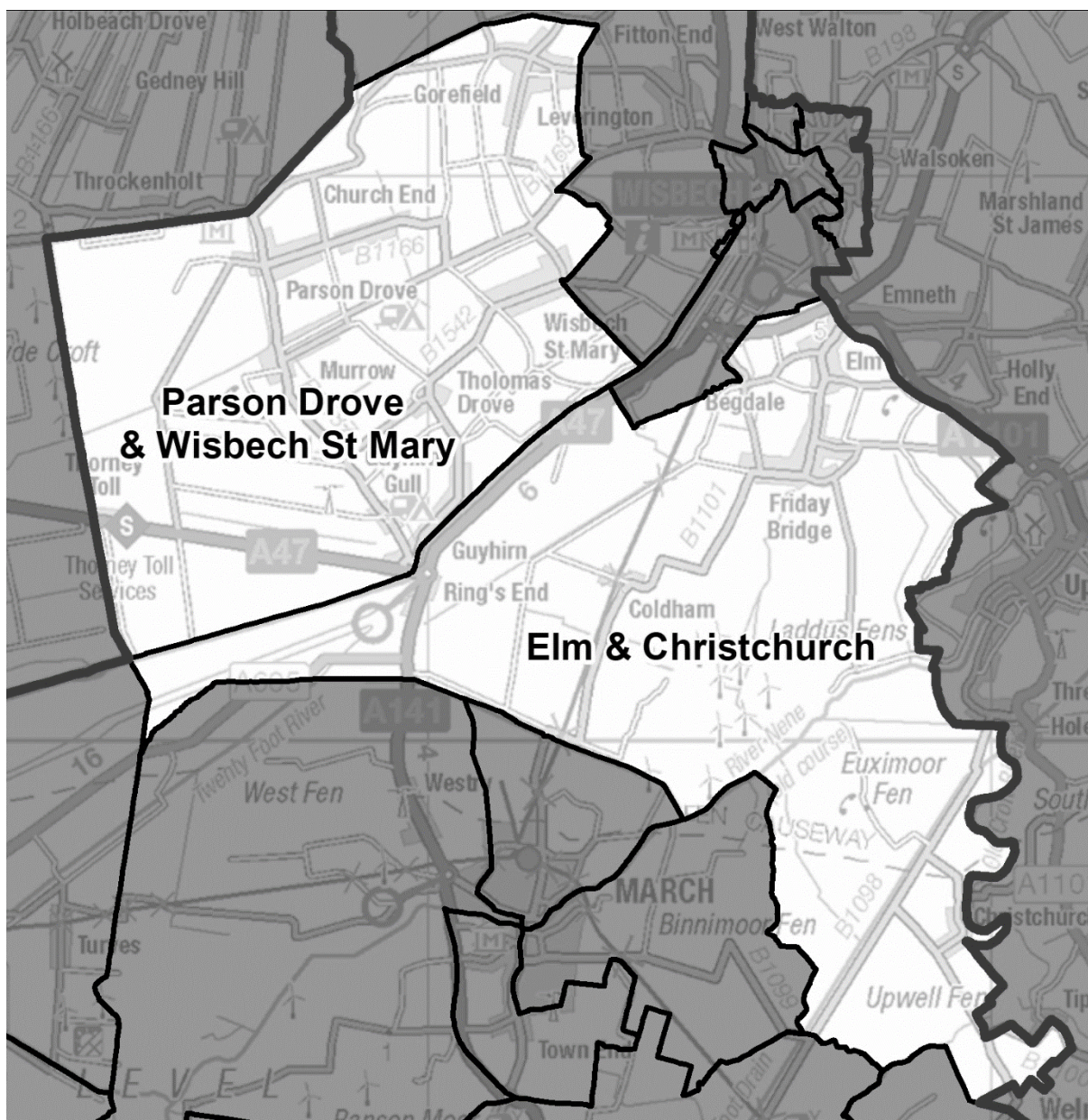
65 Councillors Count, J. French and K. French and one local resident wrote in support of the Council's revised warding pattern for March.

66 We carefully considered all of the submissions received and visited the area as part of our tour of Fenland. We agree with the Council's argument that the River Nene provides for the strongest boundary in March town centre and that the Council's revised proposal reflects the community identity of the electors in the town as well as providing for effective and convenient local government.

67 We do not propose to include Christchurch parish in a March East ward as we have not been convinced of its strong ties to March given the evidence we received. As mentioned in the previous section, we are also no longer proposing Christchurch parish form part of a ward with Doddington and Wimblington parishes. We propose that Christchurch remain in a two-councillor ward with Elm parish, discussed in the next section.

68 Our proposed final recommendations for March are for two three-councillor wards of March East and March North and two-councillor March South ward, with electoral variances of -6%, 6% and -4%, respectively, by 2027.

Northern rural parishes



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Elm & Christchurch	2	3%
Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary	3	-6%

Elm & Christchurch and Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary

69 Ninety of the 181 submissions we received during the consultation were regarding the parishes of Christchurch, Elm, Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary. There was widespread opposition to our proposed Parson Drove & Roman Bank and Elm & Wisbech St Mary wards. These submissions stated that our proposal divided the Murrow community between wards, as the community itself is divided between

Parson Drove parish and Wisbech St Mary parish. Some residents also argued that pairing Elm parish and Wisbech St Mary parish in a ward was inappropriate due to the lack of connections between the two parishes. The submissions noted that the two parishes are divided by the River Nene, which only has one crossing point in this area. It was also stated that the A47 is a major trunk road which also acts as a strong boundary in the area.

70 Fenland District Council support the draft recommendations in this area which were based on their proposed warding pattern. Fenland Independents Alliance (FIA) strongly opposed the proposals in this area, endorsing the submission by Wisbech St Mary Parish Council in their submission.

71 The submission from Wisbech St Mary Parish Council addressed the Commission's three statutory criteria when the wards in this area. They stated that whilst the proposed ward did provide for electoral equality, it was significantly worse than the variance that would be provided by the existing ward if retained. They also noted that at 9% it was towards the maximum the Commission would usually accept. The Parish Council also provided a large list of community organisations that represent the Murrow community located in both parishes of Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary. They reiterated the strong boundaries of the River Nene and A47 as well as the geographical size of our proposed Elm & Wisbech St Mary ward.

72 We asked for further evidence of the communities in this area and we were pleased to receive a level of response that has enabled us to make a better informed decision for these parishes. We also visited the area on our tour of Fenland to help inform our decision.

73 As part of our tour, we were able to see first-hand the issue regarding the parish boundary in Murrow and how the village is divided between parishes. This helped us to conclude that the village should not be further divided between Fenland District Council wards as this would not provide for effective and convenient local government for electors. We also considered that such an arrangement would break the community ties of those electors who share a great number of organisations in common as well as the same service centre of Wisbech.

74 Having formed this view, we then investigated warding patterns that would not divide the village. We looked again at the 41-councillor scheme submitted by the FIA that proposed to maintain the existing wards of Elm & Christchurch and Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary. We concluded that whilst this achieved the objective of not dividing Murrow, it did not adequately reflect the communities in the main town of the district.

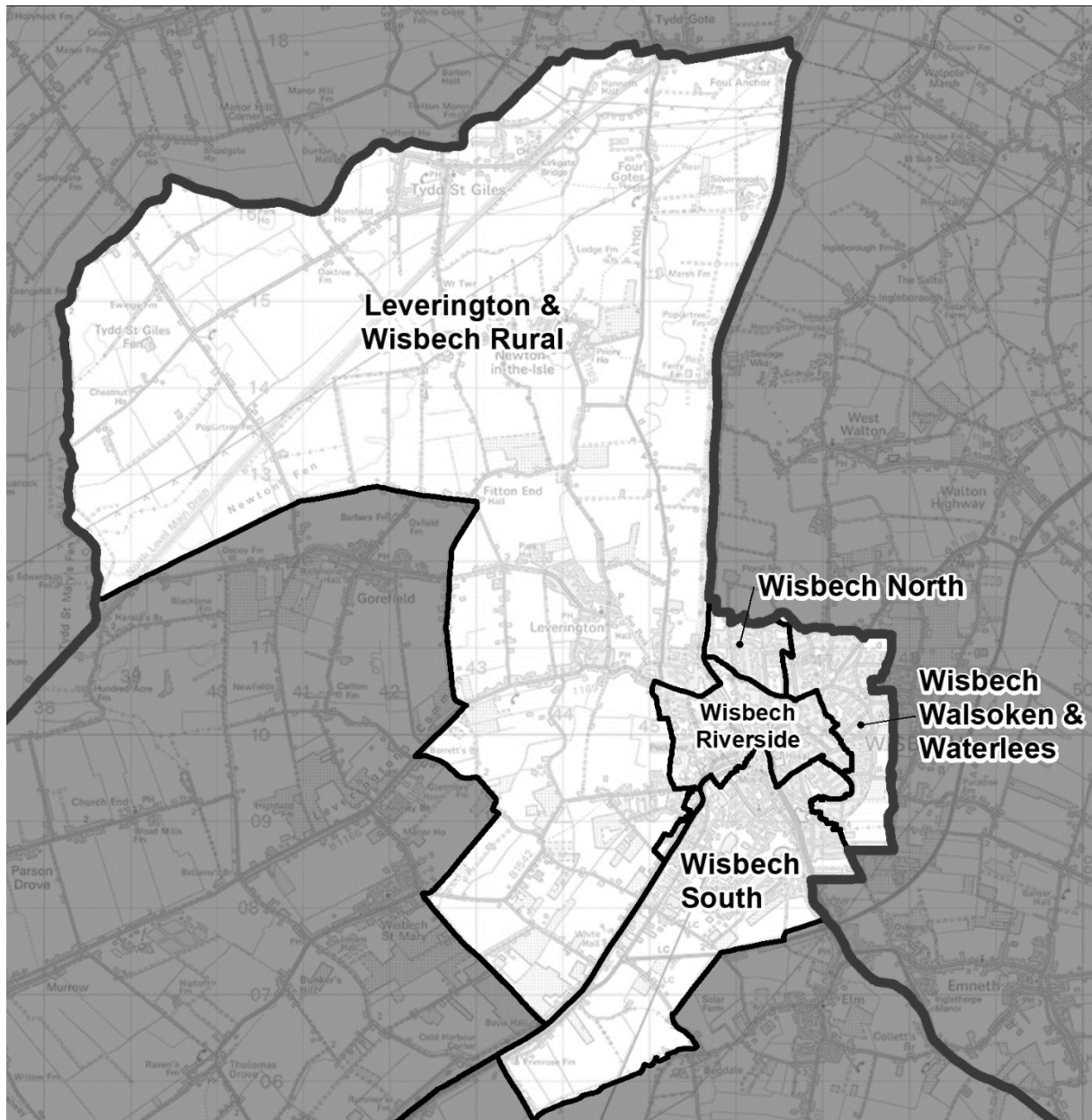
75 In order to find a warding pattern that avoided the division of Murrow while also reflecting communities in the main towns, we therefore assessed options under

alternative council sizes. Throughout the electoral review process, we reserve the right to move away from our initial decision on council size if doing so would provide for a warding pattern that provides for a better balance in our statutory criteria.

76 By increasing the number of councillors representing Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary parishes from two to three and by moving Gorefield parish into a Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary ward, we are able to provide a warding pattern that does not divide Murrow between wards, as well as maintain the existing Elm & Christchurch ward. This arrangement also reflects the evidence received regarding the strong boundary between the parishes of Elm and Wisbech St Mary.

77 Our final recommendations for this area are, therefore, a three-councillor Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary ward with an electoral variance of -6% and a two-councillor Elm & Christchurch ward with an electoral variance of 3%.

Wisbech



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2027
Leverington & Wisbech Rural	3	-5%
Wisbech North	1	-2%
Wisbech Riverside	2	-3%
Wisbech South	3	3%
Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees	3	-1%

Leverington & Wisbech Rural

78 We received around 40 submissions regarding our proposals for Wisbech Leverington. Thirty-three submissions were opposed to the inclusion of the parish in a ward with parts of Wisbech. The prevailing view of these submissions was that the status of Leverington as a village and separate parish would be diminished by the proposal. However, none of these submissions provided any alternative warding pattern for the area.

79 Fenland District Council wrote in support of our proposed Wisbech Leverington ward, which they considered reflected the 'strong evidence that Leverington parish identifies as an extension of Wisbech with strong communal ties, and road networks which ensure it is an integral part of the town, albeit with its own Parish Council'. Wisbech Town Council, Wisbech Town Council councillors Oliver and Pehilivanova and Fenland District Council councillors Hoy, Meekins, Tierney and Wallwork also wrote in support of the warding pattern across Wisbech.

80 We visited the parish of Leverington as part of our tour of Fenland. Whilst we acknowledge that it is, of course, a separate parish to the parish of Wisbech, we noted a number of connections between the south-east of Leverington parish and Wisbech parish, particularly where there is continuous development between both parishes along the A1011. The area of Wisbech that we proposed to include in a ward with Leverington comprised the rural parts of the parish along Barton Road and North Brink, as well as the lanes off those two roads. During the first stage of consultation, it was suggested that this rural part of Wisbech shares common interests with Leverington parish given its more rural nature than the rest of the town.

81 We visited this area on our tour of Fenland, and we remain of the view that our draft recommendations provide for the best reflection of our criteria. We do, however, propose to make some changes to our proposed ward. To recognise the rural links Leverington has with surrounding parishes, we propose to include Newton and Tydd St Giles in our revised Leverington & Wisbech Rural ward. We have amended the ward's name to reflect the rural nature of this parish.

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

82 The Council supported the draft recommendations across Wisbech town. The Council suggested one small change to the Wisbech Town Council parish ward names we proposed. They suggested that Walsoken parish ward should be named Waterlees parish ward and Kirkgate & Staithe parish ward should be named Walsoken parish ward.

83 We also received submissions from Wisbech Town Council, Wisbech Town Council councillors Oliver and Pehilivanova and Fenland District Council councillors

Hoy, Meekins, Tierney and Wallwork. All wrote in support of the warding pattern across Wisbech.

84 Two local residents opposed our Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees ward, arguing that merging the Waterlees and Walsoken areas would dilute councillor accountability and that the ward was too large. Eight local residents wrote in favour of our proposed draft recommendations. We have not been persuaded to make any further amendments to the draft recommendations. We do propose to make the changes to the names of the Wisbech Town Council wards as suggested by Fenland District Council and detailed in paragraph 82.

85 Our proposed final recommendations for Wisbech are for a single-councillor Wisbech North ward, two two-councillor wards of Leverington & Wisbech Rural and Wisbech Riverside and two three-councillor wards of Wisbech South and Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees. These wards will have electoral equality of -2%, -5%, -3%, 3% and -1% by 2027, respectively.

Conclusions

86 The table below provides a summary as to the impact of our final 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

	Final recommendations	
	2021	2027
Number of councillors	43	43
Number of electoral wards	18	18
Average number of electors per councillor	1,786	1,999
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

Final recommendations

Fenland District Council should be made up of 43 councillors serving 18 wards representing two single-councillor wards, seven two-councillor wards and nine 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 final recommendations for Fenland District Council on our interactive maps at www.consultation.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

87 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.

88 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.

89 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.

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

Final 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

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

Final recommendations

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

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	2
North	4
Peas Hill	2
South	2
Town End	1
West	1

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

Final 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
North West	3
St Andrews	2
South	2

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

Final recommendations

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

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

What happens next?

94 We have now completed our review of Fenland District Council. The recommendations must now be approved by Parliament. A draft Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in Parliament. Subject to parliamentary scrutiny, the new electoral arrangements will come into force at the local elections in 2023.

Equalities

95 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

Final 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	Chatteris North & Manea	3	5,799	1,933	8%	6,336	2,112	6%
2	Chatteris South	3	4,741	1,580	-12%	6,303	2,101	5%
3	Doddington & Wimblington	2	3,831	1,916	7%	4,314	2,157	8%
4	Elm & Christchurch	2	3,838	1,919	7%	4,136	2,068	3%
5	Leverington & Wisbech Rural	3	5,160	1,720	-4%	5,681	1,894	-5%
6	March East	3	5,292	1,764	-1%	5,621	1,874	-6%
7	March North	3	6,086	2,029	14%	6,373	2,124	6%
8	March South	2	2,910	1,455	-19%	3,849	1,925	-4%
9	March West & Benwick	2	3,767	1,884	5%	4,272	2,136	7%
10	Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary	3	5,219	1,740	-3%	5,636	1,879	-6%

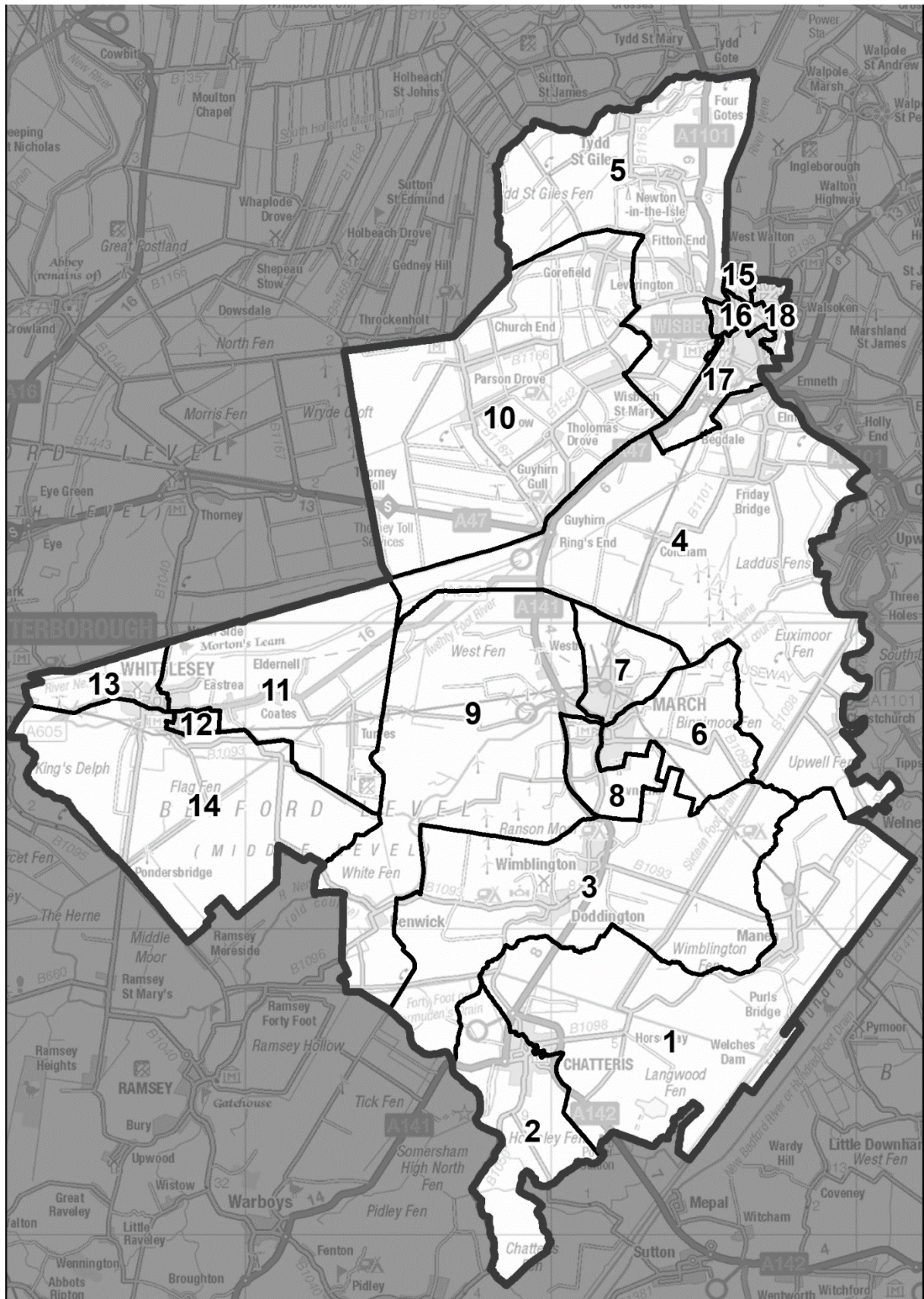
	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2027)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
11	Whittlesey East & Villages	3	4,844	1,615	-10%	5,800	1,933	-3%
12	Whittlesey Lattersey	1	1,273	1,273	-29%	1,942	1,942	-3%
13	Whittlesey North West	2	3,777	1,889	6%	3,940	1,970	-1%
14	Whittlesey South	2	3,705	1,853	4%	3,792	1,896	-5%
15	Wisbech North	1	1,977	1,977	11%	1,968	1,968	-2%
16	Wisbech Riverside	2	3,585	1,793	0%	3,884	1,942	-3%
17	Wisbech South	3	5,663	1,888	6%	6,157	2,052	3%
18	Wisbech Walsoken & Waterlees	3	5,342	1,781	0%	5,940	1,980	-1%
	Totals	43	76,809	–	–	85,944	–	–
	Averages	–	–	1,786	–	–	1,999	–

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	Chatteris North & Manea
2	Chatteris South
3	Doddington & Wimblington
4	Elm & Christchurch
5	Leverington & Wisbech Rural
6	March East
7	March North
8	March South
9	March West & Benwick
10	Parson Drove & Wisbech St Mary
11	Whittlesey East & Villages
12	Whittlesey Lattersey
13	Whittlesey North West
14	Whittlesey South
15	Wisbech North
16	Wisbech Riverside
17	Wisbech South
18	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

Appendix C

Submissions received

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

Local Authority

- Fenland District Council

Political Groups

- Fenland Independents Alliance
- North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association
- Peterborough & Fenland Liberal Democrats

Councillors

- Councillor S. Bligh (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor C. Boden (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor G. Booth (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor S. Count (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor J. French (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor K. French (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor S. Hoy (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor D. Laws (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor D. Mason (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor N. Meekins (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor K. Mayor (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor J. Mockett (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor H. Nawaz (Whittlesey Town Council)
- Councillor D. Oliver (Wisbech Town Council)
- Councillor B. Pehilivanova (Wisbech Town Council)
- Councillor B. Rackley (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor W. Sutton (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor S. Tierney (Fenland District Council)
- Councillor S. Wallwork (Fenland District Council)

Local Organisations

- Cambridgeshire Community Reuse and Recycling Network
- Parson Drove Amenities 95 Management Committee

- Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary Ward Community Speed Watch

Parish and Town Councils

- Christchurch Parish Council
- Leverington Parish Council
- Wimblington Parish Council (two submissions)
- Wisbech Town Council
- Wisbech St Mary Parish Council

Local Residents

- 149 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 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 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 (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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