

Agenda Item No:	12	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	22 February 2018	
Report Title:	Community Governance Review	

1 Purpose / Summary

For Council to approve, for further consultation, the draft proposals in relation to the Community Governance Review for future parish warding arrangements in Whittlesey.

2 Key issues

- Fenland District Council (FDC) was subject to an electoral review of District ward boundaries conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in 2013.
- The electoral review resulted in the creation of several additional parish wards across the district, predominantly in Chatteris and Whittlesey.
- A Community Governance Review was undertaken in 2014 in relation to Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey in an effort to address some of the additional parish warding anomalies resulting from the LGBCE electoral review.
- Whilst Fenland District Council was the principal Council responsible for undertaking the Community Governance Review in 2014 we were required to seek permission from the LGBCE to agree and sanction any proposed changes prior to their implementation
- The LGBCE agreed to two of the three recommendations arising from the previous Community Governance Review and therefore we were successfully able to make changes to parish wards in Chatteris and Manea. The LGBCE refused to accept the recommended changes in respect of Whittlesey. The rationale for refusal was that they were scheduled to undertake an electoral division review of the whole of Cambridgeshire in 2014 and therefore they were of the opinion that they would utilise the existing parish warding arrangements in the area to help inform the electoral division review.
- The LGBCE published their final recommendations in respect of the Cambridgeshire County Council review in December 2016 and in contrast to their original thoughts, the existing parish warding arrangements in Whittlesey did not help to inform the revised electoral divisional boundaries in the area.
- The District Council is embarking on a further Community Governance Review of Whittlesey to address the parish warding anomalies in the area which resulted from the previous LGBCE review in 2013.
- The CGR Terms of Reference were published on 11 December 2017, which initiated the first phase of public consultation, which ended on 26 January 2018. The terms of reference confirmed the focus of the review as being restricted to the internal parish warding arrangements within Whittlesey, the names of the parish wards within the town to ensure they are reflective of the communities they serve

and finally to consider the number of town councillors required to serve Whittlesey to ensure they reflect the current and forecast electorate in the area.

- During this initial round of consultation four consultation submissions were received from Whittlesey Town Council a local Town Councillor, The March, Chatteris & Whittlesey branch of NE Cambs Labour Party and a local resident.
- The Council has been mindful of the consultation comments in formulating the draft proposals regarding future governance arrangements
- The key proposals are to amalgamate the parish wards of Bassenhally, Elm and Delph into one parish ward. This proposal will result in the parish ward boundaries being re-aligned to reflect the district ward boundaries in the area therefore successfully achieving co-terminosity. The newly amalgamated parish ward is proposed to be called Bassenhally represented by 4 Town Councillors.
- We are also proposing to amalgamate the current St Andrews parish ward with St Mary's North parish ward and rename the resulting parish ward St Marys North and St Andrews parish ward. We are proposing that the new parish ward be represented by two parish Councillors.
- The parish ward boundaries of Stonald parish ward we are also proposing to remain unchanged however in order to facilitate electoral equality across the wider area we are proposing that Stonald parish ward is represented by two parish Councillors rather than the current one elected representative.

3 Recommendations

For Council to approve the initial CGR proposals for public consultation which are

- Amalgamate the parish wards of Bassenhally, Elm and Delph into one parish ward entitled Bassenhally parish ward represented by 4 Town Councillors.
- Amalgamate St Andrews parish ward with St Mary's North parish ward and rename the resulting parish ward St Marys North and St Andrews parish ward represented by 2 Town Councillors.
- Change the level of local representation in Stonald parish ward to two to facilitate greater levels of electoral equality across the wider area.

Wards Affected	Whittlesey parish wards
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Member Working Group: Cllr Will Sutton Cllr Sam Hoy Cllr Gavin Booth Cllr Virginia Bucknor Cllr Chris Boden Cllr Kay Mayor Cllr Fred Yeulett
Report Originator(s)	Anna Goodall – Head of Governance and Legal Services
Contact Officer(s)	Carol Pilson – Corporate Director 01354 622360 cpilson@fenland.gov.uk Anna Goodall – Head of Legal and Governance 01354 622357 agoodall@fenland.gov.uk
Background Paper(s)	CGR Terms of Reference.

Fenland District Council

Community Governance Review 2018

A review of parish electoral arrangements under the
Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

You are invited to comment on these proposals, and/ or suggest alternative
options by 06 April 2018.

Draft Proposals

For Consultation

4 Introduction

- 4.1 In 2012/13 Fenland District Council was subject to an Electoral Review which was conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The primary objective of the review was to achieve electoral equality across all of the district wards ensuring every electors vote carried equal weight. The review also sought to maintain communities of interest; whilst also enabling effective and convenient local government.
- 4.2 The final electoral review recommendation report, published by the LGBCE in March 2013, resulted in the creation of several new parish wards, which reflected the new district ward boundaries and existing county division boundaries. The creation of additional parish wards was particularly prevalent in Chatteris and Whittlesey.
- 4.3 A Community Governance Review was undertaken in 2014 in relation to Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey in an effort to address some of the additional parish warding anomalies resulting from the LGBCE electoral review.
- 4.4 Whilst Fenland District Council was the principal Council responsible for undertaking the Community Governance Review in 2014 we were required to seek permission from the LGBCE to agree and sanction any proposed changes prior to their implementation. We were required to seek consent as the LGBCE had undertaken an electoral review within the past five years and as such a Community Governance Review could not be utilised as a vehicle to undermine the changes resulting from the Electoral Review.
- 4.5 The LGBCE agreed to two of the three recommendations arising from the previous Community Governance Review and therefore we were successfully able to make changes to parish wards in Chatteris and Manea. The LGBCE refused to accept the recommended changes in respect of Whittlesey. The rationale for refusal was that they were scheduled to undertake an electoral division review of the whole of Cambridgeshire in 2014 and therefore they were of the opinion that they would utilise the existing parish warding arrangements in the area to help inform the electoral division review.

- 4.6 The LGBCE published their final recommendations in respect of the Cambridgeshire County Council review in December 2016 and in contrast to their original thoughts, the existing parish warding arrangements in Whittlesey did not help to inform the revised electoral divisional boundaries in the area.
- 4.7 As a result Whittlesey has a number of parish wards which do not appear to achieve electoral equality nor do they reflect the identity of the local community they serve and finally they appear not to achieve effective or convenient local government, which is why the District Council has embarked on a further Community Governance Review of the area in order to address these issues.
- 4.8 Whilst Fenland District Council will be the principal authority responsible for undertaking the Community Governance Review on this occasion, we will be required to seek the agreement and consent of the LGBCE before implementing any changes resulting from the review. The reason consent is required is because of the timeframe in which the previous District warding and Electoral Division Reviews were undertaken, as a Community Governance Review cannot be utilised as a mechanism for undermining the outcomes of either of those processes.

5 The Community Governance Review

- 5.1 Fenland District Council (FDC) is currently undertaking a Community Governance Review (CGR) under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007 in order to address some of the boundary anomalies which resulted from electoral review in 2012/13. The review is focussing specifically on the following:
- The internal parish warding arrangements in Whittlesey parish
 - The number of parish councillors to represent Whittlesey parish in the future.
- 5.2 The Community Governance Review commenced on 11 December 2017, when the District Council published a Terms of Reference document and invited initial submissions from individuals and/ or organisations who had an interest in the review. Wide spread communication took place in the relation to the review in order to engage local residents. In addition the Council published a timetable for the review in order to further maximise transparency and local engagement.
- 5.3 The period for initial submissions closed on 26 January 2018. The Council now publishes these draft proposals in response to the consultation comments received to date.
- 5.4 In preparing these draft proposals the Council has been mindful of the initial submissions received. The Council also has the role of balancing the submissions against the wider requirements and duties which are placed upon it by the 2007 Act. In particular the Council has a duty to ensure that community governance within its area:

- Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- Is effective and convenient and
- Takes into account any other, non-parish, arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.

5.5 This document launches a second round of consultation regarding the Council's proposals for the future of parish warding arrangements in Whittlesey and we welcome views from all stakeholders. The deadline for responses is 06 April 2018.

6 Scope of the Review

6.1 The CGR is focussing on the internal parish warding arrangements within Whittlesey. The electoral review conducted by the LGBCE resulted in the creation of an additional ward within the parish. As a result Whittlesey has 8 parish wards within the town. The parish ward areas do not reflect the district ward boundaries in the town and therefore the District Council is reviewing these boundaries as we believe the warded parish may not be effective or convenient to the community in the area. In addition the District Council also believes that the number of electors contained within the parish wards does not contribute to the achievement of electoral equality in the area. The District Council is also proposing to review the names of the parish wards within the town to ensure they are reflective of the communities they serve.

6.2 The final element of the CGR is to consider the number of town councillors required to serve, Whittlesey to ensure they reflect the current and forecast electorate in the area. FDC is proposing the number of town councillors remain unchanged.

7 Consultation submissions

7.1 Publication of the Terms of Reference in relation to the CGR was intended to inform and open the local debate by providing information on the parish governance in the areas concerned, the legislative framework for a review and the other issues the Council felt were of importance.

7.2 Four consultation submissions have been received as a part of this review which have indicated that there are strongly held views from Whittlesey Town Council and a local Town Councillor in favour of the re-alignment of parish ward boundaries and a counter submission supporting a different alignment of parish wards and the associated level of Town Council representation. Furthermore one individual resident has suggested that residents in Peterborough Road Kings Dyke and Kings Delph feel they have a greater local affiliation with St Mary's North parish ward or Stonald as opposed to Coates and Eastrea parish ward.

- 7.3 Appendix 1 contains the details of the consultation submissions received to date since the publication of the Terms of Reference. In summary submissions have been received from Whittlesey Town Council, The March, Chatteris & Whittlesey branch of NE Cambs Labour Party a local Town Councillor and one local resident.
- 7.4 The District Council believes that the majority of consultation submissions received to date are largely supportive of the parish ward boundaries being redefined to reflect to the new district ward boundaries, as far as is possible.
- 7.5 As a result we are proposing to amalgamate the parish wards of Bassenhally, Elm and Delph into one parish ward represented by 4 Town Councillors as opposed to the current 5 Town Councillors representing the area. This proposal will result in the parish ward boundaries being re-aligned to reflect the district ward boundaries in the area therefore successfully achieving co-terminosity. Co-terminous district and parish wards boundaries have proven very successful in the past in relation to the local electorate having a clear understanding of and affiliation to their local parish ward therefore facilitating the objective of parish warding arrangements reflecting recognised local communities whilst also providing for effective and convenient local government. Whilst it is recognised that The March, Chatteris & Whittlesey branch of NE Cambs Labour Party suggested that Bassenhally parish ward remains unchanged geographically however they have suggested that Elm and Delph parish wards are combined, which would result in two parish wards being contained within the wider district ward. It seems more logical that the district and parish wards are reflective of each other where there is the opportunity to do so. There has been no evidence submitted to date to support the fact that Elm and Delph parish wards feel themselves to be a separate community to Bassenhally and therefore this counter proposal does not appear to be reflective of the locally recognised community in this area. Should the second phase of public consultation provide evidence that Elm and Delph parish wards do have a separate community identity to Bassenhally parish ward then naturally we will take that into consideration when making our final recommendation in this area.
- 7.6 We are proposing to reduce the number of locally elected representatives in the newly defined Bassenhally parish ward from the current five in this area down to four parish Councillors. The rationale for this reduction is to facilitate greater electoral equality across the wider area.
- 7.7 We are also proposing to amalgamate the current St Andrews parish ward with St Mary's North parish ward and rename the resulting parish ward St Marys North and St Andrews parish ward. We are proposing that the new parish ward be represented by two parish Councillors. We are unable to accommodate the consultation suggested by March, Chatteris & Whittlesey branch of NE Cambs Labour Party which was to amalgamate the current St Andrews, St Marys North and St Marys South parish wards as whilst we agree in principle this appears to be far more representative of the established community in this area we are bound by the constraints of the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the LGBCE, which states clearly that a principal council undertaking a CGR should be mindful of the provisions of schedule 2 (Electoral change in England: considerations on review) to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 in relation to reviews of district council electoral arrangements. These provide that when the LGBCE is making

changes to principal council electoral arrangements, no parish ward should be split by a district or county division boundary. While these provisions do not apply to reviews of parish electoral arrangements, the LGBCE believe that in the interests of effective and convenient local government they are relevant considerations for principal councils to take into account when undertaking community governance reviews. As such, were we to act on the consultation comment, this would result in the amalgamated ward straddling the Whittlesey North and Whittlesey South electoral division boundary. This would result in approximately 25% of the electorate voting for a different County Councillor, which would appear to contradict the objective of parish wards reflecting recognised communities of interest with their own sense of identity. It is also highly unlikely that the LGBCE would agree to this change particularly in light of their published guidance.

- 7.8 This would result in St Mary's South parish ward boundaries remaining unchanged geographically reflecting the existing parish warding arrangement, represented by one elected representative. This will ensure that none of the newly proposed parish wards will cross the newly implemented County Council electoral division boundaries.
- 7.9 We are proposing to leave the parish ward boundaries of Lattersey unchanged with the parish continuing to be represented by two elected parish Councillors
- 7.10 The parish ward boundaries of Stonald parish ward we are also proposing to remain unchanged however in order to facilitate electoral equality across the wider area we are proposing that Stonald parish ward is represented by two parish Councillors rather than the current one elected representative.
- 7.11 Finally Coates and Eastrea parish ward boundaries will remain unchanged as will the number of elected representatives. Whilst we acknowledge the consultation submission from a local resident of Peterborough Road Kings Dyke which suggests that local residents have a closer community affiliation with St Marys North and St Andrews parish ward we are constrained once again by the LGBCE guidance outlined in paragraph 4.7. The consultation proposal would result in the St Marys North and St Andrews parish ward straddling the Whittlesey North and Whittlesey South electoral division boundary. The electoral division boundary is provided in part by the railway line in this area which is a clear geographical representation of the boundary and once again it is highly unlikely that the LGBCE would respond favourably to this request. It is also important to note that this review is to consider parish ward boundaries we are unable to utilise the CGR as a vehicle to impact district warding arrangements as that is the sole jurisdiction of the LGBCE.
- 7.12 The review formally started on 11 December 2017 with the publication of the Terms of Reference available from www.fenland.gov.uk The draft proposals in this document are now open to consultation until 06 April 2018, after which final proposals will be prepared and presented to the Member Working Group responsible for overseeing the CGR process followed by consideration by full Council in May 2018. After formal agreement by the Council we will then seek agreement from the LGBCE to make the changes to the parish ward boundaries. Assuming the LGBCE are agreeable we will then publish a reorganisation Order and this will take effect from the 2019 all out local elections.

7.13 Please note that parish boundaries will not change until after the completion of the review. Local residents who will be affected by the change will be informed if and when the boundaries are altered.

8 The parish of Whittlesey.

8.1 Whittlesey Parish contains 13041 electors represented by 14 town councillors. The current electoral figures are taken from the updated electoral register published on 01 December 2017. Under the proposals contained within this report the town will return six parish wards as of May 2019. The new parish wards, their electorate figures and associated town councillor representation are outlined below.

8.2

Whittlesey Parish Ward	Current Electorate Figure	Current Parish/ Town Council representation	Forecast Electorate Figure to 2022	Proposed parish/ Town Council representation
Bassenhally DA1	2264	3	2942	4
Elm DA2	765	1	926	
Delph DA3	994	1	1258	
Lattersey DB	2140	2	2226	2
St Andrews DC1	1248	1	1309	2
St Marys DC2	357	1	387	
St Marys DC3	485	1	534	1
Stonald DD	2078	1	2785	2
Coates and Eastrea	2710	3	3648	3

9 Proposed Changes to Parish ward boundaries

9.1 It was stated in the terms of reference document that parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest with their own sense of identity. Furthermore, consideration must be given to the relationship between the parish ward boundaries and the boundaries of the district wards. The parish wards have been used as the building blocks for the district wards across much of the district, and the district wards therefore share the same boundaries with the parish wards. The maintenance and where possible the re-establishment of this co-terminosity is in the best interests of effective and convenient local government for the residents in Whittlesey.

10 Next Steps

Action	Timetable	Outline of action
Draft proposals are prepared	By 13 February 2018	Draft proposals to be considered by Council on 22 February 2018
Publish Draft Proposals	By 26 February 2018	District Council publishes Draft Proposals and commences formal consultation upon them.
Consultation	Ending 06 April 2018	District Council undertakes a full consultation with stakeholders.
Final Proposals are prepared	By 08 May 2018	District Council considers results of consultation and prepares Final Proposals.
Final Proposals are published	08 May 2018	District Council publishes Final Proposals
Final Proposals are adopted by Council	17 May 2018	District Council considers Final Proposals and decide on the extent to which the Council will give effect to them
Council engages with the LGBCE regarding consent to proposed changes	thereafter	District Council engages with the LGBCE regarding the proposed changes
		A Change Order will be prepared and published depending on the outcome of the LGBCE considerations.

How to contact us

If you would like to say how you view potential future arrangements under these Terms of Reference please submit your written comments to:

Electoral Services
Fenland District Council
Fenland Hall
County Road
March
PE15 8NQ

Alternatively, your submission may be emailed to elections@fenland.gov.uk

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review process please contact:

Anna Goodall

Head of Governance and Legal Services

Telephone 01354 622357

Email agoodall@fenland.gov.uk

Publication of Draft Proposals

These Draft Proposals will be published on the District Council website www.fenland.gov.uk and will be available for public inspection at the offices in Fenland Hall and the District Council One Stop Shops in Whittlesey

Notices advertising this Community Governance Review and the availability of these Draft Proposals will also be posted within Whittlesey Parish.

Date of publication

05 February 2018

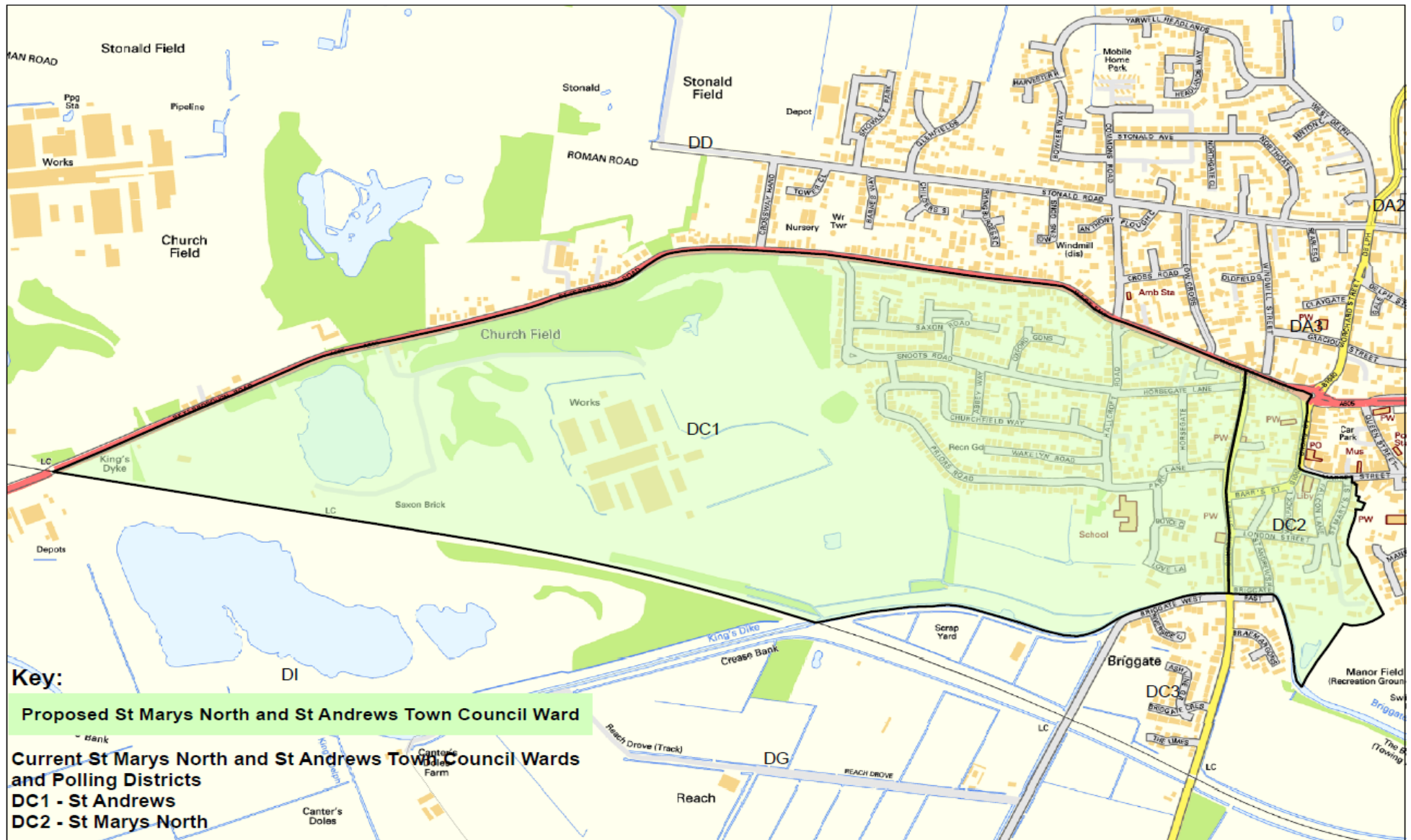
1 Appendix 1 Consultation Submissions

- 1.1 Whittlesey Town Council is supportive of the decision of Fenland District Council to undertake a Community Governance Review of Whittlesey so as to produce warding arrangements which provide more effective and convenient local governance and which better reflect the identities and interests of the community.
- 1.2 Ideally the Town Council would recommend that warding arrangements for the Town Council should be the same as the warding arrangements for the District Council as this approach provides greater certainty for the local electorate. The Town Council recognises however that the outcome from the LGBCE review of the County Council prevents co-terminosity of all boundaries as parish wards cannot cross electoral division boundaries. The Town Council; have endorsed Lattersey, Bassenhally and Stonald District Council wards being co-terminous with the parish Council wards in these areas. That Coates and Eastrea district and parish Council wards boundaries should be aligned. That St Andrews District Council ward should be split into two parish Council wards where the boundary for the Whittlesey North and Whittlesey South electoral division boundary falls.
- 1.3 Whittlesey Town Council endorses the following levels of local representation across the town Bassenhally 4 Town Councillors, Lattersey 2 Town Councillors, St Andrews and St Marys North 2 Town Councillors, St Marys South 1 Town Councillor, Stonald 2 Town Councillors, Coates and Eastrea 3 Town Councillors.
- 1.4 Mr Stevens a Whittlesey resident hoped that the CGR provided the opportunity for residents of Peterborough Road Kings Dyke and Kings Delph to be considered for inclusion within Stonald or St Mary's parish ward rather than the parish ward of Coates and Eastrea. He feels strongly that local residents in these areas have a stronger affiliation with the town rather than the surrounding villages. The aim of the Community Governance Review is to address the issues raised by Whittlesey Town Council at a parish ward level, the CGR cannot seek to address the district warding issues which were determined by the LGBCE and which took effect in 2015.
- 1.5 Whittlesey Town Councillor Julie Windle is supportive of the CGR and endorsed the changes proposed by Whittlesey Town Council.
- 1.6 March, Chatteris & Whittlesey branch of NE Cambs Labour Party suggested that Bassenhally parish ward should be represented by two parish Councillors which is a reduction of one parish Councillor which would help to achieve greater electoral equality as representation would be 1 Councillor per 1471 electorate.
- 1.7 The Labour Party also suggest that Elm and Delph parish wards should be amalgamated and represented by two parish Councillors achieving representation of 1 Councillor per 1092 electorate. They endorse Stonald parish ward maintaining its current level of parish Council representation which would achieve 1 Councillor per 1392 electorate. Again The Labour party endorse Lattersey parish ward maintaining its

current level of parish Council representation which would achieve 1 parish Councillor per 1113 electorate.

- 1.8 The Labour Party's consultation submission supported the view that St Andrews parish ward and both St Mary's parish wards be amalgamated and represented by 2 parish Councillors achieving an electoral representation ratio of one Councillor per 1115. Finally The labour Party endorsed the current parish warding and local representation levels of Coates and Eastrea parish ward which would achieve 1 elected councillor per 1216 electorate.

Appendix 2 Maps

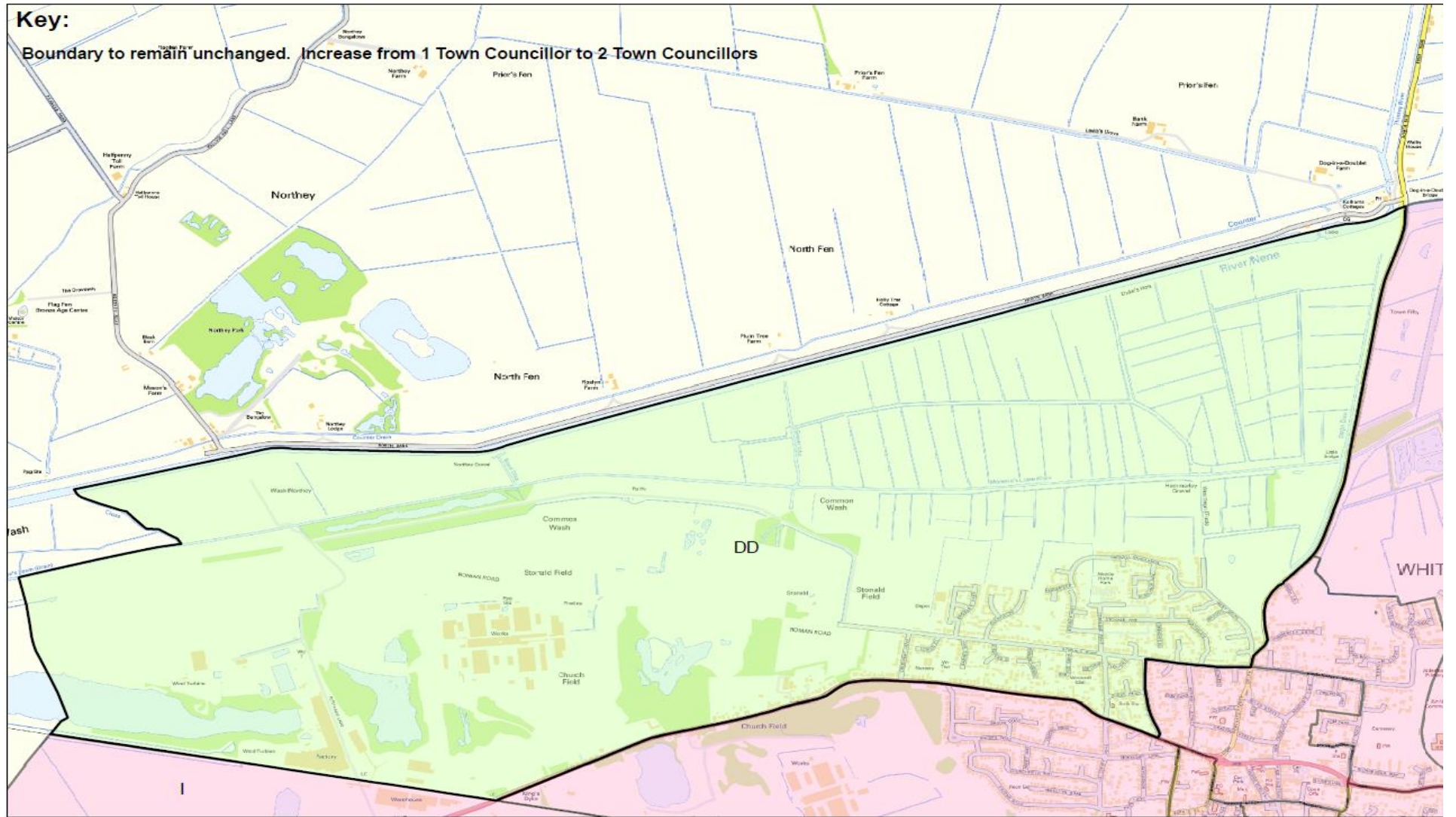


Key:

- Proposed St Marys North and St Andrews Town Council Ward
- Current St Marys North and St Andrews Town Council Wards and Polling Districts
- DC1 - St Andrews
- DC2 - St Marys North

Key:

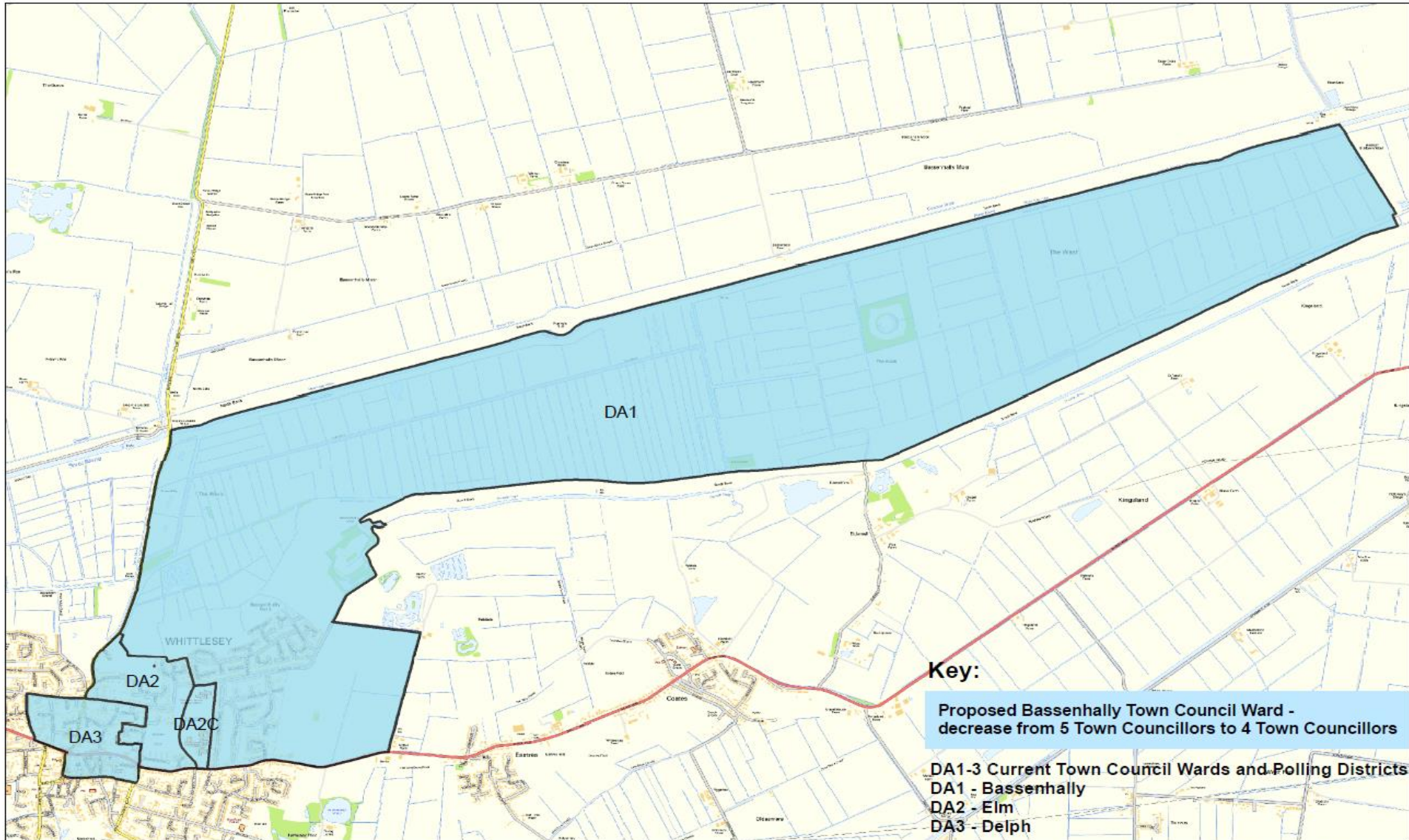
Boundary to remain unchanged. Increase from 1 Town Councillor to 2 Town Councillors



Created on: 11/12/2017

Stonald - DD





Key:
 Proposed Bassenhally Town Council Ward - decrease from 5 Town Councillors to 4 Town Councillors
 DA1-3 Current Town Council Wards and Polling Districts
 DA1 - Bassenhally
 DA2 - Elm
 DA3 - Delph

Created on: 11/12/2017

Proposed Bassenhally Town Council Ward

