


Agenda Item No:	14	
Committee:	Council	
Date:	19 May 2021	
Report Title:	Electoral Review for Fenland District Council	

1 Purpose / Summary

- For Members to consider and agree to approach the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE) for England to request an Electoral Review of Fenland District Ward Boundaries in time for this review to inform the 2023 Fenland District Council elections.

2 Key issues

- The LGBCE are responsible for conducting reviews of local authority electoral arrangements through an electoral review. Electoral reviews are usually an 18 month process which take a series of defined steps, as set out within the report, to establish new electoral arrangements. The Council is a key consultee through this process as are many other stakeholders.
- Through an electoral review the LGBCE would agree:
 - the total number of Councillors elected to the local authority;
 - the number and boundaries of wards for the purposes of the elections of Councillors;
 - the number of Councillors for any ward of a local authority; and
 - the name of any ward.
- The LGBCE conducts an electoral review of a Council for two reasons:
 1. At the request of the local authority; or
 2. If the local authority meets the Commission's intervention criteria:
 - a) If one ward has an electorate of +/- 30% from the average electorate for the authority.
 - b) If 30% of all wards have an electorate of +/-10% from the average electorate for the authority.
- Reviewing current and future projections in relation to elector numbers illustrates that Fenland District Council will exceed the intervention criteria by 2023 therefore reviewing ward boundaries to correct these inequalities ahead of the 2023 elections will ensure that Councillors represent closer to the average number of electors overall through an Electoral Review process.
- Fenland District Council had its electoral arrangements reviewed by the LGBCE in 2014 which led to a reduction in the number of Councillors from 40 to 39 and the redefinition of ward boundaries to improve electoral equality from the 2015 all out elections.

3 Recommendations

- For Members to consider and agree to approach the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to request an Electoral Review of Fenland District Ward Boundaries in time for this review to inform the 2023 Fenland District Council elections.

Wards Affected	All	
Forward Plan Reference	N/A	
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Chris Boden - Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance	
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive Carol Pilson - Corporate Director Anna Goodall - Head of Transformation, Customer Services and Governance Amy Brown - Chief Solicitor	
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd - Chief Executive Carol Pilson - Corporate Director Anna Goodall - Head of Transformation, Customer Services and Governance Amy Brown - Chief Solicitor	
Background Paper(s)	N/A	

4 Electoral Reviews

- 4.1 An Electoral Review is an examination of a Council's electoral arrangements. For a District Council, this means a review of:
- the total number of councillors elected to the local authority;
 - the number and boundaries of wards for the purposes of the election of councillors;
 - the number of councillors for any ward of a local authority; and
 - the name of any ward or division.
- 4.2 The LGBCE conducts an electoral review of a Council for two reasons:
1. At the request of the local authority; or
 2. If the local authority meets the Commission's intervention criteria:
 - a) If one ward has an electorate of +/- 30% from the average electorate for the authority.
 - b) If 30% of all wards have an electorate of +/-10% from the average electorate for the authority.

5 Electoral Review Process

- 5.1 Electoral reviews must follow a six stage process as follows:
- 5.2 1.Preliminary Stage
- The LGBCE gathers initial information from the local authority being reviewed, including electoral forecasts and other electoral data.
- They meet with all Councillors, officers, group leaders and where applicable, Parish and Town Councils.
- 5.3 2.Councillor Numbers
- They will then decide how many Councillors should be elected to the local authority in the future. They will base this decision on the evidence received from the local authority itself and any other respondents who have made a representation. They will take a view on the council size for a local authority by considering four factors:
- a) The governance arrangements of the Council;
 - b) The council's scrutiny functions;
 - c) The representational role of councillors;
 - d) Future trends and plans for the Council.
- 5.4 3.Warding Arrangements
- By this stage of the review, the LGBCE will have not proposed boundaries. At this point the LGBCE will ask the public for their views on:
- a) The number of wards;
 - b) The names of wards;
 - c) Where the boundaries between wards should lie;

- d) The number of councillors for each ward.

The public's comments will shape the LGBCE's draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements which they will publish.

5.5 4.Draft Recommendations

Based on the information received from the consultation, draft recommendations are then produced on future electoral arrangements.

A new stage of consultation is then opened to see what members of the public think of the plans for the area. They will consider all submissions on their draft recommendations when producing their final recommendations for the local authority.

5.6 5.Final Recommendations

Final recommendations are produced which are put before Parliament to be made law.

5.7 6.Parliamentary scrutiny

The final recommendations are then put before Parliament in the form of a draft order. The draft order, if made, gives effect to the final recommendations and is laid before Parliament for a period of 40 sitting days. Parliament can either accept or reject the LGBCE's recommendations.

6 Fenland District Council Electors Figures and Future Projections

- 6.1 In April 2021, a review was conducted of current electorate figures, and projected electorate figures in 2026 for wards within Fenland, taking into account County Council population forecasts, extant planning permissions and empty properties. The review gave the following current and projected 2026 electorate figures for each ward:

Table 1 - Estimated Elector Forecast Figures (includes CCC population forecast, extant planning permissions and empty properties)

Ward	Current elector figures 1 April 2021	Estimated Elector Figures				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
AA Birch	2307	2311	2314	2318	2322	2326
AB Slade Lode	2058	2126	2194	2261	2329	2397
AC The Mills	2265	2295	2325	2355	2385	2415
AD Wenneye Figures have been adjusted by an average of the other wards in Chatteris due to the high forecasted population for this ward, which sees electors nearly double, which seems unusual therefore the figures in brackets are used.	1753	2192 (1787)	2631 (1821)	3070 (1855)	3509 (1889)	3948 (1923)

Ward	Current elector figures 1 April 2021	Estimated Elector Figures				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
BA1 March East	1661	1685	1708	1732	1756	1780
BA2 March East	1702	1709	1716	1724	1731	1738
BA3 March East	663	676	688	701	714	727
BA4 March East	428	426	424	422	420	417
BA5 March East	1340	1387	1435	1482	1530	1577
March East Total	5794	5883	5971	6061	6151	6239
BB1 March North	1703	1732	1760	1789	1817	1846
BB2 March North	1751	1820	1889	1958	2027	2096
BB3 March North	1875	1968	2060	2153	2245	2338
BB4 March North	211	223	235	247	258	270
March North Total	5540	5743	5944	6147	6347	6550
BC1 March West	1495	1745	1995	2245	2496	2746
BC2 March West	2123	2455	2787	3119	3451	3783
BC3 March West	1914	2182	2451	2719	2988	3256
BC4 March West	254	287	320	352	385	418
March West Total	5786	6669	7553	8435	9320	10203
Benwick CA	850	854	858	862	866	870
Coates DE	1119	1158	1196	1235	1274	1312
Eastrea DF	755	777	799	822	844	866
Pondersbridge DG	298	287	277	266	256	245
Turves DH	460	451	441	432	422	413
Kings Dyke DI	107	111	115	119	123	127
Benwick, Coates & Eastrea Total	3589	3638	3686	3736	3785	3833
DA1Bassenhally	940	997	1054	1111	1167	1224
DA2Bassenhally	849	888	926	965	1003	1042
DA3 Bassenhally	1442	1541	1641	1740	1840	1939
DA4 Bassenhally	1054	1280	1506	1732	1958	2184

Ward	Current elector figures 1 April 2021	Estimated Elector Figures				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Bassenhally Total	4285	4706	5127	5543	5968	6389
DB Lattersey	2154	2241	2328	2415	2502	2589
DC1 St Andrews & St Marys North	1576	1579	1582	1585	1588	1591
DC2 St Marys South	470	482	495	507	520	532
St Andrews Total	2046	2061	2077	2092	2108	2123
DD Stonald	2290	2342	2394	2446	2498	2550
EA Clarkson	1753	2050	2347	2644	2940	3237
EB1 Octavia Hill	1935	1993	2052	2110	2169	2227
EB2 Octavia Hill	2054	2144	2233	2323	2413	2502
Octavia Hill Total	3989	4137	4285	4433	4582	4729
EC Kirkgate	1911	1975	2039	2103	2167	2231
ED Medworth	1976	2090	2204	2318	2432	2545
EE Peckover	1795	2007	2219	2432	2644	2856
EF Staithe	1924	2169	2415	2660	2905	3151
EG1 Waterlees Village	1637	1672	1706	1741	1776	1810
EG2 Waterlees Village	1144	1154	1165	1175	1185	1196
EG3 Waterlees Village	1102	1113	1124	1134	1145	1156
Waterlees V Total	3883	3939	3995	4050	4106	4162
FA Doddington	1941	1995	2049	2104	2158	2212
KA Wimblington	1700	1819	1938	2057	2175	2294
KB Wimblington	121	125	128	132	135	139
Doddington and Wimblington Total	3762	3939	4115	4293	4468	4645

Ward	Current elector figures 1 April 2021	Estimated Elector Figures				
		2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
GA Fridaybridge	1057	1075	1092	1110	1127	1145
GB Elm	1738	1758	1779	1799	1820	1840
GC Coldham	181	188	195	203	210	217
GD Rings End	127	128	129	130	131	132
GE Christchurch	714	734	754	774	793	813
Elm & C/Church Total	3817	3883	3949	4016	4081	4147
HA Manea	2095	2133	2170	2208	2246	2283
PA Parson Drove	1149	1180	1212	1243	1275	1306
PB Wisbech St Mary	1367	1401	1435	1469	1503	1537
PC Murrow	840	847	853	860	866	873
PD Guyhirn	737	757	776	796	815	835
PE Thorney Toll	82	86	90	95	99	103
PD & WSM Total	4175	4271	4366	4463	4558	4654
RA Gorefield	1022	1042	1062	1081	1101	1121
RB1 Leverington	1337	1364	1391	1418	1445	1472
RB2 Leverington	1462	1506	1550	1594	1638	1682
RC Newton	602	615	628	641	654	667
RD Tydd St Giles	999	1012	1026	1039	1053	1066
Roman Bank Total	5422	5539	5657	5773	5891	6008
Fenland District Total	76,369	79,934	84,305	87,057	90,624	94,185
Av electors per Cllr	1958	2049	2162	2232	2324	2415

- 6.2 Whilst the current average electorate figures for the Council do not quite meet the LGBCE's intervention criteria, if the above projections are realised they will do before the next FDC elections are due to take place in 2023.
- 6.3 If FDC's electoral arrangements are not reviewed in time for the 2023 elections, the electoral inequality between wards within Fenland may increase by 2026 to levels which would not be conducive to good governance in the District.
- 6.4 An example of this is the projection that, by 2026, if no changes are made to existing ward boundaries before the next District Elections, March West ward (represented by 3

Councillors) is projected to have an electorate of 10,203, whilst Benwick, Coates and Eastrea ward (represented by 2 Councillors) is only projected to have an electorate of 3,833. This would equate to 3,401 electors per Councillor in March West ward and 1,917 electors per Councillor in Benwick, Coates and Eastrea. If a Councillor in one ward was to represent 77% more electors than a Councillor in another ward, there would be a level of inequality of representation within the District which may be undesirable.

7 Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 7.1 The Council strives to be a Quality Organisation and it is a matter of good governance as displayed by the LGBCE intervention criteria for Councillors to represent as similar number of electors as possible which can only be achieved through an Electoral Review of Fenland District Council.

8 Community Impact

- 8.1 The community would be fully consulted by the LGBCE in regard to any future electoral arrangements for Fenland District Council.

9 Conclusions

- 9.1 The process of an electoral review usually takes up to 18 months to complete, therefore in order to ensure that changes to the Council's warding arrangements may take place in time for the Council's next scheduled elections in 2023, it is recommended that Members agree that the Council makes an immediate request to the LGBCE for an electoral review for the Council.