

Final recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for South Cambridgeshire District Council

Electoral review

October 2016

Translations and other formats

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Summary

Who we are and what we do

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. 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.

Electoral review

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

Why South Cambridgeshire?

We are conducting a review of South Cambridgeshire District Council as the value of each vote in district council elections varies depending on where you live in South Cambridgeshire. Some councillors currently represent many more or fewer voters than others. This is 'electoral inequality'. One ward (Histon & Impington) has a variance of more than 30% from the average. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where votes are as equal as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

Our proposals for South Cambridgeshire

- South Cambridgeshire should be represented by 45 councillors, 12 fewer than there are now
- South Cambridgeshire should have 26 wards, eight fewer than now
- The boundaries of 31 wards should change; three will stay the same

We have now finalised our recommendations for electoral arrangements for South Cambridgeshire.

What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹

The members of the Commission are:

Professor Colin Mellors (Chair)

Dr Peter Knight CBE, DL

Alison Lowton

Peter Maddison QPM

Sir Tony Redmond

Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

1 Introduction

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

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

What is an electoral review?

2 Our three main considerations are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

3 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Consultation

4 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for South Cambridgeshire. We then held two periods of consultation on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation informed our draft and final recommendations.

This review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
17 November 2015	Number of councillors decided
24 November 2015	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
1 February 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
10 May 2016	Publication of draft recommendations, start of second consultation
25 July 2016	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
18 October 2016	Publication of final recommendations

How will the recommendations affect you?

5 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in and which other communities are in that ward. Your ward name may also change.

2 Analysis and final recommendations

6 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.

7 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.

8 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.

	2015	2021
Electorate of area	117,115	130,255
Number of councillors	45	45
Average number of electors per councillor	2,603	2,895

9 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’. Two of our new wards for South Cambridgeshire will have over 10% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2021.

10 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of South Cambridgeshire district or result in changes to postcodes or local taxes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. We have seen no evidence to suggest that our recommendations will have an effect on 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.

Submissions received

11 See Appendix B for details of submissions received. All submissions may be viewed at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

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

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.

Number of councillors

13 South Cambridgeshire Council currently has 57 councillors. Prior to consultation, South Cambridgeshire District Council submitted a proposal to us to reduce the current council size to 45 members. We have looked at evidence provided by the Council and have concluded that it has sufficiently demonstrated that the authority can operate efficiently and effectively with 45 councillors and ensure effective representation of local residents.

14 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 45 councillors – for example, 45 one-councillor wards, 15 three-councillor wards, or a mix of one-, two- and three-councillor wards.

15 We received two submissions about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward patterns. Two of these were expressions of support for the reduction in the number of councillors, but the third was an objection. However, that submission did not present sufficient evidence of the need for the retention of the current council size to outweigh the Council's evidence. We therefore based our draft recommendations on a 45-member council.

16 We received no further submissions about the total number of councillors in response to our consultation on our draft recommendations. We have therefore maintained 45 councillors for our final recommendations.

Ward boundaries consultation

17 We received 32 submissions to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included two detailed district-wide proposals, one from the Council and one – similar in most respects – from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council. Both were based on a pattern of wards to be represented by 45 elected members. Whilst, amongst the remainder, there were some general comments, the majority were about localised parts of the district and, in particular, with which neighbours a parish should be grouped to form a ward.

18 The district-wide schemes each provided for a mix of 16 single-member, 10 two-member and three three-member wards for South Cambridgeshire. We carefully considered the proposals received and concluded that the proposed ward boundaries would have good levels of electoral equality. We also considered that they generally used clearly identifiable boundaries.

19 Our draft recommendations were based on the Council's proposal. 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. We also visited the area in order to look at the various different proposals on the ground. This tour of South Cambridgeshire helped us make our draft recommendations for 10 single-member wards, 10 two-member wards and five three-member wards.

Draft recommendations consultation

20 We received 52 submissions during consultation on our draft recommendations.

These included 23 from parish councils, one from a parish meeting, one from the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council, four from individual South Cambridgeshire district councillors and 23 from local residents.

21 Our final recommendations are similar to our draft recommendations. As a result of the local evidence received we have modified our draft recommendation for a two-member Gamlingay & The Mordens ward. We now recommend two single-member wards for that area, as initially proposed by the Council and the Liberal Democrat Group on the Council. We are confirming all of the other wards in our draft recommendations as final.

Final recommendations

22 Pages 8–16 detail our final recommendations for each area of South Cambridgeshire. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁴ criteria of:

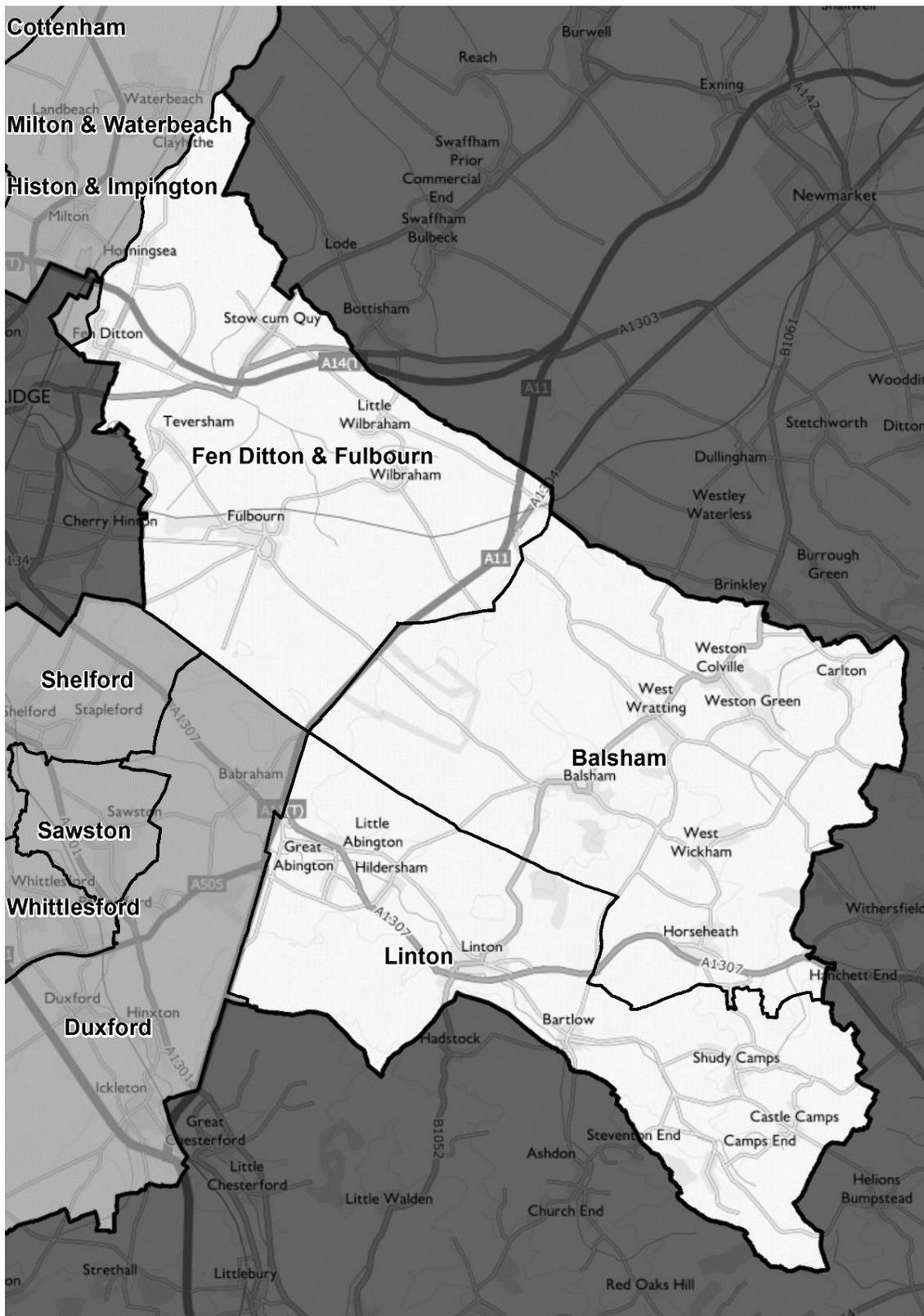
- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for effective and convenient local government

23 Our final recommendations are for five three-councillor wards, nine two-councillor wards and 12 one-councillor wards. We consider that our final recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

24 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in Table 1 (on page 16) and on the large map accompanying this report.

⁴ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

East



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Balsham	1	1%
Fen Ditton & Fulbourn	3	7%
Linton	2	0%

Fen Ditton & Fulbourn

25 The draft recommendations proposed a three-member Fen Ditton & Fulbourn ward. This was a departure from the Council's proposal for two wards: a two-member Fulbourn & Teversham ward, which would have 12% more electors than the district average, and a single-member Fen Ditton ward, with 5% fewer electors than the average. We did not consider the evidence received was sufficient to justify a high level of electoral inequality in the suggested two-member ward.

26 We received four responses to our consultation on the draft recommendations. The Council's proposal was favoured by Fen Ditton, Great Wilbraham and Teversham parish councils.

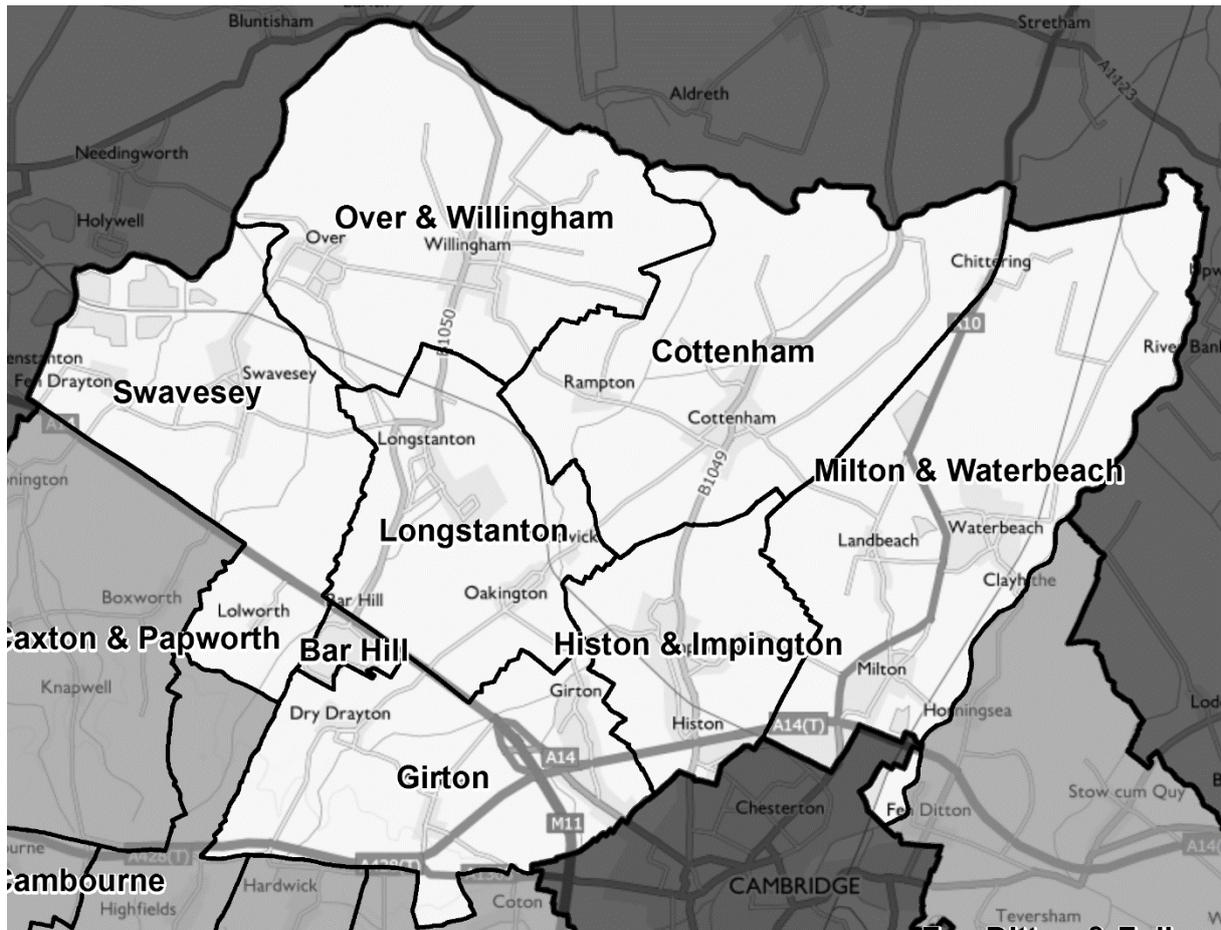
27 The Liberal Democrat Group reiterated its initial proposal for a different configuration, to be achieved by dividing Teversham parish between wards. The Parish Council was opposed to this. The proposal would have provided absolute electoral equality in a single-member Fen Ditton ward, but slightly over 10% more electors per councillor than the average in a two-member Fulbourn ward. We do not consider that the resulting division of Teversham parish would best reflect the geography of local communities.

Balsham and Linton

28 We received no responses which made specific reference to the recommendation for a Balsham ward. We received one submission referring to our Linton ward, which was supportive.

29 We therefore are confirming the recommendations for the eastern part of the district as final.

North



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Bar Hill	1	9%
Cottenham	2	-12%
Girton	2	-6%
Histon & Impington	3	9%
Longstanton	2	4%
Milton & Waterbeach	3	-8%
Over & Willingham	2	-3%
Swavesey	1	-3%

Bar Hill, Cottenham, Histon & Impington and Over & Willingham

30 We received no submissions objecting to our draft Bar Hill, Cottenham, Histon & Impington and Over & Willingham wards. We therefore confirm these draft wards as final.

Milton & Waterbeach

31 Representations argued that the current Papworth ward should not be changed, but this would result in the ward having 17% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2021. Two respondents argued that Milton should not be included in a ward with Waterbeach, but a resulting Milton ward would have 18% more electors per councillor than the average for the district whilst Waterbeach would have 21% fewer. The electoral inequality would be worsened were we to accept a proposal made by one respondent that the Milton & Waterbeach area should have four councillors.

Girton

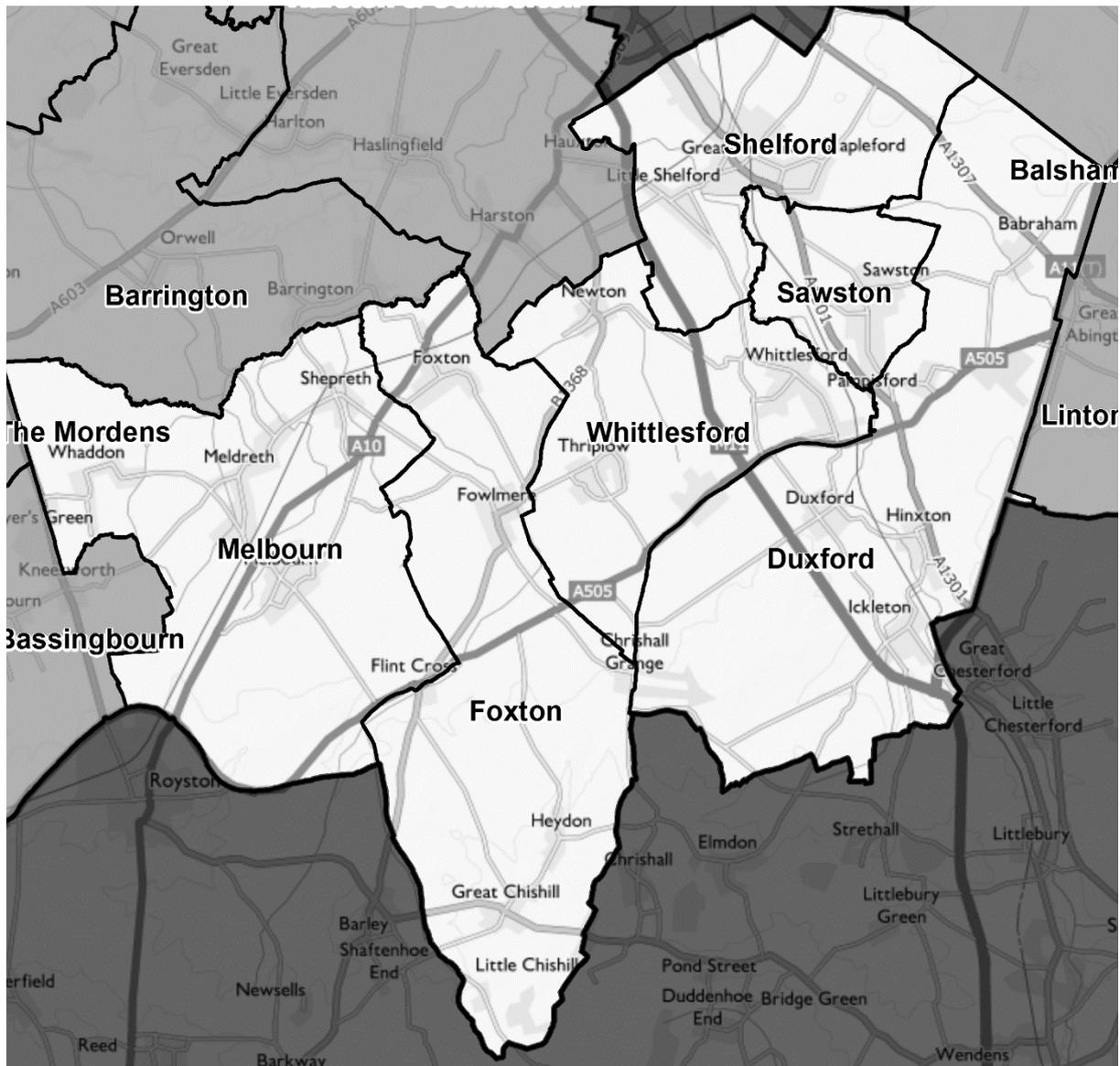
32 Oakington & Westwick Parish Council argued for the inclusion of its area in the Girton ward. Making this change would result in the Girton ward having 14% more electors per councillor than the average for the district, and Longstanton having 16% fewer. We did not consider that adequate rationale was provided to justify this level of electoral inequality.

33 We received two submissions proposing the inclusion of Madingley parish in a ward with Harston & Comberton rather than in a Girton ward as proposed in our draft recommendations. However, these representations did not present sufficient evidence to justify such a change from our draft recommendations.

Longstanton and Swavesey

34 Longstanton Parish Council supported the draft recommendations. We received objections to our draft recommendations from Oakington & Westwick Parish Council, as described in paragraph 33 above, and from Fen Drayton Parish Council and a Fen Drayton resident. In each case, the parish councils suggested alternative configurations of wards that would result in high levels of electoral inequality; we do not consider these to be justified by the evidence we received. Furthermore, alternative combinations of parishes would result in even greater electoral inequality. We therefore confirm as final the draft recommendations for our Longstanton and Swavesey wards.

South



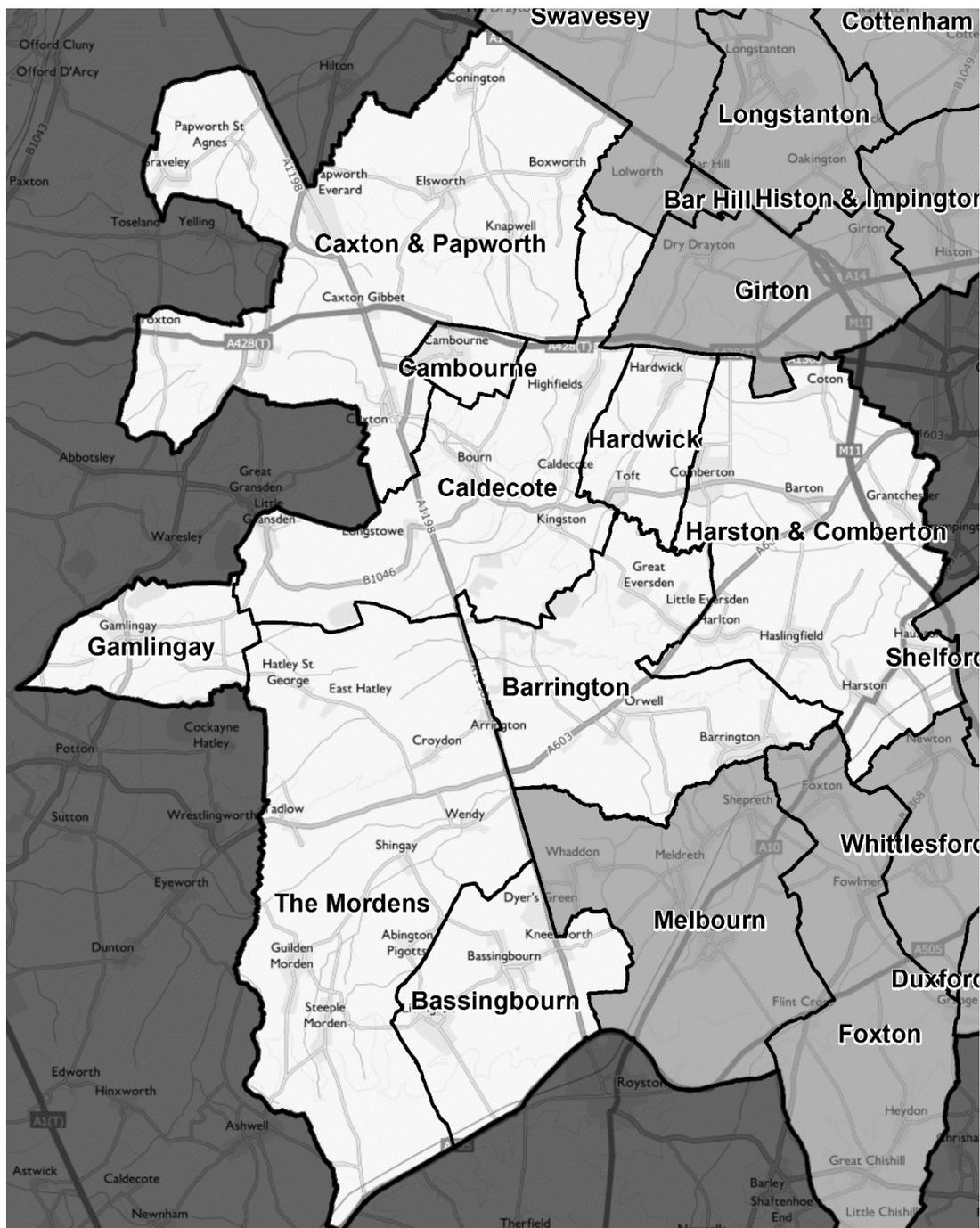
Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Duxford	1	-3%
Foxton	1	-6%
Melbourn	2	9%
Sawston	2	8%
Shelford	2	-1%
Whittlesford	1	-8%

Duxford, Foxton, Melbourn, Sawaton, Shelford and Whittlesford

35 Five responses were received from the southern part of the district. We received expressions of support for the draft recommendations for the Melbourn, Sawston and Shelford wards. One submission expressed the view that of the community of Shepreth is more closely related to those of Barrington and Foxton than to Meldreth. To include Shepreth in either a Barrington ward or a Foxton ward would, however, result in levels of electoral inequality which could not be justified by the evidence presented.

36 We confirm as final our recommendations for the southern part of the district.

West



Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2021
Barrington	1	5%
Bassingbourn	1	8%
Caldecote	1	-8%
Cambourne	3	-11%
Caxton & Papworth	2	5%
Gamlingay	1	10%
Hardwick	1	-6%
Harston & Comberton	3	2%
The Mordens	1	-5%

Bassingbourn, Gamlingay and The Mordens

37 Half of the responses to the consultation on draft recommendations were about the western part of the district. In particular, our proposed two-member Gamlingay & The Mordens ward attracted most attention.

38 When we invited warding proposals, both the Council and its Liberal Democrat Group proposed single-member wards for Bassingbourn, Gamlingay and the more sparsely populated area between them. These would have variances of +8%, +10% and -5% by 2021, respectively. We also received responses to the consultation which argued that the parish of Hatley, which lies adjacent to Gamlingay, should be included in a ward with that larger village. We were persuaded by the evidence submitted to make a draft recommendation for a two-member ward, to be created by combining the Council's proposed single-member Gamlingay and Mordens wards in order to provide for good levels of electoral equality.

39 That draft recommendation brought forward a number of objections to the proposed two-member ward from residents of, and councils for, parishes in the area other than Hatley. Objectors argued that the parishes in the south-west of the district are more closely related to the larger village of Bassingbourn than to Gamlingay. Some argued that those south-western parishes should be included in a two-member ward with Bassingbourn.

40 A single-member Gamlingay plus Hatley ward would have 16% more electors per councillor than the average for the district. Alternatively, it is clear from the warding consultation that Hatley would not relate well to a two-member Bassingbourn ward. Our final recommendation is, therefore, that the Council's original proposal for three single-member wards for this part of the district be accepted.

Harston & Comberton

41 When invited to submit warding proposals, both the Council and its Liberal Democrat Group proposed three single-member wards for the area lying immediately to the south-west of Cambridge city. In two of these wards, there would be unjustifiably high levels of electoral inequality. Good levels of electoral equality could not be achieved in a pattern of single-member wards without dividing parishes in each between wards, but we did not consider there to be appropriate boundaries for parish warding. We therefore proposed a three-member ward combining all the parishes in this part of the district. This recommendation was supported by Grantchester Parish Council.

42 The parish councils for Comberton, Harlton, Harston and Haslingfield objected to the draft recommendation for their area, preferring instead the Council's scheme with its poor levels of electoral equality, as did one district councillor. We have received no new evidence to persuade us that high levels of electoral inequality can be justified and we therefore confirm as final our recommendation for this area.

Caldecote, Caxton & Papworth and Cambourne

43 Objections to the draft recommendations were received from the parish councils for Caxton and Longstowe, each basing their objections on the relationship of their area to others. Neither objection could be accommodated without the creation of unacceptable levels of electoral inequality in Gamlingay, Caldecote and Caxton & Papworth.

44 Despite the inclusion of a Cambourne ward with 11% fewer electors per councillor than the average for the district by 2021, we considered that our draft recommendations represented the best balance of the statutory considerations. The Cambourne ward attracted no objections. We therefore confirm as final our recommendations for Cambourne, Caldecote and Caxton & Papworth.

Conclusions

45 Table 1 shows the impact of our final recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2015 and 2021 electorate figures.

Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements

	Final recommendations	
	2015	2021
Number of councillors	45	45
Number of electoral wards	26	26
Average number of electors per councillor	2,603	2,895
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	7	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	0

Final recommendation
 South Cambridgeshire District Council should be made up of 45 councillors serving 26 wards representing five three-councillor wards, nine two-councillor wards and 12 one-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Table A1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping
Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 You can also view our final recommendations for South Cambridgeshire on our interactive maps at <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/>

3 What happens next?

46 We have now completed our review of South Cambridgeshire. 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 2018.

Equalities

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

Appendix A

Table A1: Final recommendations for South Cambridgeshire District Council

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1 Balsham	1	2,930	2,930	13%	2,930	2,930	1%
2 Bar Hill	1	3,144	3,144	21%	3,144	3,144	9%
3 Barrington	1	2,621	2,621	1%	3,049	3,049	5%
4 Bassingbourn	1	3,089	3,089	19%	3,125	3,125	8%
5 Caldecote	1	2,669	2,669	3%	2,669	2,669	-8%
6 Cambourne	3	6,520	2,173	-16%	7,760	2,587	-11%
7 Caxton & Papworth	2	4,691	2,346	-10%	6,103	3,052	5%
8 Cottenham	2	5,031	2,516	-3%	5,114	2,557	-12%
9 Duxford	1	2,806	2,806	8%	2,806	2,806	-3%
10 Fen Ditton & Fulbourn	3	8,067	2,689	3%	9,272	3,091	7%
11 Foxton	1	2,670	2,670	3%	2,729	2,729	-6%
12 Gamlingay	1	2,865	2,865	10%	3,190	3,190	10%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
13 Girton	2	4,200	2,100	-19%	5,439	2,720	-6%
14 Hardwick	1	2,540	2,540	-2%	2,723	2,723	-6%
15 Harston & Comberton	3	7,225	2,408	-7%	8,816	2,939	2%
16 Histon & Impington	3	8,341	2,780	7%	9,451	3,150	9%
17 Linton	2	5,642	2,821	8%	5,774	2,887	0%
18 Longstanton	2	3,652	1,826	-30%	6,049	3,024	4%
19 Melbourn	2	6,182	3,091	19%	6,315	3,157	9%
20 Milton & Waterbeach	3	7,472	2,491	-4%	8,004	2,668	-8%
21 Over & Willingham	2	5,476	2,738	5%	5,617	2,809	-3%
22 Sawston	2	5,547	2,774	7%	6,228	3,114	8%
23 Shelford	2	5,612	2,806	8%	5,737	2,869	-1%
24 Swavesey	1	2,741	2,741	5%	2,799	2,799	-3%
25 The Mordens	1	2,761	2,761	6%	2,761	2,761	-5%

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2021)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
26 Whittlesford	1	2,621	2,621	1%	2,651	2,651	-8%
Totals	45	117,115	-	-	130,255	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,603	-	-	2,895	-

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

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

Appendix B

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at

<http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/south-cambridgeshire>

Parish councils and parish meetings

- Barton Parish Council
- Caxton Parish Council
- Comberton Parish Council
- Coton Parish Council
- Croydon Parish Council
- Fen Ditton Parish Council
- Fen Drayton Parish Council
- Grantchester Parish Council
- Great Wilbraham Parish Council
- Guilden Morden Parish Council
- Harlton Parish Council
- Harston Parish Council
- Haslingfield Parish Council
- Hatley Parish Council
- Litlington Parish Council
- Little Abington Parish Council
- Longstanton Parish Council
- Longstowe Parish Council
- Oakington & Westwick Parish Council
- Pampisford Parish Council
- Shingay-cum-Wendy Parish Meeting
- Stapleford Parish Council
- Teversham Parish Council
- Toft Parish Council

Political groups

- South Cambridgeshire Liberal Democrats

South Cambridgeshire district councillors-

- Cllr D. de Lacey
- Cllr P. Johnson
- Cllr J. Lockwood
- Cllr B. Smith

Residents

- 23 local residents

Appendix C

Outline map



A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the A1 sheet accompanying this report, or on our website <http://www.lqbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/cambridgeshire/south-cambridgeshire>

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 fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
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. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
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
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