

[REDACTED]

From: Steve Count Cllr [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 June 2022 20:38
To: reviews
Subject: Fenland Review

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a Cambridgeshire County Councillor (March North & Waldersey) and a Fenland District Councillor (March North).

I agree with the Fenland wards suggested by the LGBCE in your initial proposals with the exception of those covering March, Benwick, Christchurch, Doddington and Wimblington.

Your Draft Recommendations for March included the statement that your “suggested arrangement used more clearly identified boundaries”. But your arrangement fails to use the river to the east of the Town Centre as a ward boundary, and that is a very strong and well-recognised boundary which should be utilised if possible in whatever arrangements are agreed. On May 20th, FDC Full Council passed a motion proposing revised warding arrangements in March which make full use of the river and the Isle of Ely Way (A141) as ward boundaries. I cannot overstate how important those boundaries are and how in reality they reflect local communities. Moreover, the other boundaries being proposed within March in the FDC revised submission are all main roads, such as the B1101 southwards out of Town, and the B1098 westwards out of town, together with Hundred Road and Road which forms one of the two main north/south roads within the Town. I would ask you to compare the FDC proposal using main roads as boundaries with your initial proposal using small local community roads such as Maple Grove and Creek Road, where you are splitting existing communities rather than using a natural division between communities. Your proposed March North & Rural ward is very large – 16% above quota now, and just a handful of voters short of being 10% above quota even in 2027. The FDC revised proposal boundaries within March produce no wards with such large variances from quota. Whilst I appreciate that electoral equality is never fully achievable, I think it noteworthy that the FDC revised proposals for March produce better electoral equality than your initial proposals do.

Both Benwick and Christchurch are small villages which look towards March for virtually all of their retail, secondary school and other services. Until 2017 they were included in the March West and March East Divisions for County Council purposes, and it feels quite natural that they should again be included in a March electoral unit.

These changes also allow Doddington & Wimblington to remain as a 2-member ward with very little variance from quota.

As I said, I represent March North & Waldersey Division at County – it seems to me that the quite natural pairing of Wisbech St Mary and Elm parishes which you propose in your initial proposals could more easily be called Waldersey Ward? Wisbech St Mary and Elm sit well together as a ward – they are very similar parishes in that they are both

made up of several distinct and well-separated villages, and the two parishes are of very similar electorate so it is a joining together of equals in quantity as well as in quality.

I appreciate that the LGBCE must balance all three of its statutory criteria right across the District of Fenland. I submit that that will best be achieved by accepting in full the revised FDC warding proposals passed last month.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Steve Count

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