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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 June 2022 00:01
To: reviews
Subject: FENLAND REVIEW

Importance: High

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Reference: Fenland Review

On 12th May 2022 Fenland District Council resolved, at Full Council, to support a revised pattern of wards for future elections in Fenland. I support those proposals completely.

In Whittlesey I support the LGBCE's initial proposals for the Town and District Ward boundaries on the basis of 42 District Councillors - what I can't support is that the ward I currently represent - Stonald Ward - would under your new system of wards be included in a ward called Stonald Ward for Town Council elections but called Whittlesey North West Ward for District Council elections, DESPITE THE TWO WARDS BEING ABSOLUTELY IDENTICAL!!!! The new two member ward you propose is larger than the current one member Stonald Ward I represent at Fenland District Council, so to avoid confusion I'd suggest that you rename your proposed Stonald Town Ward as Whittlesey West Town Ward so that both the Town and District wards bear the same name.

I've lived in Whittlesey for 42 years. I used to be the owner/landlady of the Three Horseshoe public house in Turves. So I have a particular appreciation of the geography of the more rural parts of Whittlesey. Turves itself looks towards Coates within Whittlesey Town. Including Turves in the same proposed ward as Coates therefore makes sense. What never made sense was including Turves in a District Council ward running from Benwick to King's Delph. Benwick isn't in Whittlesey and has no public transport connections with Whittlesey. Benwick looks far more towards March than to Whittlesey. That's why I favour the FDC revised proposal to include Benwick in a ward with West March, just as used to be the case for many years with the County Council Division boundaries there. As for Turves being in the same Ward as King's Delph, they are on opposite sides of Whittlesey and the current District Council ward of "Benwick, Coates and Eastrea" appears to have been just thrown together with all the odd bits which couldn't be included with any other ward, such as Benwick, Pondersbridge, King's Delph and Turves, despite the fact that it's virtually impossible (without a four wheel drive vehicle) to access them all from each other without going through Whittlesey Town itself. That's why I welcome your proposed "South" and "Whittlesey East & Villages" District Council wards: that split correctly identifies which parts of Whittlesey Town outside the urban core access Whittlesey Town from the east along the A605, and which of the rural parts of Whittlesey access the Town via the other routes into town (all of which access town via the current St Andrews Ward). It makes a lot of sense in the current proposals to use as a boundary within the urban part of the Town the main road - the A605 - which runs straight through Whittlesey. It makes a lot of sense at local level to use this road as a boundary between wards because it's a clear demarcation that everyone can understand and will promote efficient and effective local representation - people need to know which ward they are in so that they know who their local representatives are!

I've served on both Fenland District Council and on Whittlesey Town Council for years. I was Chairman of Whittlesey Council before it even received Town status. I'm currently the Planning portfolio holder on the Cabinet at Fenland District Council. In supporting FDC's revised proposals for warding arrangements across Fenland I am speaking from a position of considerable knowledge and understanding of the area in making this submission.

Eastrea Village and Coates Village are both clearly defined communities. They are too small to justify splitting them north and south of the A605 into different wards. I strongly support the fact that your proposals split neither Coates village nor Eastrea Village.

I have two other representations that I would like to make.

At Fenland District Council I am the portfolio holder for flood risk and for drainage. The Fens are an artificial landscape which survive being repeatedly flooded only because of an intensive and constant active drainage system. I cannot overstate the importance of drainage arrangements in the Fens generally and in Fenland in particular. I am a member of several local drainage boards, including the North Level District Internal Drainage Board. In West Wisbech, right down southwards to Barton Road, drainage depends on the 2.3km Still Drain (and the Still Drain Extension) which empties into the 3.4km White Engine East Drain which protects most of Leverington. All of Leverington together with the westernmost rural part of Wisbech are contained within the North Level IDB's Highside sub-catchment area. Floodwaters do not respect administrative boundaries, but it makes sense to include within individual district council wards those areas with a common and interdependent drainage system which are also part of the same sub-catchment area. I therefore strongly support the fact that your proposed new Leverington Ward includes the westernmost rural part of West Wisbech, as they share in common both their flood risk and their drainage solutions.

Finally, may I express my support for including Christchurch village in with March East in a single ward? This always used to be the configuration at County Council level and it always made sense to include Christchurch in the same County Council Division with the town it looks towards. Christchurch is a small village on the edge of Fenland District. It's far too small to support a ward all on its own. There's no road access to get northwards, towards Elm or Wisbech, from Christchurch village without going out of the county of Cambridgeshire entirely and going through part of Norfolk. Residents in Christchurch access March for all of their main services and shops via March East, so it's logical to include Christchurch with March East in a single ward as proposed by Fenland District Council in its revised proposals.

Yours,

Councillor Mrs Denise Laws

Whittlesey Town Council

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