

	AGENDA ITEM NO. 13			
	COUNCIL			
Date	8 MAY 2014			
Title	COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW			

1. PURPOSE/SUMMARY

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

KEY ISSUES

- Fenland District Council (FDC) has recently been subject to an electoral review of District ward boundaries conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), the results of which will be implemented in May 2015.
- The new LGBCE defined District ward boundaries to be implemented in May 2015 cannot be changed through the CGR.
- The electoral review resulted in the creation of several additional parish wards across the district, predominantly in Chatteris and Whittlesey.
- Following publication of the LGBCE final recommendation report, the Council
 received requests from Chatteris and Whittlesey Town Councils to conduct a
 Community Governance Review (CGR) in order to address some of the boundary
 anomalies which resulted from the recent electoral review.
- The request for a review was endorsed by the FDC Member Working Group and as a result a CGR under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007 was launched.
- The CGR Terms of Reference were published on 15 January 2014, which initiated the first phase of public consultation, which ended on 12 April 2014. The terms of reference confirmed the focus of the review as being restricted to:
 - The external parish boundaries between Chatteris Town Council and Manea Parish Council;
 - The internal parish warding arrangements in Chatteris and Whittlesey parishes and finally
 - The number of parish councillors to represent Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey parishes in the future.

- FDC consulted extensively with both Chatteris and Whittlesey Town Councils and Manea Parish Council through a series of briefings and publicised the CGR to residents in both areas through public notices, press releases, community groups and direct contact with some electors who may be affected by the review.
- During this initial round of consultation six consultation submissions were received from Chatteris and Whittlesey Town Councils, Manea Parish Council, The Conservative Association and two Chatteris residents.
- The Council has been mindful of the consultation comments in formulating the draft proposals regarding future governance arrangements.
- The key proposals are to re-establish co-terminosity between the District ward boundaries to be implemented from 2015 and the parish ward boundaries. Realignment of district and parish ward boundaries will maintain communities of identity as well as achieving effective and convenient local government.
- If agreed the draft proposals report will be subject to a second period of public consultation commencing 12 May to 12 July 2014 after which the final recommendations will be submitted to Council for agreement on 24 July 2014.
- Following this, any proposals agreed by the Council to alter parish warding arrangements will require the permission of the LGBCE for implementation in time for the 2015 elections.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

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

- The parish boundary between Chatteris and Manea to be amended to follow the new 2015 district ward boundary.
- The new parish wards in Chatteris be amended to reflect the new district ward boundaries across the town
- The new parish wards in Whittlesey be amended to reflect the new district boundaries across the town
- For the number of parish Councillors to represent Whittlesey (14),
 Chatteris (12) and Manea (9) to remain the same as at present

Wards Affected	Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey parish wards		
Forward Plan Reference No. (if applicable)	-		
Portfolio Holder(s)	Member Working Group:		
	Cllr Alan Melton		
	Cllr Chris Seaton		
	Cllr Gavin Booth		
	Cllr Virginia Bucknor		
	Cllr Mark Archer		
	Cllr Kay Mayor		
Report Originator	Carol Pilson – Corporate Director		
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Background Paper(s)	CGR Terms of Reference

Fenland District Council

Community Governance Review 2014

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 12 July 2014.



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Fenland District Council (FDC) has recently been subject to an Electoral Review which was conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The electoral review was undertaken as the current district warding arrangements had resulted in a significant variance in the number of electors residing across the district wards. As a result the electoral review was undertaken by the LGBCE with the intention of achieving three primary aims: namely; to achieve electoral equality across the district; maintain communities of interest; whilst also enabling effective and convenient local government.
- 1.2 The new District Council ward boundaries for 2015 have now been set by LGBCE and Parliament and cannot be revisited as a part of this process.
- 1.3 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.

2. The Community Governance Review

- 2.1 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 have resulted from the recent electoral review at the request of the two town councils and with the endorsement of the Member Working Group. The review scope is focussing specifically on the following:
- 2.1.1 The external parish boundaries between Chatteris Town Council and Manea Parish Council;
- 2.1.2 The internal parish warding arrangements in Chatteris and Whittlesey parishes and finally
- 2.1.3 The number of parish councillors to represent Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey parishes in the future.
- 2.2 The CGR commenced on 15 January 2014, when FDC published a Terms of Reference document and invited initial submissions from individuals and/ or organisations who had an interest in the review. Widespread 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.
- 2.3 The period for initial submissions closed on 15 April 2014. The Council now publishes these draft proposals in response to the consultation comments received to date.
- 2.4 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:
- 2.4.1 Reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- 2.4.2 Is effective and convenient and

2.4.3 takes into account any other, non-parish, arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.

This document launches a second round of consultation regarding the Council's proposals for the future of parish warding arrangements in Chatteris, Whittlesey and Manea and we welcome views from all stakeholders. The deadline for responses is 12 July 2014.

3. Scope of the Review

- 3.1 The external parish boundary between Chatteris Town Council and Manea Parish Council no longer follows the District ward boundary. As a result there will be a disparity between district and parish level elections regarding which area local electors will be eligible to cast their vote. The District Council is reviewing this boundary as we believe that the anomaly may not be effective or convenient to the community in that area.
- 3.2 The second consideration within the scope of the CGR is the internal parish warding arrangements within Chatteris. The electoral review has resulted in the creation of three additional warded areas within Chatteris parish, namely Curf, Curlew and How Fen Parish wards. Chatteris will therefore have 7 parish wards within the town instead of 4 which is has presently. The new parish wards will be implemented to coincide with the 'all out' local elections in May 2015. The newly created warded parish areas do not reflect the new District ward boundaries in the town and therefore FDC is reviewing these boundaries as we believe the new warded parishes may not be effective or convenient to the community in that area. FDC believes that the number of electors contained within the new parish wards in Chatteris do not contribute to the achievement of electoral equality. FDC is therefore also proposing to review the names of the parish wards within the town to ensure they are reflective of the communities they serve.
- 3.3 The third element of the CGR is the internal parish warding arrangements within Whittlesey. The electoral review has resulted in the creation of an additional ward within the parish. As a result Whittlesey will have 8 parish wards within the town, as of 2015, as opposed to the current 7 parish wards. The newly created parish ward areas do not reflect the new District ward boundaries in the town and therefore FDC is reviewing these boundaries as we believe the new warded parishes may not be effective or convenient to the community in the area. In addition FDC also believes that the number of electors contained within the new parish wards do not contribute to the achievement of electoral equality in the area. FDC is also proposing to review the names of the parish wards within the town to ensure they are reflective of the communities they serve.
- 3.4 The final element of the CGR is to consider the number of town and parish councillors required to serve, Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey to ensure they reflect the current and forecast electorate in the area. FDC is proposing the number of parish and town councillors remains unchanged.
- 3.5 The parish warding arrangements in Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey have not been subject to a review for a number of years. The previous change to governance activities took effect in 2003, on that occasion the change resulted from an electoral review conducted by the LGBCE. It is considered best practice to regularly review governance arrangements and particularly in response to local issues or following significant change.

4 Consultation submissions

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Six consultation submissions have been received as a part of this review which have indicated that there are strongly held views from residents and interested parties both in favour of the realignment of parish and ward boundaries and a counter submission supporting maintaining the arrangements that will take effect in 2015. It is worthy of note that there is not an option to maintain the current parish and district warding arrangements as they will be abolished as a result of the LGBCE electoral review and the new provisions will take effect in May 2015.
- 4.3 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 Chatteris Town Council, Manea Parish Council, Whittlesey Town Council, The Conservative Association, and two local residents.
- 4.4 FDC believes that the majority of consultation submissions received to date are largely supportive of the parish ward boundaries being redefined to reflect the new district ward boundaries. As a result we are proposing to realign all the parish wards with the district boundaries in Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey in order to re-establish co-terminosity, which will facilitate the objective of effective and convenient local government. Whilst it is recognised that Mr and Mrs Angood expressed a clear view that they affiliate themselves with Chatteris particularly as their property is located close to the town bypass. However, as a result of the recent electoral review their property now falls within the boundary of the newly defined Manea district ward. The new ward boundaries will take effect in May 2015. The CGR cannot be utilised as a mechanism to unpick the results of the LGBCE electoral review. Should the district council seek to not make any changes to re-align boundaries then Mr and Mrs Angood would be eligible to vote in elections in relation to Manea District but conversely for Chatteris town council, which would not appear to be logical or reflective of effective or convenient local government.
- 4.5 Chatteris Town Council has expressed their support in relation to the re-alignment of parish and district ward boundaries with the exception of How Fen parish ward, which they support moving into the amended Birch parish ward. This would result in the revised Birch parish ward straddling the new Birch and Manea District ward boundary which will take effect in 2015. The Guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the LGBCE 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 How Fen ward could be a separate parish

ward of Chatteris Town Council, containing 114 electors requiring the representation of one town councillor, which would not provide electoral equality at a parish level or the parish ward boundaries could be amended to reflect the ward boundaries in the area.

- 4.6 Whilst it is the intention of the district council to propose to re-align the parish and ward boundaries it is important to note that this will result in parish wards straddling county electoral division boundaries in Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey. As a result the council would be required to seek consent from the LGBCE in order to effect these changes. Given that the LGBCE is currently working in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to conducting a review of electoral division boundaries across Cambridgeshire, it is anticipated that a request of this nature would be looked on favourably, as the current electoral division boundaries are expected to be the subject of change and therefore this could eliminate the issue.
- 4.7 The District Council has reviewed the level of parish and town council membership for Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey in response to the current and forecast electorate within each of the areas within the scope of the review in addition to the changes anticipated through the amendment of the external Chatteris/ Manea parish boundary and the parish warding amendments with Chatteris and Whittlesey. The proposal recommends no change from the current level of total membership, although the number of members allocated across the town will be subject to electoral equality.
- 4.8 The review formally started on 15 January 2014 with the publication of the Terms of Reference available from www.fenland.gov.uk The draft proposals in this document will be open to consultation until 12 July 2014, 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 July 2014. 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 affect from the 2015 elections.
- 4.9 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.

5 The parishes of Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey.

5.1 The present parish of Manea contains 1623 electors and 9 councillors. The parish contains the village of Manea which is the focus of the parish, the village is self-sufficient with local shops, a public house, village hall, a Royal British Legion Hall, a village school and a local train station, the train station tends to facilitate movement from surrounding rural properties into the village. The parish also encompasses a sparsely populated surrounding rural area. The current north and eastern parish boundary is provided by the external Fenland District boundary and the southern boundary is currently provided by the external Chatteris parish boundary which is also the northern boundary of the Birch ward of Chatteris. Manea parish and ward boundaries are currently entirely coterminous. In May 2015 the northern boundary of Birch ward will be changing, this change has arisen from the recent LGBCE electoral review. The North eastern boundary of Birch ward is moving further south and will be provided by the town bypass the A142. In addition the southern boundary of Manea district ward is also changing, the new district ward boundary will be the A142 to the Forty Foot Drain where it joins back to the A141. As a result the new district ward will encompass the rural properties along the route from Manea to A142 via Horseway and all the properties accessed from the A142. The change will

result in 114 electors transferring from the District ward of Birch, Chatteris into Manea district ward. This change will result in those 114 electors being eligible to vote in a Manea district council election and conversely a Chatteris town council election. This is an anomaly which appears to defy the objective of convenient and effective local government whilst also contradicting the principal of maintaining local communities.

5.2 Chatteris parish contains 8177 electors and 12 Town Councillors. The town will return seven parish wards as of May 2015. The new parish wards, the associated electorate figures and associated town councillor representation are outlined below:

Chatteris Parish wards	Electorate	Number of Town Councillors
Birch	1909	2
Curf	149	1
Curlew	264	1
How Fen	114	1
Slade Lode	1773	2
The Mills	2220	2
Wenneye	1748	3

- 5.3 The new parish wards will result in a significant variance in relation to the ratio of electors to town councillors. Electoral equality is a key consideration for the review as is effective and convenient local government, whilst also ensuring that any warding arrangements are reflective of local communities.
- 5.4 As outlined above the north eastern boundary of Birch ward is moving south and will be provided by the A142. Whilst this is the case at a district level those changes have not been reflected at a parish ward level which the CGR seeks to address.
- 5.5 Whittlesey Parish contains 13715 electors represented by 14 town councillors. The town will return eight parish wards as of May 2015. The new parish wards, their electorate figures and associated town councillor representation are outlined below:

Whittlesey Parish Wards	Electorate	Number of town councillors
Bassenhally	2110	3
Coates and Eastrea	2638	3
Delph	967	1
Elm	788	1
Lattersey	2166	2
St Andrews	1285	1
St Marys	832	1
Stonald	2073	2

5.6 Similarly to Chatteris, the changes resulting from the recent LGBCE electoral review will result in significant variation in Whittlesey in relation to the ratio of electors to town councillors across the parish wards. The new parish warding arrangements are not reflective of the new district ward boundaries in the area.

6 Proposed Changes to Parish ward boundaries

6.1 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 of this co-terminosity is in the best interests of effective and convenient local

government for the residents in Chatteris, Manea and Whittlesey. In relation to the Manea/Chatteris parish boundaries for those residents to be in one parish ward but a different district ward may result in confusion.

6.2 Chatteris/ Manea Parish Boundary - Proposal one

6.2.1FDC proposes that the parish boundary between Chatteris and Manea parishes be amended to follow the new district ward boundary introduced by the recent electoral review of district wards. Therefore, moving the How Fen warded parish of Chatteris Town to Manea Parish. The area under review is shown in Appendix 2 map 3. Whilst it is appreciated that the geographical changes to Manea parish appears substantial, this change will affect 114 electors. As such whilst the size of Manea parish will increase we do not believe that it is significant enough to warrant any increase in the number of parish councillors representing Manea. This change does not include any assets as no existing community assets are located in the area proposed to be transferred into the boundary of Manea parish. We believe this reflects local communities of interest and also ensure effective and convenient local government.

6.3 Chatteris parish wards - Proposal two

6.3.1 FDC proposes that the new parish wards be amended to reflect the new district wards across the town, which were introduced by the recent LGBCE electoral review. The areas under review are shown in Appendix 2 maps 1, 2, and 3. Whilst Chatteris parish will transfer 114 electors across to Manea via How Fen moving to Manea Parish this reduction in electorate is not significant enough to warrant any reduction in the level of town councillor representation and therefore it is proposed that Chatteris Town Council returns 12 Councillors, with each of the proposed parish wards being represented by three town councillors. In summary this will result in Curf parish ward moving into Slade Lode parish ward and being named Slade Lode. Curlew parish ward will move into Birch parish ward and be named Birch and as outlined above How Fen parish ward will move into Manea parish and be named Manea. We believe the proposals for Chatteris ensure that local communities are maintained and that effective and convenient local government is achieved, whilst also enabling electoral equality.

6.4 Whittlesey Parish Wards - Proposal three

6.4.1 FDC proposes that the new parish wards be amended to reflect the new district wards across the town, which was introduced by the recent LGBCE electoral review. The areas under review are shown in Appendix 2 maps 4 and 5. This will result in the town returning seven parish wards represented by 14 town councillors. In summary this will result in Elm and Delph parish wards moving into Bassenhally parish ward and being named Bassenhally, which will return 5 town councillors. St Marys parish ward will move into St Andrews parish ward and be named St Andrews and St Marys, which will return 2 town councillors. The remaining newly defined parish wards and level of representation will remain unchanged. We believe the proposals for Whittlesey ensure that local communities are maintained and that effective and convenient local government is achieved, whilst also enabling electoral equality.

7 Next Steps

Action	Timetable	Outline of action
Draft proposals are	By 28 April	Draft proposals to be considered by Council on 9 May 2014

prepared	2014	
Publish Draft Proposals	By 12 May 2014	District Council publishes Draft Proposals and commences formal consultation upon them.
Consultation	Two Month period ending 12 July 2014	District Council undertakes a full consultation with stakeholders.
Final Proposals are prepared	By 15 July 2014	District Council considers results of consultation and prepares Final Proposals.
Final Proposals are published	15 July 2014	District Council publishes Final Proposals
Final Proposals are adopted by Council	24 July 2014	District Council considers Final Proposals and decide on the extent to which the Council will give effect to them
Council publishes the reorganisation order	thereafter	District Council publishes a reorganisation order and requests the Electoral Commission to approve any consequential changes.

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

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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 March, Whittlesey and Wisbech and the Chatteris Community Hub.

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

Date of publication

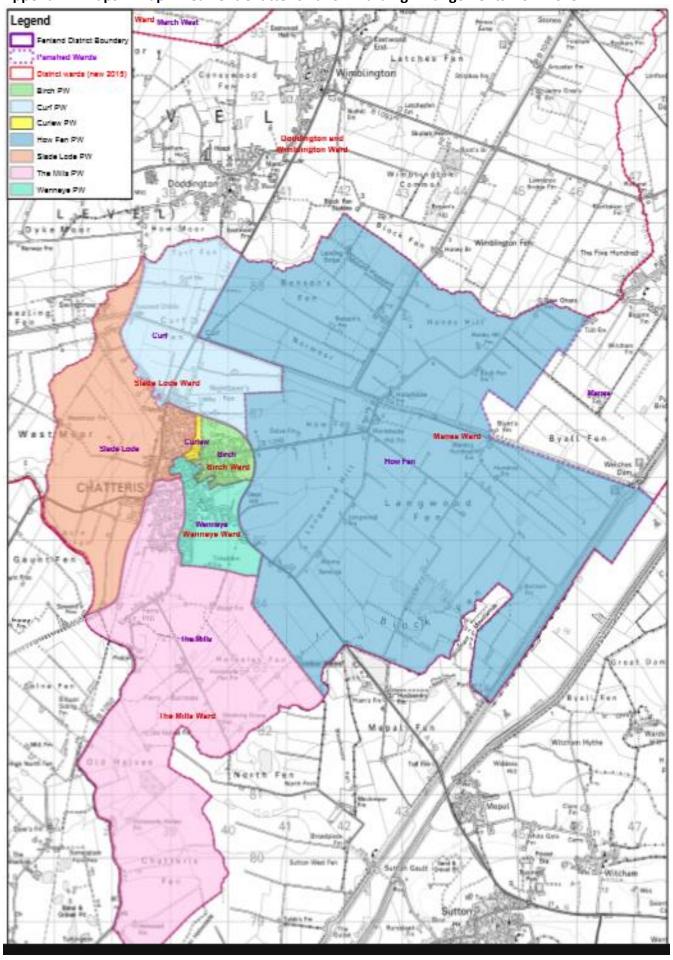
28 April 2014

Appendix 1 Consultation Submissions

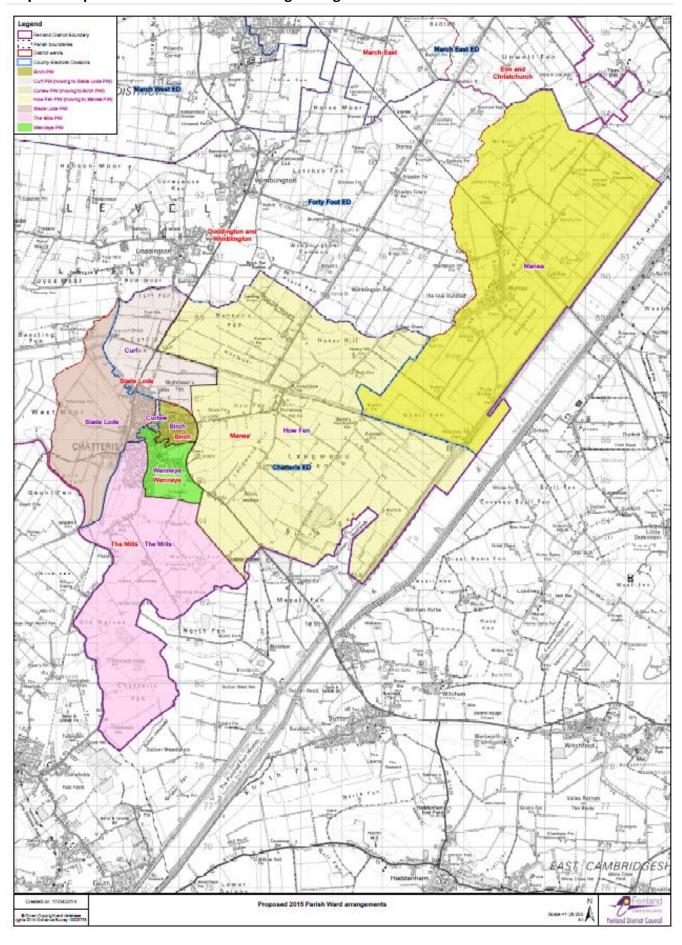
- 8.1Chatteris Town Council has stated clearly their opposition to the creation of seven parish wards within the town, they support the view that there should continue to be four wards within the parish each represented by three town councillors (as at present). Making a total of twelve councillors. They also support the re-alignment of parish ward boundaries with district ward boundaries in the area, with the exception of the external boundary between Chatteris and Manea parish. Chatteris Town Council support that Birch parish ward should extend to encompass How Fen parish ward as it believe this arrangement is more reflective of the community in the area.
- 8.2 Manea Parish Council supports the need to achieve co-terminosity between parish and district ward boundaries. They are aware that such co-terminosity would increase the geographical area of Manea parish by taking in a part of the existing Birch ward of Chatteris, and recognise this will already be the case in relation to the revised Manea district ward with effect from May 2015. Manea Parish Council can see that if no changes are made to parish boundaries these electors would be Manea voters for the purposes of the district council elections but Chatteris voters for the town/ parish elections and there would be no logic to such a situation as it would likely result in confusion and inconvenience as well as affecting residents sense of belonging to an area.
- 8.3 Whittlesey Town Council is strongly of the opinion that their views were not reflected in the final LGBCE electoral review recommendations. They do not believe the warding arrangements which will be taking effect in 2015 are reflective of the local communities. It is their opinion that the current warding system works effectively. 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 take effect in 2015. Whittlesey Town Council are also opposed to the creation of the additional parish wards in the town and also believe the proposed name of Elm parish ward will lead to the area being confused with the district ward of the same name which is in a different area of the district and encompasses the village of Elm. The town council believe that the expected growth in the area is set to exceed the 5 year forecast, which will therefore cause further electoral inequality and result in the requirement for a further electoral review by the LGBCE. The town council supports the need for co-terminosity between parish and district ward boundaries.
- 8.4North East Cambridgeshire Conservative Association expressed concern regarding the new warding arrangements to take effect in May 2015 as finalised by LGBCE and believe they will have a detrimental effect on effective local government in Chatteris and Whittlesey and support the submissions of the town councils in the area.
- 8.5Peter Wilson a Chatteris resident confirmed that the population of Chatteris had increased during the past ten years and will increase even more during the next ten years however he can see no reason to change the parish boundaries in the area. He believes town Councillors do a good job and are available when required. He believes money to conduct a review could be better spend on the provision of local services in the area.
- 8.6Mr and Mrs Angood both of whom are Chatteris residents, object that they will become residents of Manea District ward, and potentially Manea Parish as a result of the CGR. They consider themselves to be part of the Chatteris population and have no affiliation with Manea. Their association with Manea is however unavoidable as the LGBCE have finalised that these residents will be a part of the Manea

district ward from the 2015 local elections. They have proposed a revised boundary to represent the external boundary between Manea and Chatteris parishes which they believe is more representative of the natural boundary with Chatteris.

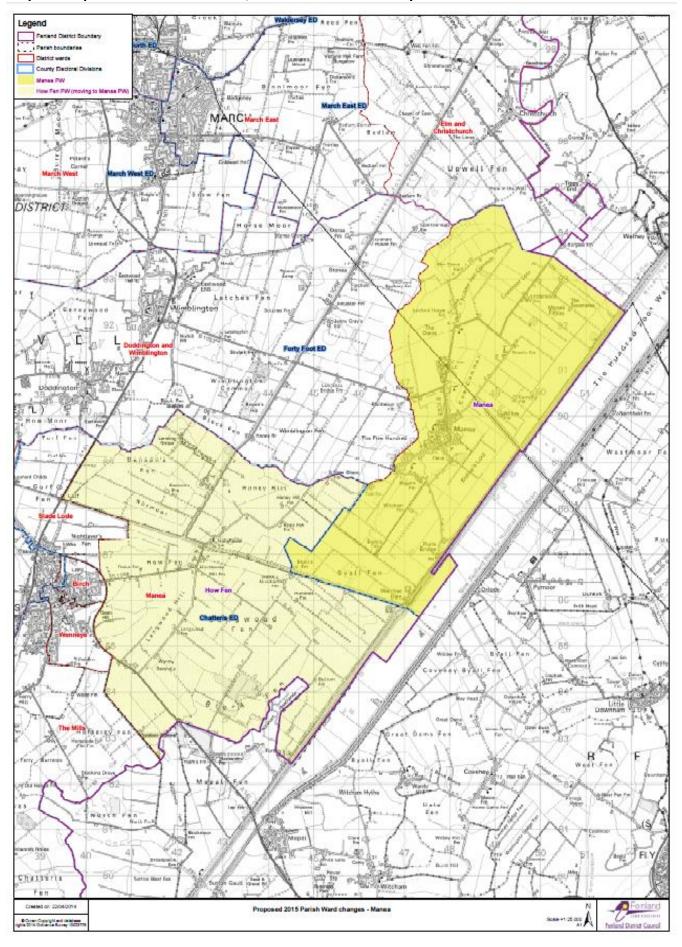
Appendix 2 Maps - Map 1 - Current Chatteris Parish Warding Arrangements from 2015



Map 2 - Proposed Chatteris Parish Warding Arrangements from 2015



Map 3 - Proposed external Chatteris/ Manea Parish Boundary



Map 4 - Current Whittlesey Parish Warding Arrangements from 2015

