

SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE ELECTORAL DIVISIONS

I am writing with particular reference to the new two-member divisions, which will create vast areas without natural community links. By their size and high populations, they will compromise effective local representation.

I am the county councillor for the Queen Edith's division, which you propose to merge with Trumpington, part of Cambridge City constituency and I object to the merger on the following grounds:

The new division would straddle two parliamentary constituencies, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. It would have two Members of Parliament, which is confusing for the electorate. The new division would have eight councillors but each voter would only be represented by half of them. This is in addition to it straddling two policing areas (south and east Cambridge neighbourhood policing teams).

The population is c 16,000 on current projections – a huge number of people for a councillor to cover effectively, and it spans about a third of the city of Cambridge. Although two councillors might divide the division geographically between themselves, effective co-operation would depend on their both being from the same political party. If the councillors were not able to work together they would have twice the workload of most other county councillors, and it would be yet more arduous for an independent candidate. This creates a democratic deficit for people living in such divisions.

The proposal precludes co-terminosity between the county council division and the city council ward, as at present. This is because the Boundary Commission's own guidelines set a maximum number of members per ward, and would not allow six city councillors for one big division – so Queen Edith's and Trumpington would be separate for city council elections, yet joint for county council elections.

The two areas don't have natural community links: there is little crossover for schools, churches or other community facilities, and transport links between the two wards are poor. The division would be divided by a railway line. This breaches the Commission's guiding principle to 'reflect local community interests and identities'.

The strong preference for single-member divisions has been supported by all five political groups in Cambridgeshire, as well as by the County Council collectively, and by several residents' associations and individuals.

It is not clear why the Commission needs to join Queen Edith's and Trumpington, as it would be a simple matter to draw a line down the middle, for example down Hills Road, where the boundary was before the last boundary changes. A division has been proposed as part of the consultation, which can be viewed at https://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/27347/Complete-A-L.pdf.

Amanda J Taylor
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