



Democratic Renewal Working Party 24 November 2011

Consultation on the Proposal to Amend Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

1. Background

1.1 The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is consulting on the 2013 Review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries. The Working Party's Terms of Reference include advising the Council on electoral matters so the Working Party is invited to formulate a response to this consultation to recommend to full Council.

1.2 Attached are maps showing the initial proposals made by the BCE as follows:-

- Appendix A: Bury St Edmunds;
- Appendix B: South Suffolk; and
- Appendix C: West Suffolk.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that:-

- (1) the Working Party notes the proposed changes; and
- (2) the Working Party consider a draft response based on Section 4 of Report C239.

3. The proposals being consulted on

3.1 The 2013 Review of Parliamentary constituency boundaries will introduce substantial changes. It will reduce the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 502 and make sure that each constituency has a similar number of registered electors. The rules in the legislation¹ state that every constituency in England (except two covering the Isle of Wight) must have an electorate of between 72,810 and 80,473, that is 5% either side of the electoral quota of 76,641. The legislation also states that when deciding on boundaries, the Commission may also take into account:-

- (a) special geographical considerations, including the size, shape and accessibility of a constituency;
- (b) local government boundaries as they existed on 6 May 2010;

¹ The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011

- (c) boundaries of existing constituencies; and
 - (d) any local ties that would be broken by changes in constituencies.
- 3.2 It is essential to understand that none of the factors mentioned in the list above overrides the necessity to achieve an electorate in each constituency that is within the range allowed.
- 3.3 The Eastern Region has been allocated 56 constituencies, a reduction of two from the current arrangement. The proposals leave nine of the 58 existing constituencies unchanged; five of these are in Suffolk. However, it has not been possible to allocate whole numbers of constituencies to individual counties or unitary authorities and so the BCE have grouped these into sub-regions. The number of constituencies allocated to each sub-region is determined by the electorate of the combined local authorities. Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk form one of these sub-regions with the proposed allocation of constituencies remaining at 23 (as at current).
- 3.4 The electorate of the existing Bury St Edmunds constituency is currently 85,933 and, therefore, needs reducing. The BCE is proposing to make minor changes to three of the seven existing constituencies in order to achieve this. The proposals affecting the Bury St Edmunds constituency are as follows:-
- (a) move three wards of the District of Mid Suffolk (Badwell Ash, Gislingham and Rickinghall and Walsham) to the proposed West Suffolk constituency; and
 - (b) move one ward of the Borough of St Edmundsbury (Pakenham) to the proposed West Suffolk constituency.
- 3.5 To compensate for the impact of these changes on the West Suffolk constituency, the BCE are proposing that the electors from the town of Newmarket be removed from constituency and combined with the District of East Cambridgeshire. Crossing over a county boundary in this way is almost inevitable given the need to standardise the number of electors and reduce the number of constituencies.
- 3.6 More detailed information, including maps regarding the review can be found at Reception in Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds, and also at:
- www.consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/whats-proposed/eastern
- Alternatively, you can follow the link from the homepage on our website. Copies of the maps will be available to consult at the meeting of the Working Party.
- 3.7 Appendix D gives a summary of the constituencies in Suffolk (and East Cambridgeshire). The table shows that we will 'give away' electors to West Suffolk (Forest Heath District Council) and South Suffolk (Babergh District Council) constituencies and 'take on' electors from Mid Suffolk District Council. From an administrative perspective this is not very different from the current situation so does not present any particular practical implications for officers.

3.8 Usually the Returning Officer for the authority that has the largest proportion of electors in a constituency is responsible for that constituency. The table at Appendix 1 shows that St Edmundsbury has the largest number of electors for the West Suffolk constituency and that Mid Suffolk District Council has the largest number of electors for the Bury St Edmunds constituency. There was a similar situation following the last review carried out by BCE but at that time the Chief Executives of Suffolk proposed that, as there were 7 constituencies and 7 Returning Officers, each Returning Officer should be responsible for 1 constituency. It is anticipated that a similar discussion would take place following any decision to amend the constituencies.

4. How to respond

4.1 When considering a response the BCE ask that the tight constraints placed upon them by Parliament are taken into account as follows:-

- (a) constituencies cannot be recommended that are more or less than 5% from the electoral quota;
- (b) the initial proposals have been based on local government ward boundaries as at May 2010; and
- (c) constituencies have been constructed within regions.

4.2 Responses can be made in writing (by e-mail, letter or through the website) or in person at one of a series of public hearings. These are being held as follows:

City/town	Location	Dates
Colchester	Town Hall, Colchester, CO1 1PJ	Monday 31 October – Tuesday 1 November 2011
Norwich	Norwich City Hall, St Peter's Street, Norwich NR2 1NH	Thursday 3 – Friday 4 November 2011
Luton	Town Hall, Luton, LU1 2BQ	Monday 7 – Tuesday 8 November 2011
Cambridge	Best Western Gonville Hotel, Gonville Place, Cambridge CB1 1LY	Thursday 10 – Friday 11 November 2011

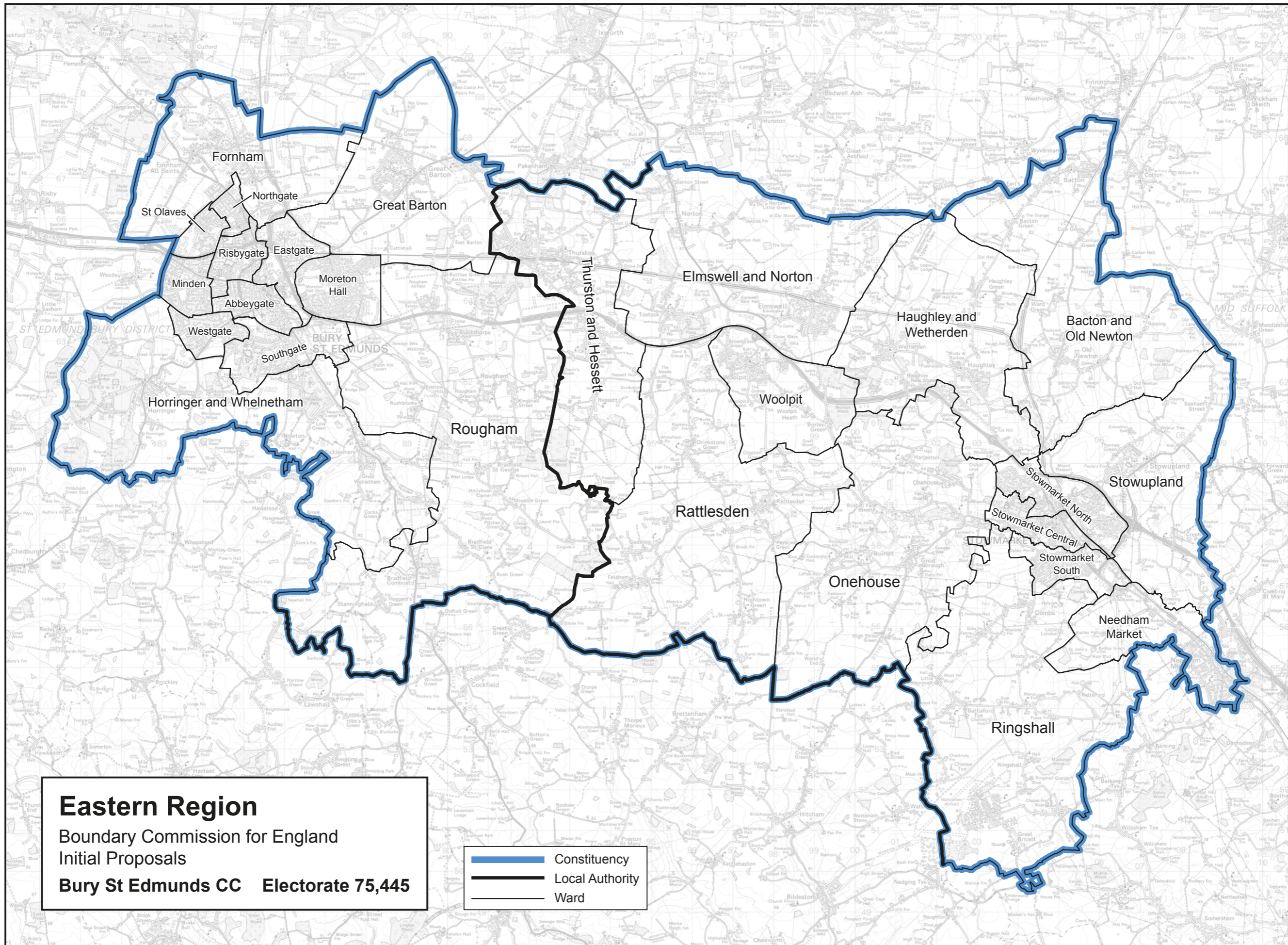
4.3 The following questions are being asked:-

- (a) Do you agree in full, in part or not at all with our initial proposals for the Eastern region?;
- (b) Which sub-regions do you agree with and why?;
- (c) Which sub-regions do you disagree with and why?; and
- (d) What are your alternatives for areas you disagree with that meet the statutory rules?

- 4.4 It is important to recognise that any objection to the shape of one constituency must take account of the knock-on impact of rejecting a change, or proposing a different arrangement, on the sub-region and region. It is clear that there are no easy answers to re-drawing boundaries.

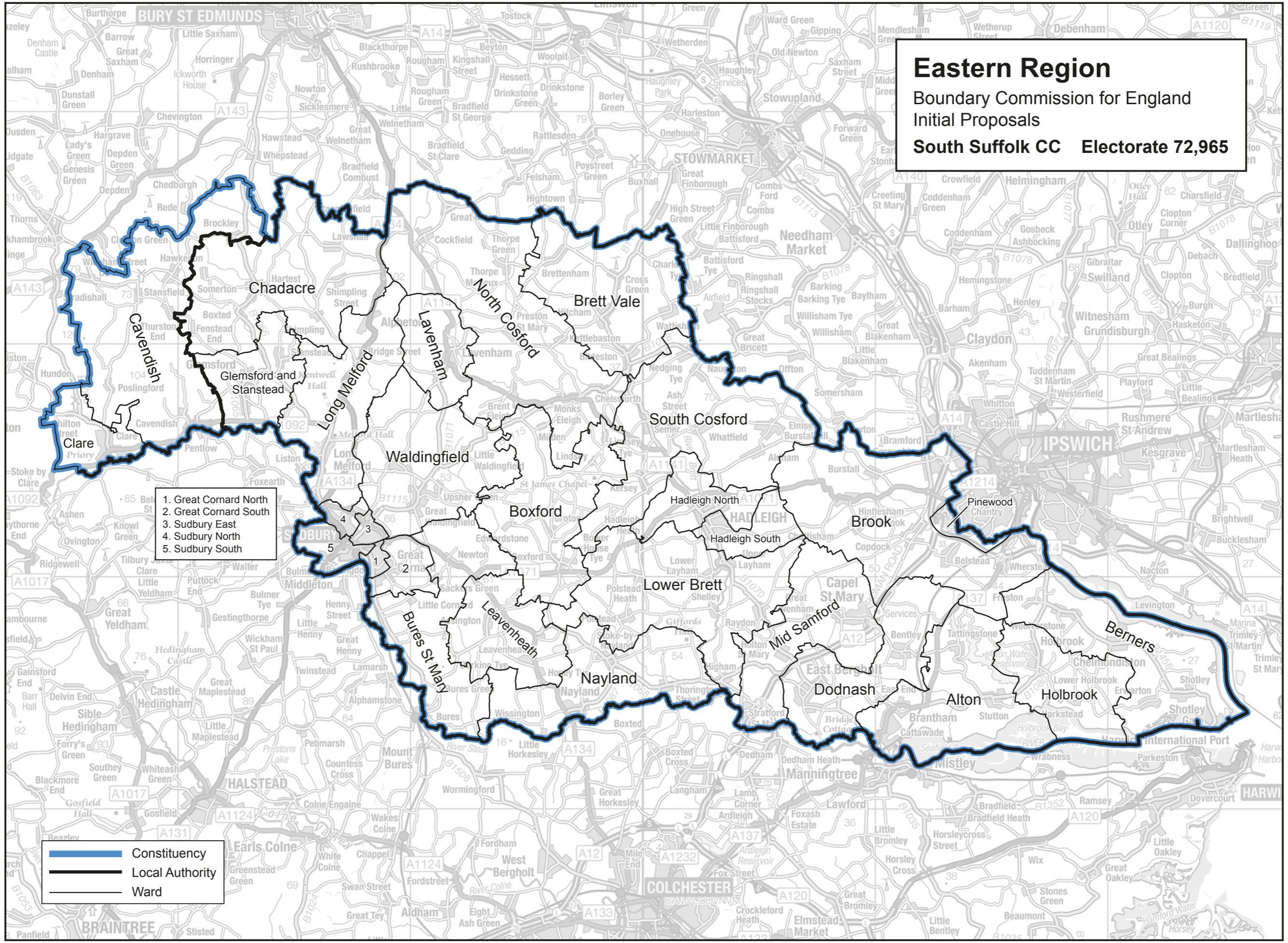
For further information and background papers contact
Fiona Osman, Electoral Services Manager,
Telephone: (01284) 757105 or fiona.osman@stedsbc.gov.uk

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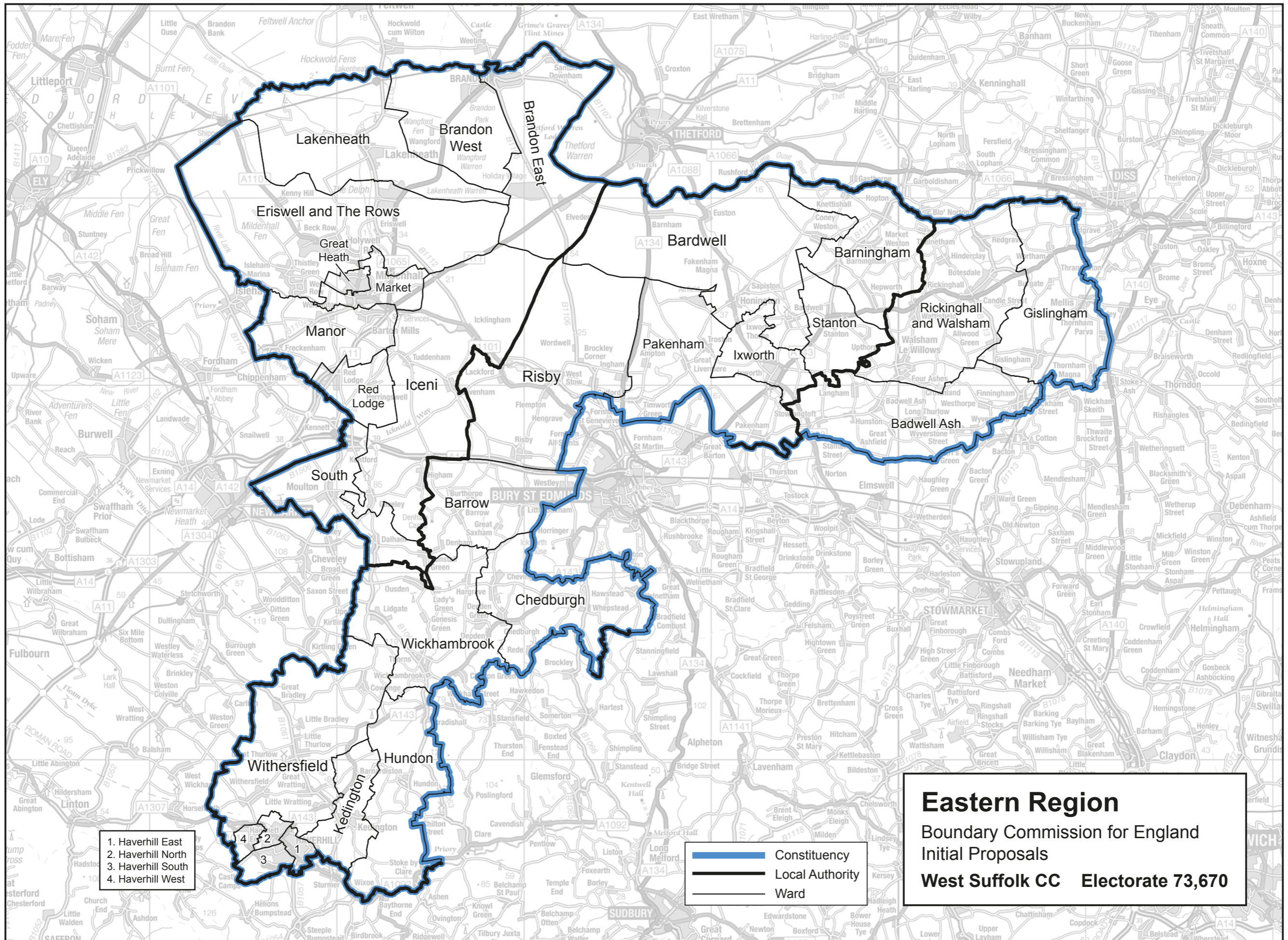
Eastern Region
 Boundary Commission for England
 Initial Proposals
South Suffolk CC Electorate 72,965



1. Great Cornard North
2. Great Cornard South
3. Sudbury East
4. Sudbury North
5. Sudbury South

— Constituency
 — Local Authority
 — Ward

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- 1. Haverhill East
- 2. Haverhill North
- 3. Haverhill South
- 4. Haverhill West

Eastern Region
 Boundary Commission for England
 Initial Proposals
West Suffolk CC Electorate 73,670

— Constituency
 — Local Authority
 - - - Ward

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Summary of Constituencies in Suffolk (and East Cambridgeshire)

Local Authorities	Constituencies								Total
	Bury St Edmunds	Central Suffolk & N Ipswich	Ipswich	South Suffolk	Suffolk Coastal	Waveney	West Suffolk	Newmarket & Ely	
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	36,965			3,356			41,087		81,408
Mid Suffolk District Council	38,480	29,215					7,975		75,670
Ipswich Borough Council		17,946	75,195						93,141
Babergh District Council				69,609					69,609
Suffolk Coastal District Council		29,016			66,484				95,500
Waveney District Council					10,448	79,132			89,580
Forest Heath District Council							24,608	12,976	37,584
East Cambs District Council								61,073	61,073
Total	75,445	76,177	75,195	72,965	76,932	79,132	73,670	74,049	

The electorate figures in red show the larger proportion of the electorate in each constituency