



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Civic Affairs Committee Annual Report 2016/17

WHAT IS THE CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE?

The Civic Affairs Committee, which held its inaugural meeting in September 2012, was set up following the amalgamation of three Committees:

- The Constitution Review Working Party,
- The Electoral Arrangements Committee; and the
- The Standards Committee.

The responsibilities of the Committee can therefore be divided into three sections.

Reviewing the Constitution

- Brings forward proposed substantive changes to the Constitution for consideration by the Council.

Code of Conduct

- Promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members.
- Assists the councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Advises the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Monitors the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Receives the investigation report of the Investigating Officer on any matter which had been referred by the Monitoring Officer for investigation.
- Maintains an overview of dispensations granted to councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct.
- Receives reports from time to time from the Monitoring Officer concerning the operation of Members' Code of Conduct and in respect of his/her statutory functions under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
- Monitors the contents of and requirements for all codes, protocols and other procedures relating to standards of conduct throughout the Council, including the Member-Officer Relations Protocol and the Officer Code of Conduct.
- Maintains an overview of the Council's 'whistle-blowing' policy.

Electoral and Governance Arrangements

- Reviews District or Parish electoral arrangements including boundaries and makes recommendations to Council.
- Gives parish meetings the powers of a parish council.
- Can increase or reduce the number of parish councillors on a parish council.
- Changes parish electoral arrangements where agreed, including parish wardings.
- Recommends district and ward boundary changes arising from a review.
- Recommends a Periodic Electoral Review.
- Recommends the establishment of a new parish council.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DURING 2016/17

Chairman: Councillor Sue Ellington
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Charles Nightingale
Councillors:
David Bard
Nigel Cathcart
Simon Crocker
Janet Lockwood
David McCraith
Deborah Roberts
Bridget Smith
Peter Topping
Bunty Waters

The following Councillors appeared as substitutes during the year:
Ray Manning

MATTERS CONSIDERED BY THE CIVIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE DURING 2016/17

Filming at public meetings (July's meeting)

The Committee discussed the merits of recording its public meetings, but noted that the Executive were ultimately responsible for this matter. The views of the members of the Committee were forwarded to the Executive.

Councillors asking questions at Council without notice (July's and March's Meetings)

The Committee considered the six month trial of allowing councillors to ask questions at Council without providing prior notice of the question. The trial period was extended for a further six months at July's meeting and then at its meeting in March. The Committee unanimously recommended that Council amend the constitution and make this provision permanent. Council will consider this recommendation at its meeting on 25 May 2017.

Community Governance Review of Haslingfield Parish Council (July's and December's meetings)

The Committee considered the first phase of the Community Governance Review of Haslingfield Parish Council at its meeting in July, where it agreed to consult on the creation of a new parish council. At its meeting in December it recommended to Council that a new parish council be set up, with the name of South Trumpington. This recommendation was agreed by Council at its meeting on 26 January 2017.

Willingham and Over Parish Boundary Review (July's and December's meetings)

Following the receipt of a petition the Committee agreed to go out to public consultation on this boundary review at December's meeting. The Committee is due to consider the results of the review at its meeting on 28 September 2017.

Parliamentary and District Boundary Reviews (July's Meeting)

Following its extensive work in 2015/16 the Committee were please to note that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England had essentially accepted the Council's recommendations regarding the District Boundary Review. The Committee also noted that the parliamentary ward boundaries were also being reviewed and that these would not be constrained by the existing local council boundaries.

Community Governance Review of Cambourne Parish Council (December's meeting)

The Civic Affairs Committee agreed to start a public consultation on the proposed increase of Cambourne Parish Council from 13 to 19 members.

Setting up of a Devolution Sub-Group (December's meeting)

The Committee agreed to set up a four member Sub-Group to suggest the wording of a protocol on devolution for inclusion in the Council's constitution.

Community Governance Review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne (March's meeting)

The Committee agreed the terms of reference for undertaking a Community Governance Review of the parishes of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne, which was necessitated by the proposed development called Cambourne West.