

REPORT TO: Civic Affairs Committee

4 September 2018

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick Community Governance Review

Purpose

1. To update the Committee with regards a proposed timetable for a Community Governance Review of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick, in relation to the new development of Northstowe.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Committee notes and comments upon the proposed timetable for a Community Governance Review of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick.

Background

4. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("the 2007 Act") provides for a Principal Council to conduct a review of the community governance arrangements for the whole or part of its area for the purpose of considering whether or not to make any changes to parish boundaries or size, and/or the creation of new parishes; and the review of the electoral arrangements for new and/or existing parishes. Section 93 of the 2007 Act allows principal councils to decide how to undertake such a review, provided that they comply with the duties in the Act which apply to councils undertaking reviews. If, following a review, the Council decides that changes should be made to the electoral arrangements they may make an Order giving effect to the changes.
5. Section 93 also states that in reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parishes or parish wards, the principal council should take account of community identity and interests in the area and consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular boundaries. Principal councils should seek views on such matters during the course of a community governance review and seek sound and demonstrable evidence of such identities and linkage.
6. The guidance states that when considering parish and parish ward boundaries the principal council should ensure they consider the desirability of fixing boundaries which are, and will remain, easily identifiable, as well as taking into account any local ties which will be broken by the fixing of any particular boundaries. A review offers an opportunity to put in place strong-clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features, and remove anomalous parish boundaries.
7. Civic Affairs Committee has authority to recommend a decision to Council following conclusion of a review.

Considerations

8. Civic Affairs Committee has been discussing the potential for instigating a Community Governance Review (CGR) of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick since at least 2015. Any review would seek to ensure that arrangements continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local governance given the new development of Northstowe.
9. The current electorate for Longstanton is 2,621 (June 2018). Phases One and Two are within the parish of Longstanton. Phase One comprises permission for 1,500 dwellings and Phase Two comprises permission for 3,500 dwellings.
10. The current electorate for Oakington and Westwick is 1,194 (June 2018). Phase Three of Northstowe will be in the parishes of Oakington and Westwick and Longstanton. Planning permission for Phase Three has not yet been granted, however, the part of Phase Three in Oakington and Westwick is allocated within the existing Local Plan and the part in Longstanton is allocated in the emerging Local Plan. Phase Three will include 5,000 dwellings.
11. There are currently 163 occupations at Northstowe (2 August 2018).
12. An informal briefing was given to members of Longstanton Parish Council on 15 November 2017 at their request. The briefing set out the CGR process. Officers have been invited to attend Oakington and Westwick Parish Council in November 2018.
13. Following the briefing with members of Longstanton Parish Council and consideration of the process at its meeting on 8 January 2018, the parish clerk emailed the Council (see Appendix A) to request that a Community Governance Review not be carried out until summer 2019 “to allow additional natural growth of the population of Northstowe”. The Parish Council stated that

“With more residents in Northstowe, this will provide a wider range of opinion when the Community Governance Review goes to referendum (currently it would be biased to Longstanton residents) and in the meantime, LPC will encourage residents of Northstowe to join LPC to gain experience in time for when the review comes to a conclusion.”

It had been the intention of officers to recommend instigating a CGR during the summer of 2018, subject to prior consultation with the parish councils, seeking their views. Based on the reasons given, officers are in support the request from Longstanton Parish Council.

14. Given discussions to date, the following timetable for a review is suggested:

| DRAFT Timetable for Community Governance Review | |
|---|--------------------|
| Terms of Reference are published | Autumn 2019 |
| Local briefings and meetings | Autumn 2019 |
| Initial submissions invited | Winter 2019/2020 |
| Consideration of submissions received, draft recommendations prepared and | Winter/Spring 2020 |

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| considered by Civic Affairs Committee | |
| Draft recommendations published and consulted upon | Spring 2020 |
| Consideration of submissions, final recommendations prepared and consideration by Civic Affairs Committee | Summer 2020 |
| Final recommendations published (conclusion of the review) and decision by Council | Summer/Autumn 2020 |
| Council can make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order | |

A final timetable would be agreed with the relevant parish councils.

15. The Principal Council is required to determine the terms of reference under which a community governance review is to be undertaken. The terms of reference must clearly specify the area under review and must be published. The guidance states that “Ultimately, the recommendations made in a community governance review ought to bring about improved community engagement, better local democracy and result in more effective and convenient delivery of local services”.

Options

16. To note and comment upon the proposed timetable for a Community Governance Review of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick.

Implications

17. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Legal

18. Should it be agreed to progress a CGR of the parishes of Longstanton and Oakington and Westwick, the terms of reference will consider the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, published in 2010, which reflects Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972, Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010, and the following regulations which guide, in particular, consequential matters arising from the Review: Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI2008/625). (The 2007 Act transferred powers to the principal councils which previously, under the Local Government Act 1997, had been shared with the Electoral Commission’s Boundary Committee for England.)

Staffing

19. Staff time will be needed to carry out a review. This will need to be programmed into work plans and balanced with other priorities. The time will be spent consulting

interested parties, taking account of any representations received and reporting back to the Committee.

Consultation responses

20. Consultation has taken place with Longstanton Parish Council and is planned with Oakington and Westwick Parish Council (see paragraphs 12–13).

Effect on Strategic Aims

21. Appropriate community governance arrangements will help the Council to sustain existing successful, vibrant villages; helping to achieve our vision to deliver superb quality of life for our residents, and remain the best place to live, work, and study in the country.

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