

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Electoral Arrangements Committee 8th July 2008
AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive/Principal Solicitor

PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Purpose

1. To report to Members on the outcome of the consultation with Parish Councils following the resolution of the Electoral Arrangements Committee on 16th April 2008; to update Members on the latest information about the impact of a change in the District/City boundary on the housing targets for South Cambridgeshire District; and to advise Members of the likely timetable for a boundary review as indicated by the Boundary Committee. To seek a recommendation to Council for its meeting on 17th July 2008.
2. This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of the District as it affects many of the wards whose boundaries are adjacent to the boundary of the City Council.

Background

3. In October 2007 Council authorised the Chief Executive to enter into discussions with the Chief Executive of Cambridge City Council regarding a District / City boundary review, on the basis that such discussions were to have due regard to the needs of parishes likely to be affected by any such review. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 permits principal authorities, of which SCDC is one, to request the Boundary Committee to undertake administrative boundary reviews. Such requests can be unilateral or made jointly by neighbouring authorities.
4. A report was brought to the April meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee outlining a proposal which had been drawn up following those discussions. The proposals are shown on the attached plan (**Appendix 1**) and were described in the report to the April meeting of this Committee. That report outlined the rationale behind the proposals. At the April meeting following representations from several Parish Councils and some local Members, the Committee decided that all Parish Councils in the district would be asked for their views on the proposals.
5. Cambridge City Council at a meeting of Council on 16th April 2008 resolved to submit the boundary review proposals to the Boundary Committee.
6. Members will recall that paragraph 10 of the last report to this Committee referred to the need for Council to have additional information on the implications of any boundary change on the Regional Housing Targets within the Regional Spatial Strategy ('RSS' also known as 'The East of England Plan') for SCDC before proceeding. A copy of the Chief Executive's letter of 2nd April 2008 and a copy of the reply from GO EAST dated 2nd June 2008 are attached (**Appendix 2 and 3** respectively).

Consultation

7. A copy of the letter sent to all Parish Clerks by the Chief Executive on 29th May 2008 is attached to this report (**Appendix 4**). At the request of some local Members, and to assist Parish Councils in canvassing the views of the residents within their area, the District Council worked with some Parishes to produce leaflets for distribution within those Parishes where residents who are currently residing with South Cambridgeshire District would, if the proposals were ultimately implemented, become residents of the City of Cambridge. Unfortunately this took longer than expected and this resulted in a delay in sending out the letters to all Parish Councils. Officers sent leaflets to Impington Parish Council; Fen Ditton Parish Council; Fulbourn Parish Council; Teversham Parish Council and Gt. Shelford Parish Council.
8. Officers collated responses sent in by residents and forwarded them on to the Parish Councils. Parish Councils were asked to respond by 27th June. As at 30th June the Chief Executive had received responses from 11 Parish Councils. A list and summary of those responses is contained in the document attached hereto. (**Appendix 5**). Impington, Milton, Hauxton, Harston and Fen Ditton Parish Councils have indicated support in part for the proposals drawn up with the City Council. Impington Parish Council also supports the further proposal put forward by Milton Parish Council that additional land at Chesterton Fen and the Science Park be transferred to the City (see para 14 below). Land to the west of the B1049 is not under consideration in the context of a review at this time by the District or City Councils. The proposals as they stand will cure the anomaly of 'Milton detached'.
9. Hauxton Parish Council would prefer to see the City boundary run alongside the new developments rather than adjacent to the M11. Hauxton PC also endorse the views of Harston Parish Council who state that there is no merit to be gained in carrying out a large and costly boundary review at this time as the only matters that require urgent attention are the realignment of the City boundary to incorporate Trumpington Meadows and Clay Farm to avoid single developments coming under the control of two authorities, and any other developments around the City where similar circumstances could arise.
10. Babraham Parish Council made no comment and Hinxton Parish Council indicate they had no preference. Great and Little Chishill Parish Council are meeting on 30th June and their response and any other late responses will be reported to the Committee on 8th July.
11. Impington Parish Council and Great and Little Eversden Parish Council indicate that any decision to submit must be based on there being no adverse implications for the housing targets for the District.
12. Teversham Parish Council is against the proposals, as this would reduce the Parish area by two thirds. The majority of Teversham residents in the areas that would be affected, who responded to the leaflets, indicated that they were not in agreement with the proposals and would prefer to remain residents of South Cambridgeshire. (60 indicated they did not agree with the changes; 25 did agree and 4 said they did not have sufficient information to decide.) Fen Ditton Parish Council has responded with detailed consideration of various aspects of the boundary review proposals in their area.
13. As at the time of writing this report a response from Fulbourn Parish Council has not been received. Officers note that the majority of residents who responded to the

leaflet in the Fulbourn Parish area expressed agreement with the proposed changes to the boundary. (39 agree with the proposed changes; 28 disagree and 4 don't know.)

14. Local Members for Milton and Milton Parish Council carried out a separate consultation exercise on their suggestion that the additional areas of Chesterton Fen and the Science Park should be part of the City. They distributed 100 leaflets to residents and businesses in these areas. Of the 52 residents and businesses that responded, 24 indicated they would be happy to move, 5 were against and 23 indicated they had no preference.

Housing targets.

15. The response from GO East is very disappointing and gives no comfort to this authority regarding its obligations to provide the numbers of houses already allocated in the current RSS. The author of the response states that there is no mechanism, other than through the RSS, for reviewing planned housing numbers as a result of district boundary changes. The best information officers have currently is that the RSS is due for review commencing 2008 and is programmed to last for 3 years. Officers view this timescale as optimistic given their experience of preparation of the current RSS which was scheduled for 3 years but took 6 years to complete. The review of the RSS will be tackling a Cambridge sub-region review as well as consideration of the location of a large new settlement in the eastern region. Therefore, there is a risk, in the event that a joint submission is made for a boundary review, that the RSS will not be complete by the time such a review is completed and this authority will have to satisfy its housing target by development elsewhere in the District.

Process

16. In conducting a review, the Boundary Committee must have regard to: The need to secure effective and convenient local government; and the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities. A review is a three-stage process. Firstly, in conducting the review itself, the Committee must consult the councils of the areas to which the reviews relate, along with other interested councils, including parish councils, and other interested persons. The second stage is the publication of draft recommendations, followed by a period during which representations may be made. This is followed by the submission of final recommendations by the Committee to the Secretary of State. The Committee is not bound by any proposals submitted to it for consideration.
17. The Director of the Boundary Committee wrote to all Chief Executives of Principal Authorities in England on 12th June 2008 requesting whether their Council was considering an electoral or administrative boundary review, in order to facilitate planning the programme of work for the Boundary Committee for 2009 through to 2011. The Director has indicated to the Principal Solicitor that, should a joint submission be received, the likely start date is estimated to be late 2010. However, he cautioned that priority will be given to requests for electoral reviews required by those Councils wishing to move to all out elections and single member wards (another provision of the 2007 Act), so the estimated timeline given for an administrative boundary review may be subject to change.

Options

18. It would be open to the Council to pursue the proposals for a review in the hope that negotiations with central government will succeed in the meantime in allowing a change in the housing targets, to take account of the fringes growth around Cambridge moving into the City, ahead of the review of the RSS.
19. It would be possible for this Council to agree, in principle, to make the proposed submission SUBJECT TO further discussion and negotiation with central government on a review/reallocation of housing target numbers, outside the RSS review process, to confirm that there will be no disadvantage to the Council on a review of the boundary because of planned new housing targets transferring to the City.
20. Cambridge City Council has resolved to make the submission to the Boundary Committee without amendment. The process of full consultation, which the Boundary Committee would undertake, would allow for the Boundary Committee to consider the alternative detailed suggestions mooted by some of the Parishes on particular areas of the proposals drawn up with the City Council. However, officers are not supportive of a change to include the Science Park and Chesterton Fen for the following reasons:-
 - i) Cambridge Science Park is world-renowned and there is benefit to the District in retaining this within its boundary given the positive associations. In any event the basis for review is consideration of the best local governance arrangements for residential communities rather than the commercial sector.
 - ii) By using the A14 as the boundary line this may set a precedent for amending other areas of the proposals map. The focus of the review is community governance and not necessarily simply following man-made or natural boundary features at the exclusion of other considerations.
 - iii) In the event that business rates revert to local authority control in the future the loss of this commercial area would be detrimental to the District Council.
 - iv) Officers cannot recommend a proposal which would result in the loss of a valuable area to which travellers resort and which the Council has spent many years working with the traveller community to provide.

Implications

19.	Financial	The boundary changes would have an impact on the amount of Council Tax collected and Government Grant received by the Council, as the tax base and population levels of the district will change, leading to a lower level of funding being received. However, this loss of income will be offset by a reduction in costs and future pressures on the Council for delivering services. At this stage these are not quantifiable, however, financial modelling of the impact of growth on the District has begun, which will be used to assess the implications of the boundary changes to the Council.
	Legal	None

Staffing	None identified
Risk Management	None identified
Equal Opportunities	None identified

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

20.	Working in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future	The boundary review discussions with the City Council and Parish Councils are a good example of partnership working to address the impact of growth on the communities of South Cambridgeshire
	Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community	The proposed changes will allow the Council to focus on meeting the needs of the village communities
	Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work	The proposed changes to the boundary recognise the need to protect and enhance the setting of the necklace villages

Recommendation

21. That the Committee recommends to Council that Council agree, in principle, to the submission of a request for a review of the administrative boundary between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council, on the basis of the proposals outlined previously and shown on the attached plan, SUBJECT TO definitive assurances from central government that the housing targets fixed in the RSS will be readjusted to take account of the numbers of planned new housing going to the City as a result of a boundary review. In order to expedite matters, if appropriate, Council should be asked to give delegated authority to the Leader & Cabinet to determine the adequacy of any assurances that may be forthcoming & consequently the decision as to whether or not to submit the request.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

The October 2007 and April 2008 reports to the Electoral Arrangements Committee.
 Representations from Parish Councils and residents.
 Correspondence from GO East.

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