

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Electoral Arrangements Committee  
Council

7 July 2011

21 July 2011

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director – Corporate Services / Legal & Democratic Services  
Manager

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### WHITTLESFORD & DUXFORD WARD BOUNDARY REVIEW

#### Purpose

1. To report the outcome of the Community Governance Review (CGR) Consultation and to decide which option to take.
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 comprising two or more wards.

#### Options Available

3. The Electoral Arrangements Committee considered the following options and recommended **Option B** to Council:

Option A      Not to make an Application for a Related Alterations Order and maintain the status quo regarding ward boundaries.

Option B      To proceed with making an application to the LGBC (Local Government Boundary Commission) for a Related Alterations Order to come into force in May 2012. Prepare for a further election in Duxford in May 2012 on the assumption that a Related Alterations Order is granted.

Option C      Not to make an application in 2011 but to review after the May 2012 elections.

#### Recommendation

4. Council is recommended either to **CONFIRM OPTION B** or to **AGREE OPTION A** or **OPTION C** as the best way forward.

#### Reason for Recommendation

5. This is not a decision on which officers can make a recommendation, and is a matter which can be decided only by full Council.

#### Background

6. On 18 August 2010, the Council made an Order cited as the South Cambridgeshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2010 relating to the Parishes of Whittlesford and Duxford. The Order came into force on 1 September 2010 and had the effect of moving the Parish Boundary from its position along the centre of Royston Road and Station Road to a new position along the centre of the A505. The Order was made as part of a Community Governance Review conducted

by the Council under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 in which the residents, the parish councils and the county council were consulted on the proposed change.

7. On the instructions of the former Electoral Services Manager, an application was made to the LGBC on 13 September 2010 for a Related Alterations Order to align the ward boundary separating the wards of Whittlesford and Duxford with the new parish boundary. On 24 January 2011, the application was withdrawn on the advice of the Senior Lawyer because the Community Governance Review conducted last year did not include a proposal to alter the ward boundary and therefore had not been considered by the consultees. It is a legal requirement of the LGBC that evidence of such consultation must be produced before a Related Alterations Order can be made.
6. At its last meeting in April 2011, the Committee resolved to consult and re-consider by 1 October 2011 with a view to making an application to the LGBC for a Related Alterations Order. The LGBC had advised that an application would need to be lodged with them by October 2011 if an Order was required in time for May elections the following year.
7. On 16 May 2011, the Council wrote to the consultees listed below requesting responses by 5pm Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. A copy of the letter is with the background papers.
8. To the Occupiers of:  
Nos.1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12,14,16,18,20,24,26 Knights Orchard, Whittlesford, CB22 4AG  
Nos.83,85,88,89,90,91 Moorfield Road, Whittlesford, CB22 4PP  
Nos.1,2,3,4,5,6 Owls Close, Whittlesford, CB22 4PL  
Nos.1,3,5,7,9,11,15,17,19,21,23,25 Royston Road, Whittlesford, CB22 4NW  
Nos.2,2A,4,6,10,12,14,16,20,24,26,28,30,32,34,36,38 Station Road, Whittlesford, CB22 4NL  
Oast House Flat, 42 Station Road, Whittlesford, CB22 4NL  
Red Lion Hotel, Station Road, Whittlesford, CB22 4NL  
Nos.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,16,18,20 The Moraine, Whittlesford, CB22 4AH  
  
Mike Parker, Clerk to Duxford Parish Council, 2 Mill Lane, Duxford, CB22 4PT  
Ian Skellern, Clerk to Whittlesford Parish Council, Ash House, 1 Owls Close, Whittlesford, CB22 4PL  
Councillor Mick Martin, Wingsfold, 17a Hunts Road, Duxford, CB22 4RE  
Councillor Peter Topping, Reeds Cottage, 11 West End, Whittlesford, CB22 4LX  
Head of Legal Services, Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, CB3 0AP
9. The two responses below were received, both from Whittlesford residents. There was no response from any of the other consultees.

*(1) "Further to your letter of 16 May 2011, we would like to communicate our support for the proposed boundary change to bring them into line with the new parish boundaries.*

*We were wholly in support of the parish boundary change, largely for reasons of schooling for our children, as the journey is safer, quieter and more easily made on foot or by bike to the Whittlesford primary school than Duxford. It now seems something of an anomaly to be voting in Duxford for local elections but in Whittlesford for parish council elections. It would also seem to complicate communication at a*

local government level if there is confusion over who is supposed to represent the residents of the strip in question on issues of transport services, housing development etc.”

(2) “ We are writing in favour of the ward boundary changes for the area around Station Road, Whittlesford. It will make good sense to have all voting occurring in one location within Whittlesford village and consistent with the new parish boundary. At a practical level access to polling within Whittlesford village will be far easier than driving around the back-lanes of Duxford looking for an address that we are not very familiar with if we wish to vote once in every so many years. This will encourage voter uptake amongst those who often have little spare time after working to look for the polling station before closing time.”

**Considerations**

- 10. The LGBC’s Guidance states:  
*“a principal council may decide that it does not wish to propose related alterations to ward boundaries. Where this results in boundaries no longer being coterminous, principal councils will need to be satisfied that the identities and interests of local communities are still reflected and that effective and convenient local government will be secured. Principal councils will also wish to consider the practical consequences, for example for polling district reviews, of having electors voting in parish council elections with one community but with a different community for district and or county elections.”*
- 11. If the LGBC decides not to implement the proposed related alterations, then the existing ward boundary remains in force. It has no power to modify any recommendations submitted to it; it may only implement or reject the recommendations.
- 12. The LGBC has advised that an order for related alterations normally comes into force at the next election in the cycle. Where elections are in thirds, there has to be an out-of-turn election to bring about coterminosity. This means cutting short the term of a councillor. Duxford held their election earlier this year in full knowledge that the term of the successful candidate may be cut short should a Related Alterations Order be made mid term. Whittlesford’s election is scheduled for May 2012. Duxford may be required to hold a further election at the same time.
- 13. This case involves some 112 electors in a group of properties “sandwiched” between main roads to their north and south.
- 14. A separate polling district has been created for the 112 electors and if they are content to be in the same parish as their neighbours to their north and in the same ward as their neighbours to their south, then a related alteration to the ward boundary to make it coterminous with the parish boundary may be unnecessary if non-coterminous boundaries do not inconvenience electors. They would continue to visit the Duxford polling station for ward elections and the Whittlesford polling station for parish elections.

**Implications**

15.	Financial	Further costs to the Council in making the application to the LGBC and extra election in May 2012. Further costs to the political parties of running an extra campaign.
	Legal	As stated.

Staffing	Further burden of running an extra election.
Risk Management	None
Equality and Diversity	None
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No N/A
Climate Change	None

### Consultations

16. The result of the Consultation is set out above. Council is being asked to decide whether to proceed with a Related Alterations request in the light of the recommendation of the Electoral Arrangements Committee in response to the two positive representations received and the lack of response from the other consultees.

#### Consultation with Children and Young People

17. None has been undertaken

#### Effect on Strategic Aims

18. We demonstrate our commitment to being a listening council by going out to public consultation and taking representations into account before a decision is made on proposed ward change. By consulting on proposed ward change, the Council is allowing affected electors to say which of their neighbours to the north or south they prefer to be with when it comes to electing their district councillor. This promotes engagement in matters affecting them and their villages and demonstrates our commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.

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

“Guidance on Community Governance Reviews” - guidance issued jointly by Electoral Commission and Communities and Local Government

Consultation letter

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