

REPORT TO: Civic Affairs Committee

22 June 2017

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

Community Governance Review for Willingham and Over

Purpose

1. To consider the responses received through public consultation to the Community Governance Review (CGR) of Willingham and Over parish boundary.
2. To decide upon the next steps of the review.

Recommendation

3. It is recommended that the committee assess the outcomes of the consultation, and make a decision as to the future course of the CGR.
4. The Committee could,
 - (a) Recommend to Council no change to the parish boundary, or
 - (b) recommend A, B or an alternative boundary and carry out further consultation before making a recommendation to Council, or
 - (c) recommend A, B or an alternative to Council without further consultation.

Background

5. South Cambridgeshire District Council received a valid petition to carry out a Community Governance Review of the Willingham and Over boundary dated July 2016. The petition was signed by local residents and businesses.
6. The Civic Affairs Committee agreed the Terms of Reference for the Review on 9 December 2016.
7. The Terms of Reference for the Review were published on 31 January 2017.
8. Terms of Reference were made available in hard copy at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Ploughman's Hall Willingham, and Over Community Centre. They are also published on the SCDC website.
9. A local briefing was given at Willingham Parish Council meeting on 1 February 2017.
10. A further local briefing was given at Over Parish Council meeting on 14 February 2017.
11. Public consultation was opened on 21 February 2017.
12. A letter notifying the public of the open consultation and details of how to respond, was sent to every household and business in both Willingham and Over parishes on 21 February 2017.

13. The consultation was closed at midnight on 16 May 2017.

Considerations

14. The Council received a total of 244 responses to the public consultation.
15. Responses were received both online, and by post.
16. Responses can be found in full (with sensitive information redacted) at Appendix A.
17. Two further responses were received from Willingham and Over parish councils. These can be found at Appendices B and C, respectively.
18. On account of Over being a smaller parish than Willingham, and by request of Over Parish Council, all figures are given both as raw numbers and percentages. The number of registered electors in Over is 2,357 (June 2017) and the number of registered electors in Willingham is 3,206 (June 2017).
- (i) The overall percentage of Over residents that responded to the consultation was 5%
 - (ii) The overall percentage of Willingham residents that responded to the consultation was 4%
19. For the purpose of this report, residents of Highgate and Over Mereway ('affected residents') have been singled-out owing to the impact of the review upon them in particular. However, it should be noted that their numbers are also counted as residents of Over parish.
20. The consultation asked residents
- (a) Whether they believed the boundary should be changed, and
 - (b) Which of the proposed alternatives (supplied on an attached map) they would find preferable.

Consultation Responses

21. Of the 244 responses received from members of the public,
- (a) 118 (48%) were from residents of Over
 - (b) 124 (51%) were from residents of Willingham
 - (c) 2 (1%) were from residents living elsewhere with a connection to Willingham/Over
 - (d) Of those responses, 18 (7%) were from people who would be directly affected by a change to the parish boundary. Namely, those living/working at Highgate Farm and Over Mereway.
22. Of the 18 responses from affected residents (Highgate and Over Mereway),
- (a) 14 (78%) supported moving the parish boundary
 - (b) 4 (22%) did not support moving the parish boundary
23. Of the 118 responses from Over residents,
- (a) 68 (58%) supported moving the parish boundary
 - (b) 50 (52%) did not support moving the parish boundary
24. Of the 124 responses from Willingham residents,
- (a) 113 (91%) supported moving the parish boundary
 - (b) 11 (9%) did not support moving the parish boundary

25. Overall, the responses were as follows,
- (a) 164 (67%) of respondents supported moving the parish boundary
 - (b) 80 (33%) of respondents did not support moving the parish boundary

Preferred Alternatives

26. The consultation asked residents, "If the boundary were to change, which of the preferred alternatives would be most appropriate." The map showing proposed alternatives (as per the petition) can be found at Appendix D. The optional answers to this question were as follows:
- (a) A – First proposed new boundary (green line)
 - (b) B – Second proposed new boundary (blue line)
 - (c) C – Neither proposed/ no change
27. Of the 18 responses from affected residents (Highgate and Over Mereway),
- (a) 11 (61%) preferred option A
 - (b) 4 (22%) preferred option B
 - (c) 2 (11%) preferred neither option/ no change
 - (d) 1 (6%) declined to answer
28. Of the 118 responses from Over residents,
- (a) 32 (27%) preferred option A
 - (b) 23 (19%) preferred option B
 - (c) 53 (45%) preferred neither option/ no change
 - (d) 10 (8%) declined to answer
29. Of the 124 responses from Willingham residents,
- (a) 47 (38%) preferred option A
 - (b) 67 (54%) preferred option B
 - (c) 8 (6%) preferred neither option/no change
 - (d) 2 (2%) declined to answer
30. Overall, the preferred alternatives were as follows:
- (a) 81 (33%) respondents preferred option A
 - (b) 90 (37%) respondents preferred option B
 - (c) 61 (25%) respondents preferred neither option/ no change
 - (d) 12 (5%) respondents declined to answer
31. During the consultation process, it came to officers' attention that the Royal Mail has the delivery addresses of affected properties listed as, for example, 'Over Road, Willingham'. This address is used for Royal Mail's operational purposes, and may not have been assigned by the District Council, who are the official naming and numbering authority. The Council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) lists these properties as, for example, "Willingham Road, Over". Unlike the Royal Mail, the LLPG is a spatial data system which operates according to parish boundaries. This discrepancy is not uncommon. Provided that a correct building number and postcode is provided, there should be no effect to service delivery.
32. The consultation also brought to our attention the fact that some Council services held the incorrect postcode for two addresses at Highgate Farm. This error has now been rectified.

Consequential Amendments and District Electoral Review

33. The full electoral review of the district's warding arrangements is scheduled to commence shortly, with implementation of new district ward boundaries at all out elections in May 2018. Any Community Governance Reviews started alongside the review will be separate, and will not be completed in time to be included within the review.
34. The Committee will also be aware that the Council only has the power to amend parish boundaries. District ward boundaries will not automatically be affected by changes made by Community Governance Reviews. Should district ward boundaries need to be changed after a Community Governance Review the Council would have to apply to the LGBCE to make any consequential amendments.

Options

35. The Committee could,
- (a) Recommend to Council no change to the parish boundary, or
 - (b) Recommend A, B or an alternative boundary and carry out further consultation before making a recommendation to Council, or
 - (c) Recommend A, B or an alternative boundary to Council without further consultation.

Implications

36. 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: -

Financial

37. The cost of any further consultation requested by the committee.

Legal

38. The draft terms of reference for a Community Governance Review of the boundary between Willingham and Over parishes has considered the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, published in April 2008, 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 (SI2008/626). (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

39. Any further steps to bring the Community Governance Review to completion will be managed within existing resources.

Effect on Strategic Aims

40. 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

Background Papers

Report to Civic Affairs Committee – 9 December 2016

<http://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s98977/Community%20Governance%20Review%20Willingham%20Over.pdf>

CGR for Willingham and Over – Terms of Reference

https://www.scams.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_gov_review_willingham_overterms_of_ref.pdf

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