



**REPORT TO:** Civic Affairs Committee

28 September 2017

**LEAD OFFICER:** Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

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## **Community Governance Review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne parishes**

### **Purpose**

1. To consider submissions received in relation to the community governance review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne parishes.
2. To make recommendations to Council.

### **Recommendations**

3. That Civic Affairs Committee consider consultation responses and make a recommendation to Council to:
  - (a) change the boundary as per Cambourne Parish Council's proposed boundary (Appendix B), or
  - (b) change the boundary to include the A1198 roundabout as per a suggestion from the consultation (Appendix C), or
  - (c) change the boundary as per an alternative recommendation made by Civic Affairs Committee, or
  - (d) agree not to recommend a boundary change.
4. If the Committee recommends a change to the boundary, they should also decide whether to recommend to Council that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) be asked to review the principal area boundaries so that the ward/county and parish boundaries continue to be coterminous. The Committee could:
  - (a) recommend to Council to make a request to the LGBCE to re-align the principal area boundaries along the new parish boundaries, or
  - (b) recommend to Council not to make a request to the LGBCE to re-align the principal area boundaries along the new parish boundaries.

### **Background**

5. A request had been received from Cambourne Parish Council to instigate a Community Governance Review due to the impending West Cambourne 2,350 home development. Cambourne Parish Council requests that the land to the west of Cambourne becomes part of Cambourne Parish, whereas the majority of this area currently falls into the parish of Caxton.
6. 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.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Civic Affairs Committee has authority to recommend a decision to Council based on the outcome of this review.
10. The Terms of Reference for this review were published on 14 April 2017.
11. Submissions were invited between 1 June and 31 July 2017 (two months).

### **Considerations**

12. The Council received a total of 13 responses to the public consultation. One response was a duplicate made online and in paper form. Therefore 12 unique responses were received in total. One online, one via email and ten on paper.
13. Responses were received both online and by post.
14. The consultation asked residents:
  - (a) Whether they believed the parish boundaries should be changed
  - (b) Where the new boundaries should lie (clear boundary map supplied)
  - (c) Any other comments
15. The consultation was open for submissions for a period of two months (closed on 31 July 2017). The South West Development Officer visited each Parish Council (Elsworth Parish Council declined stating there was no need) and explained the CGR and next steps in person, and invited questions.
16. The consultation was publicly displayed at noticeboards in all three parishes, and the Development Officer took extra steps to advertise the consultation on the front page of the Councils website for over two weeks. Furthermore, paper consultation response forms were given to each Parish Clerk and made available at SCDCs reception in Cambourne. An attempt was also made to visit each of the three residential properties in the affected area, with one resident being concerned regarding changes to school catchment areas.

## Consultation Responses

17. All 12 responses support an amendment to parish boundaries. The responses have been summarised at Appendix D (eleven responses propose the boundary shown on Appendix B and one response proposes the boundary shown on Appendix C).
18. One response proposed an approach that would see delayed implementation of boundary changes until after the May 2018 elections (with implemented changes taking effect in 2022). It is usual for CGRs to take effect at next scheduled elections, though an order could delay implementation if desired. The respondent also proposed the parish warding of Cambourne, alongside the West Cambourne area. Such changes are not within the terms of reference of this review, and have not been consulted on.

## Electoral Arrangements

19. Any changes made to parish boundaries will come into effect at the next scheduled parish council elections, which will take place in all parishes in May 2018.
20. The Council can make changes to parish boundaries through the Community Governance Review process, but cannot make changes to principal area (district, county) boundaries. This power rests with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). This will result in parish and district/county boundaries which are no longer coterminous with one another.
21. From May 2018, the current Cambourne parish boundary will form a new three member district council ward, which will not include the West Cambourne area, even if changes to the parish boundaries are approved through this CGR. West Cambourne is in the parish of Caxton which is in the newly created two member ward of Caxton & Papworth. The other affected parishes (Knapwell and Elsworth) are also in this ward.
22. The current Cambourne parish is within the county division of Cambourne. Caxton, Knapwell and Elsworth are within the division of Papworth & Swavesey.
23. In addition to deciding whether to recommend to Council a change to the parish boundary, the Committee should also make a recommendation to Council as to whether the authority should pursue a request to the LGBCE for amendment of the principal area boundaries (both district and county) in the affected wards.
24. Changing the parish boundary without a subsequent request to the LGBCE will leave future (and existing) electors in the area in a potentially confusing local government arrangement where they are residents in the parish of Cambourne, but do not sit in the same principal council electoral areas. This is not desirable from a “convenient local government” perspective, and it will confuse and challenge the effective delivery of elections. If the Committee (and subsequently Council) make this decision, the Electoral Services Manager will bring a report to a future meeting of Civic Affairs Committee discussing the options for the area going forward. This will include the arrangements for voting (polling districts, polling places and polling stations), but may also need to consider the need for another CGR addressing the potential for creating a parish ward at West Cambourne.
25. Conversely, making a request to the LGBCE to tidy the ward boundaries brings its own risks. The potential future growth of West Cambourne may concern the LGBCE in respect of the balance of electoral equality in the respective district seats.

However, there is some tolerance here already built in to the electorate forecasts for the two wards – the new Cambourne ward has a variance of -10% from the 2021 average elector to member ratio, and Caxton & Papworth has a variance of +5%. Similar tolerances exist in the County ratios as well.

26. If the Committee (and then Council) do decide to pursue re-alignment of the ward and division boundaries with the parish, then any such change is very unlikely to have been made in time for the elections in May 2018.
27. The Council will formally notify the County Council if it does decide to make such a request to amend the County boundaries.
28. A decision by Council to change the parish boundary will necessitate the creation of a new polling district (NP2 West Cambourne), along with minor changes to the polling district boundaries of other affected parishes. These changes which will reflect the new boundaries in the register of electors, and will enable the running of elections in the area.

### **Options**

29. That Civic Affairs Committee consider consultation responses and make a recommendation to Council to:
  - (a) change the boundary as per Cambourne Parish Council's proposed boundary (Appendix B), or
  - (b) change the boundary to include the A1198 roundabout as per a suggestion from the consultation (Appendix C), or
  - (c) change the boundary as per an alternative recommendation made by Civic Affairs Committee, or
  - (d) agree not to recommend a boundary change.
30. If the Committee recommends a change to the boundary, they should also decide whether to recommend to Council that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) be asked to review the principal area boundaries so that the ward/county and parish boundaries continue to be coterminous. The Committee could:
  - (a) recommend to Council to make a request to the LGBCE to re-align the principal area boundaries along the new parish boundaries, or
  - (b) recommend to Council not to make a request to the LGBCE to re-align the principal area boundaries along the new parish boundaries.

### **Implications**

31. 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**

32. The terms of reference for a community governance review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne parishes has considered 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.)

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

33. 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**

Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review of Caxton, Elsworth and Cambourne parishes:  
[https://www.scamb.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community\\_gov\\_review\\_cambourne\\_west\\_terms\\_of\\_ref\\_0.pdf](https://www.scamb.gov.uk/sites/default/files/community_gov_review_cambourne_west_terms_of_ref_0.pdf)

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