



WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Office
Ploughman Hall
West Fen Road
Willingham
Cambridge CB24 5LP
Tel: 01954 261027
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Community Governance Review for Willingham and Over
Statement of Willingham Parish Council

Summary:

- A. The current petition for an adjustment to the Willingham and Over boundary originated from a community based initiative.
- B. Willingham Parish Council agreed to support this petition for a boundary adjustment on the grounds of geography and the petitioners' sense of identity.
- C. The 244 responses to the Community Consultation conducted by SCDC show that a majority (67%) support the case for a boundary adjustment. Support for either option for adjusting the boundary was evenly divided, with Over respondents more likely to support the First Proposed New Boundary – the 'Green Line'. Willingham Parish Council has also supported adopting the Green Line for a boundary adjustment, as it offers a clear 'no man's land' between the two parishes.
- D. Over Parish Council has not constructively engaged with an approach from Willingham Parish Council to meet to agree a compromise boundary adjustment prior to this meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee. OPC does not wish to meet 'at the current time', suggesting a date sometime after the next full SCDC Council has met on 25th January 2018. This suggestion would prevent the successful completion of the Review process within its published timeframe and jeopardise the adoption of a compromise boundary adjustment between the two Parishes.

November 2017

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Willingham Parish Council welcomes this opportunity to further explore and assess the evidence for an adjustment to the current boundary with the parish of Over .

1. **Background to the boundary review petition:** this is the third recent attempt to address this issue. Previous attempts took place in November 2011 and October 2015. Over Parish Council (OPC) has consistently and robustly opposed any boundary adjustment.
2. **Origins of the current petition:** the current petition was initiated by businesses operating from Highgate Business Park. Over 460 local government electors signed this petition which was delivered to South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) in July 2016. These electors were principally from Willingham (72%) and Over (23%). A small additional group (5%) lived elsewhere. Willingham Parish Council (WPC) was not formally aware of the petition and did not engage in the collection of signatures. Notification of the Review was given to WPC at its meeting in January 2017. A presentation on the Review process was made to WPC by Kirstin Donaldson at its February 2017 meeting. Willingham Parish Council unanimously supported the desirability of a review and publicised this in an article placed in the 'Willingham News' in February 2017.
3. **The position of Willingham Parish Council:** Willingham Parish Council's arguments supporting a boundary adjustment are summarised in its letter of 11th May 2017, previously circulated to SCDC for the September 2017 meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee (Appendix A). The Parish Council supports a boundary adjustment because this would better reflect the self-defined identities and interests of the communities in the area. A boundary adjustment would be appropriate because local residents define Highgate Business Park as being located within Willingham, the businesses on Highgate Business Park collectively identify themselves as being located in Willingham, the businesses on Highgate Business Park face logistical and infrastructure challenges in conducting their activities thus compromising their current and future prosperity, this sense of identity is further compromised by a lack of involvement in decisions and activity in Willingham which may impact on them, there is more than one mile of rural countryside between Highgate Business Park and the current centre of Over Parish, and the current boundary bears no relationship to the development of Willingham in recent years. This development in the village has contributed to increased traffic flows on Over Road and deteriorating standards of highway safety for both pedestrians and traffic.
4. **Options for a boundary adjustment:** Willingham Parish Council supports a compromise boundary adjustment represented by the adoption of the First Proposed New Boundary, the 'Green Line' (see Appendix D of the Officers Report on Community Governance Review for Willingham and Over, supplied to the September 2017 meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee). This would offer a clear 'no man's land' between the two parishes without encroaching unduly upon land historically part of Over Parish. It follows a clearly identifiable ditch and existing field boundaries.
5. **The results of the Community Consultation:** the evidence collected by the Community Consultation, presented to the Civic Affairs Committee at its September 2017 meeting, supports the case for a boundary adjustment. This reports that overall 244 residents from

Over and Willingham responded and that 67% (58% Over, 91% Willingham) of respondents from both Parishes supported a boundary adjustment. Of the two options for boundary adjustment available to respondents 33% supported a change to the 'Green Line' and 37% supported a change to the 'Blue Line' (see Appendix D, Officers Report on Community Governance Review for Willingham and Over, supplied to the September 2017 meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee).

6. **Further results from the Community Consultation:** further analysis, excluding respondents indicating no preference for either suggested adjustment, reinforces the above data.
 - i. Clear opinions as to which boundary adjustment option (Green or Blue) is preferable are reported with 47% (n= 81) supporting the Green Line and 53% (n=90) the Blue Line.
 - ii. Over respondents (excluding the 18 responses of affected residents and Highgate Business Park businesses) more likely support the Green Line (52%, n=21) whilst 48% (n=19) supported the Blue Line.
 - iii. The 18 responses from affected residents and Highgate Business Park show that 73% preferred the Green Line.
 - iv. Within Willingham 41% (n=47) of respondents supported the Green Line and 59% (n=67) supported the Blue Line.
7. **Seeking a compromise adjustment:** Willingham Parish Council has noted that the draft Minutes of the Civic Affairs Committee (September 2017) suggest that the two Parish Councils should work together to attempt to agree a compromise boundary adjustment. Willingham Parish Council has written to OPC on 24th October 2017 requesting a meeting to discuss this issue (Appendix B). It has separately approached Ms Lucy Frazer MP QC to act as a mediator. Over Parish Council has responded on the 15th November that it would be willing to meet 'at some stage', possibly in the early part of 2018, depending upon the outcomes of the current process (Appendix C). It does not wish to meet 'at the current time', suggesting a date sometime after the next full SCDC Council has met on 25th January 2018. This suggestion would prevent the successful completion of the Review process within its published timeframe and jeopardise the adoption of a compromise boundary adjustment between the two Parishes (Community Governance Review of Willingham and Over Parish Boundary – Terms of Reference -Published 6th February 2017).
8. **Appendices:**
 - A. Letter from WPC (11th May 2017) previously circulated to SCDC for the September 2017 meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee.
 - B. Letter from WPC to OPC (24th October 2017) requesting a meeting to explore options for a compromise boundary adjustment.
 - C. Response of OPC (15th November 2017) to WPC's request for a meeting to explore options for a compromise boundary adjustment.

November 2017



APPENDIX A

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11th May 2017

Ms K Donaldson
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambs, CB23 6EA

Dear Kirstin

RE: Community Governance Review of Willingham and Over Parish Boundary

I am writing on behalf of Willingham Parish Council regarding the ongoing boundary review.

The Council is entirely in favour of changing the border with Over to the first proposed new Boundary (coloured green in Appendix B of the Terms of Reference), for the following reasons:

- (1) There is strong support and preference from the residents and businesses in the area to be formally recognised as part of Willingham. They consider themselves to belong to Willingham, using it as their address and their first port of call for goods and services.
- (2) The homes and businesses west of the current boundary are clearly part of Willingham. The area joins Willingham yet is separated from Over by over a mile of open countryside.
- (3) Businesses and homes serve and are served by Willingham, yet have no involvement in local decisions which may affect them. This is not conducive to good governance.
- (4) The historic boundary bears no relation to the current development.
- (5) The proposed new boundary is easily identifiable as it follows a ditch from Dockerel Brook to Willingham Road, Willingham Road itself, and then established hedged field boundaries.

If you have any queries regarding the above or would like any further information then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Powell (Mrs)
Clerk to Willingham Parish Council



APPENDIX B

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Mrs L Poulter
The Parish Clerk
Over Parish Council
32 West Street
Over
Cambs
CB24 5PL

24th October 2017

Dear Mrs Poulter

RE: SCDC Civic Affairs Committee – Over/Willingham Boundary Review

At the September 2017 meeting of SCDC's Civic Affairs Committee to discuss the Over/Willingham Boundary Review it was suggested that our two Parish Councils meet together to explore options for a mutually acceptable compromise boundary.

Willingham Parish Council representatives are willing to meet with Over Parish Council representatives to discuss the options for a compromise boundary which would meet the interests of all involved parties.

Please advise me whether Over Parish Council would be willing or not to enter into this discussion. If appropriate I will then contact you to discuss the meeting arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Mandy Powell (Mrs)
Parish Clerk
Willingham Parish Council

APPENDIX C

Clerk@willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

From: Linda Poulter <overparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk>
Sent: 15 November 2017 20:37
To: Clerk@willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk
Subject: Re: Over/Willingham Boundary

Dear Mandy

Following discussions during our recent Parish Council meeting it was agreed, in principle, that Councillors would be willing to meet with Willingham Parish Council at some stage to discuss the boundary issue.

It was felt, however, that this suggestion is premature in the context of Willingham PC's challenge to the Civic Affairs Committee's recommendation and its referral back to that Committee in December to clarify the grounds on which they reached their decision. Any meeting between our Parish Councils to discuss the boundary issue cannot usefully be held until that has been done and the full SCDC Council has then considered the Civic Affairs Committee's recommendation, presumably at its next scheduled meeting on 25th January.

Our Parish Council will need to consider the matter further when the outcome of the Boundary Review is known for certain, so it would appear that a meeting in the early part of next year might be possible.

I will be in touch with you again in due course, when we can discuss issues like time, venue, format, etc. - if indeed my Council still feels that such a meeting might be helpful and/or productive.

Kind regards

Linda

From: Clerk@willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk <Clerk@willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 November 2017 09:08
To: 'Linda Poulter'
Subject: RE: Over/Willingham Boundary

Hi Linda

Could you let me know the outcome of your meeting and whether your Council agreed to enter discussions regarding the boundary.

Kind regards

Mandy

From: Linda Poulter [mailto:overparishclerk@hotmail.co.uk]
Sent: 24 October 2017 12:04
To: Clerk <email@willinghampc.org.uk>
Subject: Re: Over/Willingham Boundary

Dear Mandy