

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on
Tuesday, 3 November 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr. Douglas de Lacey – Chair
Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Henry Batchelor
Mark Howell
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer

Dr. Martin Cahn
Bridget Smith
Heather Williams

Officers: Patrick Adams
Ellen Bridges
Andrew Francis
Clare Gibbons
Rory McKenna

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Development Officer
Electoral Services Manager
Northstowe Healthy New Town Programme
Lead
Deputy Head of Legal Practice/Monitoring
Officer

Councillors Sarah Cheung Johnson and Alex Malyon were in attendance, by invitation.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Nigel Cathcart.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Community Governance Review of Longstanton and Oakington & Westwick Civil Parishes, Prompted by the Development at Northstowe

The Programme Lead, Northstowe Healthy New Town presented this report on the Community Governance Review for the creation of a new community at Northstowe, with green space used to separate it from the neighbouring villages. She updated the Committee on the consultation process and the three Options the Committee were being asked to consider A, B and C.

Stephen Moore, Chairman of Oakington and Westwick Parish Council, spoke to the Committee and made the following points:

- Oakington and Westwick Parish Council favoured Option A, as laid out in the report.
- He suggested that Homes England proposed amendments to the

boundaries were unnecessary.

- He asserted that the green separation was important to the character of the village, had symbolic importance and should not be eroded.
- The Parish Council wanted to maintain control over an area that was important for flood control.

Libby White, Clerk to Longstanton Parish Council, made the following points:

- Longstanton Parish Council supported Option A in the report, with the amendment of using the field as a boundary, instead of the Over Road.
- She opposed the amendments proposed by Homes England, which would mean transferring more green space from the parish of Longstanton to the new parish of Northstowe.
- She supported the formation of a town council for Northstowe in 2021.
- She reported that Longstanton Parish Council had been collecting precept on behalf of Northstowe and were ready to transfer this in 2021.

Emily Jones of Homes England made the following points:

- Homes England were committed to providing high quality community buildings and maintaining green space at Northstowe.
- She proposed some minor amendments to Option A to ensure that areas important to Northstowe would come under its administrative control.
- This would be more efficient than the areas being maintained by different authorities and would ensure that future residents would be able to determine its future use.

Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson, local member for Longstanton, expressed her thanks to officers, who had given up evenings and weekends to facilitate the Community Governance Review. She requested that the Committee support Option A and reject the proposed amendments from Homes England as unnecessary. She assured the Committee that the Parish Council could maintain the areas affected by the amendments. She also requested that the new administrative body be named Northstowe Town Council, have 15 members and there be elections in both 2021 and 2022

Transferring land from Longstanton to Willingham

It was noted that Willingham Parish Council were willing to receive land that was north of the Guided Busway and they had suggested that the residents on the land considered themselves to be part of Willingham.

Recommending Option A to Council

The Chair proposed that, leaving aside the minor amendments suggested by Homes England and Longstanton Parish Council, the Committee should approve Option A. Councillor Heather Williams seconded this proposal and the Committee unanimously agreed by affirmation to recommend Option A to Council.

Amending the boundaries in Option A

With regards to the proposed amendments by Homes England and Longstanton Parish Council, members of the Committee made the following points:

- There was every confidence that the parish councils could manage the land

in the interests of the affected residents.

- Homes England's proposal had been received too late.
- The Committee needed to listen to the existing residents, who preferred a hedge boundary than a road.
- A hedgerow and field boundary was sufficiently clear.
- A facility in Kings Meadow in the District was administered by the City Council and so it was possible for Longstanton Parish Council to administer an area on behalf of Northstowe residents.
- Decisions should be based on the views of existing residents, whose views were clear.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Claire Daunton seconded that the variations requested by Homes England be rejected and the boundary at Long Lane and Oakington Edge remain as depicted in Option A. The Committee agreed this proposal by affirmation.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Heather Williams seconded using the field as a boundary instead of Over Road, with one vote against (Councillor Martin Cahn) the Committee agreed this proposal by affirmation.

Naming Northstowe Town Council

The Chair proposed and Councillor Bridget Smith seconded that the new administrative body be named Northstowe Town Council. The Committee unanimously agreed this by affirmation.

Size of Northstowe Town Council

The Programme Lead, Northstowe Healthy New Town explained that Longstanton Parish Council had recommended that Northstowe Town Council have 11 members, but it was noted that the local members had suggested 15 members. The Electoral Services Manager explained that with 11 members the quorum was 4, whilst with 15 members the quorum was 5. Councillor Sarah Cheung Johnson explained that if a size of 15 was agreed at the outset, it would prevent the need for a future Community Governance Review to increase the size of the Council. She added that there would be a large number of planning applications and the current residents were highly engaged.

The Chair proposed and Councillor Claire Daunton seconded 15 members on Northstowe Town Council, which was unanimously agreed by the Committee by affirmation.

Elections for Willingham and Longstanton Parish Council

The Electoral Services Manager explained that the proposed boundary changes would affect electors in the parishes of Willingham and Longstanton and so he requested that elections be held in these two parishes in 2021, but the councillors should be elected for a five year term, to respect the wishes of the two parish councils. The Chair proposed and Councillor Heather Williams seconded that Longstanton and Willingham parish councillors should be elected in May 2021 for a five year term. This was unanimously agreed by the Committee by affirmation.

Contacting the Boundary Commission

The Chair proposed and Councillor Claire Daunton seconded that the Committee write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to request that the District and County electoral boundaries be amended to be conterminous with the parish boundaries. The Committee unanimously agreed this by affirmation.

Arrangements for Polling Districts

The Chair proposed and Councillor Mark Howell seconded the creation of a new polling district with boundaries to match the new parish boundary for Northstowe with the amendment of existing polling district boundaries to match the new reduced size boundaries for Longstanton Civil Parish and Oakington & Westwick Civil Parish and the creation of a new polling district for the area north of the guided busway, which is to be moved to Willingham Civil Parish. The Committee unanimously agreed this proposal by affirmation.

The Civic Affairs Committee

Recommended to Council

- A)** The creation of a new civil parish for Northstowe, as detailed in Option A of the report, with a variation to proposed boundaries:
 - i. The adjacent field boundary, marking the perimeter of the Northstowe Extension Land should be the parish boundary between Northstowe and Longstanton, not the Over Road.
- B)** That the new administrative body be called “Northstowe Town Council”.
- C)** Elections to “Northstowe Town Council” be held in 2021 with councillors serving for a single year. All councillors to stand for a full four year term in 2022.
- D)** “Northstowe Town Council” should have 15 councillors.
- E)** Elections to Longstanton Parish Council and Willingham Parish Council take place in 2021 with councillors serving for a five year term.
- F)** Officers write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to seek re-alignment of district and county boundaries where these are affected by any changes made by this review.
- G)** The creation of a new polling district with boundaries to match the new parish boundary for Northstowe; amendment of existing polling district boundaries to match the new reduced size boundaries for Longstanton Civil Parish and Oakington & Westwick Civil Parish; the creation of a new polling district for the area north of the guided busway, which is to be moved to Willingham Civil Parish.

5. Community Governance Review for Foxton

The Development Officer presented this report on a request from Foxton Parish Council to increase the council size from 9 to 10 Parish Councillors.

The Civic Affairs Committee unanimously **Agreed**

- A)** The request from Foxton Parish Council for a Community Governance Review to increase the number of Parish Councillors from 9 to 10; and

- B)** The draft terms of reference (Appendix B);
- C)** For staff to agree a timetable in consultation with Foxton Parish Council.

6. **Anti-bullying Motion from Council**

The Deputy Head of Legal reminded the Committee that the last Council meeting had referred a motion on anti-bullying to the Committee. Councillor Heather Williams proposed and Councillor Aidan Van de Weyer seconded the setting up of a Task and Finish Group to examine how the LGA Model Code of Conduct could be adopted, consider how the current whistle-blowing and anti-bullying policies could be reviewed and request the Communications team to disseminate the anti-bullying message as part of anti-bullying week. The Committee unanimously agreed this proposal by affirmation.

The Deputy Head of Legal told members that the Council had recently received an announcement that the final Code will be submitted to the LGA board for approval on 3 December 2020 and was therefore expecting to receive the Model Code shortly thereafter and it would come to this Committee for discussion.

With regards to the membership of the Task and Finish Group, the Committee unanimously agreed to appoint Councillor Heather Williams as Chair and Councillor Claire Daunton as a member of the Group. The final member of the Group to be agreed by the Liberal Democrat group.

The Civic Affairs Committee **Agreed**

- A)** To designate a three-member Task and Finish Group to
 - i. Consider options for adopting the LGA Model Code of Conduct when the final version is published
 - ii. Review the whistle-blowing and anti-bullying policies, and work with HR and Democratic Services to consider how best to raise awareness of the provisions of these policies.
- B)** To request that the communications team include anti-bullying messages in their communications plan for anti-bullying week.
- C)** To appoint Councillor Heather Williams (Chair), Councillor Claire Daunton and one other Liberal Democrat Councillor to the Task and Finish Group.

7. **Update on Code of Conduct Complaints**

The Committee **Noted** the report from the Monitoring Officer which detailed the one complaint received since the last meeting, where there had been no breach of the Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer explained that there were currently no outstanding complaints.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held on Tuesday 1 December at 10am.

The Meeting ended at 12.05 p.m.
