

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Electoral Arrangements Committee 16 April 2008
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager Planning & Sustainable Communities and
Principal Solicitor

REVIEW OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Purpose

1. To receive an update on the discussions which have taken place between the Chief Executives of SCDC and Cambridge City Council and to make recommendations to Council on a joint submission with Cambridge City to the Boundary Committee for England on a proposal for changes to the administrative local government boundaries between the two authorities.

Background

2. In October 2007 Council authorised the Chief Executive to enter into discussions with the Chief Executive of Cambridge City Council regarding the carrying out of a full District / City boundary review, on the basis that such discussions were to have due regard to the needs of parishes likely to be affected by any such review.
3. Those discussions have now taken place and the Chief Executive has kept the Leader informed of progress. Officers of both Councils are now in a position to request Member approval of the proposals that have been developed. This is in anticipation of a formal request to the Boundary Committee for England and ultimately the Secretary of State for a review of the boundary to be undertaken.
4. Members will recall the response received from interested parties to the parish review consultation last summer which was reported to them by the Principal Solicitor in October 2007. Many of those responses suggested that there should be a review of the boundary between the City and the District to provide more suitable local governance for the communities affected by growth (past, current and future) on the edges of the City. For example, on the northern fringe of the City the new development at Arbury Park sits within the man-made boundary feature of the A14 and is distinct from the settlements of Impington & Histon. The adjacent Meadows Estate has social housing which was promoted by the City and relates logically to the Arbury ward of the City. The community facilities on the estate are provided by the City and yet the area actually lies within the district of South Cambridgeshire. Similarly, at Cherry Hinton, where part of the area lies within the City and part in the District, community facilities are provided by the City Council and much of the social housing within the South Cambridgeshire part of the area was built and is owned by the City.
5. Future development at Trumpington Meadows, for which outline permission has recently been granted, will be dissected by the current boundary with some residents living in the City and some in the district. Some residents would be within a parished area and represented by district councillors whilst others will be represented by City councillors and with different representation at county level. This split jurisdiction may give rise to issues about responsibility for community facilities for example.

6. The proposed changes also have regard to the need to protect the setting and identity of villages within South Cambridgeshire located close to, but outside the edge of the City. The proposals afford the opportunity to incorporate into the district undeveloped land with a rural character currently within the City boundary which will allow the integrity of the Green Belt around the City to be strengthened.

Proposed Changes

7. The principle followed in proposing amendments to the boundary is to extend the City's boundary to the urban residential edge, including the major urban growth sites. In addition, the proposals include transferring several non-urban areas to South Cambridgeshire and the boundary in the area of the Science Park will be regularised.
8. The changes proposed are that the following areas (shown coloured yellow on the attached plan) be included within the City boundary:
 - Trumpington Meadows, (where outline planning consent has recently been granted), and the area of Glebe Farm in Trumpington for which residential development is proposed.
 - the Meadows Estate and Arbury Park, by taking the boundary to the A14, but excluding the Science Park as a non-residential site.
 - the "Northern Fringe East" potential development site by extending the boundary to follow the railway line.
 - Cambridge East to include the whole of the proposed development site at Marshall's airport. The boundary currently crosses the airport.
 - The area around Cherry Hinton to include existing urban growth within the City.
9. It is proposed that the following areas (shown coloured green on the attached plan) will transfer into the District:
 - a parcel of land adjacent to Milton Parish thereby unifying Milton Parish
 - fields around Lime Kiln Hill and to the south and east of Babraham Road Park & Ride
 - fields north of the M11/A10 junction
 - the non-urban area west of Madingley Road Park & Ride
10. The proposals do not include revisions to include within the City the whole of the North West Urban Extension, as the area is subject to the North West Area Action Plan, which is due to be submitted for approval to the Secretary of State on 19th May 2008. The Boundary Committee will be invited to consider whether changes are needed in the light of the outcome of the planning process.

Process

11. Reviews of local authority administrative boundaries are undertaken by the Boundary Committee, which is a committee of the Electoral Commission. The Boundary Committee may undertake reviews on its own initiative, or at the request of the Secretary of State or of a local authority.
12. In conducting a review, the Boundary Committee must have regard to:
 - The need to secure effective and convenient local government; and
 - The need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities.
13. A review is a three-stage process. Firstly, in conducting the review itself, the Committee must consult the councils of the areas to which the reviews relate, along

with other interested councils, including parish councils, and other interested persons. The second stage is the publication of draft recommendations, followed by a period during which representations may be made. This is followed by the submission of final recommendations by the Committee to the Secretary of State. The Committee is not bound by any proposals put forward by the City Council or by South Cambridgeshire District Council. It is then for the Secretary of State to decide whether or not to act upon the Committee's recommendations.

Consultations

14. The statutory process required of the Boundary Commission provides opportunity for contributions by interested parties, both at the stage of drawing up draft recommendations and on the draft recommendations themselves. In addition, we are informing the County Council of the proposals.

Options

15. It would be open to the Councils not to pursue the proposals for a review.

Implications

16. In the event that the Committee follows the recommendation of this report to make a recommendation to Council, Council will need to have additional information on the implications of any boundary change on the housing projections within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). In particular, any boundary change may be accompanied by a formal revision to South Cambridgeshire's Regional Housing Targets. For example, if the effect of the boundary change would be to transfer allocations for say 5,000 new dwellings into the City administrative area the Council would need assurance before agreeing to the boundary change that its RSS housing target would be reduced by 5,000 dwellings. This assurance has been requested from the Government Office for the East of England but there has been no response at the date of writing this report.

17.	Financial	The boundary changes would have an impact on the amount of Council Tax collected and Government Grant received by the Council, as the tax base and population levels of the district will change, leading to a lower level of funding being received. However, this loss of income will be offset by a reduction in costs and future pressures on the Council for delivering services. At this stage these are not quantifiable, however, financial modelling of the impact of growth on the District has begun, which will be used to assess the implications of the boundary changes to the Council.
	Legal	None
	Staffing	None identified
	Risk Management	None identified
	Equal Opportunities	None identified

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

18.	Working in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future	The exploration of the boundary review is a good example of partnership working to address the impact of growth on the communities of South Cambridgeshire
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Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community	The proposed changes will allow the Council to focus on meeting the needs of the village communities
Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work	The proposed changes to the boundary recognise the need to protect and enhance the setting of the necklace villages

Recommendations

19. That the Committee recommends to Council that Council authorises the submission of a request for a review of the administrative boundary between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council on the basis of the proposals outlined in this report and shown on the attached plan.

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

The October report to the Electoral Arrangements Committee
Representations from interested parties

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