



Report To: Civic Affairs Committee
Lead Officer: Head of Legal and Democratic Services

20 March 2014

Northstowe Community Governance Review

Purpose

1. To update Civic Affairs Committee with regard to progress in relation to the Longstanton, Oakington & Westwick and Northstowe Boundary Review.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Committee approves to leave the current boundary between Longstanton and Oakington & Westwick in place until such time as there is more clarity in relation to timing and size of future phases of the Northstowe development.
3. At the same time, Officers continue to work with the local parish councils, local residents, and any working group that is set up, and report on progress and changing views and considerations to each Civic Affairs Committee.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Following on from the update presented to Committee in December 2013, Officers have now completed the public events as set out in the December Report. As well as the public events and meeting with Rampton Drift residents, Officers have also visited the parish council meetings of Longstanton and Oakington & Westwick to continue discussions in relation to any boundary changes. There remain very different opinions as to changing boundary lines and the timing of any changes, along with concern at making changes while there remains a lack of clarity in relation to the timescale of future phases of Northstowe.

Background

5. The views captured at the public events and meeting with Rampton Drift residents reflected the differences of opinion that had been captured earlier in the year:
 - Some local residents would like to see boundary changes carried out using the DFD framework so that Northstowe becomes a stand alone parish council immediately.
 - Some local residents would like to see a phased approach to changing the boundary.
 - Some would like Northstowe to remain part of Longstanton.
 - No formal view has, as yet, been received from Longstanton Parish Council.
 - Oakington & Westwick Parish Council's view remains to leave the boundary as it is until such time as the build out reaches Oakington.
 - A general lack of appetite amongst local people to become parish councillors for Northstowe.

Considerations

6. The Chair of Longstanton Parish Council and the Local Member for Longstanton attended the meeting with Rampton Drift residents. Although there was a lack of appetite amongst the residents present to become parish councillors for Northstowe (or Longstanton), there was some interest in the idea put forward by the Chair of Longstanton Parish Council to form a small 'Northstowe' working group. This working group could work alongside Longstanton Parish Council and be involved in discussions and work relating to Northstowe, working alongside SCDC Officers as well as Longstanton Parish Council. The working group could include local residents that are interested in being involved with Northstowe but are not currently able or willing to undertake the commitment of being a parish councillor. This would also enable them to gain confidence and understanding of governance at a local level. Members of the working group would also then learn more about parish council roles and responsibilities. Officers are holding a special meeting with Longstanton Parish Council to discuss further on 17 March so a verbal update will be provided at the Committee meeting.

Options

7.
 - (i) **Stand Alone Northstowe Parish/Town Council (as described in December's Report):**

Set up a stand along Northstowe Parish/Town Council immediately, using the DFD framework outline as the new boundary. Locally, this remains the least supported option.
 - (ii) **Phased Boundary Change for Longstanton (as described in December's Report):**

Use a phased approach for the boundary changes as each phase of Northstowe is granted permission. Locally, this has a small amount of support.
 - (iii) **Defer further work on boundary changes:**

This is the preferred option until such time as there is more clarity in relation to timing and size of future phases of Northstowe. Officers would continue to work with the parish councils of Longstanton and Oakington & Westwick, as well as local residents and any 'working group' that may be set up. Officers would continue to report back to each Civic Affairs Committee meeting with regular updates on Northstowe's progress and recommendations as to timings of any boundary changes.

Implications

8. There are no significant implications.

Financial

9. If a CGR is to be undertaken there will be associated costs of publicity and consultation which need to be met by the Council. It is not possible to quantify those costs at this stage.

Legal

10. Compliance with the 2007 Act and associated guidance will help avoid challenge to the process or the outcome.

Staffing

11. It is expected that a CGR can be carried out within existing staff resources in New Communities and Legal.

Risk Management

12. There are no significant implications.

Equality and Diversity

13. There are no significant implications.

Climate Change

14. There are no significant implications.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

The Youth Council is currently considering this and will respond more formally at its next meeting on 13th April 2014

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

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