



**Report To:** Civic Affairs Committee

28 July 2016

**Lead Officer:** Sustainable Communities and Partnerships Manager

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## Parish Boundary between Willingham and Over

### Purpose

1. On 12 January 2016, the Committee deferred this item which relates to a request from a resident to formally review the parish boundary between Over and Willingham.
2. The Committee asked for more information from each of the parish councils involved as to their views on the matter.
3. This is not a key decision.

### Recommendations

4. No officer recommendation is made.
5. The Committee could decide to:
  - (a) **Accept the proposal** and ask officers to schedule a Community Governance Review for the area, timings subject to officer capacity
  - (b) **Refuse the proposal**

### Background

6. A letter from a resident has been received by the Council asking for the parish boundary between Willingham and Over to be changed. The resident runs a business which is in Over parish, but is geographically much closer to the village centre of Willingham. The letter can be viewed at Appendix 1. The resident has also supplied a map of the existing boundary between the villages and two separate proposals for where a new boundary could run.
7. The resident lays out several arguments for reconsidering the boundary, including:
  - (a) Distance to village centre – the resident's business property is significantly closer to the Willingham village centre than the Over village centre
  - (b) Support and attitude from the relevant Parish Councils
  - (c) Support for proposals from neighbour properties
8. In addition, the resident has also supplied a list of people and businesses that support his proposal – for clarity these have not been verified. He has also supplied a copy of a letter from Willingham Parish Council sent to this Council in 2011 requesting consideration of the boundary at that time.
9. Since the letter was received by the Council, several letters of support have also been received. These are also appended to the report.
10. When this item was deferred from the January 2016 meeting of Civic Affairs Committee, the Chair requested further information be sought from the parishes

involved. The responses of the two parishes are attached. Willingham Parish Council support a review and Over Parish Council do not.

11. Since the January meeting, the resident has also been gaining support by way of a Community Governance Petition. Legislation requires that a petitioner gets signatures from 7.5% of the electorate of the "area" (in this case, the parishes of Willingham and Over). As at the July register, this is 414 names. Should the resident achieve the necessary number of signatures, then the Council will be obliged to carry out the review. Currently the resident has procured 380 valid signatures. He believes that he may meet the threshold to require a review by the time of the meeting.
12. In the interest of transparency, the resident has also provided copies of letters of support and of opposition to a review.

### **Considerations**

13. In response to the letter from Willingham Parish Council in 2011, this matter was considered by the Council's Electoral Arrangements Committee on 21 November, 2011. Minutes from that meeting can be viewed here:

<http://moderngov/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=412&Year=2011>

At that time, the Electoral Arrangements Committee declined the request of the Parish Council to initiate a Community Governance Review (CGR) to look at the Boundary.

14. If the Committee were to look favourably upon this request, it would require a full Community Governance Review to be undertaken. This would have to be scheduled into the workload of relevant officers as this piece of work has been unplanned. A decision to move forward with a CGR will see terms of reference bought to a future meeting of this Committee.
15. The Committee is not obliged to grant this request, but it must consider the interests of the area and local community identities.
16. Current proposals from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) are likely to see the parishes of Willingham and Over placed into different electoral divisions. SCDC may change the parish boundary after a CGR, but does not have the power to change county or district boundaries. Any anomalies caused by a change to parish boundaries would require SCDC to pursue re-alignment of those boundaries by application to the LGBCE.
17. The LGBCE's initial proposals for new district boundaries retain the two villages in the same ward, but if this changes in the final proposals, similar re-alignment may be necessary at ward level as well.

### **Options**

18. The options are listed in paragraphs 4 and 5.

### **Implications**

19. 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: -

- Financial**
20. The Council will have to bear the cost of running a CGR.

- Legal**
21. When started, CGRs must be completed within a year.

- Staffing**
22. Should a CGR be initiated there will be considerable cost in staffing time. Any CGR will need to be programmed in to fit with future work commitments.

### **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.

Guidance on CGRs:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>

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