

Committee: Electoral Arrangements Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 18 October 2010

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Title: Community Governance Review

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Item for decision

Summary

1. The Working Group will be invited to consider submissions made at the first stage of the Community Governance Review (CGR) and decide on draft proposals for any changes needed to parish boundaries to be adopted for consultation from early November until 1 February 2011.

Recommendations

2. That Members determine draft proposals for parish boundary changes to be selected from a range of options included in this report.

Financial Implications

3. There are no direct costs associated with these proposals other than for the staff time involved, postage and advertising costs, and the preparation of the necessary boundary change orders and relevant mapping. All costs will be met from existing budgets.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Representations made by members of the public, councillors and parish and town councils at the first stage of the CGR.

Government guidance and legislation

Impact

5.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation with all affected interested parties
Community Safety	No impact
Equalities	No impact
Health and Safety	No known impact

Human Rights/Legal Implications	Need to follow due legal processes for carrying out any boundary changes, or other changes to parish arrangements
Sustainability	No direct relevance to this process
Ward-specific impacts	Birchanger, Stansted South and Takeley and the Canfields
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

Situation

6. The Council commenced a CGR on 16 August 2010 and wrote to all interested parties, including affected residents, at that time. The first stage of the review was intended to identify areas of concern that may need to be addressed, and to invite submissions containing proposals for how those matters can be addressed. That stage was completed on 30 September and this has been followed by a process of evaluating the submissions received.
7. This report contains a full statement of all submissions made (see appendices A, B and D), identifies those submissions containing specific proposals, and attempts to evaluate the various options available to the Council in deciding on future actions. Appendix C relates to parish electoral schemes other than the parishes covered in this report and will be considered at a future meeting.
8. As a reminder to Members, the terms of reference of the CGR are
 - The whole of the District of Uttlesford will be reviewed to decide the most appropriate arrangements for the election of parish councillors in May 2011; the matters to be reviewed will be the number of parish councillors to be elected in each parish; the number of parish wards to be provided in each parish (if any); the location and boundaries of those wards and the number of councillors to be elected in each ward (to be determined on a broadly proportional basis); the question whether parishes should have, or continue to have, elected parish councils; and to determine the need and justification for existing parishes to be grouped together for the purposes of representation on a parish council.
 - Examine the boundaries of the parishes of Birchanger and Stansted, especially in relation to the position of the parish boundary at the residential development known as Foresthall Park, to determine whether any change is needed to reflect community interests and identities and to ensure effective and convenient local government.
 - Examine the boundaries of the parishes of Little Canfield and Takeley, especially in relation to the residential development known as Priors Green, to assess the need for any change to reflect community ties and loyalties.

9. The first bullet point above concerns parish electoral arrangements in those parishes not subject to possible boundary change. Members will be asked to agree a revised or unchanged parish electoral scheme for each parish concerned and recommend accordingly to the Finance and Administration Committee on 25 November. This will be the subject of a report to a future meeting (now scheduled for 25 October).
10. All matters concerning the boundaries at Foresthall Park and Priors Green, including the electoral arrangements for the parishes concerned, are dealt with in the remaining sections of this report.

Submissions received – Foresthall Park

11. Members are asked to refer to the schedule attached at appendix A. This sets out all of the comments received in response to the notice of the review.
12. It will be seen that nine local residents have submitted their views, as well as County Councillor Susan Barker (see appendix D) and both Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Councils.
13. Of those seven residents responding who live on the site of Foresthall Park, six currently live on the Birchanger side of the border and one in Stansted. It is interesting to note that, of those residents in Birchanger, five of the six stated a clear preference for Stansted Parish. Similarly, the single resident already in Stansted expressed a preference for staying there.
14. Of the remaining two local residents expressing a view, one resident living at an established residence at Forest Hall Road (Broom Hill) stated a clear preference for Stansted and the other (Parish Councillor Peter Jones) made a case for including the whole of Foresthall Park within Stansted Parish.
15. The responses received demonstrate clearly the confusion that presently exists. At least three residents (including at Broom Hill) state clearly that they are situated within Stansted when they are actually within Birchanger.
16. The main purpose of the first stage of the CGR was to invite proposals for change and this has been achieved. As far as can be demonstrated at present, the community of interest of the majority of residents living at Foresthall Park lies with Stansted Mountfitchet Parish. However, it is not necessary or important at this stage to establish community identities.
17. The next section of the report deals with those representations received which contain proposals for change and then goes on to identify and provide some options for Members to consider.

Identification and evaluation of proposals submitted at Foresthall Park

18. Firm proposals have been received from both Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Councils for changes to the parish boundary. These are essentially very similar, though not identical, and would both result in the transfer of the whole of the Foresthall Park estate into Stansted parish. This view is supported by Peter Jones of Lower Street, who is a serving parish councillor, and who has submitted a full statement of reasons for this view. For full details of the submissions received please refer to appendix A. Maps will be available at the meeting indicating the effect of these proposals.
19. It is interesting to note the comment of Birchanger Parish Council that it is 'broadly in agreement with the boundary line proposed by Stansted Parish Council' and that the residents 'appear generally to identify with Stansted rather than Birchanger'.
20. A full supporting statement of reasons is given in the submission from Stansted Parish Council. This gives a range of reasons for supporting the requested change including benefits to the residents in terms of the provision of local facilities and the support of a proactive parish council with the ability to deliver services, especially in the maintenance of open spaces and play areas at Foresthall Park.
21. All of this evidence appears to meet the twin objectives set out in the legislation that parish boundaries must reflect the identities and interests of local communities and that they must be able to ensure the effective and convenient delivery of local government services. For further details of the duties set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LG&PIHA), please see paragraph 23 of the report to the meeting of the Working Group on 22 July.
22. The other potential way of achieving these objectives might be to create a new and separate parish based either solely or largely on the new development site. However, no-one has suggested this and it appears at this stage to have no support within the community.
23. A number of other suggestions are made which might be interpreted as proposals. Mr Agius of Palmer Close and Mrs Wraith of Peachey Walk propose leaving the boundary as it is now on the basis of a minimum of disruption. Sue Belo of Hampton Road appears to support a transfer of the whole site to Stansted but, if this is not practical, she suggests a north/south divide with the boundary running along Walson Way and Reeve Road.
24. The option of no change has already effectively been ruled out in view of the haphazard and confusing nature of the boundary line as it relates to the new housing. The other suggestion of a north/south divide mid-way through the estate seems to be an artificial demarcation that would not meet the community identity test.

25. In considering which option to select for publication as a draft proposal, Members should have in mind the importance of establishing a sustainable long term boundary that defines the limits between the two communities of Birchanger and Stansted.
26. As previously reported, the boundary between the two parishes has already changed twice within the last thirty years, principally to accommodate changes in the Stoney Common area, much of which was historically part of Birchanger parish. This area, as well as Foresthall Park, is now seen as a southern extension to the limits of Stansted village, more so with the natural turnover in occupancy at Stoney Common.
27. In relation to the comments by Stansted Parish Council about the anomalies at Brook View, Stoney Place and Rochford Close, as well as at Thremhall Priory, it should be noted that the boundary dealing with these areas was settled back in 2004.
28. Please note the comments of Birchanger Parish Council concerning the function of the boundary in helping to prevent coalescence of the two villages and so satisfying the wishes of residents for Birchanger to remain as a separate settlement.
29. A further communication was received from Birchanger Parish Council at the end of September suggesting a slightly modified boundary line to reflect concerns about the continual erosion of the parish boundary. This is said to reflect the views of longer established residents of Forest Hall Road, although there is presently no evidence for this as only the comments of the occupiers of Broom Hill have been received to date.
30. However, there is undoubtedly some sensitivity about the gradual nibbling away of the boundary and the Parish Council is clearly anxious to draw a line in the sand. It is worth noting in this context that the effect of the boundary line proposed by both parishes would be to transfer to Stansted those properties located on Pines Hill south of the Old Bell Hotel, as well as all properties on the northern side of Forest Hall Road. The middle of the road would thus form the boundary for the majority of its length.
31. There is very little difference between the proposals submitted by both parish councils. Perhaps the main difference is that Stansted Parish Council envisages the cluster of properties at Forest Hall would all be in Stansted.
32. In selecting an option for consultation, it will be helpful for Members to define the proposed boundary clearly so that residential occupiers will be able to judge the effect on them as well as on the surrounding area.

Options to agree a draft proposal at Foresthall Park

33. As previously stated a series of options are available to resolve the uncertainty and confusion at this location. Members are asked to select one option as their preferred proposal for consultation purposes. This does not mean that other options cannot be offered as part of the consultation and it will probably be helpful to set these out for consideration by local residents.

34. In suggested order of feasibility, the options are:

- Option 1 - Transfer the entire site into Stansted defining the boundary either as proposed by Birchanger Parish Council, or by Stansted Parish Council (see map to be displayed at the meeting), or by an agreed alternative: This is undoubtedly the preferred option of most of those who have offered a view to date and appears to offer the best means of reflecting community interests and identities and ensuring the effective delivery of services.
- Option 2 - Create a new, separate parish of Foresthall Park: This is probably the next most feasible option but would be difficult to achieve and appears at this stage to have no local support. It would have the merit of helping to create a cohesive community and to build community values. However, it will divide the new development from the existing community of Stansted and separate new community facilities (such as a school and/or health centre) from much of the area they are intended to serve. A new parish should be considered only in the event of overwhelming support and would seem to be inappropriate at this location.
- Option 3 - Tidy up the boundary in a way to be agreed, so that it would not divide houses or roads: This would create a new artificial division within Foresthall Park and would not help to foster community identity. It would be a half-way house solution and leave the basic question unanswered. The only suggested way to achieve this would be to redraw the boundary on a north/south line through the middle of the estate. Neither this nor any other possible method of redrawing the boundary within the estate itself seems at all satisfactory and would be unlikely to meet the two tests referred to above.
- Option 4 - Transfer the entire site into Birchanger: This option appears to have little or no local support and would divide the new community from its seemingly natural home in the village of Stansted. It would at least have the merit of keeping the entire estate in one parish and this would help with the maintenance of community facilities. It is hard to see that this solution would remain a sustainable boundary in the long term and would be unlikely to enjoy widespread support.
- Option 5 – Leave things as they are: Not seen to be a sustainable option (although two people have suggested it) as it would leave the present confusion over the line of the boundary unresolved and lead to a loss of community identity.

35. Members are therefore asked to review the options above and select a preferred option to be published as a draft proposal.
36. It is suggested that a letter be sent to all potentially affected occupiers clearly stating the Council's preference at this stage, but also listing the other possible options for change, with the commentary above, to give a background to the boundary problems and the different ways in which they can be resolved. It is also suggested that a simple voting form be sent to every household, with the options listed in order of feasibility, as a sensible way to establish community identities and to promote a good response.
37. In considering what boundary changes to introduce, the Council must consider (s95, LG&PIHA) what **electoral arrangements** should apply to either a new or an existing parish council subject to review. The matters to be considered are:
- Whether the number or distribution of local government electors would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient
 - Whether it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented
 - If the parish is divided into wards the size and boundaries of the wards and the number of councillors to be elected for each must be decided
 - If the parish is not to be divided into wards the number of councillors to be elected for the parish
 - In either case above the number of local government electors and any change in the number or distribution of electors in the period of five years from the start of the review
38. In effect therefore, the electoral scheme to be agreed must take close account of the expected electorate in 2015. The following section of the report contains estimated electorate figures under some of the different options and suggests electoral arrangements for the parishes concerned under each of those options. The selected option in each case should be published as part of the draft proposals so that respondents will better understand the implications of the options under consideration.
39. Please refer to the table on the following page:

Parish	Electors 2015	Cllrs	Ward	Electors 2015	Cllrs
Option1	Transfer to Stansted				
Birchanger	728	9			
Stansted	5817	15	North	2342	6
			South	3475	9
Option 2	New parish				
Birchanger	728	9			
Forest Hall Park	1087	9			
Stansted	4730	14	North	2342	7
			South	2388	7
Option 4	Transfer to Birchanger				
Birchanger	1815	12	Foresthall Pk	1087	7
			Village	728	5
Stansted	4730	14	North	2342	7
			South	2388	7

40. The above table demonstrates the consequences for the electoral scheme in each parish of the option concerned. No figures have been produced for either option 3 or option 5. In the case of option 5 the prospect of retaining existing boundaries seems very remote and in the case of option 3, it is not possible to produce meaningful figures in the absence of a suggested boundary.

41. Finally, Members are asked to confirm the intention to delay the parish elections at both Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet until May 2012. Whichever option is finally agreed for implementation will have potential consequences for the electoral scheme in both parishes and it seems sensible to delay the election until such time as the transferred electors can vote in their new parish.

42. The reorganisation boundary change order will include a simple clause to extend the term of office of existing parish councillors for a further year and nominate a fresh date of the first Thursday in May 2012 as the ordinary day

of election in those parishes. The subsequent term of office will then be shortened to three years allowing the next election date to fall back into line with the ordinary elections in 2015.

43. Members are asked to:

- Select one option from the five listed in paragraph 34 to publish as the Council's draft proposal for consultation between the beginning of November and 1 February 2011.
- Select a preferred electoral scheme from those above for publication as part of the above proposal.
- Confirm the intention to delay the ordinary election of parish councillors in Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet until May 2012.
- Confirm the intention to include all of the options for change in the letter of consultation to local residents to enable the views of residents to be properly tested.

Submissions received – Priors Green

44. Members are asked to refer to the schedule at appendix B. This contains all of the comments and proposals received at the initial stage of the review.

45. It is encouraging that at least 13 different occupiers living on the Priors Green site have submitted their views and some of these have made direct proposals either for change or for no change. In addition, detailed comments have been received from both Little Canfield and Takeley Parish Councils and from County Councillor Susan Barker.

46. One thing that becomes immediately apparent in examining the comments made is the widespread confusion between postal address and parish location. A number of other factors are also mentioned such as the extra cachet attached to the 'rural' name of Little Canfield, the effect of address location on property prices and the apparent desperation in some cases to avoid any association with Takeley.

47. Unfortunately, not one of the residents in the Takeley portion of the estate has responded at this stage of the review but that will become more important at the next stage of the review after the publication of proposals.

48. Although the previous paragraph but one refers to apparently trivial factors being mentioned by some respondents, nevertheless, the range and depth of comments made by many local residents is impressive. There is a lot of reference to actions taken to achieve integration between the new and old communities, and to active participation by many newer residents in the church and other aspects of village life such as the allotments association, neighbourhood watch and walking in the countryside. The Byford family of Thornton Road (residents for 27 years) refer to the inspiration of seeing

new residents participating in local activities. It is clear that many of the respondents have put a great deal of thought into their representations.

49. In general, it is quite clear that the majority of those responding would prefer to see no change to the boundary, as would the two parish councils, but a number of suggestions have been made – as detailed in the next section of the report below – for alternative arrangements to be made. I have tried to identify these as accurately as possible in the following paragraphs.

Identification and evaluation of proposals submitted at Priors Green

50. Sifting the various proposals received in respect of the boundary at Priors Green is sadly not the relatively straightforward matter it appears to be at Foresthall Park and there are a number of complicating factors.
51. It is clearly entirely a matter of chance that the historic boundary at this location has been overgrown by a new residential development. The one piece of good fortune has been that the various phases of the development have not crossed the boundary as at Foresthall Park and so there are no anomalous areas to be tidied up.
52. The simplest solution would be to leave things as they are but that would not necessarily meet the twin tests of community interest and identity, and the effective and convenient delivery of services. The various options under discussion should first be properly tested before an assessment can be made of the best solution for the residents of Takeley and Little Canfield, and those of Priors Green in particular.
53. The identification of a preferred option to be published is likely to be challenging, but even if Members decide they would prefer to see things left as they are, there is sufficient evidence of support for alternative solutions to justify a range of options being offered to local residents at the next stage of consultation. All of the proposals submitted must be properly evaluated to assess the merits of each before a decision can be made.
54. A number of respondents to the initial consultation have proposed leaving everything as it is, with no boundary adjustments being made. Little Canfield Parish Council comment that ‘councillors do not wish any changes to take place’ and list reasons for maintaining that position. However, there is a caveat to the Parish Council’s comments that a boundary change could be considered to include all residents with a Little Canfield address within the parish.
55. Takeley Parish Council state that ‘neither Uttlesford DC nor Little Canfield Parish Council has any ambition to change the current parish boundaries’ and that ‘unless a large number of people come forward to suggest otherwise, TPC believes it is too early in the life of Priors Green to make any judgement regarding boundary changes’. In effect, the Parish Council is not ruling out a boundary change but is saying that, in the absence of

overwhelming evidence that change is desired, there should first be a settling in period.

56. My feeling about this suggestion is that the current review is the one opportunity to make any change as the prospect of undertaking a further review in the future, once the estate is fully occupied, would cause further annoyance and disruption. The administration of services would by then have settled down and community spirit evolved naturally, so any future review would be likely to prove disruptive.
57. Both Takeley and Little Canfield Parish Councils refer to the confusion caused by the allocation of Little Canfield postal addresses to the whole of the estate and Takeley asks for representations to be made to Royal Mail by Uttlesford. The question of the postal addresses allocated to residences on the estate has been a potential cause of confusion throughout this review. Priors Green dwellings were originally allocated Takeley CM22 addresses but this was changed to Little Canfield, Dunmow CM6 because the delivery office for CM22 could not cope with the numbers involved. There does not seem to be any realistic prospect of changing the addresses as requested by Takeley Parish Council whatever happens to the line of the boundary.
58. As far as can be identified (by discounting residents who comment only about their own personal position), no fewer than eight individuals or groups of residents have submitted specific proposals. Of those, the first preference of four of them (Mr Schouten, Sally Brady, Sue Gowlett, and the Byford family) is to retain existing boundaries unchanged, three would prefer to see the whole development unified within Little Canfield (Mrs Lighten, Mr & Mrs McAdams, and Mr & Mrs Leon), while the first preference of David Perry of Dryvers Close is for the creation of a new parish of Priors Green (possibly to be called Canfield Green).
59. Five of those mentioned in the previous paragraph have submitted alternative proposals, two of whom suggest a new parish as the next best option while Mr Perry states the transfer of the whole area to Little Canfield to be his second preference. Sue Gowlett suggests two possible boundary adjustments as a possible alternative to no change.
60. I will next try to evaluate each of the proposals in turn and then go on in the following section to set out the options available to Members in deciding the way ahead.

Options to agree a draft proposal at Priors Green

61. As stated above, there are a range of options for determining the position of the parish boundary at this location. The evidence received to date does not lead to an obvious conclusion being reached and it seems clear that a further stage of public consultation is essential to test properly those options under consideration. Only then will it be possible to reach a view about the preferences of those people living at Priors Green.

62. Nevertheless, the Council must select one option to publish as its draft proposal and this will inform the second consultation stage. It is felt that all possible options should be listed in the consultation, perhaps in descending order of feasibility if it is possible at this stage for that to be agreed. The options are described below with accompanying commentary highlighting the arguments for and against each one. Maps will be displayed at the meeting indicating the effect of each of the options.

- Option 1 - Transfer the entire site to Little Canfield: At first sight, this seems the most supported option and it has the merit of uniting the entire Priors Green site in one parish. When I visited the location I received a strong impression that the new development is, or has the potential to be, a cohesive community and there is much to be said for unifying the entire development area. This seems to be borne out by the comments of many of the residents (although as previously stated, there is a lack of input to date from residents in the Takeley part of the development). Ultimately, this would lead to the transfer of at least 387 dwelling units to Little Canfield (more if existing properties along Dunmow Road, on the island sites, and possibly in Jacks Lane as well, are also transferred). This would prove a considerable challenge to Little Canfield Parish as the administrative support available to the Parish Council is presently limited compared to the set up in the larger parish of Takeley. It would also have the merit of unifying all of the community facilities, as well as the proposed school, in one parish and possibly simplifying the management of those facilities. One example of this is that the community hall (situated just in Takeley parish adjoining the roundabout linking Honey Road and Bennett Canfield) would be the ideal polling venue for the Priors Green area, incorporating adjoining properties in Dunmow Road. Although we cannot prejudge next year's polling district review, I would expect the creation of a separate polling district of Priors Green to be a strong option. This would be less feasible, though still a possible option, if parish boundaries remain unchanged, as residents on the Little Canfield portion of the site would have to travel to the existing village hall on Stortford Road to cast their vote. The major complication with all of this is that the agreement for the management of the community hall will transfer the ownership of the facility to Takeley Parish Council, although the management will be undertaken by a charitable trust consisting of volunteers living locally. I cannot comment on the impact a boundary change would have on the management arrangements and it seems the consultation must go ahead on the basis that the agreement and facilities transfer will proceed regardless.
- Option 2 – leave the boundary unchanged: There is no doubt that this remains a strong option. A number of residents have stated no change as their first preference and there will be no disturbance to the handover and management arrangements for the community facilities on the site. It is also the option that will cause the least disturbance to existing residents. However, the boundary line will arguably maintain an arbitrary distinction between different parts of a single community, and will miss the opportunity to unify the community within one parish area. For that reason, the option of no change may not meet the community identity test and the need to

secure the effective delivery of local services. It is likely that all postal addresses will remain under the CM6 postcode and this may continue to cause confusion. Electors on the Little Canfield portion of the site will probably continue to have to travel to the village hall to vote instead of voting at the nearby community centre. However, this option is favoured by the two parish councils concerned.

- Option 3 – Create a new, separate parish of Priors Green (or other agreed name): This may be the best way to unify the two parts of the estate without having to choose between Little Canfield and Takeley in agreeing new boundaries. It would have the merit of helping to create a cohesive community and in building community values. It has been suggested as a first preference by one resident and by two others as a second preference. However, it would to some extent separate new residents from existing residents in the surrounding communities and might make the process of integration more difficult to achieve. In my view, it would need very strong evidence of local support before such an option could be considered as the arrangements needed to establish a new parish council would be very challenging to achieve. There is probably much less of a case for a new parish here than at Flich Green because there the new development was more clearly separate from the villages of Felsted and Little Dunmow and integration had not occurred to anything like the same extent. However, the option of a new parish should be available as an option for consideration at the consultation stage. It would be difficult to define a new parish boundary line as there remains the possibility of further development in the future both to the east of the existing site, as far as The Lion and Lamb public house, and to the north of the approved development north of Jacks Lane. There is also the proposal by Mr Perry to consider that the new parish boundary should encompass existing houses on the south side of Dunmow Road from the junction with Canfield Road to The Lion and Lamb.
- Option 4 – Merge the two parishes of Takeley and Little Canfield into a single new parish. This has not been suggested or proposed by anyone but is put forward as one possible way of achieving total integration of all of the various communities in the two villages as well as at Priors Green. It would simplify the management arrangements for the new community facilities and help to accommodate possible future development east and north of Priors Green. Of course, both parishes naturally wish to maintain their independence and may well not favour this option but it may be a possible way of integrating all of the communities without the difficult problem of defining a boundary line. The main advantage of this solution would be to make redundant arguments about the position of the boundary as all of Priors Green, including any possible development areas to the north and east, would be controlled by a single parish administration. The parish could, if desired, still be split into wards so the communities of Little Canfield and Takeley – and possibly Priors Green as well – could be elected separately.

- Option 5 – Group together the two parishes of Little Canfield into a single parish council: This would be a slightly simpler way of achieving an integrated parish council without a formal merger taking place. Parish council affairs would still come under a common council but there would be a requirement to ensure separate representation for both parishes. This would be determined proportionally by the number of electors in each parish. The grouping arrangement could be accompanied by a simple transfer of the whole of Priors Green into either one parish or the other; there may be less argument about the definition of the boundary in this case as the estate would in any event fall under the common parish council. Alternatively, the boundary could simply stay where it is as the whole area will be administered by the same parish council in any event. However, the grouping could at some future point be dissolved by agreement from both parishes whereas this could not happen under a merger as the parishes would be unified.
- Option 6 – Implement an agreed boundary change that would not affect the whole of the Priors Green development: Please refer to the comments received from Sue Gowlett of Warwick Road. She has suggested two possible alternative alignments of the boundary. The first of these would redraw the boundary around the Countryside development land north of Jacks Lane to include the whole of that area in Little Canfield. This would thus transfer to that parish an additional approximately 327 residential units from Takeley parish. If the east/west boundary is to be changed, she also suggests the new line be drawn along or at Broadfield Road. This would place an additional approximately 50 dwelling units into Little Canfield. If both of these suggestions are followed, it would leave approximately 100 units in Takeley parish. Because of the way the island sites are being developed, including at Broadfield Road, it would be difficult to select a suitable alternative boundary line in that location and there would still remain houses located immediately on either side of the boundary line. If either suggestion were to be followed, part of the Priors Green site would remain in Takeley parish and part in Little Canfield. It does not seem entirely logical to undertake boundary changes that would result in the transfer of a substantial number of dwellings, without achieving unification of the whole site. The rationale behind this proposal is that there is a woodland area between the western part of the site and the remainder east of Broadfield Road and this would result in a demarcation point at a natural break between the two areas.
- Option 7 – Transfer the entire Priors Green site to Takeley: This seems the least favoured option of all. In fact no-one has supported it to date although one respondent – Janis Keith of Burgates Road – says she has equal involvement in Takeley. However, it could be argued that Priors Green has more natural affinity with Takeley than with Little Canfield. This is because roughly two-thirds of both the site and the houses will be in Takeley parish, as will the community hall and the school, and the built up nature of the estate may be seen to blend in better with the much larger settlement of Takeley. Takeley Parish Council also seems presently more equipped to undertake the administrative support required in dealing with

the associated community facilities. Set against this however, remains the apparent lack of support within the estate itself for an association with Takeley parish.

63. Members are asked to review the options above and select a preferred option to be published as a draft proposal. The review will go forward and full consultation undertaken even if Members select the no change option as their proposal. This is because the review must run its course through all of the consultation stages and the Council may decide to change its mind at a later stage depending on the nature of the responses received at the second consultation stage.

64. As suggested above in relation to Foresthall Park, it is recommended that a letter be sent to all potentially affected occupiers clearly stating the Council's preference but listing all of the possible options for change, with the potential advantages and disadvantages of each listed, and seeking comments in the form of a simple voting slip with space for comments to be added.

65. Electoral arrangements must be considered, on the basis of the five year electorate forecast, as listed in paragraph 37 above.

66. In selecting an option for publication, please refer to the following table, and to the figures listed in the Parish Electorate Estimates schedule (appendix E):

Parish	Electors 2015	Cllrs	Ward	Electors 2015	Cllrs
Option 1	Transfer to Lt Canfield				
Little Canfield	1360	12	Priors Green	1169	9
			Village	191	3
Takeley	2380	12			
Option 2	No change				
Little Canfield	713	9	Priors Green	522	6
			Village	191	3
Takeley	3028	13			
Option 3	New parish				
Little Canfield	191	6			

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Parish	Electors 2015	Cllrs	Ward	Electors 2015	Cllrs
Option 3 cont. Priors Green	1324	9			
Takeley	2157	12			
Option 4	Merge parishes				
4A	3741	15	Little Canfield	191	1
Takeley and Little Canfield			Priors Green	1169	5
			Takeley	2381	9
4B	3741	15	Little Canfield and Priors Green	1360	6
Takeley and Little Canfield			Takeley	2381	9
Option 5	Group parishes				
5A	3741	15	Little Canfield	191	1
Takeley and Little Canfield			Priors Green	522	3
			Takeley	3028	11
5B	3741	15	Little Canfield and Priors Green	713	3
Takeley and Little Canfield			Takeley	3028	12
5C	3741	15	Little Canfield	191	1
Takeley and Little Canfield			Priors Green	1169	5
			Takeley	2381	9
5D	3741	15	Little Canfield and Priors Green	1360	6
Takeley and Little Canfield			Takeley	2381	9

Parish	Electors 2015	Cllrs	Ward	Electors 2015	Cllrs
Option 6	Boundary change				
6A	1285	10	Little Canfield	191	2
Little Canfield			Priors Green	1094	8
Takeley	2456	12			
6B	1372	10	Little Canfield	191	2
Little Canfield			Priors Green	1181	8
Option 7	Transfer to Takeley				
Little Canfield	191	6			
Takeley	3550	15	Priors Green	1329	6
			Takeley Village	2221	9

67. The above table demonstrates the potential consequences for the electoral scheme under each of the options shown in paragraph 62. It appears as a complicated picture but is probably more straightforward than seems at first sight. Under some of the options, parish warding is optional but the advantage of a warding scheme is twofold. First it produces representation on a broadly proportional basis from each part of the parish. Secondly it guarantees at least some representation for each part.

68. Members are asked to select an electoral scheme from the table, or an agreed alternative, applicable to the selected boundary review option from paragraph 62. This will not set the electoral scheme in stone but has the advantage of showing all of those consulted what would be likely to happen under each of the options highlighted. The Council can change its mind at the final proposals stage expected next March.

69. Finally, Members are asked to confirm the intention to delay the parish elections at both Little Canfield and Takeley until May 2012. This will enable those electors transferred to a new parish, or simply placed in a new parish ward, to vote under the revised arrangements.

70. In conclusion, the decisions requested are as follows:

- Select one option from the seven listed in paragraph 62 for publication as the Council’s draft proposal for consultation between the beginning of November and 1 February 2011.
- Select a preferred electoral scheme from those listed in the table above, relevant to the boundary review option.
- Confirm the intention to delay the ordinary election of parish councillors in Little Canfield and Takeley until May 2012.
- Confirm the intention to include all of the options for change in the letter of consultation to parish councils and local residents to enable views to be properly tested.

Risk Analysis

71. See risk analysis below.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Parish boundaries and voting arrangements do not reflect the community identities and values of the district’s residents	2 – if the review is conducted according to the timetable proposed any community dissatisfaction is likely to be assuaged but short term dissatisfaction may remain	3 – damage may be done to community values and to levels of community participation if action is not taken as proposed	The review process will involve full consultation with affected residents and other bodies such as parish councils as well as the opportunity to submit proposals for consideration

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.