

# AGENDA ITEM No. 12

## Cambourne Parish Council – Report on Council Size.

### Summary.

The purpose of this report is to outline the rationale for the request of a community governance review for the Parish of Cambourne, with the aim in mind of increasing the number of Parish Councillors from 13 to 19. Should such an order be made, it is the recommendation of this report that it coincide with the move to all-out elections in May 2018.

### Introduction.

Cambourne Parish Council was formed under the Parish Council of Cambourne Order 2004 and became part of the Bourn Ward comprising the Parishes of Bourn, Cambourne, Caxton, Croxton and Eltisley. The original masterplan for Cambourne put the number of houses to be built at 3,300. In 2011 a further 950 homes were approved bringing the total number of occupied houses expected to be in Cambourne upon completion to 4,250.

Although outside the scope of this report, at time of writing a planning application ([S/2903/14/OL](#)) submitted by MCA developments Ltd in December of 2014 for development at land identified as Cambourne West, for up to 2350 new dwellings, is being considered. Furthermore the emerging local plan for South Cambridgeshire is being scrutinised by a government appointed inspector. The local plan proposes 1,200 homes at the same site. Consequently it seems likely that the number of homes in Cambourne is set to increase significantly unless both the local plan and the present application are rejected. Should the application from MCA be approved, the eventual total number of houses in Cambourne will be approximately 6,965, giving rise to a population of c. 19,200.

### Meeting frequency.

Cambourne Parish Council is a large Council with a busy and frequent meeting schedule. Given its nature as an emerging community, work that otherwise may be spread out over decades in other Parishes has been condensed into a period of 17 years (since the first families moved in) in Cambourne. The workload and remit of the Parish Council has grown concomitantly with the increase in population, and will continue to grow with new and ongoing development.

In addition to meetings of the Full Council, the Parish Council has 3 standing committees, and several working parties. All Parish Cllrs serve on at least one committee, with a number serving on multiple committees and working parties. The Planning Committee in particular is very busy, with fortnightly meetings and often considering major reserved matters applications as Cambourne continues to develop. The table below illustrates the typical frequency of meetings over a municipal year.

<b>Committee / Full Council</b>	<b>Approx Meetings per year</b>
Full Council	16
Planning Committee	26
Finance & Policy Committee	5
Leisure & Amenities Committee	5
Various working parties	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>

### **Workload.**

As mentioned, the Parish Council is a busy Council. In addition to the normal day-to-day duties that any Parish Council would undertake there are a significant number of other, often time-consuming, projects underway. The nature of these projects means it is necessary for Councillors to get involved and share some of the workload.

Specific projects requiring Cllr involvement and/or a working party include:

- The Annual Cambourne Fete.
- The Provision of a Post Office.
- Oversight and promotion of Sports & Leisure activities in Cambourne.
- Consolidation and provision of facilities made possible by multi-million pound S106 deals.
- Co-ordination and promotion of an ever-increasing pool of volunteers.
- Driving community led initiatives such as the Parish Plan.
- Leading on transport and infrastructure based initiatives.
- Liaising with over 300 community groups, clubs and societies.
- Liaising with developers and principal authorities.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather offers a snapshot of the type and scale of activities Cllrs are involved with in addition to their duties as members of the Parish Council or any of its standing committees.

### **Election & Co-option history.**

Since the Parish Council was formed, there have been 4 ordinary elections, all of which were uncontested, a situation not unusual for Parish Councils in South Cambs.

Casual vacancies in Cambourne tend to consistently attract more candidates than there are seats. By-elections have always been contested and co-options have generated substantial numbers of applicants. The table below offers more detail.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Candidates</b>	<b>Seats</b>
June 2004	Co-option	4	3
Jan 2005	Co-option	7	3
2006	By-election	5	1
2007	By election	3	3
May 2008	Co-option	4	1
July 2008	Co-option	7	1
2009	By-election	3	2
2011	By-election	3	2
July 2012	Co-option	8	2
2012	By-election	3	1
May 2013	Co-option	4	1
July 2013	Co-option	4	1
May 2014	Co-option	5	2
Dec 2014	Co-option	3	2
Nov 2015	Co-option	2	2
June 2016	Co-option	6	4

### **Parish Council Size.**

The table below shows Parish Councillor seats compared to size of electorate for Parishes in the district with Councillor numbers equal to, or greater, than that of Cambourne. Figures provided by electoral services at South Cambs District Council.

<b>Parish</b>	<b>Electorate (Sept 2016)</b>	<b>Seats</b>
<b>Cambourne</b>	<b>6962</b>	<b>13</b>
Sawston	5633	19
Histon & Impington [grouped] *	6405 (3646 + 2759)	19 (11 + 8)
Cottenham	4792	15
Melbourn	3719	15
Girton	3582	15
Waterbeach	3572	15
Linton	3545	15
Great Shelford	3529	15
Milton	3331	15
Willingham	3206	15
Bar Hill	3204	13
Fulbourn	3138	15
Gamlingay	2996	15
Papworth	2744	13

*\* Histon & Impington are grouped together as one parish but treated as separate for election purposes.*

Cambourne is under-represented when it comes to ratio of Cllrs to residents. There are a number of Parishes in the district with an electorate half the size of Cambourne's, yet have more Councillors.

### **Cambourne West**

Detailed discussion of the Governance of Cambourne West is outside the scope of this report, yet it seems likely that if the development is approved then it will fall under the remit of Cambourne Parish Council pending a boundary review which will be the subject of a separate community governance review.

An increase in the number of Councillors will see the Parish Council well placed to govern Cambourne West while at the same time providing enough seats that those residents who will eventually live there will have opportunity to join the Parish Council. It is also certain that the workload of the Parish Council will increase dramatically should Cambourne West be approved. The Planning Committee in particular can look forward to 10-15 years of large reserved matters planning applications as the individual land parcels are developed.