

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



held on Monday 23 October 2017 at 6.30 pm
in Meeting Room 1, 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, Milton, OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Yvonne Constance (Chairman), Ed Blagrove, Charlotte Dickson, Gervase Duffield, Ben Mabbett and Helen Pighills

Officers: Steven Corrigan, Matthew Gaskin and Margaret Reed

Number of members of the public: 5

12. Apologies for absence

None.

13. Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 August 2017 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman signs them as such.

14. Declarations of interest

None.

15. Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

16. Public participation

The list of public speakers who had registered in relation to items on the agenda was tabled at the meeting.

17. Community Governance Reviews - suggested timetable and process

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services regarding recommendations for a revised timetable and process for community governance reviews.

Councillor Emily Smith, Vale of White Horse District Council ward member for Botley and Sunningwell, spoke in support of the recommendations, referencing the recent proposals to amend the boundary of Sunningwell parish, which was discussed at the previous meeting, as an example of how the current system is unsatisfactory. Her points included the following:

- The current process is confusing, piecemeal and not sufficiently transparent.
- Undertaking a review every four years would simplify the process, improve neighbourly parish relations and address the problem of insufficient resource to carry out reviews.

The committee agreed that this approach would improve relations between parish councils seeking further changes following review consultations and would be a far better system of carrying out community governance reviews on a timetabled basis every four years.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To agree that the council undertakes a community governance review every four years with changes agreed for implementation at the next scheduled parish elections; and**
- 2. To recommend that Council rescinds its resolution agreed on 16 July 2014 that a significant development proposal that sits adjacent to or straddles a parish boundary should automatically trigger a community governance review, such a review to take place on the inclusion of a site in a document that forms part of the approved Local Plan or when planning permission has been granted for the development of the site.**

18. Community Governance Review - review of Harwell East and Great Faringdon and Great Coxwell

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the review of electoral arrangements for a new parish of Harwell East and the Great Coxwell and Great Faringdon parish boundary. These matters had been deferred by Council in July 2014.

Jacqui Russell, of Great Coxwell Parish Council, spoke. Her points included the following:

- Great Coxwell Parish Council supports the relocation of the boundary to place the properties in Fernham Fields within the Faringdon parish. This contradicts their historic objection outlined in the report when plans for building on the site had not been finalised in July 2014.
- The proposed timetable is driven by elections in 2019 and Great Coxwell Parish Council are unhappy to be responsible for the Fernham Fields development until then and do not wish to receive the precept.

- The Steeds development should also be included in Faringdon parish.

Andrew Marsden, Chair of the Faringdon Town Council Planning and Highways Committee, raised the following points:

- The Steeds development should be included in Great Faringdon parish.
- The views of Great Coxwell Parish Council included in the report are outdated and a community governance review should already have taken place.

The officers confirmed, in response to these points, that any alteration of the parish boundaries would not be implemented until the scheduled parish council elections in May 2019. Altering the boundaries prior to May 2019 would trigger an election as the areas represented by councillors would be changed. This would incur significant costs to the parish councils affected. The timescale for the review (up to 12 months) would also not facilitate an earlier implementation of any changes to parish boundaries agreed as part of the review.

Officers confirmed that the views of Great Coxwell Parish Council expressed in July 2014 were included in the report as this was the parish's position at the time of the deferral, and additional views presented at the committee, which represented a change of position, were helpful to the committee. Any change to the parish boundary implemented as part of this review would impact on the precept for the 2019/2020 financial year.

The committee agreed to include the Steeds development, as well as the Fernham Fields development, in the review of the Great Faringdon and Great Coxwell parish boundary. The committee also agreed to undertake a review to create a new parish of Harwell East and to authorise the publication of the terms of reference in respect of these reviews by the head of legal and democratic services.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To undertake a review to create a new parish of Harwell East and to agree its electoral arrangements;**
- 2. To undertake a review of the Great Faringdon and Great Coxwell parish boundary; and**
- 3. To authorise the head of legal and democratic services to draft and publish the terms of reference for the reviews the committee agreed at this meeting.**

The meeting closed at 7.10 pm