

CGR B (21)

Parishes Affected

Sunningwell, Radley and Kennington (and South Hinksey and Cumnor in respect of the consultation on Sunningwell Parish Council's proposals)

Matter to be considered

Proposal one

Amending the boundary of Radley parish to include Chandlings Manor School currently in Kennington parish (subject to LGBC consent).

Proposal two

Amending the boundary of Sunningwell parish to include land to the west of Oxford Road currently in Kennington and Radley parishes (subject to LGBC consent).

Proposal agreed by the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 14 August 2017 for consultation

To consult on a draft proposal (proposal two) to extend the boundary of Sunningwell parish to include land to the west of Oxford Road currently in Kennington and Radley parishes.

The committee also agreed to consult on the following proposals:

- A proposal from South Hinksey Parish Council to transfer a parcel of land at the top of Hinksey Hill which includes The Westwood Hotel from Kennington parish to South Hinksey parish.
- A proposal from Sunningwell Parish council to transfer Chilswell Farm Cottages off Foxcombe Road to Sunningwell parish from Cumnor parish on the grounds that the properties are remote and separated from any other community but have a close attachment with BoarsHill/Sunningwell parish. (NB – agreement of this would necessitate a further review to allow for a comprehensive consultation exercise)
- A proposal from Sunningwell Parish Council to transfer 14 houses on the north side of Hinksey Hill up to and including the property known as Brunswick (recently renamed Wishem House) to Sunningwell parish from South Hinksey parish on the grounds that the properties are part of the Boars Hill community and relate to Boars Hill/Sunningwell parish rather than South Hinksey. (NB – agreement of this would necessitate a further review to allow for a comprehensive consultation exercise)

Summary of parish council responses to the draft proposal to extend the boundary of Sunningwell parish to include land to the west of Oxford Road currently in Kennington and Radley parishes.

Kennington Parish Council has responded that it has no comments on the proposed change.

Radley Parish Council objects to the proposal because it would divide the community around Sugworth Lane.

Sunningwell Parish Council supports the proposed change.

Summary of other responses

A summary of the responses received to the earlier consultation were submitted to the committee at its meeting in August and showed opinion was split between respondents in favour and against the proposed boundary changes between Radley and Sunningwell and Kennington and Sunningwell.

One further response was received in support of the proposal to transfer land from Radley parish to Sunningwell parish.

A further objection has been received against the proposal to transfer properties from Radley to Sunningwell because it will split the community along Sugworth Lane.

Summary of responses to Sunningwell Parish Council's proposals

A. Transfer of Westwood Hotel from Kennington to South Hinksey

South Hinksey proposed the change.

Sunningwell Parish Council does not support the proposal which conflicts with their view that the hotel should form part of the transfer of land from Kennington to Sunningwell parish – see attached letter.

No other responses have been received to this proposal.

B. Transfer of Chilswell Cottages

Sunningwell Parish Council put forward the proposal and has submitted a further letter of support – see attached letter.

Cumnor Parish Council objects to the proposed transfer – see correspondence attached.

Two residents of Chilswell Cottages responded. One supported the proposal and one supported the proposal in principle although questioned the underlying motive for the proposal from Sunningwell Parish Council.

C. Transfer of properties from Foxcombe Road

Sunningwell Parish Council put forward the proposal and has submitted a further letter of support – see attached letter.

South Hinksey Parish Council has raised a strong objection to the process for the consideration of this issue due to the late publication of the proposal as an addendum to the agenda for the August meeting of the committee. It requests a deferral of the matter for six months to allow for a proper consideration of the matter and adequate consultation.

The council has received a number of representations on this issue. Three members of the public support the proposal in principle citing a sense of remoteness from South Hinksey. Two respondents proposed that any review should go further and consider the transfer of all of Hinksey Hill to Sunningwell parish to address the 'divisive' effect of the A34.

However a majority of respondents (18) opposed the current proposal on the following grounds:

- A lack of evidence for the proposal
- The current distribution of houses works well
- The proposal puts an arbitrary line between houses and provides for a piecemeal transfer of houses There is a strong link between the residents of Hinksey Hill and Hinksey Village
- Such a proposal requires a wider consultation process to understand the full implications on the wider community
- The proposal would divide the community of Hinksey Hill
- The proposal does not include all the land (meadowland and woods) in the ownership of the 14 properties
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- The loss of properties will threaten the financial viability of South Hinksey Parish Council

A number of respondents who opposed this proposal made reference to the merits of the transfer of the whole of Hinksey Hill to Sunningwell parish, to the need for a wider review of the area and the need to address the issues of community identity caused by the A34 dividing parishes.

Recommendation

To make no change to the boundary between Kennington, Radley and Sunningwell and South Hinksey and Cumnor.

Justification

This has been a lengthy review which has grown in scope and had a detrimental impact on parish council relations.

The review was initially commenced in 2013 to consider a proposal from Radley Parish Council to move Chandlings Manor School from Kennington parish into Radley parish due to issues with sewage outflows from the school that affect properties in Radley parish which, in the view of Radley Parish Council, would be better able to serve its residents if the school was in its area. As part of that review Sunningwell Parish Council put forward an alternative suggestion to transfer the school into its parish as part of a wider proposal to extend the boundary of Sunningwell parish to include land to the west of Oxford Road currently in Kennington and Radley parishes. At its meeting in July 2014 Council deferred consideration of this review and asked this committee to undertake a further review following the May 2015 elections. This committee agreed to undertake a review which the council commenced in November 2016 with the publication of the terms of reference. In August 2017, this committee agreed to consult on South Hinksey Parish Council's proposal set out in A above and Sunningwell Parish Council's proposals set out in B and C above. Due to the impact on residents, committee support for either B and C or both would trigger a further review involving wider consultation.

Whilst the proposal to extend the boundary of Sunningwell parish eastwards to the old Oxford Road would provide a well-defined man made boundary replacing the current boundary between the parishes, which follows an obscure line via woods and fields, it has not attracted a great deal of support or opposition and impacts on very few residents. It is clear from recent submissions and consultation responses from parish councils and residents that there remain wider issues for consideration. Agreeing the committee's proposal at this stage would not address all the issues raised, complicate any future review and risk the council reversing decisions made as part of this review at a future date.

Proposal A from South Hinksey Parish Council to include Westwood Hotel from Kennington parish to South Hinksey parish does not provide a clearly defined boundary or address any of the assessment criteria.

Proposal B from Sunningwell Parish Council has minimal public support, would divide an established community and would not deliver a clearly defined boundary.

Proposal C from Sunningwell Parish Council does have support. However, this proposal does not provide for a clearly defined boundary.

There is no overriding need to address this boundary which, whilst following an obscure line, is not impacting on community identity or resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours.

This committee has agreed to undertake a community governance review following the elections in May 2019. The period between now and 2019 would provide an opportunity for the neighbouring parishes to engage in dialogue particularly regarding the “Boars Hill” issue.