

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of head of legal and democratic

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To: Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

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Community Governance Review – Great Faringdon and Great Coxwell

Recommendations

To consult on a draft proposal to amend the boundary of Great Coxwell parish and Great Faringdon parish as shown on the map attached to this report – appendix 1.

Purpose of report

1. To invite the committee to agree a draft proposal for consultation in respect of the review of the boundary between Great Coxwell and Great Faringdon parishes to move land south of Faringdon from Great Coxwell parish into Great Faringdon parish.

Background

2. At its meeting on 23 October 2017 this committee agreed to undertake a review of the boundary between Great Coxwell parish and Great Faringdon parish to transfer areas of land on which planning permission had been granted for, and development started, on site.
 3. In agreeing to undertake the review the committee had regard to the following resolution agreed by Council at its meeting in 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.
 4. The terms of reference for the review were published in January.
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Consultation responses

5. Officers wrote to Great Coxwell Parish Council, Faringdon Town Council and all properties within the affected area on the map attached as appendix one (page 14) to this report advising them of the review and inviting comments on the proposal.
6. During the consultation Councillor Roger Cox, ward councillor for Faringdon, and Councillor Simon Howell, ward councillor for Shrivenham and Watchfield, noted that the proposed area did not reflect all the land designated for housing in the Local Plan and subject to the most recent planning application P18/V0259/O on The Steeds.
7. Faringdon Town Council support the proposal for the wider area as noted in paragraph 6. Its response is attached as appendix two to this report. It has drawn attention to the possible need to further extend the boundary to take account of a further planning application in Great Coxwell (see paragraph 6).
8. Great Coxwell Parish Council has confirmed its previous strong support for the transfer of the Fernham Fields (known as Faringdon Fields) site and that part of The Steeds site (known as Fernhill Gardens) as agreed by this committee for consultation at its meeting in October 2017. It considers that a further extension of the boundary in advance of a decision on the planning application would be premature.
9. No comments have been received from members of the public.
10. Any changes to the parish boundaries in this area will not impact on county division boundaries. As such Oxfordshire County Council has not been consulted on this review.

Consideration of proposal

11. As set out in paragraphs 6 and 7 above views have been expressed regarding the fact that the area of the proposed change does not reflect the site allocation in the Local Plan and specifically the area covered by the yet to be determined outline planning application (P18/V0259/O). A map showing the area concerned is attached at appendix three (page 20). The committee needs to consider whether to amend the area of the proposed boundary change to incorporate the larger area it in its draft proposals for consultation.
 12. Amending the area would comply with the resolution of Council set out in paragraph 3 of this report. However, as members of the committee will recall this committee recommended, at its meeting on 23 October, and Council agreed, at its meeting on 13 December 2017, to rescind this resolution to provide for a more structured review process. Whilst the site in question is included as a strategic site within the Local Plan planning permission has not yet been granted for the development and consideration of the application by the planning committee has been delayed. Officers consider that, in light of the uncertainty regarding the outcome of this planning application, that the area of the proposed boundary change should not be amended as part of this review. If planning permission is
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subsequently granted the council could undertake a review of this area following the May 2019 elections as part of its district wide scheduled review.

13. In recommending that the committee agrees the draft proposals for consultation officers consider that the identities and interests of the residents will be more closely aligned with Faringdon than the small rural parish of Great Coxwell. The developments better reflect the more built up nature of Faringdon in contrast to the rural nature of Great Coxwell. Effective and convenient representation of local residents will also be better served by them residing in Great Faringdon parish containing all the local facilities that they will use. The revised boundary would be bounded by the A420 and the boundaries of the Faringdon Fields and Fernhill Gardens developments.
14. As set out in paragraphs 5-9 there have been no negative comments on the principle of the proposal to amend the boundary. As such officers consider that the council should consult on a draft proposal to transfer the area of land shown on the map attached at appendix one into Great Faringdon parish.

Electoral arrangements

15. In undertaking a community governance review the council must have regard to electoral arrangements (parish councillor numbers/warding arrangements). The addition of these areas, and development within Great Faringdon parish itself, will increase the population by approximately 3,000 over the next five years. Officers are not recommending parish warding. The number and distribution of the electors would not make a single election of councillors impracticable. Whilst a large rural town it is largely centred around a central location and no evidence has been submitted of differing communities within the parish having separate identities to justify warding arrangements. Great Faringdon currently has 14 parish councillors which is still within the typical range for a population of 10,000 as evidenced in the joint guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and Local Government Boundary Commission for England in 2010. No increase in the number of parish councillors is proposed.

Impact on district and county council boundaries

16. This proposal would affect the Faringdon and Shrivenham and Watchfield district wards. If the committee agrees to alter the boundary of the parish the council will request a related alteration order is made by LGBCE to district ward boundaries to ensure these are coterminous with any change to the parish boundary. There is no impact on county division boundaries.

Financial Implications

17. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local authorities have responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews. The process is prescribed and involves officer time and other associated costs, such as postage and printing. These costs will be met from within existing budgets.
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Legal Implications

18. The Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee has delegated authority to deal with all matters relating to parish community governance reviews.
19. All community governance reviews are undertaken in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the joint guidance on community governance reviews published by the Communities and Local Government Department and Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) in 2010.
20. The council will implement any changes by making a reorganisation of community governance order.

Risks

21. There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of a particular review item through judicial review. Council officers will mitigate against this by ensuring that at all times the council follows the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

Conclusion

22. The council has completed the initial consultation on a review of the parish boundary between Great Coxwell and Great Faringdon parishes. The council received no objections to this proposal. It has received views suggesting that the area is increased to include all the land included in the Local Plan. The committee must consider whether there is a case to do this. Officers recommend that the committee does not alter the area under review and awaits the outcome of the planning application. The committee is therefore recommended to agree draft proposals for consultation to transfer the area of land shown on the attached map from Great Coxwell parish to Great Faringdon parish.

Background papers

Report to this committee on 23 October 2017 and minutes of that meeting
