

# 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 Coxwell and Great Faringdon

### Recommendation:

1. To amend the boundary between Great Coxwell parish and Great Faringdon parish as shown on the map attached to this report.
2. To authorise the head of legal and democratic to make a reorganisation of community governance order to implement the changes agreed by the committee.
3. That any review of the boundary between Great Faringdon and Eaton Hastings parishes is undertaken as part of the scheduled district wide review following the May 2019 elections.
4. To recommend Council to authorise the head of legal and democratic to request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to make a related alteration order to change district wards to reflect the change made to the parish boundary.

### Purpose of Report

1. To invite the committee to make a final decision in respect of its community governance review of the boundary between Great Coxwell parish and Great Faringdon parish.

### Strategic Objectives

2. Community governance reviews contribute to the council's strategic objective of building thriving communities.

## **Background**

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The terms of reference for the review were published in January 2018.
6. At its meeting on 21 June 2018 this committee considered consultation responses and agreed draft proposals for consultation. In doing so the committee agreed to extend the area of land under review to include all the land designated for housing in the Local Plan and subject to the most recent planning application P18/V0259/O on The Steeds.

## **Consultation on draft proposals**

7. Great Coxwell Parish Council is supportive of the committee's draft proposal. The full response is set out in appendix 1 to this report.
8. Faringdon Town Council has confirmed its support for the proposed boundary change. The full response is set out in appendix two to this report.
9. In supporting the draft proposal Faringdon Town Council has suggested that the parish boundary between Great Faringdon parish and Eaton Hastings parish is amended to take account of development at Camden Farm. This matter was not included in the terms of reference for this review and as such no consultation has been undertaken on this matter. Officers propose that any review of this area is undertaken as part of the district wide review scheduled to commence in the autumn of 2019.
10. No responses were received from members of the public or businesses.

## **Electoral arrangements**

11. 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 subject to the rate of completion of the developments. No proposals have been submitted to introduce warding arrangements at this time and 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 within the typical range for the size of population 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 at this time. Both issues could be revisited as part of the district wide community governance review scheduled to commence in autumn 2019.

## **Final recommendations**

12. The committee agreed to consult on a proposal to amend the boundary between Great Coxwell parish and Great Faringdon to include all the area of land designated for housing in the Local Plan.
13. Officers consider that the identities and interests of the residents will be more closely aligned with the town of Faringdon than the small rural parish of Great Coxwell. The existing and proposed properties are remote from 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. Both Great Coxwell Parish Council and Faringdon Town council support the proposed boundary change.
14. If the committee agrees to alter the boundary work will commence to make the necessary order to bring the change into effect in time for the 2019 parish council elections. The committee is invited to authorise the head of legal and democratic to undertake this work.

## **Impact on district and county council boundaries**

15. This proposal would affect Faringdon and Watchfield and Shrivenham wards. If the committee agrees to alter the boundary of the parish the committee is invited to recommend Council to agree to request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to make a related alteration order to make district wards coterminous with the parish change and authorise the head of legal and democratic to progress the matter. There is no impact on the county division boundaries.

## **Financial Implications**

16. 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 have been met from within existing budgets as will the cost of making the legal order.

## **Legal Implications**

17. The Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee has delegated authority to deal with all matters relating to parish community governance reviews. Matters relating to requests to alter district ward or county division boundaries arising from such reviews are not delegated to the committee and require a Council decision.
18. The review was 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 LGBCE in 2010.

19. The council will implement any changes by making a reorganisation of community governance order.

## **Risks**

20. There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of the review through judicial review. Council officers have mitigated against this by ensuring that the council follows the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

## **Conclusion**

21. The committee has completed its community governance review of the boundary between Great Coxwell parish and Great Faringdon parish. The committee is recommended to confirm its draft proposal and transfer the area of land shown on the attached map from Great Coxwell parish to Great Faringdon parish. The committee is also invited to recommend Council to authorise the head of legal and democratic to request the LGBCE to make related alteration orders to make district wards coterminous with the parish change.

## **Background Papers**

Report to Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 23 October 2017 and committee minutes

Report to Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 21 June 2018 and committee minutes

## **Appendix 1**

### **Consultation response from Great Coxwell Parish Council**

Thank you for providing the revised proposed boundary map altering the boundary between Great Coxwell and Faringdon. On behalf of Great Coxwell Parish Council I am writing to say that we accept this proposed change.

As per the resolution of the Community Governance and Electoral issues committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018 the amended new boundary represents a move in a southerly direction along the Coxwell Road to encompass the full extent of the land allocated to development in part 1 of the Vale local plan in this region rather than only that portion associated with currently permitted developments. As discussed at the meeting Great Coxwell agrees development allocated in the local plan on the edge of Faringdon should be part of Faringdon. Given the schedule of boundary reviews Great Coxwell accepts the solution of including all land allocated to development in the plan, irrespective of the layout of housing permitted on that land. This should not be seen as the council passing judgement on the expected built form of development upon this land or their acceptance of yet to be approved development whose need and impact on the landscape and setting of Great Coxwell is a separate matter on which the boundary position has no bearing. We note that the new proposal also includes a small parcel of land of on the East side of Coxwell Road that is not allocated in the plan to development to enable the boundary to run straight across the road. We understand its inclusion will provide ease of maintenance of road verges and do not object to including it within Faringdon.

## Appendix 2

### Consultation response from Faringdon Town Council

#### Community Governance Review – CGR\_H – Great Coxwell and Great Faringdon Response from Great Faringdon 18/9/18

Regarding the assessment criteria to be taken into account when making a draft proposal for further consultation:

- *natural or man-made boundaries that help to define clearly one community from another*

The case for a boundary change are based on paragraphs 15, 83 and 84 of the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews (GCGR), March 2010, Department for Communities and Local Government Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

#### Parish boundary between Faringdon and Great Coxwell

The current boundary between the parishes of Great Coxwell and Great Faringdon comprises field hedges along the Steeds and Fernham Fields developments, Fig 1.

It is less well defined for the proposed development P15/V2649/O to the west of Fernham Rd as it mainly follows the southern line of a driveway to houses that are in Great Faringdon with some out-buildings and garden/orchard in Great Coxwell.

The purple line on Fig 2 shows the boundary actually crossing the end of Fernham Gate, passing through some houses to the south of Fernham Gate when there is actually a hedge boundary between the former tip (now a site with permission for 10 houses P15/V0154/O known as 'land adjacent to Fernham Gate', which is in Great Coxwell) and the gardens of the first houses on Fernham Gate, which are in Great Faringdon. This boundary develops into a considerable height difference between the 'land adjacent to Fernham Gate' and the houses at the eastern end of Fernham Gate as the latter back on to the former quarry wall.

The boundary then follows the field hedges terminating at the northern edge of the A420.

Because Fernham Road is closed off, the only vehicular access to the exclave of Great Coxwell to the east of the Fernham Fields development is through Faringdon; there is no pedestrian footpath and the only access on foot wholly within the boundary of Great Coxwell is along the northern verge of the A420.

The southern boundary between Great Coxwell and Little Coxwell is defined by the A420.

The limits of the current Steeds Farm development as shown in Fig 2a may be extended farther into Great Coxwell if the application P18/V0259/O by Welbeck to add 125 houses to the allocated site defined in the Local Plan Part 1, Fig 2b.

Unfortunately, there is no natural boundary to the south east; however, this leaves an open space between the proposed parish boundary of Great Faringdon and the dwellings in Great Coxwell in accordance with the Faringdon and Great Coxwell Neighbourhood Plans to avoid coalescence. If the boundary did not include the site proposed in P18/V0259/O this would leave an anomalous situation of part of a contiguous development being in a neighbouring parish as described in paragraph 15 of the GCGR. If planning permission for this site were to be refused it would only leave an empty field, technically in Great Faringdon, but otherwise part of the green space between the two settlements.

The proposed boundary between Great Faringdon and Great Coxwell would be the limits of the developments at Fernham Fields and Steeds Farm including the whole of the site allocated in the Local Plan Pt 1 2031 at Steeds Farm with the boundary between Little Coxwell and Great Faringdon being defined by the A420 up to its intersection with the former Great Coxwell boundary.

### **Parish boundary between Faringdon and Eaton Hastings**

In August 2018 Faringdon Town Council received notification of planning application P18/V1859/FUL for Barn 10, Camden Farm which straddles the Great Faringdon-Eaton Hastings parish boundaries, Fig. 3 creating a similar anomaly to that described above and in paragraph 15 of the GCGR. Camden Farm, which is mainly in Faringdon, is no longer a working farm and the farm buildings are being converted to dwellings. Barn 10 is the last of these conversions and its footprint is partly in Eaton Hastings. Similarly, Church Hill Farm, which is wholly in Eaton Hastings but served by the same access road off Radcot Road, is no longer a working farm but is contiguous with Camden Farm, Fig. 4. To avoid the situation of part of a building and the new occupants of these developments between divided between two parishes the solution would be to revise the parish boundary to include the whole of Camden Farm and also the contiguous Church Hill Farm. The proposed boundary between Faringdon and Eaton Hastings would be the curtilage of Church Hill Farm.

• *housing developments that straddle parish boundaries, thereby resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours*

The original developers SGR (Fernham Fields) and Welbeck (Steeds Farm) for the sites along Coxwell Rd. objected to the boundary of the Faringdon Neighbourhood Plan, as defined by the parish boundary of Great Faringdon, because it did not include their sites situated in the parish of Great Coxwell, but contiguous with Great Faringdon. Fernham Fields has now be renamed Faringdon Fields and the Steeds, Fernhill Gardens.

All of the planning applications for dwellings in the area in question (P13/V0139/O (Fernham Fields, 200), P13/V1102/O (Steeds, 200), P15/V2649/O (Fernham Rd., 25), P15/0154/O (Fernham Gate, 10), P17/V1242/O (Fernham Rd., 5, refused), have stated the location of their sites as being in Faringdon with no reference to Great Coxwell where in fact they are located. Planning application, P18/V1362/O, on land east of Fernham Rd. was submitted by Taylor Wimpey in 2018 for 67 houses, four of which would have been in Great Coxwell, with the only access to the site being via Great Coxwell; this application has been rejected. So far, planning permission for 435 dwellings has been granted all of which are in Great Coxwell although marketed as being Faringdon with a potential 125 dwelling development P18/V0259/O (South of Steeds, 125) pending a decision.

The Officer's report to the VoWHDC Planning Committee, 27 November 2013 on planning application P13/V0139/O, Fernham Fields, paragraphs 6.10 to 6.13 stated:

#### **6.10 *The Coalescence of Faringdon and Great Coxwell***

One of the key local objections to this proposal has been that this development will result in the coalescence of Faringdon with the village of Great Coxwell, particularly as the application site sits within the boundaries of Great Coxwell parish. Officers accept that it is entirely proper to resist proposals that would allow the urban sprawl of Faringdon into the countryside or significantly reduce the separation between these two settlements, which are of very different sizes and characters. However, officers do not consider this particular proposal would cause an undue amount of coalescence between the two settlements.

6.11 The scheme has been designed to appear and function as an urban extension to Faringdon. As outlined in Section 1, at the closest point, the site is over 1

kilometre from the Great Coxwell conservation area, which delineates the historic core of the village. It is also 0.8 kilometres from the eastern edge of the village itself. Thus, there will remain a good distance between the two settlements.

6.12 Crucially, the site will be physically contained by Coxwell Road and the A420 from the village of Great Coxwell. These roads in particular act as a strong barrier that separates the two settlements. Furthermore, the existing and future landscaping will visually contain the site in a manner that ensures it will appear as part of Faringdon, not part of Great Coxwell. Whilst views into Great Coxwell from the site will be possible, and the new development will be seen from Great Coxwell, against the backdrop of the rest of Faringdon, the two settlements will remain visually entirely separate and distinct.

6.13 The Parameter Plan also demonstrates how the proposal is designed as an extension to Faringdon. The pedestrian links are designed to allow easy access to Faringdon town centre. No footpaths are proposed that would enable direct access to Great Coxwell. Officers are satisfied that any resident of this development would consider themselves to be living in Faringdon, not Great Coxwell. Officers' assessment of this scheme leads from this basis.

The Officer's report to the VoWHDC Planning Committee, 9th December 2015 on planning application P15/V1934/O, Steeds, paragraph 6.1 stated:

6.11 The NPPF requires the need to travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34). The site is located immediately adjacent to the existing built up area of one of the five main settlements in the District with a good range of services and facilities. Therefore, although located within jurisdiction of Great Coxwell Parish, the site would form an extension of the town in terms of location.

The Officer's report to the VoWHDC Planning Committee, 17th August 2016 on planning application P15/V2649/O, Fernham Rd., paragraph 6.7 stated:

6.7 Core Policy 20 of the emerging local plan 2031 provides the spatial strategy for the Western Vale Sub-Area. The plan makes it clear that Faringdon is a strategic growth area. To calculate the impact of this development, it has been assumed to be part of Faringdon, despite falling within Great Coxwell parish boundary. It is noted that the council has either permitted or resolved to permit a number of large housing developments in Faringdon, which, if all implemented, would increase the population of Faringdon by approximately 20%. Based on the SHMA average household size of 2.52 for 2011, this development will increase the population of Faringdon by approximately 63 people.

The Officer's report to the VoWHDC Planning Committee, 10th March 2015 on planning application P15/0154/O (Land adjacent to Fernham Gate), paragraph 6.11 stated:

6.11 The NPPF requires the need to travel to be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes to be maximised (paragraph 34). In terms of facilities, Faringdon is a large town which is well served in terms of services and public transport links. Therefore, the emerging local plan identifies Faringdon as a sustainable location for further development.

Other comments imply the suitability of Faringdon as place for development.

Hence, although these developments are located in the parish of Great Coxwell, there is an implicit assumption that they are only viable because of their proximity to Faringdon. They have been regarded by Planning Officers as extensions to Faringdon being, in all cases, contiguous with the current Great Faringdon parish boundary. They



are all distinctly separate from Great Coxwell and in the case of the developments on Fernham Road with road access only accessible via Faringdon.

Potentially (i.e. including P18/V0259/O) some 560 new dwellings will be built adjacent to Faringdon with, based on a SHMA average household size of 2.52 for 2011, a predicted 1,411 residents. These new residents would to all sense and purpose to be living in Faringdon and using the services provided by Faringdon Town Council although not paying any Council Tax to Faringdon Town Council.

The development of Camden Farm/Church Hill Farm is an overlooked circumstance where the two adjacent farms were in separate parishes; however, the new housing development straddles the parish boundary, thereby resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours. Their relative isolation could result in some logistical problems regarding bin collection, council tax, etc. because they are in different parishes and wards.

- *effective and convenient representation of local residents at parish level*

Faringdon has 14 Town Councillors. The current population of Great Faringdon is between 8,125 and 8,205. There are 1,219 houses with planning permission granted or pending including the 560 planned for Great Coxwell, which would take the population of Great Faringdon to about 11,400. See Appendix 1.

The population of these new developments currently situated in Great Coxwell (1,411) would be much greater than that of Great Coxwell itself (~300) although geographically separated from it. This would not allow for effective and convenient representation on matters concerning these developments as the residents would probably consider that they were living in Faringdon, but would have no representation in Faringdon. Equally this could have a distorting effect on representation in Great Coxwell, see below.

The residents of Church Hill and Camden Farms would have different representation; either Faringdon Town Council or Eaton Hastings Parish Meeting.

- *the wards of Vale of White Horse District Council for the purposes of district council elections*

Faringdon ward has two District Councillors. Great Coxwell and Eaton Hastings are part of the Shrivenham and Watchfield ward which also has two District Councillors.

- *the divisions of Oxfordshire County Council for the purposes of county council elections*

Faringdon has one County Councillor for a division that includes Faringdon Great Coxwell and Eaton Hastings, so representation is not affected.

- *views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected*

At present only one of the developments in Great Coxwell (Fernham Fields now renamed Faringdon Fields) has any occupants. There is a concern that the Band D Council Tax for Faringdon for 2018/19 will be £133.52 whereas that for Great Coxwell will be £60; hence, residents would see an increase in Council Tax. This would be more marked for residents of Eaton Hastings which has a very low precept. However, the impact on Faringdon of the Great Coxwell developments would be significant with the loss of at least £75,000 in Council Tax (many of these houses would be higher rated so the loss would be greater) from residents who, to all intents and purposes, would be living in Faringdon. The impact of Eaton Hastings residents would be small in comparison.

- *the extent to which proposals reflect the identities and interests of the affected community*

Changing the Great Coxwell/Great Faringdon parish boundary would rectify an anomaly whereby residents living on extensions of Faringdon that are indistinguishable from the built-up area would identify with Faringdon as the nearest sustainable entity. Churchill Farm and Camden Farm are remote from the town and would be less affected.

- *the size and population of the local community*

Great Faringdon’s current population and housing stock are between 8,125-8,205 and 3,438 (2018/19 tax base), respectively. Great Coxwell’s population is about 300 with about 132 houses. The expected 560 houses will add ~1,411 people (@2.52 per dwelling). This is an increase in population of between 16% and 17% for Faringdon or 470% for Great Coxwell, a disproportionate impact.

**Conclusion**

The parish boundary between Great Faringdon and Great Coxwell should be amended to include the sites isolated from Great Coxwell by the A420 and the whole of the allocated sites in the Local Plan Part 2031 that are currently located in Great Coxwell.

The boundary between Great Faringdon and Eaton Hastings at Camden Farm and Churchill Farm should be amended to include the curtilage of Churchill Farm to avoid residents from these contiguous developments being in different parishes.



1 Showing the current built up limit of Faringdon.

Fig

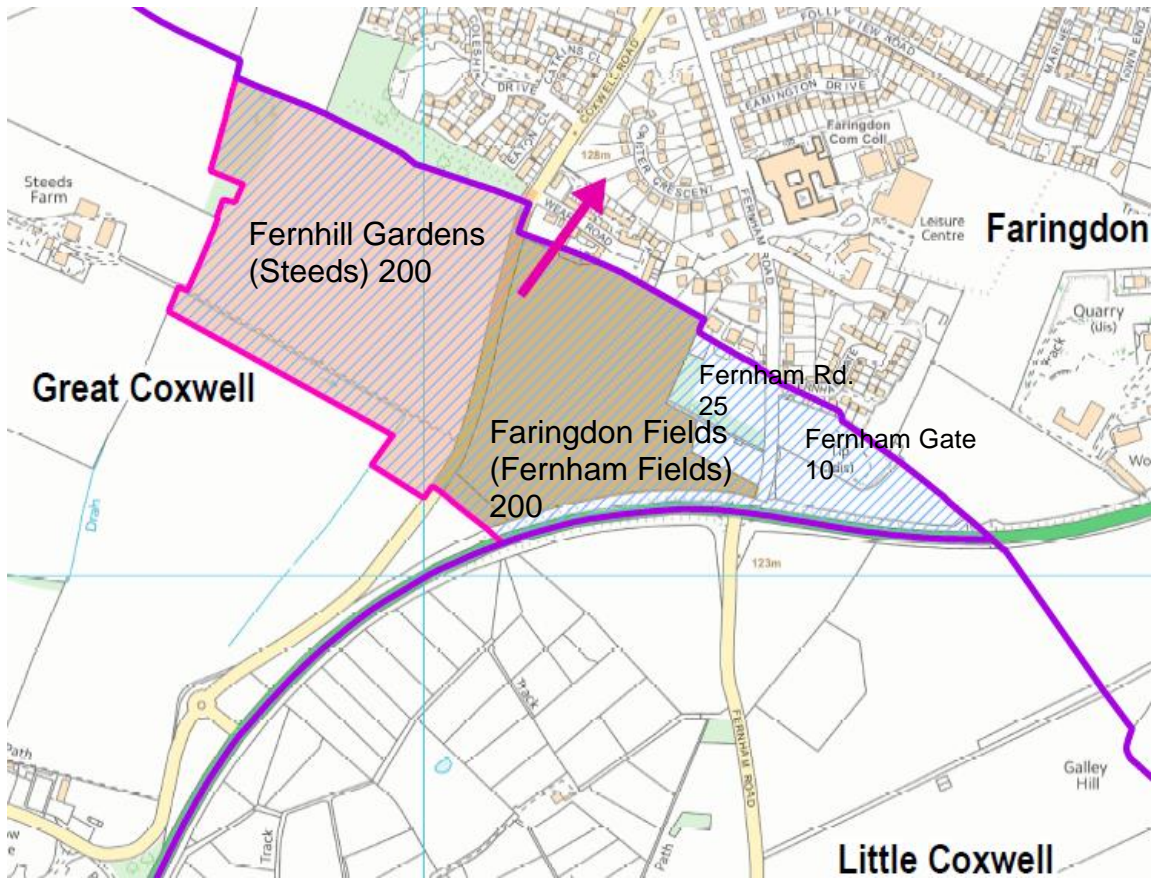


Fig. 2a Showing previous boundary change recommendation.

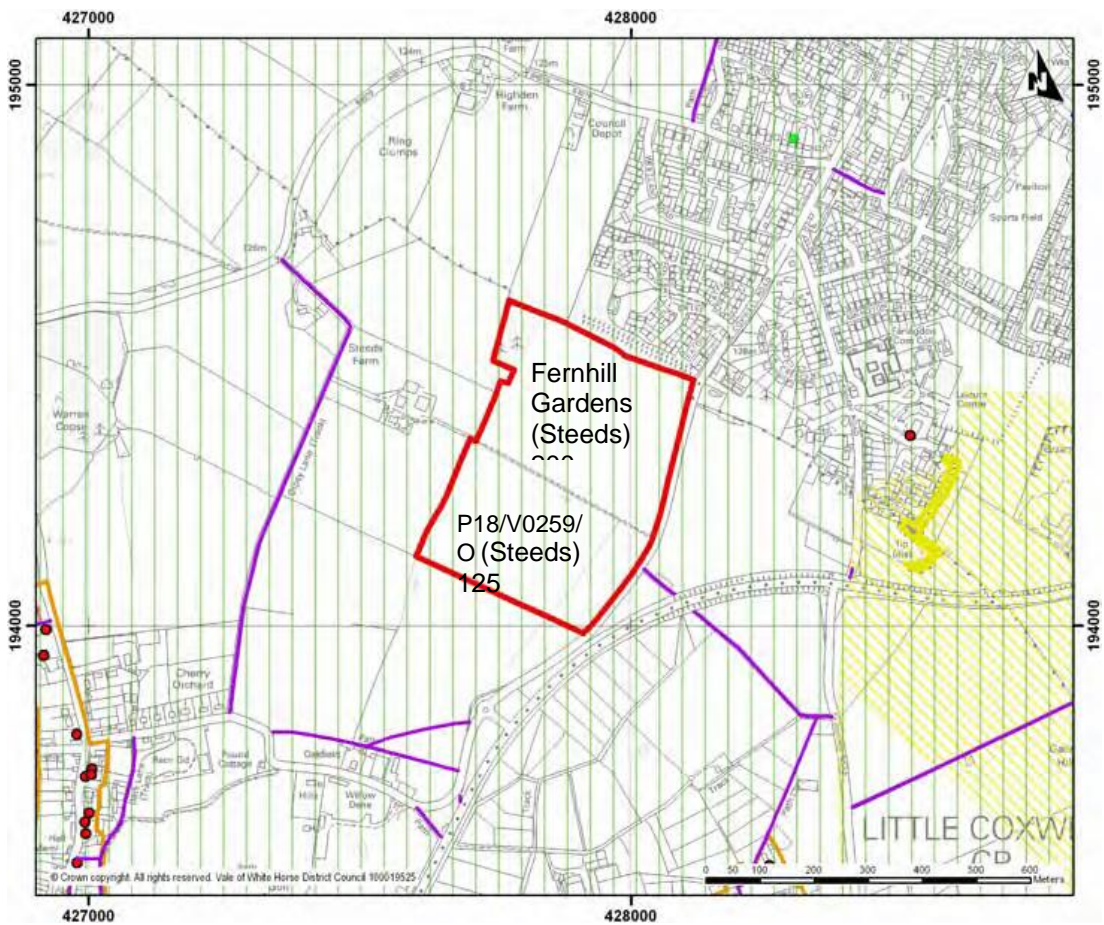


Fig. 2b Showing revised boundary to include all of the allocated site for Steeds Farm.

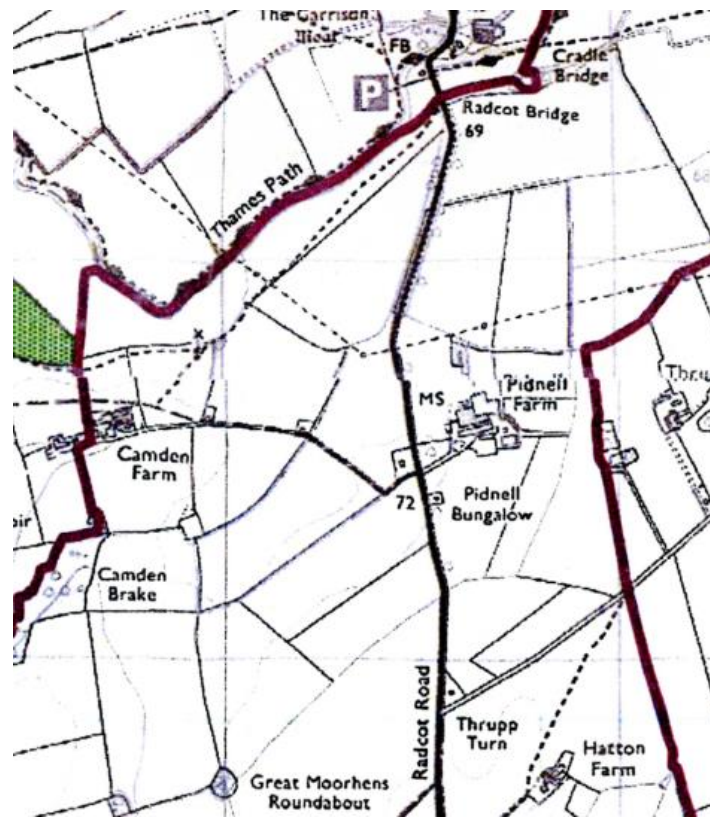


Fig. 3 Showing the parish boundary (purple) between Eaton Hastings and Great Faringdon dividing Church Hill and Camden Farms.

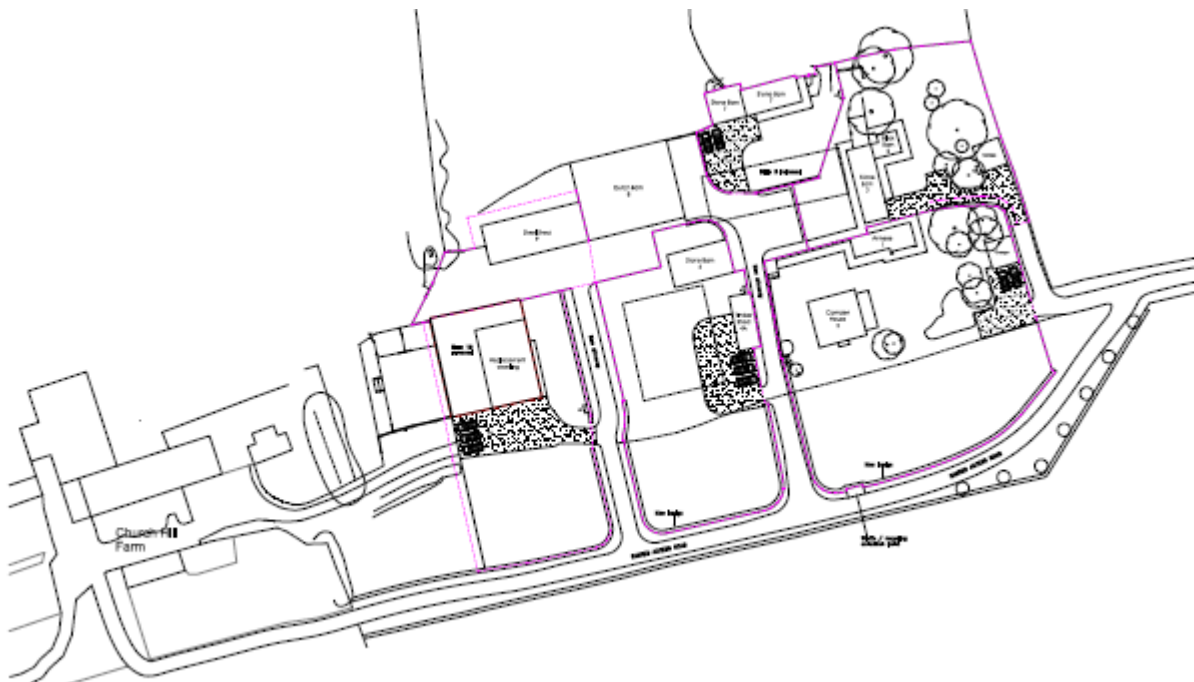


Fig. 4 Showing the contiguous Camden and Church Hill Farms.

### Appendix 1 population estimates

Permissions granted, in pipeline, or not yet fully occupied	dwelling	pop@2.52	OCC S106	OCC estimates
Tennis Club Southampton St under construction	11	28		P13/V0033/FUL
Tetronics 5 Lechlade Rd; not started	14	35		P13/V2301/O
Bloor Homes2 Sandhill outline	380+60	1,048	1,078	P17/V1082/O inc 60 b extra care home
Fernham Fields	200	504	510	P13/V0139/O
Fernham Gate outline permission + 60	10	25		P15/V0154/O
Park Rd 4&20	9	23		P15/V2113/O
Steeds	200	504	548	P15/V1934/O
Highworth Rd	190	479		P16/V0775/O
Fernham Rd	25	63		P15/V2649/O
Infill granted/occupied as balance since 2011 estimate	46	116		
Steeds Farm South (Welbeck) pending	125	315	305	P18/2059/O
Builders Ede Park Rd pending	9	23		P17/V2407/FUL
<b>Total</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>3,162</b>	<b>3,232</b>	
Population estimate at end of 2016		8,205		
<b>Total</b>		<b>11,367</b>	<b>11,437</b>	

### Small sites granted to date not on tax base

Winslow House	1	<a href="#">P17/V3396/FUL</a>	
Landview, Canada Lane	1	P13/V2589/O	
Old Barn Lechlade Rd	1	<a href="#">P13/V1261/FUL</a>	
17C & 17E London Street	2	P13/V2086/FUL	
15 Coxwell St	1	<a href="#">P14/V0715/FUL</a>	
40 Westland Rd	1	P13/V2597/FU	
Rogers Concrete	2	P13/V2698/FUL	
9/11 Coxwell Rd	3	P13/V088/	
Pidnell Farm	1	P13/V0162/LB	
21 Market Place	1	P14/V1060/FUL	
1-3 Rose Terrace	3	P14/V1842/FUL	
Canada Lane	2	<a href="#">P16/V0514/FUL</a>	
15a/15b Coxwell Rd	2	P15/V0909/O	P15/V1262/O
10 Market Place	2	<a href="#">P15/V2473/FUL</a>	
Camden Farm	1	<a href="#">P18/V1859/FUL</a>	
Foundry Barn Marlborough St	1	<a href="#">P18/V1807/N2A</a>	
Ferndale School	10	<a href="#">P18/V1512/DIS</a>	8 flats + 2 houses
20 Market Place	1	<a href="#">P18/V0937/FUL</a>	
Willes Close	1	<a href="#">P17/V3307/FUL</a>	
Ferndale St	2	<a href="#">P17/V2294/O</a>	
Camden Farm	3	<a href="#">P17/V0867/FUL</a>	
19 Coxwell Rd	1	<a href="#">P16/V3225/O</a>	
47 Gravel Walk	1	<a href="#">P16/V1630/HH</a>	
2 Cornmarket	1	<a href="#">P16/V1414/FUL</a>	
57 Westland Rd	1	<a href="#">P16/V1027/FUL</a>	

