

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



held on Thursday 26 May 2022 at 7.00 pm
at 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Committee members: Councillors Ron Batstone (Chair), Sarah Medley (Vice-Chair), Paul Barrow, Alison Jenner, Mike Pighills and Janet Shelley

Officers: Susan Baker (Elections Team Leader), Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager), Steve Culliford (Democratic Services Team Leader), and Jordan Kennedy (Elections Officer)

Remote attendance:

Officers: Chris McMullin (Elections Officer)

Guests: Councillor Eric Batts

Number of members of the public: 7

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Minutes

RESOLVED: to adopt as a correct record the minutes of the committee meeting held on 7 March 2022 and agree that the Chair signs them as such.

3. Declarations of interest

None

4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

None

5. Community Governance Review - Covering Report

The committee considered the head of legal and democratic's report. This invited the committee to agree a revised timetable for the community governance reviews and to agree draft recommendations for each review.

The committee agreed that to allow officers sufficient time to prepare the consultation documents and to allow for an extended consultation period, the consultation on the draft proposals should run until 29 July 2022. The aim was for the committee to agree final proposals at a meeting to be arranged in early September 2022. The committee was content with this revised timetable.

The committee then proceeded to receive an overview of the community governance review process to date. The committee recalled that at its meeting on 7 March 2022, terms of reference had been agreed for a community governance review in response to matters submitted by parish councils.

Eight proposals had been received from parish councils. An initial engagement period ran from 31 March to 29 April 2022 on the proposed changes. A summary of the engagement responses for each proposal was now presented to the committee for consideration. The summaries contained recommendations for each review. The justification for each recommendation was based on the assessment criteria contained within the terms of reference and informed by the engagement responses. However, one of the assessment criteria was to take into account "views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected". This meant that review proposals should only be evaluated once the council had consulted on its draft proposals.

The committee agreed to consider submissions from the public participation section of the agenda (minute 6 below refers), followed by consideration of each review summary in turn (see minutes 7 to 14 below).

RESOLVED: to agree the revised timetable for the community governance reviews so that the consultation on the draft proposals will run until 29 July 2022, with the committee agreeing final proposals at a meeting to be arranged in early September 2022.

6. Public participation

Seven members of the public had registered to speak at the meeting.

1. Donna Foster made a statement on behalf of Cumnor Parish Council, objecting to the proposal from Sunningwell Parish Council to transfer Chilswell properties from Cumnor parish to Sunningwell parish.
2. Yvonne Constance, an Oxfordshire County Councillor, made a statement supporting East Challow Parish Council. Councillor Constance questioned why Grove Parish Council was proposing to transfer Grove Technology Park from East Challow parish into Grove parish and could see no reason to do this.

3. Paul Barrow, a Vale of White Horse District Councillor and an East Challow Parish Councillor, made a statement representing East Challow Parish Council. He believed that the proposal by Grove Parish Council to transfer Grove Technology Park out of East Challow parish and into Grove parish was unnecessary.
4. Kate O'Donovan, representing the Boars Hill Association, made a statement in support of the proposal by Sunningwell Parish Council to transfer Boars Hill into Sunningwell parish. However, the Association did not support Boars Hill being added to Sunningwell's parish name.
5. Ian Bristow, the chair of Wootton Parish Council, made a statement objecting to the proposal by Sunningwell Parish Council to transfer Boars Hill into Sunningwell parish. He believed that Boars Hill was an integral part of Wootton and welcomed anyone from Boars Hill to join Wootton Parish Council as there were vacancies on the council.
6. Virginia Grant, the chair of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council, made a statement in support of the parish council's proposal to transfer the land east of Kingston Bagpuize into its parish. A planning application for a large housing development was pending determination. If approved, this new development would be adjacent to Kingston Bagpuize, which would be the primary source of services for its new residents.
7. Eric Batts, the local ward district councillor for Kingston Bagpuize, made a statement in support of the parish council's proposal to transfer the land east of Kingston Bagpuize into its parish. He suggested that the approval could be conditional on planning permission being achieved for the new development on the site.

The committee chair thanked the speakers for their statements.

The committee also noted that Fyfield and Tubney Parish Council had submitted a written statement as it was unable to send a representative to the committee meeting. The written statement objected to the proposal to transfer land into Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor parish. The committee noted the written statement.

7. Community Governance Review - Grove

The committee considered a proposal to de-ward Grove Parish Council. This effectively would result in the parish council consisting of 16 councillors without being split into Grove North and Grove South wards. The committee noted that it was now within this council's remit to approve such a change. The committee agreed that the parish council's proposal should be the subject of public consultation.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal to de-ward Grove Parish Council.

8. Community Governance Review - Grove Business Park

Councillors Ron Batstone and Paul Barrow, local ward district councillors for the Grove and East Challow parishes respectively, did not take part in the consideration or voting on this review proposal.

The committee considered a proposal from Grove Parish Council to amend the boundary of Grove parish to include Grove Business Park, which was currently within East Challow parish.

The committee concurred with the officer's report that the council should consult on a proposal not to change the boundary.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal not to include Grove Business Park within Grove parish.

9. Community Governance Review - Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor and Fyfield and Tubney

The committee considered a proposal from Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council. The proposal was to amend the parish boundary east of Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor to include land currently in Fyfield and Tubney parish. The reason behind the proposal was that a planning application for a large residential development had been submitted and was pending determination by the district council's Planning Committee. If approved, the new development would be adjacent to the Kingston Bagpuize boundary and its new residents would look primarily to Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor for services.

The committee explored options relating to this proposal but agreed with officer advice that the proposal should not be made conditional on achieving planning permission, as this was not part of the criteria for assessing community governance reviews. The committee considered that the council should consult on a proposal not to change the boundary.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal to make no change to the current boundary between Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor parish and Fyfield and Tubney parish.

10. Community Governance Review - North Hinksey

The committee considered a proposal from North Hinksey Parish Council to change the name of the council to include the name Botley, and to introduce an alternative style of parish so that it became a community council. The parish council would be changing its name from North Hinksey Parish Council to Botley and North Hinksey Community Council.

The committee concurred with the officer's recommendation that the proposal should be subject to consultation.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal to introduce an alternative style of parish and rename North Hinksey Parish Council to Botley and North Hinksey Community Council.

11. Community Governance Review - Kennington and South Hinksey

The committee considered a proposal from South Hinksey Parish Council to amend the parish boundary south of South Hinksey to include the former Westwood Hotel site, currently in Kennington parish.

The committee agreed that the council should consult on a proposal not to change the boundary.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal to make no change to the current boundary between South Hinksey and Kennington parishes.

12. Community Governance Review - Sunningwell

The committee considered a proposal from Sunningwell Parish Council to amend the parish boundary to include the area of Boars Hill currently in Wootton and Cumnor parishes, and to amend the parish name to reflect the change.

The officer's report recommended (1) consulting on a proposal to make no change to the boundary, and (2) to consider undertaking a community governance review of the wider area (Sunningwell, Wootton, Cumnor, Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey) following the elections in May 2023 to include consideration of a new parish for Boars Hill.

The committee, noting the differing views on this proposal, believed that a proposal to make no change to the parish boundary should be subject to formal public consultation. The committee also believed that, following the consultation and pending the outcome on the committee's decision in the autumn, the council should also consider undertaking a community governance review of the wider area following the elections in May 2023.

RESOLVED: to

- (a) consult on a proposal to make no change to the current boundary between Sunningwell, Cumnor and Wootton parishes; and
- (b) consider undertaking a community governance review of the wider area (Sunningwell, Wootton, Cumnor, Kennington, Radley and South Hinksey) following the elections in May 2023 to include consideration of a new parish for Boars Hill.

13. Community Governance Review - Uffington

The committee considered a proposal from Uffington Parish Council to increase the number of councillors from six to seven. The committee supported the recommendation to consult on this proposal.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal to increase the number of councillors for Uffington Parish Council to seven.

14. Community Governance Review - Wootton

The committee considered a proposal from Wootton Parish Council to review its parish name to reflect the settlement of Boars Hill.

The committee noted that this proposal related to a separate proposal from Sunningwell Parish Council regarding Boars Hill. The committee was concerned that running two consultations on the two Boars Hill proposals would be confusing for the public, so to avoid this the two proposals should be amalgamated into one consultation. Officers confirmed that they would work with the council's engagement team to achieve this. This should help inform the committee's consideration of the proposals in the autumn.

RESOLVED: to consult on a proposal to rename Wootton Parish Council to Wootton and Boars Hill Parish Council.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Chair:

Date: