

## **Community Governance Review**

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### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update Council on the outcome of the consultation on the various schemes that the Working Group were asked in November 2015 to re-consider and to make recommendations on the Community Governance Review (CGR) for consideration by the Council.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1. A Community Governance Review is a review of the whole or part of the Council's area to consider one of more of the following:
- Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes
  - The naming of parishes and styles of new parishes
  - The electoral arrangements of parishes (including the number of councillors to be elected to the council and parish warding)
  - Grouping or de-grouping parishes
- 2.2. The Council appointed a Working Group to carry out this Review and to make recommendations to the Council. The Working Group comprises a representative from each group of the Council (with a substitute permitted to attend). Individual members of the Working Group have been mindful of their position as local members in some cases, and have received advice and guidance in that respect from the Council's Monitoring Officer. In particular, it should be noted that following the consultation members of the Working Group withdrew from discussions on the formulation of recommendations affecting their respective divisional area.
- 2.3. The Council at its meeting on 24 November 2015 approved a number of CGR schemes. The report and minutes of the meeting can be found at [this link](#).
- 2.4. For some of those schemes there will be a need for amendments to be made to the warding arrangements of those Councils and these are the subject of further report on the Council agenda.
- 2.5. This report deals with those CGR Schemes upon which the Council decided required further consultation and the decisions of the Council in relation to each of these Schemes is set out within the appropriate section of this report.
- 2.6. Each scheme has therefore been given a number consistent with previous considerations to enable progress to be tracked on each scheme. These are

as follows and for each scheme there is mapping provided within **Appendix 1** to explain the scheme:

Scheme 2 – Bishopdown Farm, Salisbury  
Scheme 3 – Hampton Park, Laverstock and Ford  
Scheme 18 – Halfway Close and Brook, Trowbridge  
Scheme 19 – Wyke Road, Trowbridge  
Scheme 20 – Wyke Road, Trowbridge  
Scheme 21 – Shore Place, Trowbridge  
Scheme 22 – Paxcroft Mead, Trowbridge  
Scheme 23 – Hulbert Close, Ferris Way and Oxford Gardens, Trowbridge  
Scheme 24 – Lady Down Farm, Trowbridge  
Scheme 25 – Hilperton Gap South, Trowbridge  
Scheme 26 – Old Farm, Trowbridge  
Scheme 27 – West Ashton Road Employment Land, Trowbridge  
Scheme 28 – Ashton Park Urban Extension, Trowbridge  
Scheme 29 – White Horse Business Park, Trowbridge  
Scheme 100 – Merger of Laverstock and Ford Parish Council with Salisbury City Council  
Scheme 102 – Corsham and Box  
Scheme 103 – Albert Road, Osborne Road and Victoria Road, Trowbridge

### **3. Main Considerations for the Council**

- 3.1. The Review has to ensure that the community governance arrangements within the areas under review reflect the identities and interests of the communities concerned and provide effective and convenient governance for local people. Further guidance can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>
- 3.2. In carrying out the review, and in formulating its recommendations, the Working Group has had regard both to its legal obligations under Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and to the statutory guidance issued jointly by the DCLG and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. In reaching a decision on these recommendations, the Council must have regard to the same criteria, which are therefore summarised below, and which are linked to all of its recommendations.
- 3.3. Section 93 of the 2007 Act requires the Council, when undertaking a review, to ensure that community governance within the area under review will:-
- be reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and
  - facilitate effective and convenient local government.

3.4. The Guidance gives further advice in relation to the above two main criteria, as summarised below:

#### Identities and Interests of Local Communities

- Communities need to be empowered to respond to challenging economic, social and cultural trends and to demographic change;
- Parish Councils can perform a central role in community leadership;
- How people perceive where they live - their neighbourhoods – is significant in considering the identities and interests of local communities. Neighbourhoods can be defined by the geography of an area, the make-up of the local community, a sense of identity and whether people live in a rural, suburban or urban area;
- Parishes should reflect distinctive and recognisable communities of interest with their own sense of identity;
- The feelings of the local communities and the wishes of local inhabitants are the primary considerations in considering this criteria;
- There may be a variety of different communities of interest within a Parish and any review should consider communities as offering a sense of place and of local identity for all residents.

#### Efficient and Convenient Local Government

- Effective and convenient government is best understood in the context of a local authority's ability to deliver quality services economically and efficiently and give users of services a democratic voice in the decisions that affect them;
- Local communities should have access to good quality local services, ideally in one place and a parish council may be best placed to do this;
- Parish Councils should be viable in terms of providing at least some local services which need to be easy to reach and accessible to local people.
- The Guidance also provides that, when considering the two statutory criteria set out in paragraph 3.3 above, the Council should take into account a number of influential factors, including:
  - The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion and
  - The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

3.5. Further guidance is provided in relation to these two factors:

#### *The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion*

- Community cohesion is about recognising and responding to changes in the make-up of a community to enable different groups of people to integrate and get on well together. This includes developing a shared sense of belonging and developing positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. Cohesion is also about how people perceive the composition of their local community and what it represents.

### Size, Population and Boundaries

- Size, population and boundaries are relevant considerations in deciding whether community governance arrangements are effective and convenient. Authorities should be based on natural communities reflecting people's expressed choices. A parish should be based on an area which reflects community identity and is of a size which is viable as an administrative unit of local government. Boundaries should reflect 'no man's land' between communities and be (and be likely to remain) easily identifiable, such as rivers, roads or railways.
- 3.6. The Guidance recognises that over time communities may expand with new housing development and that this can lead to parish boundaries becoming anomalous as new houses are built across boundaries resulting in people being in different parishes to their neighbours. The Guidance states that in many cases changes to the boundaries of existing parishes, rather than creating an entirely parish, will be sufficient to ensure that community governance arrangements continue to reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government.
- 3.7. In addition to offering the opportunity to put in place strong clearly defined boundaries tied to firm ground features and to remove any anomalous parish boundaries, community governance reviews also offer the opportunity to consider the future of any redundant or moribund parishes where there are an insufficient number of local electors within the area willing to serve on a parish council. This may be demonstrated in continuing vacancies on the parish council or where there has been an absence of elections over a period of time due to the lack of people wishing to stand for election.
- 3.8. When considering the proposals for changes to the structure or area of parish councils, the Working Group has been mindful of proposed developments that are likely to take place in those areas. The Guidance provides that, when considering the electoral arrangements for an area, the Council must also consider any changes to the number or distribution of electors that is likely to occur within the next five years. Therefore, where planned development is known, this had been taken into account. (See Para 6 below).
- 3.9. Where, as a result of an alteration to parish boundaries, a property moves from one parish to another, this may well have an impact on the overall level of Council Tax payable by the occupants of that property, as the amount of precept levied by different parish councils will vary. However, as can be seen from the guidance summarised above, this is not a relevant factor when considering whether it is appropriate to change the community governance arrangements in a particular area.

## 4. Consultation

- 4.1. In carrying out the reviews the Council must consult and have regard to the views of local people.
- 4.2. The Council agreed the terms of reference for the Working Group that required it to identify relevant consultees and determine the most appropriate and effective methods of communication. The terms of reference also provided that any representations received as result of the consultation process would be considered by the Working Group and be taken into account in the formulation of recommendations to the Council.
- 4.3. Further the Council decided on 24 November that any properties which might be moved from one civil parish to another is written to individually alerting them to the consultation and advising how they can make their representations to the working group.
- 4.4. Schemes were consulted upon, by a number of methods including
  - 4.4.1. By individual letters to the resident.
  - 4.4.2. An online survey was provided and widely publicised to enable all interested parties, not just residents, to respond.
  - 4.4.3. By arranging public meetings to discuss the proposals and meetings with parish and town councils.
- 4.5. The following actions were taken in publicising the consultation:
  - Press release 26 April;
  - Promoted extensively on social media – Twitter and Facebook;
  - Elected Wire and Electric Wire;
  - Parish Newsletter;
  - Published on the WC News Portal – this allows it to also sit on the front page of the WC website.
- 4.6. Feedback was received from a number of sources including:
  - Website, including the consultation portal;
  - Consultation meetings;
  - Hard copy surveys from meetings;
  - Hard copy surveys for letters to individual households in some areas;
  - e-mails;
  - Hard copy letters.

## 5. Outcome of Consultation

- 5.1. The outcome of consultation for each of the Schemes is as follows.
- 5.2. A summary of public responses to both the online survey and hard copies of the survey for each Scheme is attached at **Appendix 2**. The survey also provided an open question so that respondents could add their views in relation to the proposals in addition to responding to specific questions. These responses are also set out at Appendix 2.
- 5.3. The detailed submissions from the relevant parish and town Councils for each of the schemes are attached as appendices as follows:-
- A. Schemes 18 to 29 and 103 – Trowbridge Town Council – **Appendix 3**  
Schemes 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25 and 103 – Hilperton Parish Council – **Appendix 4**
  - B. Schemes 100, 2 and 3 – Laverstock and Ford Parish Council – **Appendix 5**  
Salisbury City Council – **Appendix 6**
- 5.4 The notes of public consultation meetings on various schemes and meetings with representatives of parish and town councils are set out in **Appendix 7**.

## 6. Wiltshire Core Strategy Implications

- 6.1. This review is concerned with community governance issues, as set out above. These are different from the issues that apply to the planning and development management processes. However, in considering whether to make any changes to the community governance arrangements for a particular area, it is appropriate for the Council to consider any changes to the locality that are likely to occur in the near future, including those arising from any residential or other development that is anticipated to take place. The Working Group has therefore taken into account any significant committed development including unimplemented planning permissions and any relevant allocations in the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2016). The Core Strategy also defines settlements in the form of 'settlement boundaries' to illustrate their extent for the purpose of applying planning policies.

## 7. Timing of Future Reviews

### 7.1. Future Boundary Reviews

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolves the power to take decisions in relation to Community Governance Reviews to Principal Councils (eg district, county and unitary councils). The intention was to streamline and simplify the process by which the outcomes of such reviews are given effect. Local authorities are therefore required to keep under review the requirement to undertake such reviews and the statutory guidance is clear that it

may be helpful to undertake such a review in circumstances such as where there have been changes in population or in reaction to specific or local new issues.

In terms of the timing of such reviews a principal council is under a duty to carry out a review if it receives a valid community governance petition. This duty does not apply where the council has carried out such a review of the area within the last two years, although it can do so if it so wishes, or where it is currently conducting such a review of the whole or a significant part of the area concerned.

Otherwise the 2007 Act provides for a council to conduct a review at any time and one may be needed for example to reflect a major change in population or to re-draw anomalous boundaries.

The purpose of this paragraph is to reassure the Council and residents that now that local councils have the power to undertake community governance reviews, the frequency and timing of such reviews is devolved locally and can therefore be undertaken with more certainty and frequency.

## 7.2. Unitary Review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) receives data from all councils annually to highlight significant levels of electoral inequality. This is defined as:

- more than 30% of its wards/divisions have an electoral imbalance (ratio of electors to members) of more than 10% from the average for the authority;
- and/or it has one ward/division with an electoral imbalance of more than 30%; and the imbalance is unlikely to be corrected by population change within a reasonable period.

The LGBCE have expressed interest in our figures for the last two years, but have now confirmed that Wiltshire will not feature in its work programme before 2017/18. This means that unitary divisions will not be affected by any parish alterations before that.

## 7.3. Parliamentary Review

Under current legislation the reference data for the review of Parliamentary boundaries will be the local authority boundaries (external, ward, and polling district) as they existed on 7 May 2015, and the Parliamentary electorate figures as they exist in the register that was statutorily published on 1 December 2015.

Whilst the alteration of parish boundaries and parish wards may cause some administrative difficulties, this need not derail the present CGR process.

## 7.4. Elections

It is a generally accepted rule that no major changes should be introduced within six months of any main election. The end date for any changes affecting parish elections should therefore be no later than the end of October 2016. The operative date to give effect to any changes can be shown in the Order(s), e.g. 1 April 2017, and that would be sufficient to produce registers on new

boundaries from 1 December 2016, albeit with many smaller polling districts to recognise the boundaries as they existed at 7 May 2015.

### 7.5. Precepts

Depending on how many changes are approved by Council, there will be considerable work involved in reconciling property records to their new parish, both in respect of council tax and in many other departments. Further, parish councils would need an indication of their tax base for precepting purposes, and an introduction date of 1 April 2017 would seem to offer the best compromise.

## 8. **Working Group Recommendations and Reasoning**

8.1 In deciding what recommendations to make, the Working Group has taken account of the representations received and the need to ensure that the community governance for the areas concerned reflect the statutory criteria ie the identities and interests of the community in that area and facilitates effective and convenient local government. In addition, the Working Group had regard to the Core Strategy implications for future development for the various sites as reported at para 6 above.

8.2 Set out below are the recommendations and reasoning for each Scheme considered by the Working Group:

### **A. SALISBURY/LAVERSTOCK AND FORD - SCHEMES 100, 2 AND 3**

8.3 The Council at its meeting on 24 November decided as follows:-

**“That Council instruct the Working Group to investigate and consult on the merger of Laverstock and Ford Parish into Salisbury City Parish; and bring the matter back to Full Council for a decision at the earliest opportunity.”**

8.4 The first issue addressed by the Working Group was the possible merger of Salisbury City Council and Laverstock and Ford Parish Council. It was clear from the representations received that opinion was divided with Laverstock and Ford residents and the Parish Council being firmly opposed to the merger, whilst the City Council was strongly supportive. Both Councils had undertaken their own surveys and these are referred to in paragraph 5.3B above.

8.5 The Working Group took into consideration the detailed submission from Salisbury City Council in which the Council stated that it was firmly of the view that the merger would lead to a better reflection of the identity and interests of the community of that area and would be more effective and convenient in terms of governance than the current arrangement. The merger would reflect the current physical realities of the area and strengthen democratic participation and accountability. The City Council have questioned the viability of the Parish Council and its capacity to deliver services in the future, highlighting frequent vacancies and uncontested elections.

8.6 Laverstock and Ford Parish Council in their submission argued that there was a strong sense of civic pride within their community with a particular focus on their rural heritage. There was a strong sense of place and distinctiveness with a strong



and inclusive community and voluntary sector. Engagement with the community was effective.

8.7 In discussing this proposal, the Working Group considered whether the merger would lead to more effective and convenient local government and/or increased community identity. In particular, the Working Group considered whether the proposal would lead to increased community cohesion and community engagement. The Working Group were of the view that the Laverstock and Ford Parish Council was a viable and active Council and there was no suggestion that it wasn't effective in delivering services. Judging by the responses received from Laverstock and Ford residents it was clear that there was effective democratic engagement at the community level.

8.8 The merger proposal as it stood would in effect lead to the abolition of the Laverstock and Ford Parish Council and its integration within Salisbury City. The Guidance was clear that the abolition of a parish council should not be undertaken unless clearly justified and any decision to do so should not be taken lightly. Evidence would be required to justify the abolition and the views of local electors and parish councillors would need to be considered. Whilst it is accepted that this Guidance is aimed primarily at areas where the proposal is to take away without replacement, which is not the case with the merger, the Working Group remained of the view that a merger of councils should only be undertaken where both councils and the community supported such a move. In this case both the residents of Laverstock and Ford and the Parish Council were clearly opposed to such a merger and therefore the Working Group felt that there was no justification locally to support the proposal.

8.9 The Working Group considered that the existing arrangements provided effective and convenient local government, with both of the parish councils working effectively to provide services to their respective parish communities and a strong sense of community identity and interest in respect of residents of Laverstock and Ford as evidenced by the consultation responses received. The Working Group therefore did not consider that there was sufficient justification for a merger of the two parishes.

**RECOMMENDATION – That the proposal to merge the Laverstock and Ford Parish into Salisbury City Parish be not approved.**

8.10 Following on from this decision the Working Group then considered two alternative proposals to re-align the boundary between the two councils by either moving properties at Bishopdown Farm, currently within Salisbury City Council, to Laverstock and Ford Parish Council or by moving properties at Hampton Park, currently within Laverstock and Ford Parish Council, to Salisbury City Council.

8.11 Originally the Council at its meeting on 24 November had decided as follows:-

**“To defer consideration of proposals affecting the Properties within Hampton Park (ref 2 and 3), and that these be referred back to the Working Group.”**

8.12 When the Working Group had originally considered this proposal in 2015 it had come to the view that it would be logical for all of these properties to be located in one parish or the other, not as currently, split between the two parishes, and if

there was a preference for either option the Working Group had recommended that the properties should all be contained within Laverstock and Ford.

8.13 The Working Group has again confirmed the view that the areas in question were clearly one housing development and a re-alignment of the boundary was more logical, and on that basis the community identity for the area would be improved by agreeing to the inclusion of all properties within one parish.

8.14 The City Council felt that the three new housing developments, planned and functioning as a single neighbourhood, are closely connected to and reliant upon the City with the remainder of Laverstock and Ford separated from it by a river and/or railway line. For this reason, it would support the transfer of the Hampton Park area into the City Council.

8.15 In terms of the re-alignment of the boundary in the Hampton Park area, the Parish Council wholeheartedly supported the inclusion of the whole area set aside for the country park within Laverstock and Ford and would welcome the residents of Bishopdown Farm if that was their wish.

8.16 The outcome of the consultation was clearly in favour of including the properties within Laverstock and Ford and strengthened the previous views of the Working Group that the Bishopdown Farm area should be located within Laverstock and Ford. The Working Group did however recognise that a larger number of Laverstock residents had been consulted. Neither the Parish nor the City Council in its surveys had addressed the specific issue of the re-alignment of the boundary.

8.17 The Working Group were mindful that the Hampton Park area was designated as part of the urban extension of Salisbury within the Core Strategy but understood that there were no further allocations within the Parish of Laverstock and Ford Council.

8.18 The Working Group has concluded on balance that a re-alignment of the boundary between the two councils would lead to a more logical boundary and that the community identity of the area would be enhanced by the area's inclusion within Laverstock and Ford Parish Council.

**RECOMMENDATION – That the proposal to move properties at Bishopdown Farm from Salisbury City Council to Laverstock and Ford Parish Council, as described in Scheme 2, is approved.**

(NB. As Scheme 3 was a direct alternative to Scheme 2, the approval of the latter scheme means that Scheme 3 is not approved.)

## **B. CORSHAM AND BOX - SCHEME 102**

8.19 At its meeting on 24 November the Council had decided as follows:-

- 1. That the proposal for the area of land at Rudloe in the parish of Box, shown edged green on Map Scheme 40 and 41 - Area A8 - Corsham and Box Area Map 2 to become part of the parish of Corsham, be not supported;**
- 2. That the area of land in the parish of Corsham shown hatched and edged in green on Scheme 40 and 41 - Area A8 - Corsham and Box Area Map 3 being land at Rudloe, becomes part of the parish of Box;**
- 3. That the working group is asked to consider the proposal that the area of land in the parish of Box to the south-east of the B3109 Bradford Road shown hatched on Map Scheme 40-41 Area 8 Corsham and Box Map 2 should become part of Corsham Parish and report back to council; and**
- 4. That the working group is asked to consider that in addition the use of the B3109 Bradford Road as the eastern boundary for the parish of Box puts in place a clear boundary tied to firm ground detail and removes an anomalous and outdated parish boundary and report back to council.**

8.20 The Working Group considered the outcome of consultation in respect of the proposal to transfer an area of land which contained 79 properties from Box Parish to Corsham Town. The majority of responses received disagreed with the proposal although the Working group noted that a significant proportion of responses were not from the area affected. The views of the respective Councils on Scheme 102 differed greatly, Corsham Town Council being in favour and Box Parish Council being opposed.

8.21 The Working Group expressed some concern that the existing boundary was anomalous and does not follow a clearly defined boundary. However, the proposed new boundary is not ideal either and had not attracted clear support.

8.22 Members of the Working Group met with representatives of both Box and Corsham Councils on 15 June 2016 to gain a better understanding of their respective views. This was a very helpful meeting in which it became clear that a compromise solution might be possible.

8.23 Councillor Whalley attended the meeting of the Working Group on 20 June and spoke in support of the proposed Scheme 102. The Scheme would replace the outdated anomalous boundary that dissected crucially important sites with a clear linear boundary and would place nationally important industrial sites within one council area, Corsham Town, which would be better placed to support and develop the economic vibrancy and cohesion of the area. It was clear, however, that Councillor Whalley would also support a compromise solution that achieved these aims and had the support of both Councils.

8.24 At a subsequent meeting the Chairman of the Working Group met with representatives of the two Councils who following discussions, were able to agree a new boundary line by way of a compromise. This is subject to confirmation by both Councils – Box Parish Council will meet on 30 June and Corsham Town Council on

6 July. Subject to ratification by the two Councils, the Working Group will recommend that the Council accepts the proposed compromise.

8.25 Council will be updated at the meeting.

### **C. TROWBRIDGE AREA**

8.26 When the Council originally considered the proposals for Trowbridge and the surrounding area at its meeting on 24 November it decided as follows:-

**“That decisions on the proposals numbered 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, and 26 for changes to the areas of Trowbridge and surrounding parishes be deferred for further consideration and consultation by the Working Group and that there also be consultation on proposal 24 (Lady Down Farm), proposal 25 (Hilperton Gap South), proposal 27 (West Ashton Road Employment Land) proposal 28 (Ashton Park Urban Extension) and proposal 29 (White Horse Business Park).”**

8.27 The Working Group gave detailed consideration to the submission by Trowbridge Town Council which covered all of the schemes listed below. The Town Council were of the view that as it provided a range of services and facilities for a wide community, in order to continue to provide effective and efficient local government on behalf of the whole town they required one town council for all of the town and that this should include all areas of current and planned development where they are detached from neighbouring villages and, where development is contiguous with neighbouring villages, appropriate natural boundaries, such as main roads should be used.

8.28 In addition, the Working Group considered the representations submitted in relation to individual schemes.

**SCHEMES 26 (OLD FARM), 27 (WEST ASHTON EMPLOYMENT LAND), 28 (ASHTON PARK URBAN EXTENSION) AND 29 (WHITE HORSE BUSINESS PARK) - TROWBRIDGE**

8.29 The Working Group considered all four schemes together in a general discussion on the urban extension of Trowbridge into the surrounding parishes and in particular considered the detailed submission from Trowbridge Town Council.

8.30 The Working Group recognised that all four areas were a mixture of areas where development had already been built out, areas that had allocations in the Core Strategy for mixed housing and employment uses and areas currently utilised for local employment. Schemes 27 and 28 were natural progressions of the urban extension of Trowbridge from Scheme 26 where the housing had already been built. In that sense the Working Group recognised that if Scheme 26 was not agreed then it would follow that Schemes 27 and 28 could not be agreed as the parish boundaries would not be contiguous.

In relation to Scheme 29, Councillors noted that the site was split by the railway line, east of which formed part of the allocated site within the Core Strategy and west of which comprised the White Horse Business Park.

8.31 Councillors were of the view that there would be no logical improvement in the boundaries arising from the implementation of Schemes 26, 27, 28 and 29. Arising from the consultation there was no compelling evidence to suggest that the community identity would be improved by implementing any of the schemes nor was there any suggestion that the existing Parish Councils were unviable or inactive. On that basis the Working Group agreed that against the statutory criteria, there was insufficient reason to approve any of the Schemes and therefore community identity and efficient and effective local government was best served by maintaining the status quo at this time.

**RECOMMENDED – That no action is taken in respect of Schemes 26, 27, 28 and 29.**

#### D. SCHEME 21 – SHORE PLACE, TROWBRIDGE

8.32 The Working Group noted that the response to consultation showed the majority of respondents disagreed with the proposal to transfer the properties into Trowbridge Town Council from Wingfield Parish Council. However, Councillors noted that the only access to this area was from Trowbridge and that the existing boundary was out of date and anomalous. The houses were clearly part of the existing housing estate and were to all intents and purpose part of Trowbridge. On this basis the Working Group agreed that community identity would be enhanced by including this area within Trowbridge Town Council.

**RECOMMENDED – That the proposal to move properties within Shore Place from Wingfield Parish Council to Trowbridge Town Council, as described within Scheme 21, is approved.**

#### E. SCHEME 24 – LADY DOWN FARM, TROWBRIDGE

8.33 The Working Group noted that access to this area of land was only possible via Trowbridge and that the proposed revised boundary by using the canal would be an improvement. However, the response to consultation was mixed and no compelling case had been made for the change. No subsequent development was planned for the site.

8.34 On that basis the Working Group agreed that the proposal would not lead to enhanced community identity as the current residents associated themselves with Holt Parish Council and were satisfied with their engagement with that Council. Therefore, community identity and efficient and effective local government was best served by maintaining the status quo.

**RECOMMENDED - That no action is taken in respect of Scheme 24.**

#### F. SCHEMES 18 (HALFWAY CLOSE AND BROOK) AND 22 (PAXCROFT MEAD SOUTH OF HILPERTON DRIVE) – TROWBRIDGE

8.35 The Working Group considered the two alternative proposals from Trowbridge Town Council and Hilperton Parish Council to re-align the boundary between the two councils and to move properties between the councils. The proposal from Hilperton (Scheme 18) represented a tidying up of the boundary to reflect house building within the area so that the boundary would follow easily recognisable landmarks. The Trowbridge Town Council proposal (scheme 22) represented a

more fundamental movement of the boundary albeit to an even more recognisable boundary.

8.36 The outcome of the consultation indicated that there was little local support for Scheme 22 and a mixed response but with marginal support for Scheme 18.

8.37 The Parish Council pointed out the area in question contained several community facilities such as the main shopping area for houses in the parish, a public house, the Paxcroft Mead Community Centre and one of the two primary schools in the parish and the most recently constructed affordable housing development. It therefore supported Scheme 18 and opposed Scheme 22.

8.38 The Working Group agreed that there would be benefit in revising the boundary to reflect building on the ground and that whilst Scheme 22 reflected a more easily identifiable boundary there was little local support for this. In addition, there was quite clear community engagement with an active and viable local parish council. On that basis the Working Group felt that Scheme 18 reflected a more equitable solution that had local support and that better reflected local community identity and cohesion.

**RECOMMENDED – That the proposal to re-align the boundary between Hilperton Parish Council and Trowbridge Town Council, as described within Scheme 18, is approved.**

(NB. As Scheme 22 was a direct alternative to Scheme 18, the approval of the latter scheme means that Scheme 22 is not approved.)

#### G. SCHEME 23 – HULBERT CLOSE, TROWBRIDGE

8.39 The Working Group considered the proposal to re-align the boundary between Trowbridge Town Council and Hilperton Parish Council to move the land and properties in Hulbert Close, Ferris Way and Oxford Gardens from Trowbridge Town Council to Hilperton Parish Council.

8.40 The outcome of the consultation was strongly in favour of the proposal. The Parish Council however appeared not to be convinced. The Working Group therefore felt that there was no compelling evidence for change and therefore felt that community identity and effective and efficient local government was best served by maintaining the status quo.

**RECOMMENDED - That no action is taken in respect of Scheme 23.**

#### H. SCHEME 25 - HILPERTON GAP SOUTH, TROWBRIDGE

8.41 The Working Group considered the proposal from Trowbridge Town Council to re-align the boundary with Hilperton Parish Council which would move the boundary out to the new Hilperton Relief Road.

8.42 The response to the consultation process was minimal but this reflected the fact that the majority of land in question is not built upon.

8.43 The Parish Council opposed the Scheme, not least because the land consists of open fields which are not allocated for housing in the 2026 Core Strategy

8.44 Again as there was no compelling evidence for change the Working Group agreed to maintain the status quo.

**RECOMMENDED - That no action is taken in respect of Scheme 25.**

**I. SCHEMES 19 (WYKE ROAD) AND 20 (WYKE ROAD) – TROWBRIDGE**

8.45 The Working Group considered the two alternative proposals from Trowbridge Town Council and Hilperton Parish Council to re-align the boundary between the two councils and to move properties between the councils.

8.46 The outcome of the consultation was considered although the origin of the majority of responses came from outside of the area and were therefore less influential.

8.47 The Parish Council supported Scheme 19 as it would assist the aim of better local governance for the residents by combining them with their near neighbours who were already in Hilperton Parish.

8.48 As there was no compelling evidence for change the Working Group felt that community identity and effective and efficient local government was best served by maintaining the status quo.

**RECOMMENDED - That no action is taken in respect of either Scheme 19 or 20.**

**J. SCHEME 103 – ALBERT ROAD, OSBORNE ROAD, VICTORIA ROAD AND WYKE ROAD, TROWBRIDGE**

8.49 The Working Group considered the proposal to re-align the boundary between Trowbridge Town Council and Hilperton Parish Council to move the land and properties in Albert Road, Osborne Road, Victoria Road and Wyke Road from Trowbridge Town Council to Hilperton Parish Council.

8.50 The outcome of the consultation was in favour of the proposal. However, the Working Group felt that there was no compelling evidence for change. The Working Group therefore concluded that community identity and effective and efficient local government was best served by maintaining the status quo.

**RECOMMENDED - That no action is taken in respect of Scheme 103.**

**9. Next steps**

Any changes to community governance arrangements that have been approved by the Council are brought into effect by means of a formal Order. However, before any order is made, it would also be necessary to consider whether there are any consequential changes that need to be made. For instance, where a boundary alteration results in a change in the number of electors in a parish, or the distribution of those electors within the parish, it may be appropriate to consider whether there needs to be changes to the warding arrangements within the parish, or to the number of councillors. If a parish is to be abolished, there would need to be consideration as to what is to happen to any assets held by

that council. This would be considered as a separate exercise, following the decisions made at this meeting.

#### **10. Safeguarding Implications**

There are no safeguarding impacts arising from this report.

#### **11. Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

#### **12. Risk Assessment**

There are no significant risks arising from this report, although the situation with regard to boundaries and seats must be in place by no later than the end of October 2016 to meet the required timescale for the Unitary and Parish elections in May 2017. It will be necessary to ensure that sufficient resources are available to complete this work within the required timescale.

#### **13. Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

#### **14. Legal Implications**

This Review is being carried out by the Council in accordance with Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the DCLG as referred to earlier in this report.

#### **15. Public Health Impact of the Proposals**

There are no public health impacts arising from this report.

#### **16. Environmental Impact of the Proposals**

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

#### **17. Recommendations**

- 17.1. That Council approves the Working Group recommendations set out in Paragraph 8 to this report.**
- 17.2 That, where changes to parishes boundaries are approved, the Working Group gives consideration to any consequential changes that need to be made to the electoral arrangements for those parish councils, including any changes to warding and brings these back to Council for final approval.**

**Ian Gibbons, Associate Director, Legal and Governance, and Monitoring Officer**

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4 July 2016.

## **Background Papers**

Letters and documents appended from councils, other organisations and individuals

## **Appendices**

Frequently Asked Questions

Appendix 1 – Mapping for individual schemes

Appendix 2 – Summary of public response to the consultation

Appendix 3 – Trowbridge Town Council submission

Appendix 4 – Hilperton Parish Council submission

Appendix 5 – Laverstock and Ford Parish Council submission

Appendix 6 – Salisbury City Council submission

Appendix 7 – Notes of public consultation meetings and meetings with Town and Parish Councils

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **What is a Community Governance Review (CGR)?**

These reviews were previously called Parish Reviews and they are usually undertaken every 10-15 years to make sure that the boundaries and electoral arrangements of parishes within an area are working well.

A CGR must:

- Reflect the identities and interests of the communities in that area; and
- be effective and convenient.

Consequently, a CGR must take into account::

- the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
- the size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

Therefore any changes made by a CGR must improve communities and local democracy in the parish or parishes concerned.

#### **Why is the Council doing this now?**

The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 transferred responsibility for these reviews to principal councils. A number of parishes and towns within the county have asked the council to review their boundaries.

#### **Some information on this Review refers to parish or town wards – what are these?**

Some large parishes are divided into smaller sections, called wards, and these can reflect the character of a parish. For instance, if a parish contains two villages, with quite separate identities, then the parish might be split into two separate wards, with separate parish councillors for each ward.

#### **How many councillors can a Parish Council have?**

There must not be fewer than five councillors on a parish council but there is no maximum number given. Ideally, the number of members on a parish council should reflect the size of the parish overall.

#### **Will my post code change?**

No, Royal Mail has a separate process for setting postcodes, which do not correlate with parish boundaries.

### **Does changing a parish boundary make any difference to the likelihood of development occurring on the edge of settlements?**

No. The criteria, and the legislation that sits behind it, for determining whether or not parish boundaries should change bears no relation to the legislation that guides the determination of planning applications. In simple terms, if a proposal for development comes forward the parish within which that development sits has no direct relevance to the decision whether to grant planning permission or not.

### **Will this affect my council tax bill?**

Possibly. Most parish councils levy what is known as a precept to cover their costs. Typically the contribution toward your parish council is around 5% of the council tax you pay. There are variations between parish precepts so it is likely that this element of your council could change if your property moves into a different parish.

The 2014/15 and 2015/16 Council Tax band D charge and precept for all parishes can be seen at:

<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/counciltaxhousingandbenefits/counciltax/ctaxhowmuch/counciltaxbanddandpreceptallparishes.htm>

It is not possible to say what the 2016/17 charges will be, and nor is it possible to predict the effect of the Community Governance proposals on these parish precepts.

### **Will I have to get official documents like my driving licence changed if my property moves from one parish to another?**

No. The key elements of your address for official purposes are your house name/number, street and postcode. There are many examples already of where a postal address records a property in a different town/parish than the one in which it is actually situated.

### **If my property moves from one parish to another, do I need to change my passport details?**

No. Your passport does not contain your address, therefore there is no requirement to update the details.

### **What sort of factors might be taken into account when looking at community identity?**

There is no set list of factors; the following offers a few suggestions:

- Where do you tell your friends you live?
- Where are your key services, e.g. shops, doctors, pub, sports club, social club?
- Where do you think the boundary with the next parish is?
- Do you know which parish you live in?
- Are there any natural physical boundaries such as a river, road, hill

nearby?

- Are there any Community groups or associations in the area which help to indicate where communities begin and end?

**Where can I read more about Community Governance Reviews and how they operate?**

The Department for Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission have produced guidance on how to conduct reviews and what they should cover.

This can be seen at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-governance-reviews-guidance>