



**Boundary Review Statement read by the Leader of SCC, Cllr Andrew Roberts at the
Boundary Review Meeting, City Hall, 9 May 2016.**

1. A few thousand residents living in continuous but pleasantly spaced houses, a handful surviving from the pre-1850 rural past, the remainder planned and ordered streets, estates and closes; with two churches, a few shops, three pubs, sports facilities, halls, a primary school; spread along a principal road between a wood-topped hillside and a river, linked across its meadows to the city centre a mile away by two road bridges and a footpath, with uninterrupted farmland stretching away from its outer boundaries.

This is Harnham. Part of Salisbury and served by the City Council.

1850 to 1990 - deduct a church and two pubs, add three secondary schools and you have Laverstock served by Laverstock and Ford Parish Council.

Such close comparisons could also be made between Bemerton and Old Sarum (plus an airfield) but could not be made between any of them and Odstock or Redlynch, Whiteparish or Winterbourne, or any other of Wiltshire's many rural settlements.

2. It is for this reason that SCC continues to support the full merger of the two parishes, which outcome would fully meet the statutory objectives of the current Community Governance Review in the two parishes and for the established governance policies and objectives of Wiltshire Council and the long established approach to administrative boundaries throughout Great Britain.

We do however recognise a possible alternative in respect of the settlement of Ford itself.

3. Since the last review in 1954 development has made the then sparsely populated parish of Laverstock and Ford home to a series of separate settlements that in their form and function are urban extensions of Salisbury.

Those settlements are the Milford extension along Queen Manor Road; Laverstock Village; Hampton Park/Riverdown; Ford and Old Sarum. They have no real collective identity, beyond that constructed around the institution of the Civil Parish. There are few physical connections between them and little reason for residents of one to have more to do with the others than with the adjacent City, which provides their services above the neighbourhood level.

4. Both public and private sectors have long operated in accordance with the physical reality of a single enlarged settlement. As long ago as 1961 the LEA reorganised Salisbury schools by moving three of them to a new site in Laverstock (from Highbury Avenue [Wyvern College]; St Edmunds Church and Exeter Street [St Joseph's – the then senior school element of St Osmund's]).



The City area remains the largest provider of pupils to these schools. Wiltshire Council treated them as so connected that its Divisions were based on a combination – creating a cross-parish Division and attendance at Salisbury Area Board by Laverstock and Ford Parish Council. The Anglican Church Parishes of Salisbury St Marks and Laverstock St Andrews were merged some years ago. And house builders conspicuously advertise Hampton Park, Riverdown and Old Sarum as being in Salisbury. The Core Strategy treats them as a single sustainable entity.

5. This Review offers a rare opportunity for the parish level governance to reflect the current realities whilst strengthening democratic participation and accountability; enhancing the convenience, efficiency and effectiveness of local government and ensuring fairness of participation, access to resources and contribution amongst all residents.
6. Both parishes are fine places to live, enjoying an unusual abundance of green and open space, largely derived from the famous five rivers. But Salisbury now contains more commercial farmland; more meadow; more woodland and more publicly owned open space than Laverstock and Ford. This reflects the transformation of the parish since 1945 by the building of housing and facilities on an urban pattern and scale, with hundreds of houses in multi-road developments. Only Ford is a partial exception to this. The transformation in character is confirmed by the presence of these same identifiers of an urban area – a Community Farm and a Country Park (rural villages have agri-business farms and countryside).
7. Communities of this type deserve and need capable and accountable local government. In the near future both parishes will (hopefully) be considered to be 'developed out'. This will mean the end of developer funded community provision – but not the end of demand. Maintenance funds run out and an area must eventually rely on its own resources. It will not be enough to consult and specify, asking others to provide. Action will be needed. SCC already has very limited reliance on developer funding, the need for which is a double-edged sword. The effectiveness of its governance in the future is secured. Our proposal could do the same for Laverstock and Ford.
8. SCC is and always has been fully elected, like Wiltshire Council. We trust that no elected authority would consider appointment of members to be more democratic. You are also composed of party members. Again, we assume that you do not consider the clear choices that represents as being a bad thing. Although note that I am an elected Independent Leader of the City Council.
9. Wiltshire Council has made its own choices as to what amounts to effective and convenient local governance. Its own existence is testament to the benefits of scale and capacity, whilst its plans for the devolution of the most local services to parishes set an increasing requirement for robust capacity in these parishes. SCC has that capacity. Does Laverstock and Ford?



10. And all residents of both areas have an interest in fairness. Wiltshire Council policy has raised a double fairness issue, if my parish council proposes a locally-funded service to me – should I also contribute to the cost of its provision in other parishes? Wiltshire Council says no – service devolution will eventually be the same for all. But should I contribute to services used in the same way by others – not as occasional visitors but with the regularity of neighbours - if they don't? This is the core boundary question and the underlying logic behind all UK reviews. In a country with ever-growing settlements the answer has always been no. We hope it will also be in this case.
11. And finally a point on Ford. Although it lacks any of the usual (although frequently disappearing) facilities of a typical village, Ford has a pattern, scale and feel that has significant similarities to one. So whilst it would find a welcome home in the City, we see that it could fairly be a separate parish, either on its own or with a rural neighbour such as Hurdcott, perhaps using its old name of Winterbourne Ford, if that is appealing to Wiltshire Council members. Precise boundaries to be agreed, but roughly the edge of the airfield, the edge of the Riverdown development, the river and the existing North East boundary.
12. On options 2 and 3, we would support the inclusion of Hampton Park and Riverdown in the City if the full merger does not occur, and oppose the transfer of Bishopdown Farm to Laverstock and Ford for the reasons above.

I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank You