

Notes of the CGR meeting with Parish Representatives, Corsham Fire Station, 15 June 2016 10:45 – 12:00

Present

Cllr Ernie Clark (Acting as Chairman, CGR Working Group and HPC) and Cllr Ian West (Substitute for Cllr Glenis Ansell - CGR Working Group Member)

Also Present

Mr Ian Gibbons, Miss Jessica Croman, Stewart Barnes (BPC), Pauline Lyons (BPC), Margaret Carey (BPC), Cllr Sheila Parker, Ruth Hopkinson (CTC) and David Martin (CTC)

BPC – Box Parish Council

CTC – Corsham Town Council

The Chairman opened the meeting, explaining that both councils had been invited to discuss the proposals that would be considered by Wiltshire Council in July 2016 and that the Working Group would be making recommendations to full council, not making the decisions themselves.

BPC was first to present their views on the proposal which included:

- BPC did not welcome a change to the parish boundary;
- Residents of BPC supported the views of the Parish Council and did not want a change;
- The proposal had been driven by CTC and not supported by Corsham residents;
- The proposal was a land grab;
- If CTC only wanted to tidy up the boundary then what was the need to include all of the land and why was that not the original proposal;
- The proposal included 30% of BPC and included all of the development land for Box;
- All of Box residents feel affected by the proposal not just those in the affected area;
- The proposal would contradict official guidance because it would break up communities and be counter-productive;
- The November Council decision was for Rudloe to become part of BPC, agreeing the CTC proposal would change that decision;
- The proposal had been developed without communicating with BPC;
- The proposal had been tabled after public speaking during the WC full council meeting in November, which meant that BPC could not comment on the proposal at the time and residents watching had become very concerned;
- Residents prefer rural life and do not want to be part of Corsham;
- There seemed to be a common theme in the CGR schemes where towns want to take over villages.

CTC responded to some of the points raised by BPC which included:

- CTC had no intention of land grabbing. As part of the CGR review, CTC recently agreed to a proposal for part of its land to transfer into Chippenham. That decision was based on logic and following logical boundaries;

- The residents views were based on the previous proposal prior to November full council, as such were irrelevant to the current proposal;
- Corsham residents did not attend the previous public consultation meeting because they were not affected by the proposal;
- CTC did not intent to take over rural villages and recognised that BPC had its own identity;

CTC presented their views on the proposal which included:

- The proposal corrected anomalies;
- The proposal came from Cllr Whalley and not CTC itself, although they did support the proposal;
- The proposal followed rational boundaries and would enable CTC to plan development in the town;
- The area was fundamental to the future of Corsham and recognised as an area of national economic importance to the digital future;
- An area of the proposal included land for digital Corsham and recognised by the SWLEP;
- CTC is better suited to support businesses and creat jobs
- CTC had put their own resources into the environmental wellbeing of the area and local train station which would benefit other areas;
- Both BPC and CTC would benefit from the CTC neighbourhood town plan but only if the land was included in the plan. Currently the land is not in Corsham which means it cannot be included in the neighbourhood plan;
- The current boundaries were no longer relevant and needed to be updated for the sustainability of the area;
- The 3 main land owners have given support to the proposal;
- Developments in Wadswick were being advertised as being in Corsham;
- Arc Data part of the digital enterprise and digital Corsham supported the proposal;
- The MOD's car park was currently split between CTC and BPC and the proposal would fix that, the MOD informally supported the proposal;
- BPC would remain economically viable due to Rudloe joining them;

Cllr Sheila Parker presented her arguments against the proposal which included:

- The proposal would take away part of Box's identify;
- Whether the employment land was in Box or Corsham, both residents would still find employment there;
- The proposal would take away the only development land that Box had;
- The November full council meeting stated that they wanted to keep communities together;
- Residents are concerned that CTC will continue to take land and ultimately take over Box.

The Chairman asked technical questions on whether the WG had the flexibility to approve part of a proposal. It was noted that the WG was allowed to make recommendations which had a different view of correcting anomalies or suggested alternative boundaries, although if the recommendation included an area which had not been consulted, further consultation would need to be carried out.

The Chairman asked if there were any other suitable boundaries and CTC indicated the public footpaths could be used although they were not clearly definable or fixed.

CTC indicated that they were more concerned with the Wadswick Green, Digital centre and MOD land than actually taking over all of the rural land. Box welcomed that view and it was suggested by the Chairman that both CTC and BPC worked together with an independent party chairing the meeting, to produce an alternative proposal that was a better compromise between them.

Both councils were informed that Wiltshire Council could review boundaries more regularly.

The time scale for the decision to be made was discussed and it was noted that a decision affecting the change of boundaries should not be rushed, although both councils were keen to not let the review drag on.

BPC agreed to have informal discussions which could be reported to their full council at the end of the month.

The Chairman thanked both BPC and CTC for their attendance.