

Wiltshire Council

Council

9 September 2020

Public Participation – Item 7 – Recommendation 11

From Amanda Bocker and Matthew Wakeling

To Councillor Richard Clewer, Chairman of the Electoral Review Committee

My partner and myself have been residents of 18 Woodmarsh, North Bradley since March 2020. We were aware of the land allocation for development between White Horse Business Park and Woodmarsh prior to this, and indeed received a copy of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan - adopted Feb 2020. This plan clearly marks the allocation area which borders the back of our property, and as such that marked area would be included in the Trowbridge Town boundary. However according to the CGR May 2020, Trowbridge Town Council have advised us that although they opposed the inclusion of our property (accessed off Woodmarsh) being included in the Town Boundary, Wiltshire Council now proposes to include the whole of the development allocation (inclusive of our property) in the town boundary.

Not only does this mean that we would no longer be a part of North Bradley, it would also increase our Council Tax significantly and throws doubt into our minds as to why a property which is owned by us is considered part of the development allocation.

Therefore, we would like to ask:

Question P20-37

1. Why was the boundary of the allocation changed?
2. Given that the entrance to our property is accessed off Woodmarsh, North Bradley, and that our adjacent neighbours also on Woodmarsh would remain in North Bradley, what are the logical reasons for our property being singled out and included in that allocation?

Response

At the time of the decision of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) to create new divisions and consequentially new parish warding arrangements including around North Bradley and Trowbridge, the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan - Submission draft plan (July 2018) did include the area including your property, which sits outside the settlement boundary of the village, within its boundary.

The LGBCE initially sought to place all the properties accessed off Woodmarsh into the Trowbridge Drynham Division, and therefore the White Horse ward of North Bradley parish. After considering representations the LGBCE adjusted the position,

instead including most of the properties accessed off Woodmarsh within the Southwick Division, and therefore the Village ward of North Bradley parish. This decision was made around June 2019, although the detail was only announced on 1 October 2019, as they undertook a further limited consultation regarding another area of the council prior to the announcement.

The housing site allocation boundary shown in the draft Plan, which was referred to in the submissions to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, was amended through the plan making process. The change to exclude the land referenced was recommended by the Inspector, who examined the draft Plan, in his Report (January 2020) and is reflected in the final version of the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan adopted by the Council in February 2020.

The recommendation of the Committee is that there are reasons of effective and convenient governance, and community interest and identity, for the White Horse ward as a whole to be transferred into Trowbridge Town Council in advance of the May 2021 local elections. It considered that arrangements as a whole would not be appropriate if there were a delay beyond May 2021 for a transfer.

However, the Committee did accept that the precise line between the two parishes could be looked at again in the future to resolve any outstanding anomalies, despite endorsing the principle of the majority of the area being appropriately located within the town of Trowbridge, and considering that there would be a detriment to effective governance to not undertake a transfer of the ward at this time.

Question 20-38

1. What benefits (that we don't already have as residents of North Bradley) would we gain from the increase in our Council Tax?
2. Are there any other plans, that would give further reason to our property being included as part of the allocation?

Response

1. With any proposed boundary change there may be shifts in council taxes obligation for an individual property, however a community governance review looks at the wider governance arrangements for the area in question and therefore the council tax precept level is not a factor which may be considered by the Council in this process.
2. See previous response.