

CORSHAM  
VILLAGE-COMMUNITY  
14/10/15

## Community Governance Review

The reasons why Corsham Town Council made its proposal for a boundary change with Box are all set out in our formal proposal which conforms with Government guidance. I would just like to highlight a few of the main points and address some misconceptions.

We took what is at best a once every 10 year opportunity, to have our boundaries reviewed in order to ensure the parish was in the best possible position to serve it's communities. Over the past two decades Corsham's population has grown by about 20% and almost all of that growth has been to the West of the Parish. It is growth that has been led from the outside by developers, conforming with the National Planning Framework and Wiltshire Council policies which has left little or no voice for local people in what they want or where they want it.

Much of Box Parish lies within the AONB and therefore, as a relatively small Parish, has not considered it necessary or affordable to produce or cooperate in a neighbourhood plan. That means that the residents outside the AONB have little chance of influencing future development and planning policy which affects them, but not the remainder of the Parish. Corsham Town Council wants to give all its residents and communities both existing and planned, the strongest possible voice in shaping their future. Work on the Corsham Community Area Framework has identified the lack of identity for the developing communities in the area between Box and Corsham and we are keen to address this in a positive manner.

Opportunities now exist and are indeed encouraged by Wiltshire Council, for the devolvment of services they currently provide down to a more local level. Corsham is keen to explore these opportunities, but they depend on us having the capacity to do so. The Boundary change which we have requested would increase our capacity to take on additional services from Wiltshire Council to the advantage of all our residents and communities.

Corsham is already a Council with some capacity and a proven record of integrating it's services for both town and village communities within it's boundaries. Any growth to the West will only increase its capacity, in a very cost effective manner, to serve all the communities better. The proposal was never based on simply increasing revenue at the expense of Box.

Corsham started the process of examining its boundaries in accordance with the Government's guidance on this process. This led us, initially, to consider all of the area East of the AONB as a clear division unlikely to change over time. We were however persuaded by the arguments of Box Council and the opportunity offered by the new access road to The Wadswick Green Development to revise and reduce the area covered by our proposal. That is the proposal that is now on the table for this review and is one that makes sense in planning as well as governance rules.

In conclusion the Corsham Town Council proposal is inclusive, offering to all those who live now, or who will come to live in the new developments, a clear sense of identity and a real and effective say in how their neighbourhoods meet the opportunities and challenges of the future. Taking power back from speculative developers and generalised policies and putting it in the communities own hands through their own local, democratically elected council.

It does seem strange that Box Parish Council has now put forward an alternative proposal, since their position appeared to be that there was no need for a change to boundaries that had been in place for over 100 years.