

Questions to Wiltshire Council, 24th November 2015. From Lance Allen, Clerk to Trowbridge Town Council

Supporting statement.

Whilst Trowbridge Town Council welcomes the recognition by the Working Group that; *'There had been some lack of clarity regarding the specific proposals which had been put out to public consultation'* and that; they have therefore recommended *'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 27'*, they have failed to make a recommendation to Wiltshire Council with respect to a number of other proposals made by Trowbridge Town Council:

- 24. Lady Down Farm
- 25. Hilperton Gap South
- 28. Ashton Park Urban Extension
- 29. White Horse Business Park

And have therefore taken the decision themselves to reject these proposals without any justification.

Question 1.

How can the Working Party reconcile its failure to make a recommendation in support of scheme 24 Lady Down Farm, a proposal which moves the boundary from an undefined middle of field position to the Kennet and Avon Canal, with its recommendation in support of scheme 47 which moves the boundary to the Kennet and Avon Canal, giving as a reason for its support as; *'the proposal would provide a clearer boundary between the two parishes'*; and its failure to make a recommendation in support of scheme 25 Hilperton Gap South, a proposal which moves the boundary from the middle of a number of back gardens to a new road on the edge of a town, with its recommendation in support of scheme 42 which moves the boundary to a new road on the edge of a town, giving as a reason for its support as; *'The transfer of this area of land . . . would provide a logical definitive boundary between the two parishes'*; and its failure to make a recommendation in support of scheme 28 Ashton Park Urban Extension, a proposal which incorporates areas of new development to the south of the town which are remote from their villages, with its recommendation in support of scheme 42 which incorporates areas of new development to the south of a town which are remote from their village, giving as a reason for its support as; *'The majority of parish residents live in the residential estates to the south of Devizes and have a clear community link with the town'*; and with its recommendation in support of scheme 43 which incorporates areas of new development to the east of the town which are remote from their village, giving as a reason for its support as; *'The proposed new boundary lines provided a clear division*

between the two parishes and that the community in the area to be transferred would have clear affinity with Melksham'?

Response

In considering each of the areas under review, the Working Group considered all of the relevant factors in the legislation and Government guidance and came to an overall conclusion as to the recommendations that it proposed to make in respect of that area. Given that, I do not see that there is any inconsistency in the summary reasons given for the various recommendations quoted in the question.

Question 2.

When did Wiltshire Council agree to delegate decision making authority to the Community Governance Review Working Party, (with not a single councillor voting against that resolution, as the Working Party is not a politically balanced committee of the Council) and if Wiltshire Council did not make such a resolution, does Wiltshire Council accept that the decision of the Working Party not to make recommendations in respect of schemes 24, 25, 28 and 29 above, is Ultra Vires and will Wiltshire Council therefore now amend the recommendation to include schemes 24, 25, 28 and 29 in the '*further consideration and consultation*' so that all of the proposals made by Trowbridge Town Council can be consulted on and presented to Wiltshire Council for decision making?

Response

The terms of reference of the Working Group were approved by Council in February 2014. These included undertaking a review of the internal and external boundaries of Trowbridge and neighbouring parishes and associated seating arrangements. The role of the Working Group was to carry out reviews of the areas concerned and make recommendations to the Council. Whilst the Working Group had no executive powers to make final decisions on any boundary or other structural changes, it was a proper part of its remit to decide what proposals to put forward, initially for consultation and then to full Council for a decision.

It is a matter for Council whether to accept the Working Group's recommendations on any of the proposals or not. If it does not accept the Working Group's recommendation in respect of any of the areas under review, it can ask the Group to carry out further consideration and consultation, either generally or in respect of any specific proposals that may have been put forward by parish councils or other bodies.