

## **CGR 4**

### **Parishes Affected**

Wallingford, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, Cholsey

### **Matter to be considered**

Extending the boundary of Wallingford parish to the by-pass, thereby incorporating land at Slade End west of the town, currently in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish, and Winterbrook south of the town, currently in Cholsey parish

Amending the boundary of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish to incorporate land north-east of Wantage Road, currently in Wallingford parish

### **Impact on district and county council boundaries**

Affects Wallingford and Cholsey district wards in the Slade Farm area.

### **Summary of parish council responses**

Wallingford town council put forward the proposal to extend its boundary to the south and west. It has submitted a lengthy justification for its proposal citing, in particular, how well it meets the terms of reference relating to man-made boundaries, ensuring people are in the same parish as their neighbours and, in the case of Winterbrook, how it coincides with the LGBC's view of where the district and county ward boundary should lie.

Wallingford town council does not support a change to its northern boundary stating that, "whilst the northern town boundary at present follows a rather tortuous route, it would be no better defined by following garden fence lines".

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish council does not object to the principle of the land at Slade Farm moving into Wallingford parish but it considers that the appropriate boundary is the edge of the built-up area (excluding the buffer zone) rather than the by-pass. It also re-affirms its support for the proposal it put forward to extend its boundary to the north of Wallingford stating, "the existing boundary does not meet the recommended requirement that a boundary should be easily identifiable and likely to remain so. The Council's suggested edge of settlement principle overcomes this difficulty."

Cholsey parish council opposes the proposal to move Winterbrook into Wallingford parish. It states, amongst other things:

"For centuries Winterbrook has been part of Cholsey parish; Wallingford has come out to meet Winterbrook, not vice versa. There is a well defined natural boundary between the two settlements – Bradford Brook.

Winterbrook is a semi-rural hamlet with a more rural character to that of the more built-up and urban Wallingford. The parish council has been very concerned and active to protect this special character, most recently during the production of the district council's Core Strategy. The parish council is convinced that this protection will be lost if the hamlet is subsumed into Wallingford.

Residents of Winterbrook use facilities in Cholsey, including the shops, school, community halls and groups. Many Winterbrook residents will tell you that their children attend or have attended the village primary school, play for the Cholsey Bluebirds, attend Youth Club and scouts. Many residents belong to groups such as WI, The 5-0 Club and Cholsey 1000+."

## **Summary of other responses**

We have received a number of letters from residents of Winterbrook. Most oppose the proposal to move them into Wallingford parish, although a small number support it. We will test residents views in more detail if council agrees the draft proposal.

Cllr Mark Gray, who is also chairman of Cholsey parish council, has written saying:

"I genuinely believe that the interests of the hamlet and the preservation of its distinctive character are best served by it remaining within the parish of Cholsey. It was obvious in the recent Wates appeal that the support - both financial and human - that Save Winterbrook! received from Cholsey Parish would not have been available from the Town Council. There are many other reasons that I could put forward in terms of history, connections and financial issues, but suffice it to say, I oppose this proposal."

Cllr Pat Dawe has endorsed Cllr Gray's comments

## **Recommendations**

To use the Wallingford by-pass to define the southern and western boundaries of Wallingford parish, as shown on the attached map

To move land west of the Wallingford by-pass from Wallingford to both Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Cholsey parishes as shown on the attached map

To make no change to the northern boundary of Wallingford parish

## Justification

At present two areas within the area bounded by the Wallingford by-pass lie outside the parish of Wallingford. To the south of the town lies Winterbrook, part of Cholsey parish, plus a number of fields stretching towards the Hithercroft Industrial Estate. There is no physical divide between Wallingford and Winterbrook. Bradford's Brook is the boundary but properties lie immediately to the north and south of this along the Reading Road. Cholsey village centre lies well over a mile away from Winterbrook. To the west of the town lies part of Slade End farm, separated from the main part of the farm by the by-pass. The council has allocated this land for housing in its Local Plan.

Regarding Winterbrook and the adjacent land the working group considers that the case for moving this into Wallingford parish is strong. The identities and interests of the residents are much more closely aligned with Wallingford than Cholsey. Effective and convenient representation of local residents will be better served by them moving into the parish containing all the local facilities that they use. The proposed new southern boundary along the by-pass is strong and was used by the Local Government Boundary Commission to create the district ward boundary division.

To the west, the working group considers that it is desirable to move the land bounded by the by-pass into Wallingford before any new housing development starts. This will avoid a housing development that straddles a parish boundary. Future residents are much more likely to identify with Wallingford than Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and effective and convenient representation would be enhanced by them being in Wallingford parish.

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish council recognises the arguments in favour of moving this land into Wallingford parish. It proposes, however, that rather than the by-pass forming the boundary between the two parishes that instead it is drawn along the eastern edge of the buffer zone between the new housing and the bypass.

The working group does not support the parish council's view. It considers that the by-pass is a very strong man-made feature and should be used for its entire length to define the boundary between Wallingford and other parishes. It also considers that the best way of achieving effective and convenient local government is by including all land, including the buffer zone, in a single parish.

Two small parts of Wallingford parish currently lies to the west of the by-pass. A consequence of using the by-pass to define the parish boundary is that this land needs to move into another parish and the working group proposes that in one case this is Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and in the other it is Cholsey.

Finally, Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish council proposed moving undeveloped land to the north of the town of Wallingford, but still in Wallingford parish, into Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish. The working group sees no merit in doing this.

The land is physically as close to Wallingford town as it is Brightwell-cum-Sotwell village. If the council was to review parish boundaries to the north of the town it would probably want to do so on a more comprehensive basis and there is no case for this at present.