

CGR 14

Parishes Affected

Henley-on-Thames, Harpsden

Matter to be considered

Amending the boundary of Harpsden parish to include land south of Rotherfield Road currently in Henley-on-Thames parish

Amending the boundary of Henley-on-Thames parish to include land north of Gillott's Lane and land south of Grey's Road (Highlands Farm) both areas currently in Harpsden parish

Impact on district and county council boundaries

Affects Henley-on-Thames and Sonning Common district wards and county divisions

Summary of parish council responses

Harpsden parish council proposed moving land south of Rotherfield Road into its parish stating that it would like to, "consolidate its role as one of the main custodians of the Chilterns AONB between Henley and Reading and in particular to protect the north side of the Harpsden valley by extending its northern boundary up to Rotherfield Road"

Henley-on-Thames town council proposed extending its boundary to include land north of Gillott's Lane stating that the current boundary is illogical.

Henley-on-Thames town council also proposed moving land south of Grey's Road into the parish. This land is largely made up of Highland's Farm, a potential development site for housing, and the town council considered that any future housing development was better included within the town boundary rather than Harpsden parish.

Both Harpsden and Henley-on-Thames councils have responded to the working group's draft proposals. Harpsden parish council raises no objection to the change being proposed at Gillotts School but maintains its view that its boundary should be extended to Rotherfield Road.

Henley-on Thames town council maintains its view that land at Highlands Farm should move into Henley parish. It has provided a lengthy justification, which hinges on the fact that the land is likely to be proposed for development as part of the emerging Henley/Harpsden neighbourhood plan and is therefore better placed in Henley-on-Thames rather than Harpsden parish.

Summary of other responses

Two residents of Rotherfield Road have written objecting to any proposals to move them from Henley-on-Thames parish into Harpsden parish

Recommendation

To move land north of Gillott's Lane, but excluding the properties at Gillott's Hill, into Henley-on-Thames parish from Harpsden parish

To make no change to current parish boundaries in respect of land south of Rotherfield Road or south of Grey's Road

Justification

The working group considers that the case for moving land north of Gillott's Lane is strong. It includes Gillott's School, which is the secondary school that serves Henley. However, the working group noted that properties at the foot of Gillott's Lane, known as Gillott's Hill, are remote from Henley and identify with Harpsden village and consider that they should remain in Harpsden parish.

The working group sees no merit in changing the boundary between Henley and Harpsden parishes in the Rotherfield Road area. The existing boundary is a strong one at the edge of the built up area.

The case for changing the boundary south of Grey's Road largely rests on whether the land is designated for housing. If it is not then there is little case for change as its rural nature fits much better with Harpsden parish than Henley. This review will finish before decisions are made about housing allocations so the working group does not propose any change, although it does make a general recommendation in the main report about how to deal with future housing sites that straddle or abut parish boundaries.