

## **CGR 20**

### **Parishes Affected**

Rotherfield Peppard, Sonning Common

### **Matter to be considered**

Amending the boundary between Sonning Common and Rotherfield Peppard parishes

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

None, in the light of the recommendation

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

Rotherfield Peppard and Sonning Common parish councils put forward competing proposals for changes to the boundary between the two parishes.

Rotherfield Peppard parish council requested that its boundary be extended to include an area bounded by Peppard Road, Widmore Lane and Blounts Court Road. The reasons given were that many of the residents living in this area already think that they live in Rotherfield Peppard parish and that a change to the parish boundary would increase the catchment for Rotherfield Peppard primary school thereby improving its viability.

Sonning Common parish council requested that its boundary be extended northwards to include the whole of Shiplake Bottom, parts of Stoke Row Road, Gravel Hill and Blounts Court Road and land north of Blounts Court Road, which is mainly open land but also includes the Johnson Mathey research facility. It noted that much the housing in the area concerned seems to be part of Sonning Common already, but lies outside of the parish boundary and that the current boundary runs through gardens of properties in certain places.

### **Summary of other responses**

Despite the fact that the council has not yet put forward any proposals, we have received a lot of resident comment. The vast majority of correspondence received has been from residents living in Rotherfield Peppard parish who do not wish to see their properties moved into Sonning Common parish. The reasons cited are various and include the possible impact on school catchments, ecclesiastical boundaries, the impact on house prices and the increased likelihood of development on open land.

## **Recommendation**

To make no change to the boundary between Rotherfield Peppard and Sonning Common parishes

## **Justification**

The working group did not support the proposal put forward by either parish council. It considered that the proposal from Sonning Common parish council extended the boundary too far, taking in open land and housing that was rural in character and more suited to being in Rotherfield Peppard parish. Equally, it saw little merit in Rotherfield Peppard parish council's proposal that would see properties very close to the centre of Sonning Common village being moved out of the parish.

The working group instead put forward its own proposal. This was to create a new boundary between the two parishes using Stoke Row Road and Blounts Court Road, both good man-made boundaries. This would move properties on the south side of these roads, together with all properties in Shiplake Bottom, Gravel Hill Close and Priory Close into Sonning Common parish. The working group noted the proximity of these properties, particularly at the south-eastern end of Shiplake Bottom and Gravel Hill, to the centre of Sonning Common. It also noted that there is no break in the development in this area, resulting in people being in a different parish to their neighbours and that effective and convenient representation of local residents is likely to be best served by changing the boundary.

It also proposed moving the Johnson Matthey research centre and adjacent Blounts Court Farm into Sonning Common parish, noting that the car park for the centre and a number of the farm buildings are already in the parish.

The working group consulted the two parish councils on these proposals but neither supported them. Many local residents who saw the proposals on the parish council agenda also wrote objecting to them.

Having taking everything into consideration the working group's conclusion, and its recommendation to council, is to leave the existing boundary unchanged. It makes this recommendation because, although it considers the existing boundary is unsatisfactory in community governance terms, it cannot identify a noticeably improved one that better meets the terms of reference of the review.