

Agenda



Listening Learning Leading

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Date: 12 October 2016

Website: www.southoxon.gov.uk

A MEETING OF THE

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 2016 AT 6.30 PM

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON,
OX14 4SB

Members of the Committee:

Margaret Davies
Anthony Dearlove

Paul Harrison
David Nimmo-Smith

Bill Service
Vacancy

Substitutes

Charles Bailey
Felix Bloomfield
Stefan Gawrysiak

Elaine Hornsby
Toby Newman
David Turner

John Walsh

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1 Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2 Election of chairman

To elect a chairman of the committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17.

3 Appointment of vice-chairman

To appoint a vice-chairman of the committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/17.

4 Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2015 – **attached**.

5 Declarations of interest

6 Community Governance Reviews (Pages 7 - 13)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic services which invites the committee to consider whether to conduct a community governance review of Cholsey Parish Council – **report attached**.

7 Review of parliamentary constituencies (Pages 14 - 22)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic services on the Boundary Commission for England's review of parliamentary constituencies - **report attached**

8 Interim Review of Polling District and Polling Places (Pages 23 - 30)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic services on proposals for polling districts and polling places following an interim review of one polling district and four polling places to address issues that arose during recent elections – **report attached**.

MARGARET REED

Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Minutes



Listening Learning Leading

OF A MEETING OF THE

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

HELD AT 6.30 PM ON TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2015

in MEETING ROOM 2, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON, OX14 4SB

Present

Paul Harrison (Chairman), Nigel Champken-Woods, Margaret Davies, Anthony Dearlove and Bill Service

Also present:

Mr John Fox (Wheatley resident), Mr John Boden (Chairman of Great Western Park Residents Association) and David Slingo (Vice Chairman of Great Western Park Residents Association).

Officers present:

David Buckle (Returning Officer), Margaret Reed (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Steven Corrigan (Democratic Services Manager), Sarah Ling (Elections Team Leader), Philippa Rugman (Electoral Services Officer)

Mr Service chaired the meeting until the arrival of Mr Harrison (Chairman) during minute 9.

6 Apologies for absence

None

7 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2015 as a correct record and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

8 Declarations of interest

None

9 Final report of the Returning Officer on the delivery of the May 2015 Elections - Henley, Oxford West and Abingdon and Wantage parliamentary constituencies; South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts; and various parish and town councils

Mr John Fox addressed the committee on his views concerning Wheatley Merry Bells polling station at the May elections.

His address covered the following points:

- The rights of tellers were not clear in the Electoral Commission guidance;
- The tellers did not wear name tags;
- The apron and wooden porchway on the front of the Merry Bells polling station had multiple tellers which was intimidating for some voters;
- The tellers were asking for detailed information from voters, sometimes in an aggressive manner.

David Buckle, Returning Officer, explained that neither the presiding officer nor the polling station inspector had reported any problems at the polling station. There was a police liaison officer on duty that day. Any reported issues would have been dealt with by the police, who are responsible for matters outside of the polling station. Officers agreed to inform the Electoral Commission of Mr Fox's comments regarding their guidance for tellers and to attach his letter to the minutes of this meeting.

The returning officer presented his final report to the committee. The committee discussed the following issues:

- Paragraph 19 regarding the absent votes which were not sent abroad. The returning officer explained that although this was an unfortunate error, it was mitigated by offering proxy votes to those affected. An estimated 123 voters, at most, were affected across the three parliamentary constituencies.
- Paragraph 21 concerning the second issue of absent votes in Oxford City. This error was due to a data transfer issue. The returning officer referred to his recommendation that protocols for data transfer with both Oxford City and Cherwell should be put in place ahead of the next cross boundary election to ensure this error is not repeated.
- Paragraph 18 which details parish ballot papers for Watlington parish were erroneously sent to voters in North Hinksey and Wheatley. Officers clarified that this was only the second issue of postal votes which were sent out so only small numbers of electors were effected, about 70 in each instance. This issue was quickly identified and those affected were hand delivered a correct ballot paper within 24 hours of the error being discovered.
- Willowbrook polling station. Officers explained that as this was the only station which there were significant queues, it was not thought to be an issue with staffing levels. The combination of the parliamentary, district and parish elections meant issuing ballot papers took more time. In order to improve the situation polling station inspectors were sent out to manage queues with police assistance. Officers would review the provision of polling places prior to the next scheduled elections in May 2016.

- The use of counting sheets rather than grass skirts as a method for counting votes. The committee agreed that grass skirts offered a more transparent method of counting. Officers agreed to review the options for counting votes in multi-member wards in time for the district and parish elections in 2019.

The committee discussed the order and accuracy of the electoral registers. Officers clarified that work was currently being done with the elections software provider, Xpress, in order to improve how registers are run from the system.

The committee noted and supported the key action points and recommendations in the returning officer's report and were satisfied these measures would alleviate issues going forward.

10 Community Governance Review-Great Western Park

Mr David Slingo (vice-chairman) and Mr John Boden (chairman) of the Great Western Park Residents Association addressed the committee in support of a petition to establish a new parish council for that part of Great Western Park within South Oxfordshire. Mr Slingo clarified that although the petition was not submitted in time for the previous community governance review, the Residents Association still considered it a pertinent and valid petition. Mr Boden then addressed the committee and summarised the reasons, contained in the letter attached to the report of the head of legal and democratic services to this meeting, why the Great Western Park Residents Association would like to establish a parish council.

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic services on a petition request for a community governance review of the Great Western Park area of South Oxfordshire. The committee considered that because the majority of development had not been completed it would be premature to undertake a review. Any consultation conducted now would not take into account the views of the numerous future residents of the area. The committee agreed that a review should not commence until the construction and occupation of 75% of the homes on Great Western Park.

RESOLVED: not to undertake a community governance review of Great Western Park (the establishment of a parish council for the area) at this time, but to review the situation when 75% of the development is complete and occupied.

11 Further community governance review requests

The committee considered whether to invite parish councils to submit further proposals for changes to community governance arrangements. The committee considered that as a major review had just been undertaken the council would deal with issues on an ad hoc basis in response to requests rather than inviting another full review.

The meeting closed at 7.49 pm

Chairman

Date

ISSUES RAISED BY MR JOHN FOX – A WHEATLEY RESIDENT

I've lived in Wheatley (London Rd) 42 years. I also did my stint as a parish councillor when pterodactyls flew overhead. In June this year at the first post-election WPC meeting I was the member of the public who raised the behaviour problem on Polling Day at the Merry Bells.

On Election Day 8 May before voting ended I wrote to David Buckle SODC Electoral Officer, and copied to Joanna Simons, OCC. My letter to them was also read out to the WPC in June with an accompanying letter and more information. I appreciated the respectful hearing which councillors gave to my concerns which I know for certain are shared by others. Let me summarise them so far.

The following have come to my attention:

- outright **'bullying' or harassment** (two tellers, from two parties, were challenged publicly and named to me afterwards
- **no name tags** on tellers. In fact tellers cannot be distinguished from activists.
- **too many people on the narrow (10-15 feet) apron in front of the Merry Bells** One WPC councillor described it as 'quite a party atmosphere' . I likened it to drinkers clustered outside at the pub door.
- **the 'gauntlet' of tellers in the wooden porchway** - intimidating *or perceived to be* incriminating. Both are criminal offences. Local authority 'Tellers' Advice' (Parish Clerk has copies) demands **'numbers should never be capable of being seen as intimidation in any way'**. One WPC councillor called blocking the porch 'an invasion of body space'
- the demand by one **for a phone number from a current WPC councillor**. (My neighbour claims to have been a **sked outright about his voting** at the previous election)
- **three of us, complete strangers, requested the supervising official on 8 May to clear the porch**, which she did: the porch filled as soon as she went back in
- A lady stood on the corner at the bottom of the Car Park steps and told me **'I don't want to go in there'. She had come to vote.**

It is now more than three months since I sent my initial concerns to Mr Buckle (elections@southandvale.gov.uk). I have had no response at all, not even to acknowledge receipt. I know the fire at Crowmarsh disrupted many things, but an acknowledgement would have helped. I read this officer's interim report on the conduct of elections in which it seems all is well on his patch.

Where do we go from here ?

This morning I met an old villager with a record of service - I told her of my concerns and that I was raising the matter, to which her reaction was 'About time too'. I believe the porch should be off limits. The apron should also be free of crowding and of activist-spectators. The numbers should be limited as *Tellers Advice* requires and individuals made identifiable. I know this year's elections were unusual - three on one day - but it will happen again, and we have the EU referendum coming up soon. At the end of the day if only one person is being intimidated or even feels intimidation, we should be taking it seriously.

Best wishes

John Fox

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Author: Margaret Reed

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To: COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND ELECTORAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

DATE: 20 October 2016



Community Governance Reviews

Recommendations:

1. To decide whether to undertake a community governance review of Cholsey Parish Council as requested in appendix one to this report;
2. If the committee agrees to undertake a review, to consider the draft terms of reference attached as appendix two to this report;
3. To authorise the head of legal and democratic services to finalise and publish the terms of reference for the review incorporating the comments of the committee;
4. To note that the committee will receive a further report in due course on the request to undertake a community governance review of Great Western Park.

Purpose of Report

1. To invite the committee to consider whether to conduct a community governance review of Cholsey Parish Council and, if so, to consider draft terms of reference for the review.

Strategic Objectives

2. Community governance reviews contribute to the council's strategic objective of building thriving communities.

Background

3. Local authorities (in the case of two-tier areas, district councils) have had powers to review parish arrangements for many years. Until 2007, any proposals for

change resulting from such reviews had to go to the relevant secretary of state for approval. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007Act) changed that and gave full powers to local authorities to implement proposals without reference to central government. The Act created the title of community governance reviews (CGR) to cover such activity.

4. In the conduct of a review, the council has to be mindful of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Guidance on Community Governance Reviews that has been issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). The council has a duty to ensure that community governance within the area under review meets the 'Community of Identity' test. Community governance should:
 - reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area;
 - be effective and convenient, and
 - take into account any other, non-parish, arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area.
5. At its meeting in July 2013 Council agreed to undertake a district wide CGR. This review included proposals submitted by parish councils following an invitation from the chief executive to put forward any changes to community governance arrangements.
6. At its meeting on 18 July 2014 Council considered the final recommendations of the community governance working group, established to consider the issues in detail and submit proposals to Council, and agreed a number of changes to the governance arrangements of parishes within South Oxfordshire. Council authorised the head of legal and democratic services to make a reorganisation of community governance order to implement the changes, subject to receiving the necessary consents from the LGBCE. The relevant order was made and brought the changes into effect in time for the 2015 parish council elections. As authorised by Council, officers have applied to the LGBCE for related alteration orders, to make district wards and county divisions coterminous with parish boundaries where these have become out of sync.
7. At that meeting Council also agreed to establish a community governance and electoral issues committee with terms of reference which include the responsibility to undertake community governance reviews.
8. At its meeting on 20 October 2015, this committee considered whether to invite parish councils to submit further proposals for changes to community governance arrangements. The committee considered that as a major review had just been undertaken it would deal with issues on an ad hoc basis in response to requests rather than inviting another full review.

Great Western Park

9. At its meeting on 20 October 2015, this committee decided not to undertake a community governance review of Great Western Park (the establishment of a parish council for the area) at this time but to review the situation when 75% of the development is complete and occupied.

10. Following that meeting, the Great Western Park Residents Association (GWPR) expressed concern that members of Didcot Town Council had taken part in that decision. Officers agreed to ask the committee to reconsider its decision at its next meeting but since that time officers have met with the chairman of GWPR to discuss a range of issues arising from a potential review, including the impact of the district council boundary. GWPR are considering these options and a report will be brought to a future meeting of the committee.

Request from Cholsey Parish Council

11. Cholsey Parish Council has submitted a request to reduce its number of parish councillors from 13 to 12. The request is attached at appendix one to this report. The parish council bases its request on the reduction in population as a result of Winterbrook transferring from Cholsey into Wallingford. However, since the last review, the Fairmile Hospital development has taken place to compensate in part for this. The committee is asked to decide whether to conduct a community governance review in response to the request.

Terms of reference

12. The first stage of a review is the drawing up of terms of reference. In effect, this document becomes the council's policies for the conduct of the review. It should provide background information to help electors and other interested organisations to make informed submissions and should also refer to the legislative framework against which the review must operate. Publication of the terms of reference commences the review, which the council then has twelve months to complete.
13. The committee is invited to consider the draft terms of reference attached as appendix two and to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to finalise and publish the terms of reference incorporating the comments of the committee.

Financial Implications

14. Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, local authorities have responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews. The process is prescribed and involves officer time and other associated costs, such as postage and printing. These costs will be met from within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

15. The Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee has delegated authority to deal with all matters relating to parish community governance reviews.
16. All community governance reviews will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the joint guidance on community governance reviews published by the Communities and Local Government Department and LGBCE in 2010.
17. The council will implement any changes by making a reorganisation of community governance order. Where the changes impact on arrangements put in place by the LGBCE's reviews of the electoral arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council

and South Oxfordshire District Council, the council will need the LGBCE's consent before making an order.

Risks

18. There is a risk that someone could challenge the outcome of a particular review item through judicial review. Council officers will mitigate against this by ensuring that at all times the council follows the requirements laid down in the 2007 Act and guidance.

Conclusion

19. The council undertook a comprehensive review of parish arrangements in 2013/14 and agreed changes for implementation in 2015. The committee is invited to consider the further requests from Cholsey Parish Council.

20. If agreed, the committee is invited to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to finalise and publish the terms of reference for the review incorporating the committee's comments.

Background Papers

- None



Mr D Buckle, Chief Executive
SODC
Benson Lane
Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford
Oxon OX10 8QS

4th September 2014

Dear Mr Buckle,

As a result of the loss of Winterbrook following the latest Community Governance Review, Cholsey Parish Council voted to reduce its number of Councillors from 13 to 12. However, because this decision was not made before the final decision was made regarding Winterbrook we have been told by Legal and Democratic Services that this cannot be implemented until the next review, due to be conducted after the 2015 election.

This effectively means Cholsey Parish Council in the interim carrying a requirement for additional councillors for Winterbrook, which no longer forms part of the Parish.

I hope that it within your mandate to help us make sense of this situation by allowing us to reduce the number of councillors with effect from the next elections without having to wait until a further review is conducted.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie Malcolm'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Melanie Malcolm
Clerk to Cholsey Parish Council

Strategic Management Board



Listening Learning Leading

Ms M Malcolm
Clerk to Cholsey Parish Council

Sent by email only to
cholseypc.clerk@mediummail.co.uk

David Buckle
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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10 September 2014

Dear Melanie

Community Governance Review

Thank you for your letter of 4 September. I am afraid I am not going to be of much assistance. The advice that you have already been given is correct - because consideration of the number of councillors for Cholsey parish did not form part of the community governance review and was not covered by any decisions taken by council we cannot now make any changes.

The consequence of this is that Cholsey parish council will continue to have 13 members. These councillors will be elected from across the entire new parish area.

I think that the council will be sympathetic to a request to reduce the number of councillors but we can only do this as part of a new community governance review, and we do not intend to carry out another one until post the 2015 elections.

I am sorry that I cannot offer better news

Yours sincerely

David Buckle
Chief Executive

Appendix two

South Oxfordshire District Council

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

The council’s Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee (“the committee”) has agreed to undertake a community governance review (CGR) pursuant to Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 of part of the district of South Oxfordshire, namely Cholsey Parish Council. The 2007 Act vested powers in the council to undertake such a review and the council has delegated those powers to the committee.

The committee will undertake the review in accordance with the guidance on community governance reviews issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in March 2010 (“the guidance”).

Proposal for consideration

The committee proposes to consider the following parish matters:

CGR reference	Parish/Area	Matters to be considered
CGR_B	Cholsey	A review of the number of parish councillors

Assessment criteria

The factors that the council will take into account in making decisions are as follows:

- natural or man-made boundaries that help to define clearly one community from another
- housing developments that straddle parish boundaries, thereby resulting in people being in different parishes from their neighbours
- effective and convenient representation of local residents at parish level
- the newly created wards of South Oxfordshire District Council for the purposes of district council elections
- the divisions of Oxfordshire County Council for the purposes of county council elections
- views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected
- the extent to which proposals reflect the identities and interests of the affected community

Why is the Council undertaking the review?

The guidance states that it is good practice for principal councils (in this context that means this council) to undertake CGRs every 10-15 years. The council completed a review of the whole district in 2014. However, since that time, Cholsey Parish Council has asked the council to conduct a further review of its electoral arrangements **and the committee has agreed to carry out this review.**

Consultation

The committee will consult formally on the review.

Timetable

The 2007 Act requires that a principal council must complete a CGR within 12 months of the date of publication of terms of reference. The proposed timetable complies with the legal requirement.

Action	Completion Date
Publication of terms of reference	October 2016
Consultation commences	November 2016
Consultation closes	31 January 2017
Committee agrees draft proposals for consultation	March 2017
Further consultation commences	April 2017
Further consultation closes	30 June 2017
Committee agrees changes	July 2017

How to make comments

Please submit any comments via email to cgr@southandvale.gov.uk. The council does not require a hard copy of any submission. For those without access to email please send any submission to:

CGR
 South Oxfordshire District Council
 Legal and Democratic Services
 135 Eastern Avenue
 Milton Park
 Milton
 OX14 4SB

Should you require any further information or need clarification on the review

process, please contact:

Steven Corrigan
Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: 01235 422526
Email: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of head of legal and democratic services

Author: Steven Corrigan

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E-mail: steven.corrigan@southandvale.gov.uk

To: Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

DATE: 20 October 2016



Review of parliamentary constituencies

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- (a) considers whether it wishes to support the initial proposals for the Oxfordshire sub-region
- (b) considers whether it wishes to comment on the proposed constituency names
- (c) agrees to request the BCE amend the constituency boundaries to reflect the Local Government Boundary Commission for England related alteration order

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out details of the above review and invites the committee to make representations to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE).

Strategic Objectives

2. The report does not specifically relate to any of the council's strategic objectives.

Background

3. The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 makes provision for a reduction in the number of parliamentary constituencies (members of parliament) from 650 to 600. 501 of these constituencies will be in England. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is responsible for reviewing constituencies and drawing up proposals, with a view to submitting its formal report on the review to parliament in 2018. If agreed the changes will be implemented at the first general election after the approval of proposals by parliament currently scheduled for 7 May 2020. The initial consultation closes on 5 December 2016. There will be a further

two rounds of consultation in 2017. Following the conclusion of all three consultation periods, the BCE will look at all the evidence received and make final recommendations to parliament in September 2018.

The review

4. One of the objectives of the review is to ensure that constituencies fall within a defined “electoral quota” to ensure there is broad equality in the number of electors represented by each Member of Parliament (MP). The electoral quota for each constituency is 74769; no constituency shall be more than 105% of that figure, nor less than 95% of it (i.e. all constituencies must have an electorate in the range of 71031 to 78507). The review is based on the electorate at 1 December 2015.
5. The BCE’s initial proposals were published on 13 September. Publication of the initial proposals is followed by a statutory consultation period of twelve weeks. The BCE will hold a series of public hearings, at which interested persons will be able to give views. These are *“not inquiries, public meetings or debates, but are there to provide an opportunity both for BCE to explain its initial proposals and for people to give their views on those proposals”*. BCE also states that it *“attaches just as much significance to representations made in writing as to those made orally at public hearings”*. In the South East, five two day public hearings have been scheduled, at various locations and in the period between 20 October and 4 November. Details of the hearings are available on the BCE website. The nearest hearing will take place in Oxford on 24 and 25 October.
6. The 12 week consultation period on the initial proposals ends on 5 December 2016. As soon as possible after the close of consultation, BCE will publish all representations received, together with transcripts of all the public hearings. This is followed by a further statutory four week period during which interested persons may submit written comments on the representations made in the initial 12 week period. Subsequently, BCE will publish notice of whether or not revisions have been made to the initial proposals. If the proposals are revised, then there is a further eight week period for written representations to be made relating to the revised proposals.
7. Following this, BCE will submit a formal written report to the government. Parliamentary procedures will then apply for agreeing and implementing the new constituencies. As mentioned above, the changes will become effective at the next general election following this process.
8. BCE is very clear in saying that *“an objection accompanied by a viable counter-proposal is likely to carry more weight than a simple statement of objection”* and that a counter proposal *“setting out the composition of each constituency in an area will generally be viewed as more persuasive than a proposal for the composition of only one constituency which does not address any knock-on effects on the electorate figures of other constituencies”*.

Current Situation in Oxfordshire

9. The current electorate information for Oxfordshire is summarised as follows:

Electorate at 1/12/15		Difference from Electoral Quota			Within range?
		(Min)	(Max)	(Quota)	
		(71031)	(78507)	(74769)	
Banbury CC	85,398	14367	6891	10629	No
Henley CC	72,682	1651	-5825	-2087	Yes
Oxford East BC	70,293	-738	-8214	-4476	No
Oxford West and Abingdon CC	73,647	2616	-4860	-1122	Yes
Wantage CC	80,859	9828	2352	6090	No
Witney CC	78,455	7424	-52	3686	Yes

10. As can be seen, the current Banbury, Oxford East, and Wantage constituencies all fall outside the required electorate range referred to in paragraph 4 above.

BCE initial proposals

11. BCE's initial proposals provide for changes to the current constituencies covering South Oxfordshire (Henley and Wantage) the renaming of the Henley constituency as Henley and Thame and the inclusion of three South Oxfordshire district wards in the Oxford West and Abingdon constituency.
12. The Commission's initial proposals are reproduced below from the BCE initial proposals document relevant to Oxfordshire:

"Initial proposals for the Oxfordshire sub-region

77. There are currently six constituencies in the County of Oxfordshire. We are proposing no change to the number of constituencies.

78. Three of the existing constituencies (Henley, Oxford West and Abingdon, and Witney) have electorates within 5% of the electoral quota. Of the remaining three constituencies, Banbury and Wantage have electorates above the 5% limit and Oxford East is below the 5% limit.

79. We considered whether we could leave unchanged any of the three existing constituencies that have an electorate within 5% of the electoral quota. We propose no change to the constituency of Witney.

80. To reduce the electorate of the existing Banbury constituency, which is too large, we propose to transfer the wards of Fringford, Launton, and Ambrosden & Chesterton (located in the Borough of Cherwell) to our renamed Henley and Thame constituency. As we have altered the existing Banbury constituency, we propose to rename the constituency Banbury and Bicester to reflect the names of the two largest towns. Our proposed Henley and Thame constituency extends further north than the existing Henley constituency. It extends up to, but does not include, the town of Bicester. In the south of our Henley and Thame constituency, we propose that it includes the ward of Wallingford from the existing Wantage constituency and, to ensure the constituency remains within 5% of the electoral quota, we propose to transfer the wards of Wheatley, Garsington & Horspath, and Sandford & The Wittenhams to our Oxford West and Abingdon constituency. The

inclusion of these wards also reflects changes to the local government ward boundaries in the District of South Oxfordshire.

81. The existing Oxford East constituency currently has an electorate below 5% of the electoral quota. In order to increase the number of electors in this constituency, we propose to include the wards of North and St. Margaret's (located in the City of Oxford) in our Oxford East constituency.

82. In order to reflect changes to local government ward boundaries in the District of the Vale of White Horse, we propose that the whole of the Thames ward be included in our Wantage constituency."

13. The appendix to this report sets out the initial proposals showing details of the proposed constituencies and the district/city wards proposed to be included in each.
14. When the BCE consulted on proposed changes in 2011 Council resolved, at its meeting on 17 November 2011, to make the following representations:
 - A. That the current proposal by the Parliamentary Boundary Commission to place Radley in a future Henley Constituency is fundamentally flawed. Radley has nothing in common with the proposed new Henley and is physically separated from it by the Thames, with no direct road connection whatsoever. This Council believes that if a rebalancing in the number of electors is required to equalise the new constituencies, then this would be better achieved by transferring another suitably sized area. This would leave Radley as an integral part of its present constituency. Council resolves to make representations accordingly.
 - B. That Council makes representations to the Parliamentary Boundary Commission proposing that, in order to better reflect the geographical areas covered, the Henley Constituency is renamed South East Oxfordshire and the Wantage Constituency is renamed the Didcot and Wantage Constituency".
15. In respect of A above Radley is not included in the proposed new Henley and Thame constituency. In respect of B above neither of the constituency name changes proposed in 2011 are reflected in the current proposals. The committee is invited to consider whether to make representations on the proposed constituency names.
16. Paragraph 80 of the BCE's initial proposals document states that the proposals reflect the changes to the local government ward boundaries made under 'The South Oxfordshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2014' and implemented at the local elections in May 2015. However, the proposals do not take account of the anticipated changes to district ward boundaries to be made by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England under a related alteration order. These changes, requested by this council, will make changes to the boundaries of district wards and county divisions to reflect changes made at parish level following the community governance review completed in 2014 and implemented on 1 April 2015 under the South Oxfordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2015.
17. Officers recommend the committee alerts the BCE to the making of this order and asks it to amend the proposals to reflect the changes to district ward boundaries.

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

19. There are no legal implications arising from the current consultation.

Risks

20. There are no discernable risks associated with the decision whether to submit any views during this consultation stage.

Conclusion

21. The BCE has published its initial proposals for parliamentary constituencies. The committee is invited to consider whether it wishes to make representations on the initial proposals.

Background Papers

BCE Guide to the 2018 Review, available at

<http://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

BCE Initial Proposals for the South East, available at www.bce2018.org.uk/

Appendix

2018 Review of Parliamentary Constituencies
Initial Proposals of the Boundary Commission for England

Constituency	Ward	District/City	Electorate
Banbury and Bicester			78,250
	Adderbury	Cherwell	2,317
	Banbury Calthorpe	Cherwell	3,974
	Banbury Easington	Cherwell	6,076
	Banbury Grimsbury and Castle	Cherwell	6,821
	Banbury Hardwick	Cherwell	5,911
	Banbury Neithrop	Cherwell	3,869
	Banbury Ruscote	Cherwell	5,606
	Bicester East	Cherwell	4,307
	Bicester North	Cherwell	4,601
	Bicester South	Cherwell	3,630
	Bicester Town	Cherwell	3,784
	Bicester West	Cherwell	5,467
	Bloxham and Bodicote	Cherwell	5,250
	Caversfield	Cherwell	2,087
	Cropredy	Cherwell	2,268
	Deddington	Cherwell	2,163
	Hook Norton	Cherwell	2,063
	Sibford	Cherwell	2,161
	The Astons and Heyfords	Cherwell	3,756
	Wroxton	Cherwell	2,139
Henley and Thame			77,517
	Ambrosden and Chesterton (currently in Banbury)	Cherwell	3,005
	Fringford (currently in Banbury)	Cherwell	1,887
	Kirtlington	Cherwell	2,346
	Launton (currently in Banbury)	Cherwell	2,256
	Otmoor	Cherwell	1,967
	Benson & Crowmarsh	South Oxfordshire	5,716
	Berinsfield	South Oxfordshire	2,846

Constituency	Ward	District/City	Electorate
	Chalgrove	South Oxfordshire	2,643
	Chinnor	South Oxfordshire	6,118
	Forest Hill & Holton	South Oxfordshire	2,688
	Goring	South Oxfordshire	2,991
	Haseley Brook	South Oxfordshire	3,062
	Henley-on-Thames	South Oxfordshire	8,318
	Kidmore End & Whitchurch	South Oxfordshire	2,789
	Sonning Common	South Oxfordshire	5,214
	Thame	South Oxfordshire	8,847
	Wallingford (currently in Wantage)	South Oxfordshire	5,625
	Watlington	South Oxfordshire	2,955
	Woodcote & Rotherfield	South Oxfordshire	6,244
Oxford East			76,914
	Barton and Sandhills	Oxford	4,614
	Blackbird Leys	Oxford	3,790
	Carfax	Oxford	1,926
	Churchill	Oxford	3,715
	Cowley	Oxford	3,937
	Cowley Marsh	Oxford	3,982
	Headington	Oxford	3,843
	Headington Hill and Northway	Oxford	3,109
	Hinksey Park	Oxford	3,717
	Holywell	Oxford	1,573
	Iffley Fields	Oxford	3,645
	Littlemore	Oxford	4,305
	Lye Valley	Oxford	4,327
	Marston	Oxford	4,232
	North (currently Oxford West and Abingdon)	Oxford	2,936
	Northfield Brook	Oxford	4,081
	Quarry and Risinghurst	Oxford	4,418
	Rose Hill and Iffley	Oxford	4,235
	St. Clement's	Oxford	3,767
	St. Margaret's (currently Oxford West and Abingdon)	Oxford	2,965
	St. Mary's	Oxford	3,077

Constituency	Ward	District/City	Electorate
Oxford West and Abingdon			75,606
	Kidlington North	Cherwell	3,973
	Kidlington South	Cherwell	6,112
	Yarnton, Gosford and Water Eaton	Cherwell	4,047
	Jericho and Osney	Oxford	4,040
	Summertown	Oxford	4,197
	Wolvercote	Oxford	4,281
	Garsington & Horspath (currently in Henley)	South Oxfordshire	2,752
	Sandford & the Wittenhams (currently in Henley)	South Oxfordshire	2,880
	Wheatley (currently in Henley)	South Oxfordshire	3,023
	Abingdon Abbey Northcourt	Vale of White Horse	4,333
	Abingdon Caldecott	Vale of White Horse	5,083
	Abingdon Dunmore	Vale of White Horse	4,545
	Abingdon Fitzharris	Vale of White Horse	4,616
	Abingdon Peachcroft	Vale of White Horse	5,178
	Botley & Sunningwell	Vale of White Horse	4,240
	Cumnor	Vale of White Horse	4,645
	Kennington & Radley	Vale of White Horse	5,081
	Wootton	Vale of White Horse	2,580
Wantage			75,312
	Cholsey	South Oxfordshire	6,597
	Didcot North East	South Oxfordshire	6,805
	Didcot South	South Oxfordshire	7,104
	Didcot West	South Oxfordshire	4,663
	Blewbury & Harwell	Vale of White Horse	4,583
	Drayton	Vale of White Horse	2,274
	Faringdon	Vale of White Horse	5,362
	Grove North	Vale of White Horse	3,998
	Hendreds	Vale of White Horse	2,151
	Kingston Bagpuize	Vale of White Horse	2,555
	Marcham	Vale of White Horse	2,158
	Ridgeway	Vale of White Horse	2,355
	Stanford	Vale of White Horse	2,654
	Steventon & the Hanneys	Vale of White Horse	2,444

Constituency	Ward	District/City	Electorate
	Sutton Courtenay	Vale of White Horse	2,086
	Thames	Vale of White Horse	2,534
	Wantage & Grove Brook	Vale of White Horse	5,138
	Wantage Charlton	Vale of White Horse	4,764
	Watchfield & Shrivenham	Vale of White Horse	5,087
Witney			78,455
	Alvescot and Filkins	West Oxfordshire	1,367
	Ascott and Shipton	West Oxfordshire	1,713
	Bampton and Clanfield	West Oxfordshire	2,877
	Brize Norton and Shilton	West Oxfordshire	1,549
	Burford	West Oxfordshire	1,467
	Carterton North East	West Oxfordshire	3,806
	Carterton North West	West Oxfordshire	3,260
	Carterton South	West Oxfordshire	3,295
	Chadlington and Churchill	West Oxfordshire	1,533
	Charlbury and Finstock	West Oxfordshire	2,955
	Chipping Norton	West Oxfordshire	4,640
	Ducklington	West Oxfordshire	1,667
	Eynsham and Cassington	West Oxfordshire	4,706
	Freeland and Hanborough	West Oxfordshire	3,378
	Hailey, Minster Lovell and Leafield	West Oxfordshire	3,107
	Kingham, Rollright and Enstone	West Oxfordshire	3,115
	Milton-under-Wychwood	West Oxfordshire	1,645
	North Leigh	West Oxfordshire	1,506
	Standlake, Aston and Stanton Harcourt	West Oxfordshire	3,280
	Stonesfield and Tackley	West Oxfordshire	3,111
	The Bartons	West Oxfordshire	1,556
	Witney Central	West Oxfordshire	3,654
	Witney East	West Oxfordshire	5,541
	Witney North	West Oxfordshire	3,114
	Witney South	West Oxfordshire	4,522
	Witney West	West Oxfordshire	2,994
	Woodstock and Bladon	West Oxfordshire	3,097

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee



Report of the head of legal and democratic services
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To: Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee
DATE: 20 October 2016



Interim Review of Polling District and Polling Places

Recommendation

That the Committee approves the schedule of polling districts and polling places set out in paragraph 9 of this report

Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out proposals for polling districts and polling places following an interim review of one polling district and four polling places to address issues that arose during recent elections.

Strategic Objectives

2. The report does not specifically relate to any of the council's strategic objectives, but agreement of the recommendations (amended if the committee sees fit) will ensure compliance with the law.

Background

2. The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The last such review in South Oxfordshire was undertaken in October 2014. The results of the polling places and polling districts review were agreed by this committee at its meeting on 26 January 2015.
3. A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency. A polling place is the building(s) within each polling

district that will house polling stations. The number of polling stations within each polling place is a matter for the Returning Officer and is not covered in this report.

4. The changes to polling districts and polling places were first used at the parliamentary and local elections in May 2015. In the Returning Officer's 2015 post elections report to this committee on 20 October 2015, it was reported that there were issues with queues at the polling place at Willowbrook Leisure Centre in polling district RBA. To address this issue he used his delegated powers to designate a temporary additional polling place at Ladygrove Community Centre, Tamar Way, Didcot for electors within the polling district for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) election and EU Referendum.
5. In addition the Returning Officer designated alternative polling places for Culham, Nuffield and South Moreton for the PCC and EU Referendum to address issues with the unsuitability of the previous arrangements or the lack of availability of the designated polling place.

The review

6. Council gave notice of the review in August 2016. Notice of the review was published on the council's website and given to the Acting Returning Officer, those parish councils affected by the review, district councillors, the relevant members of parliament, political agents and access groups operating in Oxfordshire. The closing date for consultation responses was 30 September 2016. A copy of the notice is **attached**.
7. Four consultation responses were received from the following stakeholders: The Acting Returning Officer – **attached**; Culham Parsh Council; Didcot Town Council and South Moreton Parish Council.

Key issues

8. Didcot Town Council and South Moreton Parish Council were supportive of the proposals. Culham Parish Council does not support the current arrangements for the residents of Culham to vote in Clifton Hampden and suggests that the church is put forward as a possible venue for voting at elections pointing out that the church has a small kitchen area and it is possible for a portaloos to be installed within the church on a temporary basis (this has been done before). Officers have previously considered the church as a polling place and concluded that it is not a suitable venue due to external and internal access issues and the lack of suitable facilities for staff working on elections. The parish council has drawn attention to plans for works to the church to convert it into a community space with better facilities of which officers are aware. However, at this time the church is not a suitable venue. Therefore, in order to provide a polling place within Culham officers propose the designation of the school as the polling place. Unfortunately this may require the closure of the school which the council has previously avoided. Officers would discuss the practicalities with the school if the committee supports the proposal.

9. The issues, responses to the consultation and officer proposals are set out below. The former Acting Returning Officer representations are attached. The current Acting Returning Officer has no comments to add although he shares the aspiration to avoid the need to close schools.

Parish	Issue	Consultation responses	Proposal
Culham	<p>In recent years we have been unable to use the only available room in the school due to the education needs of a child with learning difficulties. A small mobile unit was provided on the school site which does not provide suitable access for electors or amenities for staff and is expensive. There is no suitable alternative within Culham – the remaining pub has recently closed.</p>	<p>Culham Parish Council - the current arrangements for the residents of Culham to vote in Clifton Hampden are unsatisfactory.</p> <p>Suggest that the church is put forward as a possible venue for voting at elections. The church has a small kitchen area and it is possible for a portaloo to be installed within the church on a temporary basis (this has been done before). Going forward plans are underway for works to the church to convert it into a community space with better facilities.</p>	<p>Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the committee favours designating a polling place within the parish it will need to designate Culham School as the polling place for Culham. Officers will liaise with the head regarding practical arrangements. 2. To designate Clifton Hampden Village as the polling place for Culham. <p>Officers will monitor progress with the redevelopment of the church.</p>
Didcot	<p>The returning officer's report into the 2015 local and parliamentary elections concluded that an additional polling place</p>	<p>Didcot Town Council is supportive of the proposals relating to Ladygrove.</p>	<p>Subdivide the existing polling district RBA (Didcot North East) to create two polling districts with Ladygrove Community Centre, Tamar Way, Didcot and Willowbrook Leisure Centre, Bowmont Water, Didcot as the respective</p>

	should be designated in polling district RBA to address the queues that were experienced at those elections.		polling places to reflect arrangements put in place for the PCC and EU Referendum in 2016.
Nuffield	No suitable venue available in Nuffield. Although a mobile unit was provided on the Huntercombe Golf Club site in 2015 this arrangement was not an ideal arrangement for staff or the club.	The local district ward councillor and chair of the parish council feel that the democratic process is best served by having a polling place within the parish. The church has been offered as a future option once internal works are undertaken.	Designate Nettlebed Village Club, Nettlebed as the polling place for Nuffield. Officers to work with the parish council to investigate alternative options in the parish. Officers will monitor progress with the redevelopment of the church.
South Moreton	Following the closure of The Crown Public House electors voted in North Moreton in 2016. The other facilities in the village (Boxing Club and churches) are not suitable or available. Use of school would require its closure.	South Moreton Parish Council agrees that there is no alternate appropriate location. Support proposal to designate polling place in North Moreton.	Designate North Moreton Village Hall as the polling place for South Moreton.

Financial Implications

- There is a modest cost associated with running a polling place. Often this cost is shared amongst a number of parties because the polling place hosts multiple elections at the same time. Cost, however, should not be a prime consideration in determining how many polling places to designate.

Legal Implications

12. The Representation of the People Act 1983 (as amended) (Section 18C (5) and Section 31) allows a local authority to conduct an interim review of any polling district, polling place or polling station within its area, outside of the timescales for a compulsory review.

Risks

13. There are no discernable risks associated with the proposals set out in this report

Conclusion

14. The council met its legal requirement to complete a review of polling districts and polling places by the end of January 2015. Due to a number of circumstances set out in the report the council has undertaken an interim review of polling districts and polling places. The committee is invited to agree the proposals set out in paragraph 9 of this report.

Background Papers

Reports to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on the

- Polling District and Polling Places Review - 26 January 2015
- Final report of the Returning Officer on the delivery of the May 2015 Elections - Henley, Oxford West and Abingdon and Wantage parliamentary constituencies; South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse districts; and various parish and town councils – 20 October 2015



Notice of review of polling districts and polling places

In accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Administration Act 2013, South Oxfordshire District Council gives notice that it is undertaking an interim review of polling districts and polling places in its area for the following polling districts:

- Culham parish
- Nuffield parish
- South Moreton parish
- Didcot Ladygrove – polling district RBA

The review will conclude in sufficient time to enable the electoral registration officer to make any alterations to the electoral register prior to publication in December 2016.

The council's last full review was undertaken in 2014/2015, but due to:

- the lack of a suitable polling place within Culham, Nuffield or South Moreton; and
- the temporary designation of an additional polling place at Ladygrove Community Centre, Tamar Way, Didcot for electors within polling district RBA for the Police and Crime Commissioner election and EU Referendum

the council is undertaking a further review of these matters and is considering implementing the arrangements put in place for the recent Police and Crime Commissioner election and EU referendum namely to:

- designate Nettlebed Village Club, 32 High Street, Nettlebed as the polling place for Nuffield;
- designate Clifton Hampden Village Hall, Abingdon Road, Clifton Hampden as the polling place for Culham;
- designate North Moreton Village Hall as the polling place for South Moreton;
- subdivide the existing polling district RBA (Didcot North East) to create two polling districts with Ladygrove Community Centre, Tamar Way, Didcot and Willowbrook Leisure Centre, Bowmont Water, Didcot as the respective polling places.

We welcome the views of all residents, particularly disabled residents on the council's proposals, the Acting Returning Officer's representation or any other matters.

In addition, we will welcome comments from those people or bodies with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability on the council's proposals, the representations of the Acting Returning Officer, or any other matters.

Representations in support or objection are welcome but any objections should, wherever possible, be accompanied by suggestions for alternative places that may be used as polling places.

The council's proposals are set out above. Comments on the existing arrangements, our proposals or the Acting Returning Officers' comments, either in support or proposing alternative arrangements will be welcome by Friday 30 September. Please note all representations and correspondence received will be made available for public inspection.

Representations should be made in writing to:

Electoral Services
South Oxfordshire District Council,
135 Eastern Avenue,
Milton Park,
Milton,
OX14 4SB
or email to elections@southandvale.gov.uk

PARISH	POLLING DISTRICT	CURRENT POLLING PLACE	RO'S COMMENTS
Culham	Whole parish	Culham Parochial Primary School. Electors voted in Clifton Hampden for the May 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner election and the EU referendum in June.	Electors to vote in Clifton Hampden. In recent years the council has been unable to use the only available room in the school due to the education needs of a child with learning difficulties. We have provided a small mobile unit on the school site which does not provide suitable access for electors or amenities for staff and is expensive. There is no suitable alternative within Culham – the remaining pub has recently closed. The only option is to close the school on polling day. I have a policy of not doing this, which the council has supported
Didcot	Didcot North East - polling district RBA	Willowbrook Leisure Centre. At the May 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner election and EU referendum the polling district was split providing for two polling places	Support the division of polling district RBA to create two polling districts with Ladygrove Community Centre, Tamar Way, Didcot and Willowbrook Leisure Centre, Bowmont Water, Didcot as the respective polling places. Evidence from this year's elections shows this will address the queues experienced in May 2015.
Nuffield	Whole parish	Huntercombe Golf club. Electors voted in Nettlebed for the May 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner election and the EU referendum in June.	Electors to vote in Nettlebed which they did at the recent Police and Crime Commissioner election and EU referendum. Alternative arrangements within Nuffield have not proved suitable.
South Moreton	Whole parish	The Crown Inn. Electors voted in North Moreton for the May 2016 Police and Crime Commissioner election and the EU referendum in June.	Electors to vote in North Moreton. The Crown Public House, is closed and the other facilities in the village (Boxing Club and churches) are not suitable or available. I have a policy of avoiding the closure of schools, which the council has supported - the only other venue available.