

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 380

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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To the Rt Hon Michael Heseltine MP
Secretary of State for the Environment

REVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE BOROUGH OF THAMESDOWN AND
THE DISTRICT OF NORTH WILTSHIRE IN THE VICINITY OF TOOTHILL

1. We, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, having carried out our review of the boundary between the borough of Thamesdown and the district of North Wiltshire in the vicinity of Toothill, now submit our Report.
2. This review follows the conclusion in our Report No 1 that the adjustment of the western boundary of the Thamesdown Borough should be left for further consideration in the light of any decisions that might be reached in the future on the development of Swindon. It is the last of the 5 cases listed in our Report No 6 which we considered would qualify for priority boundary reviews.
3. The uncertainties concerning the western development of Swindon have continued over the years, and progress on settling the planning situation proved to be extremely slow. By 1975 outline planning permission for part of the Toothill development had been granted and Thamesdown Borough Council requested that we should undertake a boundary review. We considered the Borough Council's request but concluded that it would be inappropriate to review the western boundary of Thamesdown before further outline planning permission had been granted and a clearer picture of the future development of Swindon had emerged. By 1977 four substantial applications for planning permission had been submitted. These were subsequently the subject of a planning inquiry, as a result of which planning permission was granted for the development of a further 515 acres of land. The four planning applications having been resolved, we decided that we were in a position to undertake a review of the North Wiltshire/Thamesdown boundary.
4. In accordance with the procedure laid down in section 60(1) and (2) of the 1972 Act, notice was given on 19 April 1978 that we were to undertake this review. This was incorporated in a consultation letter addressed to the Borough Council and District Council, to the County Council and to all the Parish Councils and Meetings in the borough of Thamesdown and district of North Wiltshire. Copies

were also sent to the Regional Health Authority, the Regional Water Authority, the regional offices of government departments, the headquarters of the main political parties, the Members of Parliament for the affected constituencies, and to the editors of local newspapers circulating in the area and of the local government press. Notices inserted in the local press announced the start of the review and invited comments from members of the public and from any interested bodies.

DRAFT PROPOSALS

5. Representations were received from nineteen local authorities, four of whom submitted specific suggestions for boundary changes, from a private developer, from a residents' association, and from sixty-two individuals; three petitions bearing a total of 826 signatures were received.

6. Thamesdown Borough Council proposed a boundary which would have included in the borough all land for which planning permission had been granted for the western expansion of Swindon, all land bought by themselves and private developers for this purpose, all land for future development included in their Western Expansion Sketch Plan and some small areas of land to the north and west of these.

7. The only support for these proposals came from one private developer. All the other local authorities, as well as all individuals, raised objections.

8. North Wiltshire District Council proposed a boundary which would have included in the Borough of Thamesdown only that land which had been granted planning permission or was likely to be granted planning permission within the period of the county's planning policy review. This boundary would have retained existing development in Lydiard Tregoze and Common Platt within the District of North Wiltshire.

9. Lydiard Millicent Parish Council proposed that an area of North Wiltshire, smaller in area than either of the above proposals, should be transferred to the Borough of Thamesdown. Their proposal would have retained the development at

Nine Elms, Washpool and Shaw, in addition to that in Lydiard Tregoze and Common Platt, within North Wiltshire.

10. We considered all the representations. We noted that while there was some feeling amongst local residents that the existing boundary should not be changed, there was little real dispute amongst the various local authorities that the boundary between Thamesdown and North Wiltshire should be altered because of the western expansion of Swindon.

11. The western side of Swindon had been identified as an expansion area for many years and since planning permission had been granted for development of the areas of Toothill, Freshbrook and Whitehill the Borough Council's wish to have these areas under their control seemed reasonable. The other local authorities concerned did not dispute this. They did, however, express reservations as to the speed with which further development would take place and maintained that the boundary proposed by the Borough Council would transfer to their control land far in excess of their planning needs, over the 15 year period of the County Council's planning policy review.

12. We came to the conclusion that some change in the Thamesdown/North Wiltshire boundary was desirable. Nevertheless we were not convinced that so large a change as that proposed by Thamesdown Borough Council was justified. We therefore examined the alternative suggestions submitted by North Wiltshire District Council and Lydiard Millicent Parish Council. In general we were inclined to favour the adoption of the boundary line advocated by the District Council as representing a reasonable compromise between the conflicting views of Thamesdown Borough Council on the one hand and those of the parishes and local residents affected on the other. We were, however, influenced by the comments of Wiltshire County Council with respect to the future development and use of the areas of Lydiard Park and Windmill Hill and we thought that the District Council's proposed boundary should be modified so as to include those areas within Thamesdown Borough.

13. Our conclusion was incorporated in our draft proposals which were published on 11 June 1979. Copies of these draft proposals were sent to all who had received our initial consultation letter or who had made representations to us. Representations on these draft proposals were invited from those to whom details had been sent and, by public notices, from other members of the public and interested bodies.

RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PROPOSALS

14. In response to the publication of our draft proposals we received comments from seven local authorities, including all the principal authorities and parish councils involved, from local organisations, and from a considerable number of individuals.

15. Wiltshire County Council, North Wiltshire District Council, Purton Parish Council, Cricklade Town Council and one local resident supported our draft proposals. Both the County Council and the District Council, however, pointed out that the Euroway employment area lying between Blagrove Farm and the M4 Motorway Intersection had received planning permission. They suggested that our proposed boundary should be amended to include that area within Thamesdown Borough. The District Council also suggested that the boundary in the Windmill Hill area should be redrawn to follow the western edge of Marsh Farm. This latter suggestion was supported by two local residents.

16. Thamesdown Borough Council welcomed our draft proposals as a substantial improvement over the existing situation. They therefore offered no objections but suggested some minor amendments to include within the Borough additional land which had received planning permission or which was in their ownership. These amendments concerned the Euroway employment area, a small area to the north of Wick Cottages, and an elm plantation in the south-west corner of Lydiard Park.

17. Lydiard Tregoze Parish Council objected to our draft proposals and put forward an alternative proposal which would exclude Lydiard Park from Thamesdown and which they considered would produce a technically superior boundary.

Lydiard Millicent Parish Council urged that we should reconsider their earlier

proposals. They were supported by a local residents' association. A private developer suggested that we should adopt the boundary originally proposed by Thamesdown Borough Council.

18. We received representations from 146 individuals, including the Member of Parliament for the constituency concerned, and a petition on behalf of the residents of the Parish of Lydiard Millicent bearing 574 signatures. Virtually all these representations were objections to our proposal to include the hamlet of Shaw within Thamesdown Borough.

FINAL PROPOSALS

19. We have now reviewed our draft proposals in the light of the written representations which we received.

20. We have noted that, subject to certain relatively minor suggestions, the principal authorities accepted our proposals and expressed the wish that the new boundary might be implemented as soon as possible. The local residents, however, were deeply concerned over the future of Shaw. They argued that Shaw was essentially rural in character and had close social links with the village of Lydiard Millicent. The recently developed Toothill area was urban in character and looked to Swindon for its amenities. To divide Shaw from the rest of the parish of Lydiard Millicent would not only split a long established community but also involve some danger that the interests of Shaw would be neglected in favour of those of the urban area. Furthermore, they believed that the building programme which would link Shaw with the new urban area would take 15 years or more to complete and in the meantime Shaw would be isolated, being separated from the village of Lydiard Millicent by the district boundary, and from the Toothill area by undeveloped land.

21. We appreciate the strength of feeling which has induced so many people to write to us on the subject of Shaw. On the other hand it is clear to us that there have been a good many difficulties and uncertainties over the years in connection with the development of land beyond the present boundary of Thamesdown.

Continuing uncertainty over the planning and use of the adjoining land to the north

is undesirable and the problems involved would in our view be more satisfactorily handled if the area likely to be affected is in the same district. Any proposals we make must, under Section 47(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, appear to us to be desirable in the interests of effective and convenient local government and we are of the opinion that any new boundary which we propose must alleviate those difficulties not only at the present time but also for a reasonable period in the future.

22. We are not in a position to assess accurately the speed with which development may take place, particularly since much of the area concerned is still the subject of planning applications. In reaching our conclusions, therefore, we can only have regard to the extent to which land has already been granted planning permission, and take account of the statements contained in the consultative draft of the North East Wiltshire Structure Plan, which was issued by Wiltshire County Council in September 1979 and which covers the period up to 1991.

23. Development is already in progress on the land immediately south of Shaw and the area for which planning permission has been granted runs right up to the edge of the existing hamlet; moreover the County Council have indicated that they consider that a further 220 acres of land to the west of Swindon may need to be released for housing and associated services between 1985 and 1991 and that further land could be necessary for employment purposes. Having regard to these considerations we do not think there is any serious risk that the hamlet of Shaw will be isolated or deprived of adequate amenities. There seems little doubt that the area of Shaw will ultimately become part of Thamesdown and we are of the opinion that, given the present pattern of development for the western expansion of Swindon, it would be conducive to effective and convenient local government for it to be transferred now.

24. We have considered whether, in view of the strength of feeling at Shaw, we should visit the area and hear further representations at a local meeting. We have decided, however, against such a course as the facts and arguments are already sufficiently clear without further information being needed.

25. We have considered the minor amendments proposed by the principal authorities, referred to in paragraphs 14 and 15 above. We agree that all areas which have received planning permission should be included within Thamesdown Borough and have therefore decided that we should alter the boundary in our draft proposals so as to take in the Euroway employment area and the area around Wick Cottages. We also

agree that the elm plantation, which is owned by the Borough Council, should be included within the Borough. With regard to the Windmill Hill area we note that our proposed boundary would divide Park Farm. We therefore accept the amendment proposed by North Wiltshire District Council. Subject to these modifications we confirm our draft proposals as our final proposals.

CONSEQUENTIAL REVISION OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

25. Following our review of the North Wiltshire District, new electoral arrangements are to come into effect there in 1983. On the basis of the latest figures available to us, the number of electors in the new district wards of North Wiltshire concerned would not, after the transfer to Thamesdown of the area proposed, be significantly different from that originally forecast during the review. Nor would the standard of representation provided by the existing county and parish electoral arrangements be adversely affected. We have concluded, therefore, that consequential adjustments to the electoral arrangements for North Wiltshire District should be confined to detaching the areas to be transferred from the existing electoral areas at parish, district and county level.

26. We have examined the figures submitted by Thamesdown Borough Council with regard to the probable rate of expansion of the electorate in the area which we propose for transfer. We accept that the forecast growth of electorate to more than 7,000 by 1981 is sufficient to justify additional representation on the Borough Council. As an interim arrangement we propose that the transferred area should become one new borough ward named Toothill, returning three councillors. We consider it would be premature to determine now the appropriate electoral arrangements for the longer term in view of the uncertainty about the rate of growth of the electorate. If necessary we would be prepared to carry out a fresh review of Thamesdown Borough as a whole when the pattern of development becomes clearer. We also propose that the transferred area should not be parished.

27. We are currently reviewing the electoral arrangements of the county of Wiltshire under the provisions of section 63 of, and schedule 9 to, the Local Government Act 1972. Our final proposals for revised electoral arrangements for the county will take account of any decision on the North Wiltshire/Thamesdown

boundary made by the Secretary of State before completion of our electoral review. Meanwhile we recommend that the transferred area should become part of the Swindon West electoral division in Thamesdown instead of forming part of the Purton electoral division in North Wiltshire.

PROPOSALS

28. Details of our final proposals are set out on the attached map and in Schedules 1 and 2 to this report. The proposed boundary is defined on the map. Schedule 1 specifies the proposed changes in local authority areas and Schedule 2 specifies the consequential adjustments to the existing electoral arrangements.

PUBLICATION

29. In accordance with section 60(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 a copy of this report and of the map is being sent to Thamesdown Borough Council and North Wiltshire District Council. This report and the accompanying map will be made available for public inspection at the Council's main offices. Copies of this report, which includes a small scale map, are also being sent to those who received the consultation letter and to those who made comments.

L.S.

Signed: NICHOLAS MORRISON (Chairman)

 JOHN M RANKIN (Deputy Chairman)

 PHYLLIS BOWDEN

 TYRRELL BROCKBANK

 G E CHERRY

 D P HARRISON

 R R THORNTON

L B GRIMSHAW
Secretary
14 February 1980

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS IN THE VICINITY OF TOOTHILL

It is proposed:-

1. that the boundary between the borough of Thamesdown and the district of North Wiltshire should be realigned as defined on the map which accompanies this report;
2. that the parts of the parishes of Lydiard Millicent, Lydiard Tregoze and Purton which will be transferred to the borough of Thamesdown, shall cease to be parts of any parish;
3. that the part of the parish of Lydiard Millicent remaining in the district of North Wiltshire shall be a parish known as the parish of Lydiard Millicent;
4. that the part of the parish of Lydiard Tregoze remaining in the district of North Wiltshire shall be a parish known as the parish of Lydiard Tregoze;
5. that the part of the parish of Purton remaining in the district of North Wiltshire shall be a parish known as the parish of Purton

SCHEDULE 2

PROPOSALS FOR REVISED ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS CONSEQUENT UPON THE PROPOSED
REALIGNMENT OF BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE DISTRICT OF NORTH WILTSHIRE AND THE
BOROUGH OF THAMESDOWN

It is proposed:-

1. that Swindon West electoral division as defined in the County of Wiltshire (Electoral Divisions) Order 1973 shall be altered by the addition of those parts of the parishes of Lydiard Millicent, Lydiard Tregoze, and Purton which are within the realigned boundary of the borough of Thamesdown, as defined on the map which accompanies this report, and that the number of councillors representing the said electoral division shall be unchanged;
2. that those parts of the parishes of Lydiard Millicent, Lydiard Tregoze, and Purton, which are within the realigned boundary of the borough of Thamesdown, as defined on the accompanying map, shall become a new borough ward to be named Toothill, and that the number of councillors representing the said ward shall be three;
3. that Purton electoral division, as defined in the County of Wiltshire (Electoral Divisions) Order 1973, shall be altered by the separation of those parts of the parishes of Lydiard Millicent, Lydiard Tregoze, and Purton, which are within the realigned boundary of the borough of Thamesdown, as defined on the accompanying map, and that the number of councillors representing the said electoral division shall be unchanged;
4. that Ward No 21 of the district of North Wiltshire, as defined in the County of Wiltshire (District Wards) Order 1973, and The Lydiards ward of the district of North Wiltshire, as defined in the District of North Wiltshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979, shall be altered by the separation of those parts of the parishes of Lydiard Millicent and Lydiard Tregoze which are within the realigned boundary of the borough of Thamesdown, as defined on the accompanying map, and that the number of councillors representing the said wards shall be unchanged.
5. that Ward No 20 of the district of North Wiltshire, as defined in the County of Wiltshire (District Wards) Order 1973, and the Purton ward of the district of North Wiltshire, as defined in the District of North Wiltshire (Electoral Arrangements) Order 1979 shall be altered by the separation of that part of the parish of Purton which is within the realigned boundary of the borough of Thamesdown, as defined on the accompanying map, and that the number of councillors representing the said wards shall be unchanged.
6. that the number of councillors representing the parishes of Lydiard Millicent, Lydiard Tregoze, and Purton, as altered, shall be unchanged.

PRINCIPAL AREA REVIEW

DESCRIPTION OF AREA OF LAND PROPOSED TO BE TRANSFERRED FROM NORTH WILTSHIRE DISTRICT TO THAMESDOWN DISTRICT

Note: Where the boundary is described as following a road, railway, river, canal or similar feature, it should be deemed to follow the centre line of the feature unless otherwise stated.

The area of land bounded by a line commencing on the western boundary of Thamesdown District at a point where it meets the northern boundary of the M4 motorway, thence northwestwards along said northern boundary to the northern boundary of the northern carriageway of the roundabout on the A420 road, thence northwestwards along said boundary, crossing the western and eastern fork of the A420 road to a point where the northern boundary of the M4 motorway meets the northern boundary of the A420 road, thence northeastwards along the northern boundary of the A420 road to the northeastern boundary of Parcel No 3124 as shown on OS 1:2500 microfilm SU 1083 editinn B (1977), thence northwestwards along said boundary and the northern boundary of Parcel No 0051 to the southeastern boundary of Parcel No 3400, thence northeastwards along said boundary to the unnamed road leading from Hay Lane to the B4041 road passing to the south of Lydiard Park and Elm Plantation, thence northwestwards and westwards along said road to the linear detail in continuation from the northern and western boundary of Elm Plantation, thence northwards and northeastwards along said detail and western and northern boundaries of Elm Plantation to the western boundary of Lydiard Park, thence generally northeastwards along said boundary and generally southeastwards along the northern boundary of said Park and continuing southeastwards along the northern boundary of the access road to Lydiard Park to the entrance of said Park, thence southwards and eastwards along said entrance and access road to the unnamed road from Hay Lane to the hamlet known as Common Platt, thence northwestwards, northeastwards and generally northwards along said road to the southern boundary of Purton CP, thence northeastwards, southeastwards and northeastwards along said boundary to the western boundary of Parcel No 4175 as shown on

OS 1:2500 Microfilm SU 1186 edition A (1970), thence northwestwards along said boundary to the unnamed road from Common Platt to Purton Road, thence northeastwards along said road to the Stroud to Swindon Railway, thence southeastwards along said railway to the unnamed stream flowing east of Sparcell's Farm, thence generally northeastwards along said stream to the western boundary of Thamesdown District, thence generally southwards, southwestwards, northwestwards along said boundary to the point of commencement.