

Local Government
Boundary Commission
For England
Report No. 545

Review of Non-Metropolitan Counties

County of Somerset

Boundary with Wiltshire

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BOUNDARY COMMISSION

FOR ENGLAND

REPORT NO. 545

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

REVIEW OF NON-METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

SOMERSET: BOUNDARY WITH WILTSHIRE

COMMISSION'S FINAL PROPOSALS

INTRODUCTION

1. On 27 January 1986 we wrote to Somerset County Council announcing our intention to undertake a review of the county under Section 48(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. Copies of the letter were sent to the principal local authorities and all the parishes in the County of Somerset and the adjoining Counties of Avon, Devon, Dorset and Wiltshire; the Members of Parliament with constituency interests; the headquarters of the main political parties; various Government Departments which might have an interest; the Wessex Regional Health Authority and Somerset Health Authority; British Telecom; the Southern and South Western Electricity Boards; the South Western Gas Board; the Southern, South West, Thames and Wessex Water Authorities; the English Tourist Board; Ports Authorities in the County; the Editors of the Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle; local television and radio stations serving the area; and the National and County Associations of Local Councils.

3. The County Councils were requested, in co-operation as necessary with other County Councils and with the District Councils concerned, to assist us in publicising the start of the review by publishing a notice for two successive weeks in appropriate local newspapers to give the widest possible publicity in the areas concerned. The County Councils were asked, in particular, to use their best endeavours to ensure that the issue of the consultation letter was drawn to the attention of those concerned with services such as the administration of justice and police, in respect of which they have a statutory function.

4. A period of six months from the date of the letter was allowed for all local authorities, including those in the adjoining counties, and any other person or body interested in the review, to submit to us their views in detail on whether changes in the county boundary were desirable; if so, what those changes should be; and how they would serve the interests of effective and convenient local government.

THE SUBMISSIONS MADE TO US

5. In response to our letter we received representations from Somerset County Council, the District Councils of Salisbury and West Somerset and from four parish councils in Somerset and four interested bodies. In addition, Somerset County Council forwarded copies of five other representations which it had received from South Somerset District Council, Mr Paddy Ashdown MP, a Somerset County Councillor and two parish councils in Somerset.

6. The submissions made to us included various recommendations for changes to Somerset's boundaries with Avon, Dorset and Wiltshire. The suggestions for changes put forward in respect of the boundaries between Somerset and Avon and Somerset and Dorset are being dealt with under the reviews, which are still in progress, of Avon and Dorset respectively.

BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE COUNTIES OF SOMERSET AND WILTSHIRE

7. Brewham Parish Council, in Somerset, recommended a minor change to the boundary between the Counties of Somerset and Wiltshire, to transfer to Somerset a two-mile stretch of road, which loops into Wiltshire. The Parish Council stated that the change would improve road maintenance since, it claimed, Wiltshire County Council had long neglected the part of the road in its area.

8. Somerset County Council did not favour a boundary change but preferred to pursue the possibility of an agreement with Wiltshire County Council under Section 8 of the Highways Act 1980. It also pointed out that the local authorities in Wiltshire were opposed to the change. Salisbury District Council objected to the change and stated that the Parishes of Kilmington and Maiden Bradley were also opposed to it. The District Council's main ground of objection was that the existing boundary was, in part, historic in that it followed the line of ancient earthworks. The Council considered the change unnecessary and drew our attention to Kilmington Parish Council's observation that access to the road was easier from the Wiltshire side in wintry weather and

that any agreement under the Highways Act 1980 should take account of this fact in order to maintain access for Kilmington residents.

9. West Somerset District Council had no specific proposals to make but stated that it would support any recommendation for a return to Somerset's pre-1974 boundaries. The other representations made direct to us had no comment to make, or were in favour either of no change to Somerset's present boundaries or a return to the County's pre-1974 boundaries.

OUR CONSIDERATION OF THE SUBMISSIONS

10. We considered the submissions from the principal authorities and all the other representations we had received. We agreed that the existing boundary between the District of Mendip (Somerset) and the District of Salisbury (Wiltshire) was unsatisfactory in that it divided responsibility for the maintenance of a road but, particularly, because the present boundary cuts through a number of properties. We felt that some change was necessary and we concluded that Brewham Parish Council's suggestion, which would place the whole of the road and adjoining properties in Somerset, would provide a satisfactory solution.

OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

11. We decided, therefore, to publish a draft proposal based on Brewham Parish Council's suggestion, but amended to reflect minor technical adjustments

suggested by Ordnance Survey. Our proposal involved the transfer of parts of the Parishes of Kilmington and Maiden Bradley in the District of Salisbury to the Parishes of Trudoxhill and Witham Friary in the District of Mendip.

12. Our draft proposal was published on 30 July 1987. Having advertised the start of the review extensively throughout Somerset and its adjoining counties, we decided that, in view of the limited response to our consultation letter, we need only advertise our draft proposal in the area affected. Copies were therefore sent to the principal authorities directly concerned and to those persons and bodies who appeared to us to have an interest in the review of the boundary between Somerset and Wiltshire. The County Councils of Somerset and Wiltshire were asked to arrange publication of a notice giving details of our draft proposal and to place copies of it on display at places where public notices are customarily displayed. They were also asked to place copies of our draft proposal letter on deposit for inspection at their main offices for a period of eight weeks. Comments were invited by 24 September 1987.

RESPONSE TO OUR DRAFT PROPOSALS

13. We received, direct, eleven representations in response to our draft proposal letter and, in addition, three other representations were forwarded to us by Salisbury District Council and the West Wiltshire Conservative Association. The draft proposal was opposed by Wiltshire County Council; Salisbury District Council; the Parish Councils of Kilmington and Maiden

Bradley; the West Wiltshire Conservative Association; the Wiltshire County Councillor for the area affected; and two local (Wiltshire) residents. The objections mainly reiterated points which had been put to us prior to the publication of our draft proposal. The general feeling was that the traditional, partly historic, boundary was satisfactory to all (split property notwithstanding) and that Somerset County Council would not be able to provide the same high standard of services and road maintenance as Wiltshire County Council does at present, particularly in respect of snow clearance which, it was frequently pointed out, is most important to these isolated settlements. Two of the comments we received also asserted that our draft proposal was not justified in terms of the criteria laid down in DOE Circular 12/84.

14. Support for, or at least acceptance of, the proposal came from Mendip District Council, Trudoxhill Parish Council, the Somerset Family Practitioner Committee and the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. British Gas confirmed that it had no comments to make.

15. On further considering our draft proposal, we discovered that, inadvertently, we had included in it a technical amendment suggested by Ordnance Survey which, in fact, affected only the parish boundary between two parishes within Somerset. As such a change was outside the scope of the review of the county we decided to withdraw it and, since the adjustment was so minor, we felt that the fact of its withdrawal did not warrant separate publication.

OUR FINAL PROPOSALS

16. As required by Section 60 of the Local Government Act 1972, we have considered the representations made to us. We noted that there was opposition to our draft proposal for change to the boundary between Somerset and Wiltshire. However, we concluded that change was necessary primarily to remove the evident anomaly of split properties and also to bring responsibility for the road in question wholly under the jurisdiction of one local authority. Therefore, in the interests of effective and convenient local government, we confirm our draft proposal as our final proposal, subject to the withdrawal of the technical amendment referred to in paragraph 15.

PUBLICATION

17. A separate letter enclosing copies of this report is being sent to Somerset and Wiltshire County Councils, asking them to deposit copies of the report at their main offices for inspection for six months and to put notices to this effect on public notice boards and in the local press. The text of the notice will explain that the Commission has fulfilled its statutory role in the matter, and that it now falls to you to make an Order, implementing the proposal, if you think fit, though not before six weeks from the date they are submitted to you. Copies of this report, which includes small-scale maps, are also being sent to

those who received our draft proposal letter and to those who responded in writing.

LS

Signed: G J ELLERTON (Chairman)

J G POWELL (Deputy Chairman)

K F J ENNALS

G E CHERRY

G R PRENTICE

B SCHOLES

S T GARRISH

Secretary

17 December 1987

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

COUNTY BOUNDARY REVIEW

SOMERSET

AFFECTING WILTSHIRE

FINAL PROPOSALS

Existing County Boundary



Proposed County Boundary



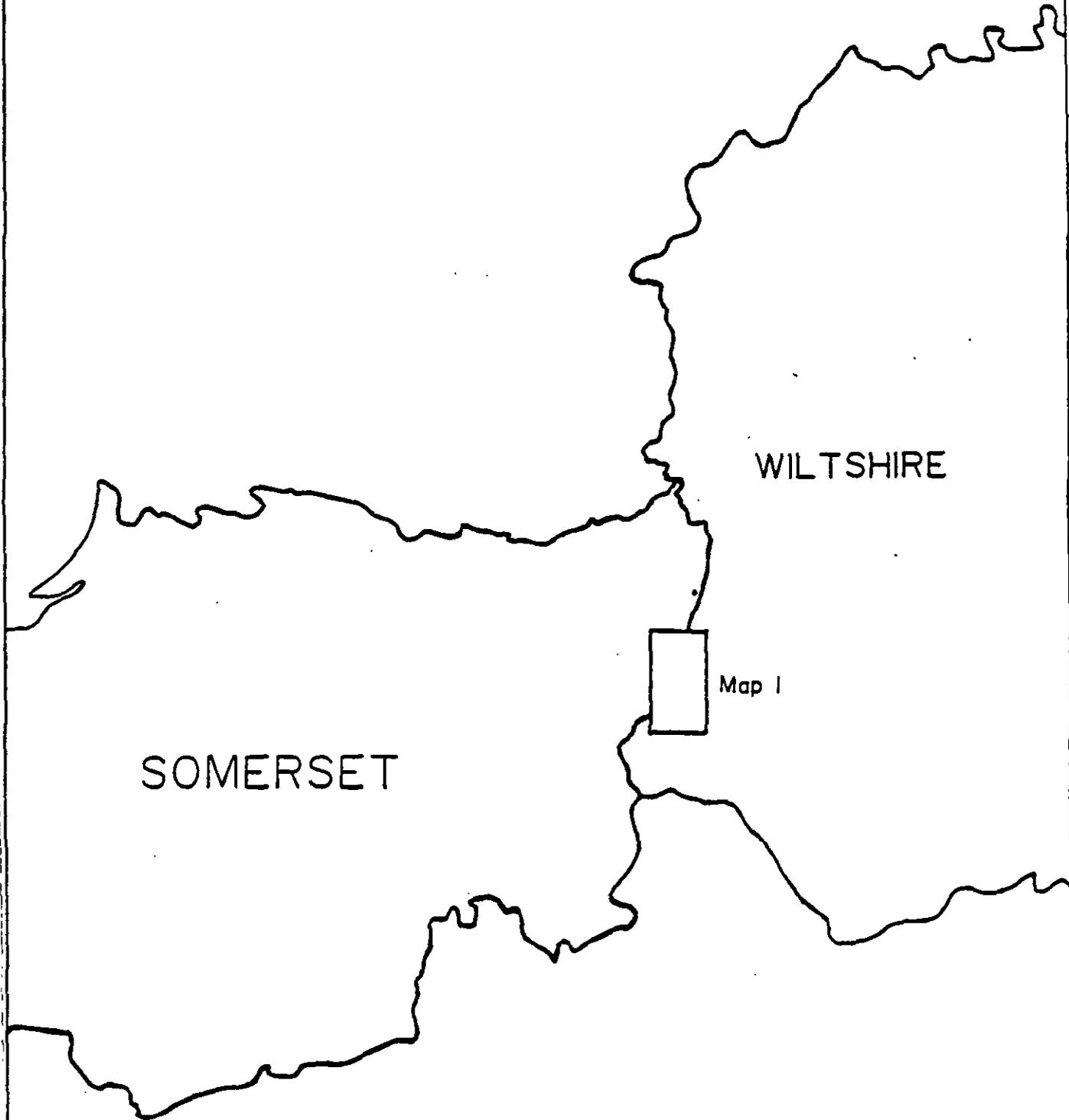
Existing CP Boundary



Proposed CP Boundary



LOCATION DIAGRAM



SOMERSET

WILTSHIRE

Map 1



