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The Vale's proposal splits the un-warded parish of North Hinksey along the A34 and an arbitrary boundary on the west side of the A34, at the cost of community cohesion.

Other communities in the Vale have benefitted from a more rational approach to their new boundaries: the Chilton parish is preserved, as is the town of Faringdon, for reasons to do with community cohesion and avoidance of subdivision of natural boundaries. Here's what the proposal says about these two communities:

- To remove part of the town (Faringdon) and place it in another ward to achieve electoral equality, would represent a wholly artificial construct that the local electorate would not recognise.
- This ward (Blewbury) comprises three parishes in the south-eastern corner of the district. The electorate is quite high but the alternative would be to sub-divide Chilton parish along the line of the A34. We do not favour this because the village lies to one side of the road and the school and new housing to the other and we would be sub-dividing a natural community if we did so.

North Hinksey parish is a natural community in the same way that Faringdon and Chilton are, and should be preserved in the same way as those two communities have been. This proposal wants to do what officers refused to do in Faringdon, and what they did not favour in Chilton. The principles having to do with community identity should be applied wherever they are relevant, not just in some wards.

With nearly 4000 electors, North Hinksey parish is too big for a single one-member district ward, and too small for two wards. The tabled proposal would split off a fraction of the parish and combine it with other areas further south to make up the electoral numbers. Essentially, everything east of the A34, and south of Lime Road, would be part of a ward with other distant villages with which there are no ties. It's a far better idea to keep all of North Hinksey parish together, and add to it the several outlying areas of Wytham, South Hinksey, Boars Hill and Sunningwell to make the numbers large enough for a two member ward. Electoral equality is still achieved; the combined electorate of the two proposed wards is about 5000, a 3% variance, which is well within demonstrated tolerance. No natural community boundaries are shattered.

There are more specific reasons to not split up North Hinksey parish.

1. In their submission, North Hinksey parish council made it clear that the most important consideration is community identity. They felt the ward should be formed so as to include all electors who turn to North Hinksey for their public services. The doctors' surgery, dentist, opticians, shops, library and recreational amenities are all on the west side of the A34.
2. Things on the west side of A34 that serve everyone. West Way precinct, the Elms Parade shops and the nearby church halls are the social centre of the neighbourhood. Seacourt Hall is used for group meetings, classes and events. Two churches provide a social and spiritual centre for residents on both sides of the A34. The library was saved by a community-wide campaign, and

provides services for less mobile residents. Louie Memorial Playing Fields, the Louie Memorial Pavilion and children's play areas are all on the west side of the A34. Friends of Raleigh Park, Friends of the Louie Memorial Fields have membership that crosses the A34 boundary. Botley Primary School and the linked Children's Centre serve families from throughout the parish. Matthew Arnold School, although just over the border into Cumnor parish, is the secondary school serving the whole area. The North Hinksey Youth Club, which meets in the LM Pavilion on Arnolds Way, serves children from throughout the parish.

3. Things on the east side that serve everyone. The North Hinksey parish allotments are on the east side of the A34, and have holders from both sides of the A34. The community orchard is there too, as well as the North Hinksey Nature Reserve, built and maintained by community effort. The North Hinksey Primary School enrolls children from the whole parish; children access the school via the pedestrian underpasses on A34 as well as from the bus stops on Botley Road. The main church of North Hinksey and the Botley Cemetery and Botley Women's Institute are all on the east side of the A34. Seacourt Retail Park, due to be redeveloped soon, is the focus of local planning concern as the new plans will demolish the only petrol station for miles around and change the traffic flow in the area. All of us who live here interact with services, facilities and people who live on the either side of the A34.
4. The Lime Road development will soon bring 150 new homes to the middle of North Hinksey parish. Under the current proposal, this new estate would **not** be in the ward with most of North Hinksey parish, but in the ward with Sunningwell. New residents will use North Hinksey services; the impact will be on local shops, schools and doctors. They will use local recreational amenities and local roads. Keeping the new homes with North Hinksey supports better planning control in a rapidly growing community and will enable better Localism with a community-minded responsibility for local issues.
5. The local campus of Oxford Brookes University in Harcourt Hill is far closer to North Hinksey than anywhere else. Residents of North Hinksey parish also have strong ties to the university, both for employment and especially the sports centre, where local people meet for sporting events and everyday work-outs. With the planned expansion of sport and recreational facilities at Brookes, it makes good sense to ensure there is local input into the planning process. If Harcourt Hill is split off from the rest of the parish, that local representation is lost. The 400 students on-site face towards North Hinksey and the City of Oxford for their services.
6. The first church built in North Hinksey parish was the original Saxon church still standing in North Hinksey Village on the east side of the A34. This area also includes North Hinksey Primary School, Botley Cemetery and Commonwealth War Graves, and a public house. In the last century North Hinksey parish expanded to the west where the daughter church and a small shopping centre were built on West Way. The number of houses west of the A34 now far exceeds the size of the original North Hinksey Village. The best warding arrangement is to keep North Hinksey Village within North Hinksey parish by making it part of a two member ward with South Hinksey and Sunningwell.

7. When the A34 was built in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it sliced North Hinksey parish in half, and local people have worked hard ever since to keep both sides linked up. Pedestrian underpasses mean residents on the east side of the highway can still access their shops, schools, churches and other services on the west side. The un-warded nature of the parish council helps promote community unity. This proposal would serve to further split the eastern part from the main part of the parish on the west, and undermine the efforts everyone has made to keep the parish together over the years.
8. Roads on the east side of the A34 are only accessible via North Hinksey Lane. Many are no-through roads accessed only via the A34 southbound or the pedestrian underpasses. Bus routes that serve the area run along Botley Road between the shops in West Way and Oxford City. There are no bus links to areas further south (Sunningwell).
9. Harcourt Hill is only accessible via the road North Hinksey parish, or from the A34 northbound. The only road into Harcourt Hill comes from North Hinksey parish, which has the local bus route.
10. The single two-member ward will be geographically long, but not as long as the Thames Ward. The odd jog in the ward will exist whether it is two wards or one.

All of this evidence of community identity and cohesion across the physical boundary of the A34 supports keeping the parish together in one district ward. In all the debate, there's been no evidence submitted that supports splitting the parish.