



Public Questions to Full Council relating to Agenda Item 6 – Community Governance Review

Wotton is relentlessly opposed to the very recently adopted recommendation to move the triangle of land to the west of the B4060 to Kingswood parish. This area comprises Katharine Lady Berkeley's School (KLB), the Wotton Community Sports Foundation (WCSF) development and, at its north end, just two residential properties with a total of three local government electors. We ask three questions:

Questions from Wotton-under-Edge Town Council to the Community Governance Working Group

Q1. The SDC terms of reference of the review and DCLG Guidance are required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be reflective of the identities, interests and historical traditions of the community in that area and takes into account the impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion.

KLB was founded in Wotton-under-Edge in 1384 and has been an important aspect of the town's community ever since that date. For example, in recent years three Mayors of Wotton-under-Edge have been chairs of governors of KLB. The school's carol service is held in the parish church, receptions and classes for visiting foreign students to place in Wotton Civic Centre and, at one time, school classes were also held in the Civic Centre. The town has been used as a teaching resource. The Mayor and officers take part in the farewell event for visiting Japanese students at KLB and hand out certificates.

The WCSF facilities have been developed and run on land leased from Wotton Town Council with huge efforts from many community volunteers and contributions from the Wotton's council taxpayers of £82,000.

The sports facilities of KLB and WCSF are managed as one by a joint venture company.

Why have these close community links been ignored in proposing that these facilities should be moved into Kingswood parish and what greater community links does Kingswood parish have with this area?

A1.

The working group carried out the review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement Health Act 2007 and as required had regard to the guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (as was) and the Local Government Boundary Commission.

The final recommendations have been based on the statutory criteria and the guidance that should be taken into account when conducting a review, namely:

- The identities and interests of the community in an area; and
- The effective and convenient governance of the area.

Other factors that should be taken into account are:

- What impact proposed community governance arrangements might have on community cohesion; and
- Whether the size (area), population and boundaries proposed for local governance make sense on the ground and contribute to the above criteria

All of the above criteria have been taken into account when formulating the final recommendations.

The community links mentioned as part of the question were not all submitted as part of any consultation response for consideration by the working group. However, as they have been put forward now they are available for deliberation by Council when coming to its decision on whether to support the working group's recommendation.

Q2. The reasons given by Kingswood Parish Council (KPC) for this area transferring to them are:

- the majority of the school buses and school traffic come through Kingswood and KPC have no control and are not automatically consulted on highways and transport issues as they come under Wotton Town Council.
- issues with parking on Wotton Road from KLB, Wotton Sport Centre, school events, etc. all have an effect on KPC.

Wotton Town Council is not aware of being consulted on traffic issues associated with these sites. Kingswood is perfectly able to raise these issues itself with the relevant County and other authorities.

Why do you believe it is necessary to move the parish boundary to enable Kingswood to deal successfully with highways authorities and bus companies in an attempt to solve its traffic and school drop-off parking problems?

A2.

The final recommendations propose the boundary amendment based on the criteria as set out in statute and guidance (noted in full in the response to question 1) that should be taken into account when conducting the review; the recommendations have not been proposed purely to enable Kingswood Parish Council to deal successfully with highways authorities and bus companies.

Q3. **Recommendation 11.4.2** states: "The area of dispute is the area that includes Penn Wood Lodge, Katharine Lady Berkeley School and Wotton Community Sports Foundation. Wotton-under-Edge Town Council have maintained that the School is predominantly for pupils from Wotton-under-Edge and the Town Council has also provided a considerable amount of funding to the Wotton Community Sports Foundation. The Town Council strongly object to the transfer of these facilities to Kingswood Parish Council."

This is inaccurate. Wotton Town Council is not disputing the transfer of Pennwood Lodge to Kingswood Parish and have also accepted the wishes of Kingswood over other properties including Park Mill Farm, Kingswood House and two other farms. What is being objected to is only the proposed transfer of KLB school and the WCSF site to Kingswood parish.

Recommendation 11.4.3 states: “At present, Kingswood Parish Council have no automatic right to be notified or consulted on any planning applications in the South Ward even though the impact of the applications are felt directly by Kingswood parish community and Kingswood district ward.”

This is not accurate. The changes proposed by WTC prior to July meant that all planning applications in the current K5 would fall within Kingswood parish with the exception of the agreed change in Wortley and the triangle containing KLB, WCSF and two properties at the north of this triangle.

The proposal now being put forward would mean, according to Kingswood, that “Wotton Town Council would have no automatic right to be notified or consulted on any planning applications for KLB, WCSF or the two properties!”

Can SDC please explain why the views expressed by the Town Council have been presented inaccurately in the recommendation and what action will be taken to ensure that all Council members are correctly informed in advance of the meeting?

A3.

11.4.2 refers to the area of dispute which is the land and road adjacent to Pennwood Lodge Care home and the area of dispute also includes KLB and the Sports Foundation. This has not been expressed as a view of the Town Council. It is accepted that the recommendation to transfer Pennwood Lodge to Kingswood Parish Council in the final recommendations has not been disputed by Wotton-under-Edge Town Council.

11.4.3 is a summary of Kingswood Parish Council’s consultation responses and argument for the boundary to be amended so that the whole of South Ward with the exception of the hamlet of Wortley should be transferred to Kingswood Parish Council. This has not been expressed as a view of the Town Council.

Question from Kingwood Parish Council to the Community Governance Working Group

Kingswood Parish Council asks councillors to consider is it right that Wotton Town Council retain the Governance and control of the area directly on the border with Kingswood Parish Council when all of the effects of the use of this area are felt by the community of Kingswood thus resulting in KPC having no control on what is proposed in this area?

A1.

The Community Governance Review Working Group carried out the review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement Health Act 2007 and as required had regard to the guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (as was) and the Local Government Boundary Commission. The final recommendations are based on the statutory criteria, guidance and the consultation responses.

The governance of the area has been taken into account when proposing the final recommendations.