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Introduction

- 1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) devolved the power to take decisions relating to the creation or abolition of parishes, the boundaries of parishes and the electoral arrangements of parish councils from the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to principal councils. With effect from February 2008, district councils have had the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews (formerly known as parish reviews) and have been able to decide whether to give effect to recommendations made in those reviews. In making that decision, councillors need to take into account the views of local people.
- 2 Councils are required to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission. Guidance suggests that it is good practice for a principal council to consider conducting a review every 10-15 years. So far as Swindon was concerned, it was considered timely to conduct a review following on from the recent electoral review of the Borough Council's electoral arrangements.
- 3 We contacted all parish councils, interested parties and the public, inviting the submission of proposals at stages of this review. The submissions received during this time have formed our final recommendations.
- 4 The period for both further consultation and the receipt of submissions is now closed. The final recommendations proposed by the Corporate Governance Review Working Party (referred to as The Working Party during this report) for the future parish arrangements for Swindon are set out within this documents for presentation to Cabinet on 20th March 2013, and Council on 11 April 2013.
- 5 Final approval and adoption of an agreed parish scheme for Swindon will be made by Council Order and come into effect at the dates set out in that Order. The effect of the scheme will be to retain the current cycle of parish council elections with the exception of Blunsdon Parish Council whose next election will be deferred from 2014 to 2015 with a reduced three year term of office to bring it back in line with the current electoral cycle.

What is a Community Governance Review?

- 6 It is a review that can take place for the whole or part of the Borough to consider one or more of the following:
 - Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
 - The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
 - The electoral arrangements for parishes (the ordinary year of election; council size, the number of councillors to be elected to the council, and parish warding), and

- Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- 7 The Council is statutorily required to have regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community in the area under review, and the need to secure that community governance in that area is effective and convenient.
- 8 In doing so the community governance review is required to take into account:
- The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
 - The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish.

Timetable for the Review

- 9 The timetable for this review allows the final recommendations and statutory order to be in place prior to the parish council elections scheduled to take place in 2014.

Action	Timeline	Outline of Action
Deciding when review commences	January 2012	Approval of Terms of Reference and timescale
Terms of Reference	17 th May 2012	Publish Terms of Reference and notifies stakeholders.
Introductory stage – Meetings with stakeholders	11 th – 20 th June 2012	
Stage 1	20 th June – 10 th September 2012	Initial submissions invited.
Stage 2	11 th September – 9 th November 2012	Consideration of submissions and publication of draft recommendations.
Stage 3	10 th November 2012– 18 th February 2013	Consultation on draft recommendations.
Stage 4	18 th February – 15 th April 2013	Consideration of final submissions and preparation of final recommendations
Final recommendations	16 th April 2013	Publication of final recommendations
Making the Community Governance Order	May 2013	Council to make Order

Why are we conducting a review of parish arrangements?

- 10 This review is taking place partly as a result of the electoral ward review undertaken in 2011 and also the current situation of some of the parish arrangements.
- 11 The Council believes that parish councils play an important role in terms of community empowerment at the local level and wants to ensure that parish governance within the Borough continues to be robust, representative and enabled to meet new challenges. Furthermore, it wants to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes – the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors – are appropriate, equitable and readily understood by their electorate.

Undertaking the review

- 12 Swindon Borough Council has approached the review by conducting a Borough wide consultation;
 - Seeking the views of all interested parties including parish councils, community groups, and individuals
 - The Borough Council has not sought to initiate changes but clearly reflect the views of the community and the submissions received at both the draft and final stages of the review.
 - The Borough Council has promoted the review widely through media advertising, web site information, and notices and leaflets which have been distributed throughout the local authority area.

Consideration of Submissions

- 13 The submissions received at the first stage of the review were considered by The Working Party on 11th October 2012. The Working Party then formulated draft proposals on the basis of the evidence submitted having regard to the extent to which the submissions received met the statutory criteria referred to in paragraph 6 above.
- 14 In some instances, The Working Party considered that insufficient evidence had been submitted at this stage to justify the changes requested. The Working Party, therefore, recommended that in those instances further evidence be gathered together for consideration by The Working Party in preparation of the final recommendations.
- 15 Having regard to the submissions received at both the draft and final stages of the review The Working Party have considered the evidence received to finalise recommendations to Cabinet for a final parish scheme for Swindon. If agreed the recommendations will be further endorsed by Council. The scheme will best reflect the interests of the

communities in Swindon and offer effective and convenient local government.

Analysis and Final Recommendations (Alphabetical order of parish)

- 16 The current electorate figures for the parished and unparished areas of the Borough are as follows:

Parish Area	Electorate
Bishopstone	558
Blunsdon St Andrew	9,550
Castle Eaton	196
Chiseldon	2,195
Covingham	3,007
Hannington	223
Haydon Wick	15,696
Highworth	6,672
Inglesham	89
Liddington	311
South Marston	701
Stanton Fitzwarren	180
Stratton St Margaret	18,500
Wanborough	1,548
Wroughton	6,413
Unparished areas	97,323

(Correct as at October 2012)

17. Before finalising our recommendations on the Community Governance Review we considered further evidence in support of initial proposals received during the final stages of the review to enable proposals to be made that best reflect the wishes of the community and that provide effective and convenient local government.

Electoral Arrangements

- 18 In this section of the report we have detailed the submissions received at both the draft and final stages of the review.. The parished areas have been considered in turn followed by the un-parished areas of Swindon Borough.

Bishopstone

- 19 Bishopstone Parish Council indicated it wished to see no change to its existing parish boundaries. The Council received no submissions directly from residents at either the draft or final stages of the review.

Recommendation - It is recommended that Bishopstone parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Bishopstone.

Blunsdon St Andrew

- 20 Blunsdon St. Andrew Parish Council made a joint proposal with Stratton St Margaret Parish Council at the draft stage of the review shown in **Appendix A** and shaded in green, that the boundary between Stratton St Margaret and Blunsdon parishes is re-aligned so that Stratton Woods and a small number of houses from Hyde Road are moved from the Blunsdon St Andrew parish to Stratton St Margaret parish. The Council received no submissions directly from residents. It is noted that in the submission from Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, local residents had responded to a questionnaire on the matter negatively. No further submission was received from the parish at the final stage of the review.
- 21 Blunsdon St. Andrew Parish Council is also reported by Haydon Wick Parish Council as supporting a joint proposal that the boundary between the two parishes, shown in **Appendix B**, follows Tadpole Brook, Thamesdown Drive and Elstree Way. Although no local residents have made any submission on this proposal, it is considered that this would be a logical change as this would follow the local road network and would also correlate to the Borough Ward boundary.

Recommendation - Taking the proposals in order, it is recommended that the area of the Parish should be altered as follows:

- (i) *Stratton Woods* – it is recommended that the proposed change to the parish boundary to incorporate the whole of Stratton Woods to within Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is agreed. The Borough Council will formally make a proposal to the Boundary Commission for England regarding the matter of moving the ward boundary to align with the proposed parish boundary.
- (ii) *Houses on Hyde Road* – It is recommended that the properties in Hyde Road remain within the Parish of Blunsdon St Andrew because local residents who responded to questionnaires at both draft and final stages of the review, do not support this change. In determining a change, the Borough Council has a duty within the act to take into account the wishes of the local government electors within the area subject of the proposed change. It has not been demonstrated by the residents in this area that they readily support the change, as shown on the map, and that the results of the consultation make evident that there was no overall wish to move from the parish of Blunsdon St Andrew to the parish of Stratton St Margaret.
- (iii) *Boundary between Blunsdon St. Andrew Parish and Haydon Wick Parish* – It is recommended that the boundary between the two parishes be adjusted as submitted by Haydon Wick Parish Council as it has been demonstrated that such change would better reflect

the identities and interests of the community in that area and in particular that:

- a. The Baxter parish ward of the parish of Blunsdon St Andrew (polling district HWF) be transferred to the existing parish of Haydon Wick on the basis that the changes would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area, and that
- b. Part of the Haydon Wick warded parish (polling district SAD) be transferred to the existing parish of Blunsdon St Andrew.

Castle Eaton

- 22 The Council received no submissions at either the draft or final stages of the review relating to the parish of Castle Eaton.

Recommendation - It is recommended that Castle Eaton parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Castle Eaton.

Chiseldon

- 23 Chiseldon Parish Council indicated it wished to see no change to its existing parish boundaries. No other representations have been received at the final stages of the review.

Recommendation - It is recommended that Chiseldon parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Chiseldon.

Covingham

- 24 At the initial stages of the review no formal comment was received from Covingham Parish Council regarding any proposed changes. The Parish Council did, however, circulate a leaflet within the parish seeking comments on the review from residents and raising a particular question as to an adjoining unparished area, shown in **Appendix C**, comprising Bullfinch Close, Pheasant Close, Avocet Close, Owl Close, Mallard Close, Kestrel Drive and adjoining roads (the un-parished area).
- 25 Six responses were received concerning the Parish of Covingham.
- One respondent suggested that the parish boundary should remain the same. No further information was provided in support of this response.
 - Four responses proposed that the un-parished area be included in Covingham Parish,
 - One respondent suggested further information should be made available to residents before a decision was made.

- 26 The un-parished area (polling district CDD) is an isolated residential area adjoining Covingham Parish comprising its own polling district. It has an industrial area on three sides. Of those who responded to the survey, there appears to be strong local support for it being included within the parish of Covingham as this would better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- 27 Since the publication of the draft proposals, Covingham Parish Council has submitted a letter of confirmation, supporting the transfer of Bullfinch Close, Pheasant Close, Avocet Close, Owl Close and Mallard Close for the un-parished area of Dorcan to the Covingham Parish.

Recommendation - It is therefore recommended that the area of the Parish should be altered as follows:

The un-parished area of Bullfinch Close, Pheasant Close, Avocet Close, Owl Close, Mallard Close, Kestrel Drive and adjoining roads (polling district CDD), become part of the existing Covingham Parish for the reason that it is considered that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.

Hannington

- 28 Hannington Parish Council indicated it wished to see no change to its existing parish boundaries. No other representations have been received at either the draft or final stages of the review.

Recommendation - It is recommended that Hannington parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Hannington.

Haydon Wick

- 29 Haydon Wick Parish Council reported that Blunsdon St. Andrew Parish Council supports a joint proposal from the two parish councils that the boundary between the two parishes follows Tadpole Brook, Thamesdown Drive and Elstree Way. Although no local residents have made any submission on this proposal, officers consider that this would be a logical change as this would follow the local road network and would also correlate to the Borough Ward boundary
- 30 It is not considered that any rationale has been submitted for the proposed change to the area between Emerson Close and Wynwards Road which would take that area out of the Haydon Wick Parish whilst leaving it in the Haydon Wick borough ward.
- 31 During the initial stages of the review a submission was received from Haydon Wick Parish Council recommending changes to the southern parish boundary to include the areas of Priory Vale (PVF) and Haydon Wick (HWA) which are currently un-parished but within the Haydon Wick borough ward. The Parish Council had consulted with the 1,260

dwellings involved and reports that a total of 134 have responded of which 94 are in favour.

- 32 To further support the re-aligning of the Parish boundary to include the polling districts of PVF and HWA to form part of the parish of Haydon Wick, the Parish Council undertook a further survey of the residents situated within these polling districts. From this survey, 213 properties responded, with 183 in favour of the proposals and 30 against. Therefore 85.92% of those surveyed supported the Parish Council's proposals.
- 33 It should be noted also, that HWA is the only polling district in the Haydon Wick ward that is not within the Haydon Wick parish and likewise, PVF is the only polling district within the Priory Vale Ward that is not within the Haydon Wick parish. The map for Haydon Wick identifies these polling districts in relation of the parish of Haydon Wick and the Borough Wards.
- 34 Furthermore, Haydon Wick Parish Council proposed the inclusion of the un-parished areas of Toppers Close and Beck Close (17 properties) within its parish. That area is currently within the borough ward of Haydon Wick and comprises polling district HWG which was established during the Borough Council's electoral review. No submissions have been received from local residents on this issue.
- 35 The Parish Council has also suggested that the Parish should extend its boundary to include the un-parished Seven Fields Nature Reserve, currently in the Penhill and Upper Stratton borough ward, "in order to take on a consultancy role." A petition of 34 residents was received at the initial stages of the review against Haydon Wick Parish Council's proposal to extend its boundary to include the Seven Fields Nature Reserve.
- 36 Further representations have since been made by the Parish Council during the final stage of this review. The Parish Council has made an additional representation in their submission that they have worked closely with the Seven Fields Conservation Group for many years. They also believe that the residents' petition against the proposal resulted from a misunderstanding by the members of the Penhill Forum. An email has been sent from Haydon Wick Parish Council identifying an extract from the Penhill Forum minutes dated 12th November 2012 which now supports this change.
- 37 Finally, it is noted that there is one property in Blackthorn Lane, and one property in Kennet Avenue, both adjoining the Whitworth Road cemetery, all of which are currently un-parished. The two properties currently form their own polling district (HWH) established as part of the Borough Council's electoral review, and are within the Haydon Wick borough ward. It would seem sensible for that area to be included within the Haydon Wick parish, and comments were sought from the Parish Council.

Recommendation - Taking the proposals in order as shown in **Appendix B** it is recommended that the area of the Parish should be altered as follows:

- (i) *Boundary between Haydon Wick and Blunsdon St Andrew Parishes* - It is recommended that the boundary between the two parishes be adjusted as proposed by Haydon Wick parish council as it has been demonstrated that such change would better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and in particular that:
 - a. The Baxter parish ward of Blunsdon St Andrew (polling district HWF) be transferred to the existing parish of Haydon Wick on the basis that the changes would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area, and that
 - b. Part of the Haydon Wick warded parish (polling district SAD) be transferred to the existing parish of Blunsdon St Andrew.
- (ii) *Priory Vale and Haydon Wick polling districts* – It has been demonstrated during the final consultation stage with the residents of PVF and HWA, that there is a wish of the residents, to support the Parish Council's proposals to be included within Haydon Wick Parish Council. The residents of these two polling districts feel that Haydon Wick is their "community hub" and as such The Working Party feels that a change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community. It is therefore recommended that the polling districts of PVF and HWA be incorporated into Haydon Wick Parish Council
- (iii) *Toppers Close and Beck Close Area*- It is recommended that the current polling district HWG is included within the existing parish of Haydon Wick to better define the parish, and align the boundary with that of the Haydon Wick borough ward. This recommendation is on the basis that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area
- (iv) *Seven Fields Nature Reserve* - In the light of further evidence provided during the final stage of the review, and the support of the members of the Penhill Forum, The Working Party recommends that the Seven Fields Nature Reserve be included within Haydon Wick Parish Council. This change will result in a polling district with no electors as the transfer of this area will cross two borough wards, The Council will therefore apply to the Boundary Commission for England to re-align the ward boundary in the interests of more effective and convenient community governance within the area.

- (v) *Properties in Blackthorn Lane and Kennet Avenue* - It is recommended that these properties, including the cemetery, comprising polling district HWH be included within the Haydon Wick parish on the basis that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.

Highworth

- 38 Highworth Town Council indicated it wished to see no change to its existing parish boundaries. No representations had been received at the initial stage of the review.
- 39 Nevertheless, The Working Party recommended that the Town Council may wish to consider the warding of the Town in order to reduce the costs at future by-elections.
- 40 Highworth Town Council have formally responded on this matter in the final stages of the review, and have decided that they cannot see a clear warding division, and, therefore, wish the electoral arrangements to remain unchanged.

Recommendation - It is recommended that Highworth Town should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the Town Council arrangements relating to Highworth.

Inglesham

- 41 The Council has not received any comments concerning Inglesham at either the draft or final stages of the review..

Recommendation - It is therefore recommended that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Inglesham.

Liddington

- 42 Liddington Parish Council proposed at the initial stage of the review, that the parish boundary "should be extended along Ham road until the point where the fields and open land create a natural break." No consultation appears to have been carried out with affected residents who are in Wanborough Parish, and no other representations have since been received. Wanborough Parish Council does not appear to have been consulted on this matter.

Recommendation – It is therefore recommended that Liddington should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating Liddington.. A case

for securing more effective and convenient community governance was not been established.

South Marston

- 43 South Marston Parish Council proposed at the initial stage of the review that a change is made to its eastern boundary, shown in **Appendix D**, with Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, and also a proposal to amend the northern boundary between the parishes of South Marston and Stanton Fitzwarren. No other representations have been received. It is understood that no residential properties are affected. South Marston Parish Council stated that these changes have been discussed with the respective parish councils and no objection has been raised.

Recommendation – Taking the proposals in order, it is recommended that the area of the Parish should be altered as follows:

- (i) *Boundary with Stratton St Margaret* - It is recommended that the eastern boundary of South Marston parish with Stratton St Margaret parish be amended as proposed by South Marston Parish Council as the proposals provide greater clarity as to the identities of each of the Parishes and provide a distinct boundary using Honda's test straight as a clearly defined boundary. Accordingly, it has been demonstrated that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- (ii) *Boundary with Stanton Fitzwarren* – As there has been no further evidence to support the change to the northern boundary of South Marston parish with Stanton Fitzwarren parish. On the basis of these original proposals the borough council would be required to create two separate polling districts each with no residents. It has also not been demonstrated that any change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area or better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area. It is therefore recommended by The Working Party that no changes are made in relation to the boundary between South Marston and Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Councils.

Stanton Fitzwarren

- 44 No comment was received from Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council during both the initial and final stages of the review. As stated above, South Marston Parish Council have proposed a change to the boundary with Stanton Fitzwarren parish which they say has been agreed by the two parish councils.

Recommendation - It is recommended that there be no change to the boundary between the parishes of Stanton Fitzwarren and South Marston on the basis that this would require the creation of two separate polling districts each with no residents and it has not been demonstrated

that any change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area or better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area. It is therefore recommended that Stanton Fitzwarren should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Stanton Fitzwarren.

Stratton St Margaret

- 45 Twelve responses were received in relation to Stratton St Margaret parish at the initial stage of the review and a further 4 responses were received at the final stages of the review.
- 46 Stratton St Margaret Parish Council's initial submission, in essence, proposed retaining the current parish boundaries with some amendments referred to below. Having met with representatives from Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council, Covingham Parish Council, and South Marston Parish Council they proposed that the following changes be made;
- That the boundary is re-aligned so that all of Stratton Woods is contained within Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, previously identified in **Appendix A** and shaded green. During the initial stages of the review it was recommended by The Working Group that the inclusion of the remaining part of Stratton Woods from the parish of Blunsdon St Andrew to Stratton St Margaret Parish did not secure effective and convenient local government as the change would mean that the transfer of this area would result in a polling district with no electors. This situation has not changed, however The Working Group has requested that the Borough Council makes a formal proposal to the Boundary Commission for England to re-align the Borough Ward boundary with the proposals set out by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council.
 - Stratton St Margaret Parish Council also proposed that the Groundwell Industrial area, again shown in **Appendix A** and shaded in Grey, be transferred from Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council to Stratton St Margaret Parish Council in line with the Borough Ward boundary.
 - *Groundwell and Hyde Road* – It was proposed by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council at the initial stages of the review that 165 properties from Hyde Road were moved from Blunsdon St Andrew Parish Council to Stratton St Margaret Parish Council. The residents survey carried out at this stage did not produce definitive support for the change and therefore the Working group requested further evidence would be required to support these proposals.

47. Further consultation was carried out by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council at the final stage of the review. Questionnaires were submitted by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council which they felt supported this change.
48. Stratton Parish Council have documented in their final submission that 60.32% of residents support the transfer of the Groundwell and Hyde Road area from Blunsdon St Andrew parish to Stratton St Margaret parish. To enable clarity of support for any proposed change, the Borough Council has extracted the questionnaires from the streets affected by the change to provide members of The Working Group with a clear indication as to the wishes of those affected by the proposals. The results to question 2 of the survey can be seen in the table below;

Question: Should the Groundwell/Hyde road areas be included in the revised parish boundary?

	Total questionnaires completed	Yes	No	% Yes	% No
<i>SSM parish results</i>	1182	713	469	60.32%	39.68%
<i>Streets affected; Bramwell Close Hyde Road Loveridge Close Pearce Close</i>	36	16	20	44.44%	55.55%

49. The table above shows that over 60% of residents responding to the questionnaire within the Stratton St Margaret Parish are in favour of the transfer of the Groundwell/Hyde Road area into the parish. However, only just over 44% of the residents responding to the questionnaire affected by the proposed change, support the proposals.
50. There are a total of 165 properties affected by the proposed change which results in a 13.3% response from affected properties. These properties currently form part of the Penhill and Upper Stratton Borough Ward and so the transfer of them from the Blunsdon St Andrew parish would align them with the Borough Ward boundary.
51. These properties have also been geographically separated from the Blunsdon St Andrew parish since the completion of the A419 in 2009.
- *Alignment of boundary between Stratton St Margaret and South Marston Parish Councils* - Proposals were made at the initial stage of the review to make a small number of changes to the boundary adjoining the South Marston Industrial Estates. No further submission have been made at the final stages of the review.
 - *Headlands Grove* - Stratton St Margaret Parish Council also proposed at the initial stage of the review that the current boundary

which runs along Headlands Grove should be moved to include all of the houses on Jefferies Avenue and Wheeler Avenue (including allotments) (currently un-parished).

- 52 It was suggested in the draft proposals that The Working Group, required more evidence to support the initial proposals of transferring the Headland area identified in **Appendix E** from the un-parished area of Gorsehill and Pinehurst to Stratton St Margaret Parish Council.
- 53 A further survey of residents undertaken by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council showed that 50.51% of residents supported the inclusion of Headlands into the parish whilst 49.49% were opposed to the idea. Again, to establish clarity of support for any proposed change, the Borough Council extracted questionnaires from the streets affected by the change to provide members of The Working Group with a clear indication as to the wishes of those affected by the change. The results to question 3 of the survey can be seen in the table below;

Should Headlands Grove be included in the revised parish boundary?

	<i>Total Questionnaires Completed</i>	Yes	No	%Yes	%No
<i>SSM parish</i>	<i>1182</i>	<i>597</i>	<i>585</i>	<i>50.51%</i>	<i>49.49%</i>
<i>Streets affected:</i>					
<i>Constable Road</i>					
<i>Headlands Grove</i>					
<i>Jefferies Avenue</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>68.42%</i>	<i>31.57%</i>
<i>Masefield Avenue</i>					
<i>Wheeler Avenue</i>					

- 54 The table shows that the survey responses undertaken by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council show little evidence to either support or oppose the changes to Headlands. However, the results from those streets affected by the proposals indicate that over 68% of residents responding to the survey support the proposals to transfer Headlands Grove area to Stratton St Margaret Parish Council.
- 55 There are a total of 363 properties affected by the proposed changes resulting in an 8% response to the survey.
- 56 Stratton St Margaret Parish Council has provided The Working Group with additional rationale to support their proposals. These include;

Masefield Avenue – Currently properties 9 – 21 are within the parish but properties 1-8 and 22-26 are not. These can be seen on the map for Stratton St Margaret.

Constable Road – the only access is via Green Road which lies inside the parish boundary of Stratton St Margaret and some facilities that the residents benefit from are currently provided for by the parish council

Wheeler Avenue – The parish council refer to the possible transfer of allotments from Swindon Borough Council to the parish. The parish council believes that it can provide improved management and maintenance for the allotment holders.

- 57 The parish council also commented that the change would provide the residents of the Headlands area with greater representation within the community especially with regard to the old Headland school site and the Headlands trading estate.
- 58 The parish council also suggested changing the boundaries and names of the following parish wards;
- St Philip Ward changes to Upper Stratton Ward
 - St Margaret Ward changes to Lower Stratton Ward
 - Lower Coleview & Nythe Ward name remains unchanged
 - Merton Ward changes to Headlands Ward
- 59 So far as changing parish ward names is concerned, advice has been given by the Boundary Commission for England to the effect that as the Merton Ward was created in consequence of the recent Electoral Review of the Borough, there will need to be further consultation with electors in that area.
- 60 The parish council conducted an initial survey of the Coleview and Nythe area, whereby 3,000 questionnaires were delivered, with a total of 365 returned (12% response rate). 76% responded (277 respondents) saying they'd like Stratton St Margaret Parish to remain the same. 74% (270 respondents) also confirmed they didn't think the Parish boundaries should be changed. An internet poll was also conducted, in which 55% (30 respondents) said they'd like the parish to remain the same size and 31% (17 respondents) wished for the parish area to be increased.
- 61 Other submissions were received as follows;
- An email suggesting that the Parish of Stratton St Margaret should not have its name changed.
 - Another submission was supportive of the parish and suggested they would like the parish boundaries to remain the same, although no further evidence to support this was provided.
 - Two responses received were opposed to the idea of parish councils altogether, making reference to Stratton St Margaret

Parish Council, although no further relevant reasons or evidence were provided in support of this view.

62 *Coleview and Nythe* - Specific submissions were received at the initial stage of the review relating to the Coleview and Nythe area of the parish of Stratton St Margaret:

- A submission was received based on an information sheet that had been distributed to households in Coleview and Nythe. The sheet asked residents to return a slip confirming “I/We are satisfied that we reside within the Parish of Stratton St Margaret and wish to remain so, and urge that the Review of Parish Governance being conducted by Swindon Borough Council endorse this view.” A total of 123 slips have now been returned, and a further ten email responses, in agreement with this statement.
- A submission at the initial stage of the review was also received suggesting a reduction in size of the existing Stratton St Margaret Parish Council and the creation of a Lower Coleview and Nythe Parish Council. To support this, a survey had been conducted of 2,000 properties which would form the new parish council, made up of the polling districts CDA and CDB. The survey received a 10.1% response rate (206 responses) with 83.5% of respondents agreeing that a “Coleview and Nythe Parish Council would better meet their community.” A further letter of support for this proposal has also been received, together with a letter opposed to it.
- Three responses were received supporting the idea of Coleview being removed from the existing parish boundary, one of these submissions went further suggesting that the existing Stratton St Margaret Parish was too large and that “south of Oxford Road or the railway line should be released to another Parish Council”. The respondent stated that whilst living in Ermin Street they had “no issues” with the service provided by Stratton St Margaret Parish, however, since moving to the Coleview area they felt there was a “lack of interest and support in this area by the Parish Council.” The respondent continues that he felt “we would get more attention from Covingham Parish Council should the boundaries change in favour of Coleview joining the Covingham Parish.

63 At the final stage of the review a counter proposal to that mentioned above, for the creation of a Coleview and Nythe Parish council has been received. It recommends a new parish of Nythe, shown in **Appendix F**, to be created rather than a new parish of Coleview and Nythe. It is proposed that only the residents in properties within the polling district of CDB will form part of this revised proposal. The total number of properties within this area currently stands at 1,138 housing 2,131 registered electors. The map identifies the revised area for the proposed new parish of Nythe.

- 64 A door to door survey was carried out by Councillor Dale Heenan covering 1,138 properties. Of those properties, Councillor Heenan reports that 210 households responded regarding the proposal to form a new parish council of Nythe.
- 65 The overall results from the survey at this second stage in the review can be seen in the proposal submitted by Councillor Dale Heenan. However, the most important question asked was "Who thought that a Nythe parish council would best serve the community?" It is reported that 89.3% of those responding to the survey said 'Yes' to this question.
- 66 Further information to provide a clear understanding of the wishes of the electorate within the Nythe area has been extracted from the survey conducted by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council. Question 1 taken from the parish council survey asked residents the following question. "Would you like the parish boundary of Stratton St Margaret to stay as it is (Subject to the proposed changes below)? Of those residents from the CDB area, there were 101 replies of which 71 answered Yes to the question and 30 answered No to the question. Therefore 70.29% of residents who responded to the survey, from the area affected by these proposals, wanted to stay within the Stratton St Margaret Parish. However, this needs to be balanced against the fact that this figure only represents 4.7% of the electorate.
- 67 The proposal submitted by Councillor Dale Heenan provides further rationale for the creation of a new parish of Nythe. These include;
- *Resident disengagement in democracy* – supported by the fact that there has been only one contested parish election since 1985 in the Coleview and Nythe parish ward. This may be viewed alongside the statistics for contested elections in all the parishes within the Borough, whereby, only 10 contested parish elections have taken place since 2000.
 - *Nythe shopping parade* – the residents of Nythe are provided for, by a range of community facilities. These include the shopping parade, the Nythe Community Centre, Nylands School and Greenbridge playing fields and rugby club
 - *Royal Mail* - The postal addresses for the properties within Nythe do not contain reference to Stratton.
 - *History* – The CDB area currently forms part of the Covingham and Dorcan Ward and has no connection with St Margaret Ward. When the Stratton St Margaret Parish was originally formed it was a small village and has subsequently grown and changed over time. The area of Nythe is separated from the rest of the parish by the Dorcan way and therefore is distinctly independent by the nature of its geographical position.
 - *New parish council* – Research has taken place that identifies the viability of a new parish of Nythe. It revealed that 8 residents indicated that they would stand for election as parish councillor should a new parish of Nythe be formed.

- 68 There is also the question of financial viability and whether or not a new parish can comfortably sustain itself. To ensure this is the case the Borough has provided The Working Group with a provisional expenditure level for the new parish council and any affects to the residents within the remaining area of Stratton St Margaret Parish Council. The table below reflects possible financial outcomes;

	Stratton	Nythe	Stratton excl Nythe
Number of Properties	9,956	1,138	8,818
Estimated Tax Base	7,274.5	831.5	6,443
Tax Base as % of Households	73.1%	73.1%	73.1%
2013-14 Stratton Charge per Band D Equivalent	£105.52	£105.52	£105.52
2013-14 Swindon Average Charge per Band D Equivalent		£63.07	
Income Raised (at Stratton level of charge)	£767,627	£87,742	£679,885
Income Raised (at Swindon average charge)		£52,443	
Smallest Swindon Parish Precept	0	0	0
Average Swindon Parish Precept	123,669	123,669	123,669
Largest Swindon Parish Precept	£767,627	£767,627	£767,627

- 69 From this it can be deduced that the level of precept for the new parish would be £88k at the Stratton level of Band D charge and £52k at the Swindon average. Both are viable and within the average parameters of Swindon precepts. The impact on Stratton St Margaret Parish Council would be to reduce its income by £88k (11.4%) which would be significant to manage in a single year
- 70 Two separate emails have been received that both indicate support of the creation of a new parish called Nythe.

- 71 The original proposal for the creation of a Coleview and Nythe parish has been replaced by a counter proposal requesting the creation of a Nythe Parish consisting of electors only within the CDB polling district.

Recommendation - There have been several proposals made to change the existing boundaries of the parish of Stratton St Margaret. The recommendations for change below take into account all submissions received both at the initial stages of the review and the final stage and it is recommended that the area of the Parish should be altered as follows

- *Stratton Woods* – it is recommended that the proposed change to the parish boundary to incorporate the whole of Stratton Woods to within Stratton St Margaret Parish Council is agreed. The Borough Council will formally make a proposal to the Boundary Commission for England regarding the matter of moving the ward boundary to align with the proposed parish boundary.
- *Groundwell and Hyde Road* – it is recommended that there is no change to the existing parish arrangements in this area. There has not been sufficient evidence presented to The Working Party from the residents affected by this proposal, to support this change. The law requires a demonstration of community engagement with proposals put forward and The Working Party cannot be clear from the evidence provided that a strong enough case has been made to support the proposals.
- *Boundary with South Marston* – It is recommended that the eastern boundary of South Marston parish with Stratton St Margaret parish be amended as proposed by South Marston Parish Council as the proposals provide greater clarity as to the identities of each of the Parishes and provide a distinct boundary using Honda's test straight as a clearly defined boundary. Accordingly, it has been demonstrated that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area
- *Headlands Grove* – Further consultation of the residents affected by the proposed change was carried out, and it is clear from the outcome that the residents of Headlands Grove, Jefferies Avenue, Marsland Road, Masfield Avenue (part) and Wheeler Avenue (polling district GPE) support the proposals put forward by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council. It is therefore recommended by The Working Party that the proposals to re-align the parish boundary to include these properties mentioned above be accepted on the basis that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area and better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.
- *Renaming of parish wards* – It is recommended that the change of name of St Philip ward to Upper Stratton ward, and the change of name of St Margaret ward to Lower Stratton ward be supported.

Further consultation was identified in the draft proposals, showing evidence to support the renaming of Merton Parish Ward. This parish ward was created as part of the Borough Council's electoral review and as such, cannot be changed without support of the residents for a period of 5 years. No evidence of support by electors in this area was received and so it is recommended by The Working Group that the Merton Parish Ward is not renamed

- *Coleview and Nythe* – The revised proposal received during the final stages of the review requested the creation of a Nythe Parish Council. This request was made as a result of a door to door survey conducted by Councillor Dale Heenan. Although it was reported that 210 households were available for comment and of those 89.3% were in favour of a Nythe Parish Council, no evidence has been submitted to support the proposal. As a result of no clear evidence to support the creation of Nythe Parish Council, The Working Group has recommended that the proposal could not be supported and therefore there will not be a separation of Nythe from the Stratton St Margaret Parish Council

Wanborough

- 72 Wanborough Parish Council indicated it wished to see no change to its existing parish boundaries during the initial stage of the review. No further representations have been made at the final stage of the review.
- 73 Two further responses were received making representation in support of Wanborough Parish Council, although no further details or information was provided.

Recommendation - It has been recommended Wanborough parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Wanborough.

Wroughton

- 74 One proposal was received in respect of Wroughton Parish concerning the expansion of West and Middle Wichelstowe in future years, but no firm proposals were made. No other representations have been received at the final stage of the review.
- 75 It was suggested as part of the draft proposals that Wroughton Parish Council may wish to consider warding the parish as this could cut costs in the event of any by-election. This may also be particularly relevant in relation to the future of the Wichelstowe development.
- 76 Wroughton Parish Council have responded to this suggestion during the final stages of the review. They have made representation that they do not wish for the parish to be warded.

Recommendation - It is therefore recommended that Wroughton Parish should not be abolished and that its area should not be altered and that there be no change to the parish arrangements relating to Wroughton.

Un-parished areas

Eastcott

- 77 Two emails were received at the initial stage of the review concerning the un-parished area of Eastcott although no formal submission or evidence was submitted. No further submissions have been received to support the perishing of this currently un-parished area.

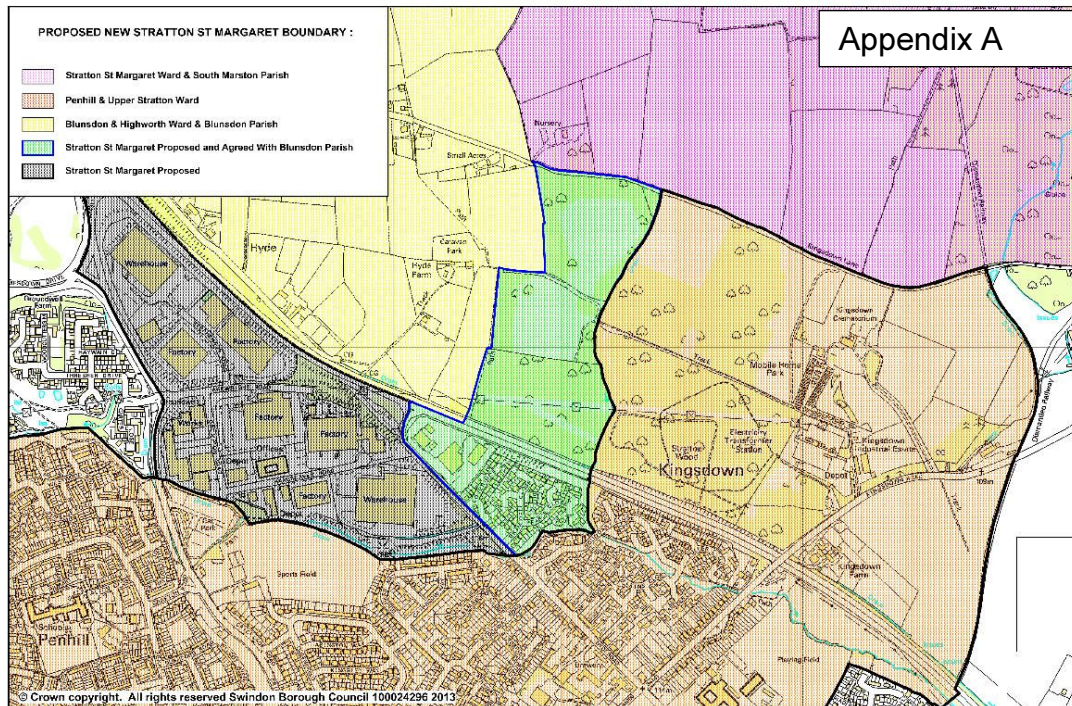
Recommendation - It is recommended therefore that no parishing of this area will take place as there is no evidence of any significant appetite for change received from local residents. It has not been demonstrated that such change would secure more effective and convenient community governance within the area or better reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area.

Remaining un-parished areas:

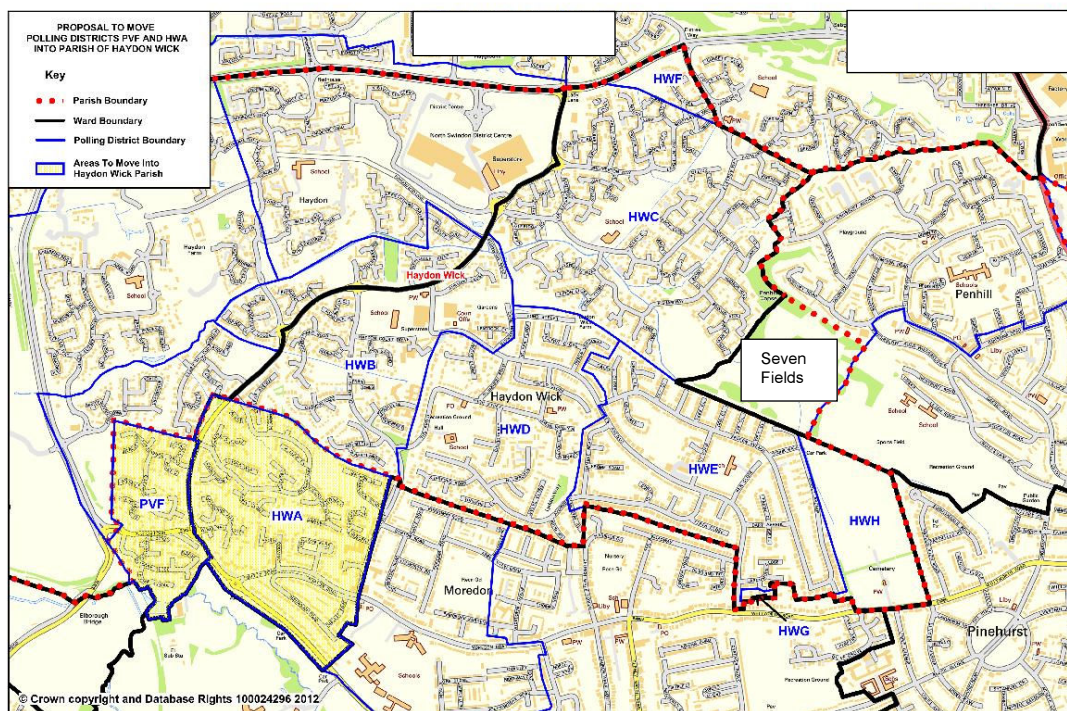
- 78 No comments other than those referred to above have been received regarding any other unparished areas of the Borough and no final proposals are recommended in relation to those areas.

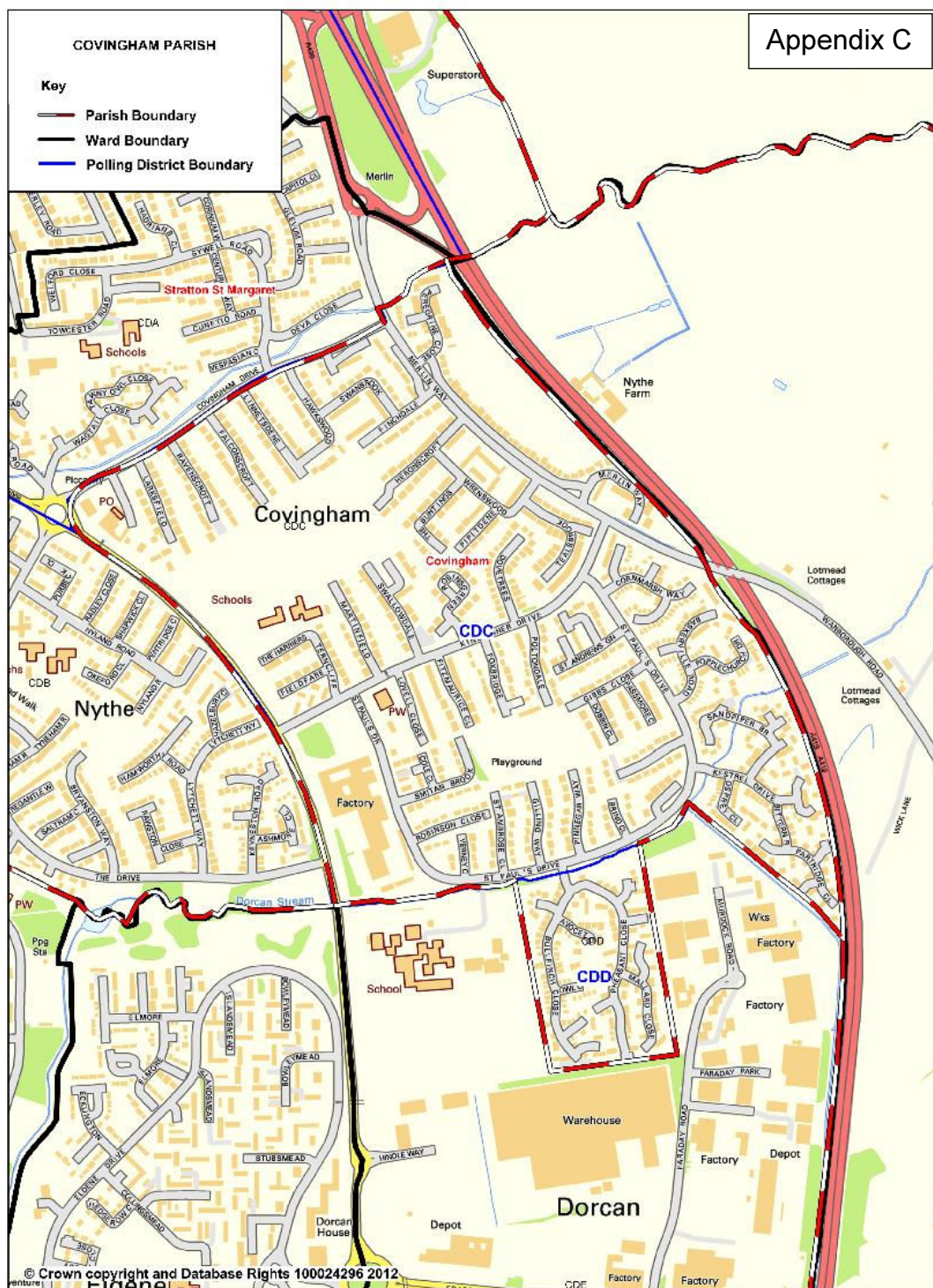
Responding to the Borough Council's Final Proposals

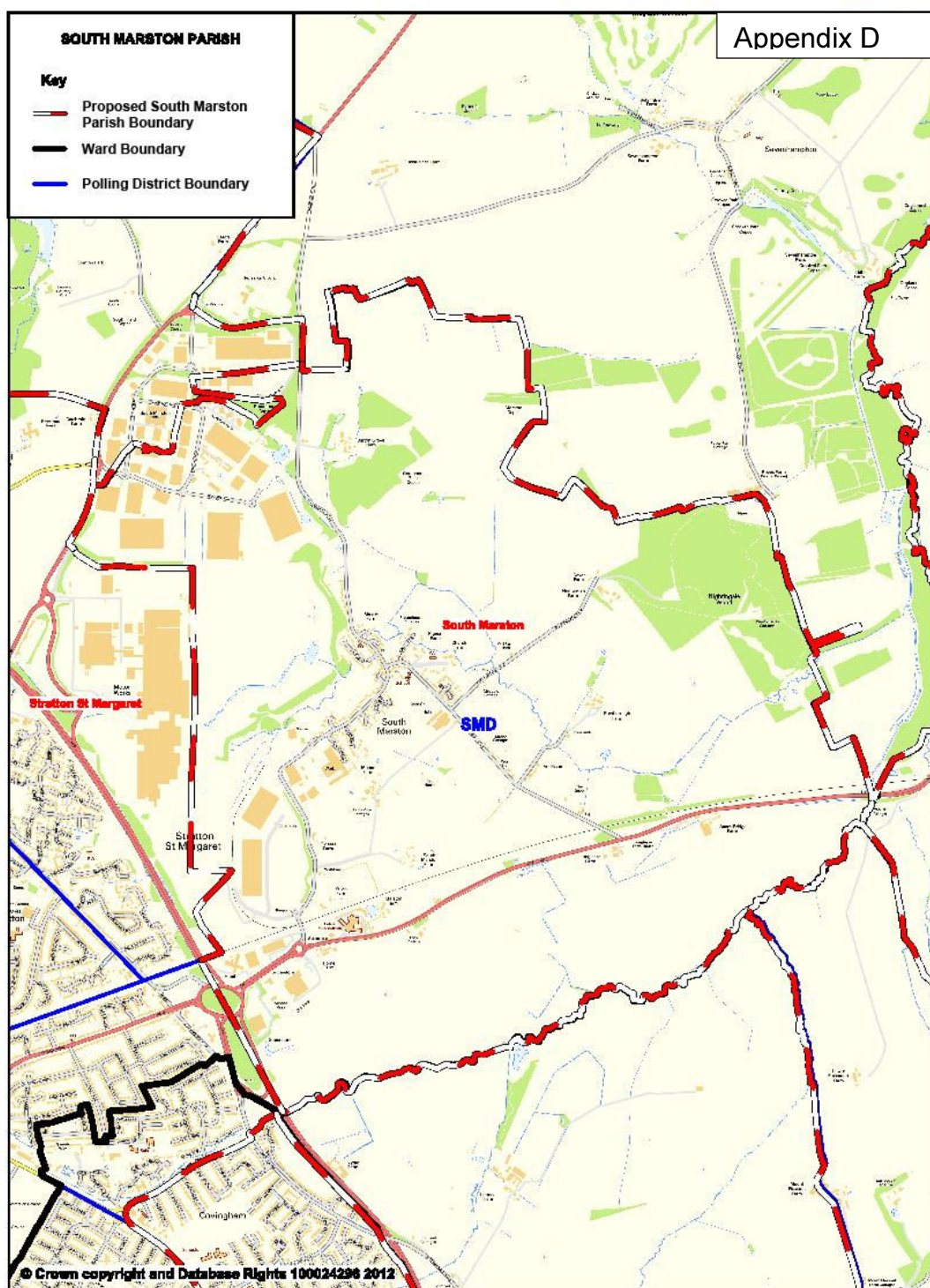
- 79 Maps showing the existing and recommended parish boundaries are available on the Borough Council's website or can be requested from Electoral Services, Swindon Borough Council, Euclid Street, Swindon SN1 2JH (phone: 01793 464601 or email: elecereg@swindon.gov.uk).
- 80 Cabinet will consider the recommendations on 20th March proposed by The Working Party. The final recommendations resulting from Cabinet will be presented to Council on 11th April. Subsequent to full council approval, the Council will prepare the necessary Community Governance Order in May 2013.
- 81 It is expected that changes to parish arrangements will take effect when appropriate but not before the date of the next scheduled parish elections in May 2014. It is probable that the electoral arrangements of the parishes affected by any changes agreed, may result in extending or reducing the current term of office of their councillors.

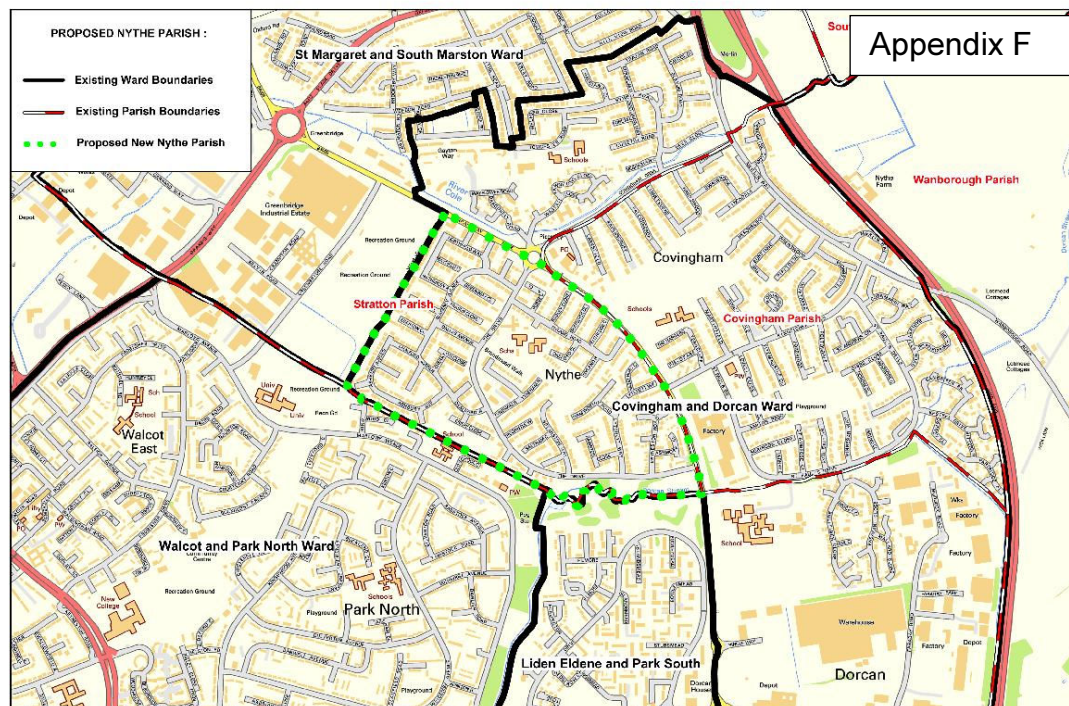


Appendix A









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