

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE WARD NAME

SUMMARY

The report advises Council on the outcome of the consultation on changing the name of Hardwick Ward to Hardwick and Salters Lane Ward and asks Council to decide whether to change the name.

RECOMMENDATION

Council is asked to decide whether Hardwick Ward should be renamed Hardwick and Salters Lane Ward.

DETAIL

Background

1. Following a number of requests from residents in the area, the Local Councillors for Hardwick Ward, Councillors Norma Stephenson and Nigel Cooke, enquired about changing the ward name from Hardwick to Hardwick and Salters Lane. The reason for the change was that it was felt that the proposed new ward name better reflected the community identity of the area. The proposed change was also supported by the Labour Group. On 8 May, Council considered a report outlining the legislative changes to achieve a change of ward name and agreed the procedure for dealing with this and future proposals.
2. When conducting reviews, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England bases its decisions to change the names of wards and divisions on which name they consider best reflects the communities within the ward. The Commission also seeks to ensure that ward names are sufficiently distinct from other ward names in the district to avoid any confusion.
3. The exercise of the Council's power to change a ward name is delegated to the Director of Law and Democracy, subject to Council approval to the change.

Details

4. Section 59 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables a Local Authority to agree to change the names of any of its electoral areas (normally known as wards) by passing a resolution at a Special Meeting of the full Council held for that purpose, subject to the statutory procedure being followed. The Act specifies steps that must be taken by an Authority in order to change the name which are summarised as follows: -
 - a. Before passing a resolution at a Special Meeting to change the name of an electoral area the authority must take all reasonable steps to consult such persons as it considers appropriate on the proposed name.
 - b. A resolution to change the name must be passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of members voting at a specially convened Council meeting.
 - c. Notice of the object of the meeting must be given

- d. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) must first agree to the proposed change in any cases where the change is proposed within 5 years of a change made by the LGBCE. (This does not apply to the current proposed change)
 - e. After a resolution is passed, the Council must inform the LGBCE, the Boundary Commission, the Office of National Statistics and the Director General of the Ordnance Survey.
 - f. The change of name does not take effect until the LGBCE has been given notice of it.
5. The following procedure was agreed by Council for dealing with this proposal and any future proposals to change a ward name in order to establish consistency:-
- a. A request to change the name of an electoral area should only be progressed if it is supported by all of the relevant Ward Councillors for the electoral area and their political group(s).
 - b. The timetable for the steps to be taken to change the name of an electoral area should be agreed with the Director of Law and Democracy, taking into account the Annual Electoral Canvass arrangements, any Elections and the publication date of the revised Electoral Register and, would need to include the following:-
 - i. A request for a change must be made at least 6 months prior to the publication date of the revised Electoral Register and approval must be obtained from Council to progress the request.
 - ii. Consultation, as detailed below, must take place by no later than the end of the fourth month prior to the publication date of the revised Electoral Register.
 - iii. A Special meeting of the Council must be held during the second month prior to publication date of the revised Electoral Register.
 - iv. Notice of any agreed name change to be given to the LGBCE, the Boundary Commission, the Office of National Statistics and the Director General of the Ordnance Survey at least one month prior to publication date of the revised Electoral Register.
 - v. The change of name to take effect on the publication date of the revised Electoral Register.
 - c. It is proposed that the method of consultation will include: -
 - i. Displaying notice of the proposal on the Council Website and main Council buildings.
 - ii. In public places in the electoral area affected, such as libraries.
 - iii. Press release by the Council and an article in an edition of Stockton News if possible within the timescales.

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 6. In line with the above procedure, information was published on the Council's web site and displayed in local libraries/ community centres; a press release was issued. As the Annual Canvass commenced on 1 October 2013, the opportunity was taken to include a consultation letter with the Annual Voter Registration Form to every household in the Hardwick Ward. Responses could be sent back to the Council in the pre-paid envelope together with the voter registration form.
- 7. A total of 456 responses were received to the consultation. 294 respondents were in agreement with changing the ward name and 151 respondents were against the change. 11 respondents had no view.
- 8. Residents were also invited to submit comments and these are reproduced at Appendix A.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 are detailed at Paragraph 4.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The cost of revising the Register of Electors to reflect any name changes have been avoided by timing this with the publication of the new Register on 17 February 2014

RISK ASSESSMENT

11. This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routing activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12. This report is not subject to Equality Impact Assessment as it makes no proposals for service development or policy change.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

13. Stronger Communities.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

14. Details of consultation is set out above.

Director of Law and Democracy

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Background Papers: None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Hardwick Ward Councillors Stephenson and Cooke

Property Implications: None