

ASH WARD - NAME CHANGE

Electoral Arrangements Committee - 2 September 2010

Extraordinary Council - 14 September 2010

Report of the: Corporate Resources Director

Status: For decision

Key Decision: No

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Bracken

Head of Service Head of Legal & Democratic Services – Mrs. Christine Nuttall

Recommendation to Electoral Arrangements Committee: It be RESOLVED that: Council be recommended to change the name of the Ash Ward of the Sevenoaks District Council to Ash and New Ash Green Ward with effect from the next full elections to the Sevenoaks District Council to be held on 5 May 2011.

Recommendation to special Council: It be RESOLVED that: the name of the Ash Ward of the Sevenoaks District Council be changed to Ash and New Ash Green Ward with effect from the next full elections to the Sevenoaks District Council to be held on 5 May 2011.

Reason for recommendation: to more accurately identify the ward and to recognise the significant population of New Ash Green.

Introduction

- 1 The present Ash Ward was created by The District of Sevenoaks (Electoral Changes) Order 2001 following the Periodic Electoral Review (PER) and came into effect at the local elections in May 2003. The Ward consists of the Ash, New Ash Green North West and New Ash Green South East Wards of the Parish of Ash-cum-Ridley (the Hodsoll Street Ward of that parish is a part of the Hartley and Hodsoll Street District Council Ward). 3 District Councillors represent Ash Ward.
- 2 The PER was a long and contentious process. The final scheme for the north east of the Sevenoaks District (the parishes of Ash, Fawkham, Hartley and West Kingsdown) was only settled after the District Council made representations to the Secretary of State objecting to the Local Government Commission's recommendations for this part of the District. It may be that, had the District Council been given more time to consider its own counter proposals, a different name would have been proposed for this Ward.

The Proposal

- 3 A local member for Ash Ward, Cllr Bruce, proposes that the name of the Ward be changed to Ash and New Ash Green because “This would more accurately define the ward now that the Hodsoll Street part of the Parish of Ash-cum-Ridley has gone to Hartley. It would also recognize the significant population of New Ash Green and I believe be more readily identified with by the electorate.”

The Legal Position

- 4 At the time of Cllr Bruce’s request in 2003, the responsibility for changes to district ward names rested with the Boundary Committee (part of the Electoral Commission). In their view, at that time, this matter would have to wait until the next general review of districts, 10 - 15 years hence.
- 5 The passing of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) changed the situation. Section 59 provides for local authorities to change the name of any of its wards, by resolution. The resolution must be passed “at a meeting which is specially convened for the purpose of deciding the resolution with notice of the object, and a majority of at least two thirds of the members voting on it.” If required, a special meeting of the Council will consider the recommendation of this Committee.
- 6 Also by section 59 of LGPIH “A local authority must not pass the resolution unless it has taken reasonable steps to consult such persons as it considers appropriate on the proposed name.”

Consultation

- 7 Phase one of the consultation process involved the following interested parties:
- Ash Ward members
 - Ash-cum-Ridley Parish Council
 - New Ash Green Village Association
 - The 3 main political parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats)
 - Kent County Council

All the above have responded and they all support the proposal.

Phase two of the consultation process involved the public. A public notice was published on 22 March 2010 requesting comments by 30 June 2010. Additionally, articles appeared in In Shape magazine and local newspapers. 10 representations have been received from the following: Veronica Brazier, Mr A Jahed, Michael Brown, Judie Bright, Jerry Ash, Sandra Bax, Miss L Smith; Mr & Mrs S Dyson; Ian Nurdin. All are residents of New Ash Green and all support the proposed name change.

The Next Steps

- 8 If the Electoral Arrangements Committee supports the name change proposal, then a special meeting of the Council will take place on 14 September 2010.
- 9 If, at the special meeting, a majority of at least two thirds of the Members voting on the proposal approve it, then the District Council will make an order bringing the change into effect at the next District Council elections on 5 May 2011.

Key Implications

Financial

Minimal administrative costs only.

Community Impact and Outcomes

None

Legal, Human Rights etc.

Consultation has been carried out in accordance with the relevant legislation and there are no legal or human rights implications.

Risk Assessment Statement

A request has been submitted for a change of name to a ward of the District Council. Section 59 of LGPIH gives district councils the power to change the names of wards and the duty to consult on such issues, convene special meetings and to resolve by a two thirds majority of voting members. The local authority must give notice of a name change to the following: the Electoral Commission, the Boundary Commission for England, the Office of National Statistics, the Director General of the Ordnance Survey and the county council. The change of name does not take effect until the Electoral Commission have been given notice of the change.

Background Papers:

Cllr Bruce's request for a change of name to Ash Ward and Officer's replies.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Representations received from specific interested parties and from the public.

Contact Officer(s):

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Corporate Resources Director

