

Extraordinary Meeting of the Council - 22nd March, 2011

Report of the Chief Executive

Proposed Ward Name Changes

Purpose of Report

1. To determine a proposal to change the ward names for the Lye and Wollescote and Cradley and Foxcote wards.

Background

2. Following discussions with all of the ward members for the Lye and Wollescote and Cradley and Foxcote wards, together with Councillors Millward and Sparks, I have undertaken a public consultation proposing that the name of the Lye and Wollescote ward be amended to Lye and Stourbridge North, and the name of the Cradley and Foxcote ward be amended to Cradley and Wollescote. The consultation period ran from early February to 11th March 2011 and included reports to the March meetings of the Stourbridge and Halesowen Area Committees. There were also press releases and posters or leaflets in public buildings and community centres, together with an internet link. In addition I consulted Margot James, M.P. for Stourbridge, who stated that she was happy with the proposal.
3. The reason for the proposed ward name changes is that the majority of Wollescote falls within the Cradley and Foxcote ward and not Lye and Wollescote. It would also be more accurate to describe Lye and Wollescote as Lye and Stourbridge North. The existing ward names, therefore, do not correctly reflect the geographical makeup of their areas and have been somewhat anomalous since they were determined by the last Boundary Review.
4. It is important to emphasise, however, that the boundaries of both wards will not be changing as a result of this proposal. It is only the names of the wards that will be altered. If approved by the Council, the new names will be in use for the local elections and Referendum on 5th May 2011.

Responses to Public Consultation

5. At its meeting on 8th March 2011 the Stourbridge Area Committee resolved to support the proposed change of name for the Lye and Wollescote ward. Councillors Lowe and Hanif, though supporting the proposal in principle, reserved their position until the conclusion of the period of public consultation on 11th March. During the debate, which included members of the public, the following alternative names were suggested:-

- Lye and Stour Valley
- Stourbridge North and Lye

In addition one member of the public felt that “Stourbridge North” would not be appropriate because the ward would not include Amblecote. There was general agreement, however, that whatever name was used for the ward it should include “Lye”

6. I also reported at the meeting that I had received the following representations from members of the public:-

- Five supported the proposal
- One considered that the boundaries needed to be changed. Cradley should be linked to Halesowen and the western part of Lye (Stambermill) should be connected to Stourbridge. All of Lye (DY9) and Wollescote should be encapsulated as a ward.
- Two felt that it would be more apt to name the ward “Stourbridge North”
- One strongly opposed the proposal and felt that the vast majority of people that live in Stourbridge would agree with them. Their view was that “Stourbridge” should be omitted from the name and that we should consider another name such as “Lye” or “Quarry Bank and Lye”.

7. Following the meeting of the Stourbridge Area Committee I received a letter from another member of the public who suggested ward name changes for all five Stourbridge wards but in relation to Lye he proposed that its name be changed to “Lye – Stourbridge East”. He further stated that under no circumstances should the name “Lye” be dropped or substituted.

8. Another respondent stated that an alternative name for the area could be Stour Valley and therefore, the ward name should be “Lye and Stour Valley” or “Stour Valley and Lye”. Finally, a member of the public felt that the name should not be “Lye and Stourbridge North” because this would create a further anomaly as the ward does not include Amblecote. Instead they suggested older area names such as “Stambermill”, “Hay Green” or “Stour Valley” the latter being the best compromise in their view although it would mean losing the name of Lye.

9. With regard to Cradley and Foxcote I have received one representation in favour of the proposal and views were expressed at the Halesowen Area Committee at its meeting on 9th March 2011. Neither the Committee nor any member of the public offered an alternative suggestion and the Committee resolved to recommend to the Council that the name of the Cradley and Foxcote ward be changed to Cradley and Wollescote.

10. I am grateful for all of the representations that have been received. However, for the reasons set out in Paragraph 3 of this report, I see no reason to alter the original proposal in respect of both wards.

Finance

11. Very limited costs have been incurred in consulting on these proposals and such costs will be met by existing budgets.

Law

12. Section 59 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables the Council to change the name of any ward after reasonable steps have been taken to consult such persons as it considers appropriate on the proposed name.
13. A resolution to change a ward name must be taken at a special meeting of the Council and must be approved by a majority of at least two thirds of the Members voting on it.

Equality Impact

14. There are no particular equality implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that :-
 1. The Council consider the representations summarised in the report and the recommendations of the Stourbridge and Halesowen Area Committees and determine the proposal to change the name of the Lye and Wollescote ward to Lye and Stourbridge North and the name of the Cradley and Foxcote ward to Cradley and Wollescote, and
 2. The Chief Executive be authorised to take all necessary steps to implement the decision of the Council.

John Polychronakis

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John Polychronakis
Chief Executive

Contact Officer: John Polychronakis
Telephone: 01384 815201
Email: john.polychronakis@dudley.gov.uk

List of Background Papers

1. Representations submitted by members of the public.