

Results of Consultation on Barming Ward Name Change

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
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Classification	Public
Wards affected	Barming Ward

Executive Summary

This report details the results of the consultation on changing the name of Barming Ward to Barming and Teston following approval to go out to consultation on the name change by the Democracy Committee in September.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To review the consultation results and agree whether to recommend the change of ward name from Barming to Barming and Teston to Council

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Democracy Committee	15 November 2017
Special Council meeting	To be confirmed

Results of Consultation on Barming Ward Name Change

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Committee at its meeting in September considered a request from Councillor Mrs Gooch to change the name of Barming ward to more accurately reflect the two parishes the ward covers. This follows feedback from residents in the ward and the parish council of Teston.
- 1.2 By law, a local authority may not pass a resolution to change the name of a ward unless it has taken reasonable steps to consult with persons that it considers appropriate on the proposed name. A consultation was carried out from the 1 October 2017 to 31 October 2017 via a hand delivered letter to each household in the ward.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

2.1 The results of the consultation are:

Barming Consultation Results

	Electorate	No	Yes	Response
Barming Parish	1373	134	172	24.33%
Teston parish	556	34	162	30.22%
Total	1929	168	334	26.02%
% result		8.71%	17.31%	26.85%

Rejected votes:

Uncertainty 5
Blank 5
Undelivered 6

17.31% of the electorate were in favour of changing the name from Barming Ward to Barming and Teston Ward.

Of those who responded 67% were in favour of the name change.

- 2.2 The Committee must decide if the results are sufficient to recommend a name change to Council. The results are clearly in favour of change with 27% of the electorate responding to the consultation.
- 2.3 A number of comments were received as part of the consultation. A few comments reflected confusion over the boundary of the ward with a number

of respondents believing the name change constituted a boundary change to bring in Teston into the Barming Ward. To clarify Teston is already within the boundary of the ward and the consultation was run on change of name and not boundary. There was also a link by a couple of comments to housing suggesting the name change would allow more houses to be built between the two villages or by combining the two villages. An assertion that it would be more logical to link Teston and Wateringbury. A comment "not sure if going to make ward bigger and disrupt it then no" and another comment that they were not moved either way as long as it did not involve updating records. Other comments stating that they were two distinct areas so should not be put together, showing the understanding of which areas are in Barming Ward could be improved. There were also a number of comments in favour of the name change including that change "seems obvious" was long awaited and a reasonable proposal. Other comments included it would improve identity and it would be good to have Teston recognised in the ward name. A full list of comments is attached at Appendix A.

2.4 If the Committee are minded to recommend to Council the change of name this will be considered at a special meeting of full Council. As there is a by election in November the Council will now not be publishing the revised register until 1 February 2018, this means that a special meeting could be convened by the proper officer in December or January to consider the name change.

2.5 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.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 As stated in the September report the local ward Councillor, Councillor Mrs Gooch put forward the proposal following feedback from the residents and Teston parish Council:

"The parish of Teston is one of two parishes that make up the ward of Barming. Teston is a well-defined rural village of about 300 homes with its village shop and village hall which lie together in the centre of the village which is a conservation area. Teston lies to the west of Barming Ward.

The other parish is Barming and is semi-rural. It lies on the western edge of the Maidstone urban area, comprising approx. 720 homes. Its boundary with the adjoining wards of Heath and Fant (neither of which is parished) runs up the middle of one of its estates: the Beverley Estate. It is not uncommon for residents in those adjoining wards to mistakenly believe they live within the parish of Barming.

The two settlements of Barming and Teston are separated by almost 1.5 miles of open countryside. They are both very distinct and separate communities.

Hence Members are asked to approve a request to change the name of the ward from 'Barming' to 'Barming and Teston'. This will add clarity and will enable a more accurate reflection of the make-up of the electoral area i.e. that the ward comprises the two distinct parishes of Barming and of Teston.

There are other wards within the borough that already carry the identity of its parishes, such as Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton; also Sutton Valance and Langley.

Members are asked to note that no boundary change is involved. This is purely a request to amend the title of the ward. The added value of the amendment will be three-fold:

- 1. To accurately reflect the electoral make-up of the ward i.e. two distinct and separate communities;*
- 2. To foster the identity of Teston and inclusivity of its residents, being just as much a distinctive part of the ward as the residents of the parish of Barming.*
- 3. To illustrate to residents in neighbouring communities such as St Andrews and Fant that they are not electorally in Barming (even though estate agents and Royal Mail like to think they are) thus helping to reduce confusion."*

- 3.2 In light of the above and the results of the consultation the Committee is asked to consider whether to recommend the change of ward name to full council or not.

4. RISK

- 4.1 The Committee will need to consider risk as part of their options appraisal there are risks to the council's reputation if we run a consultation and fail to take action as a result. The risk is within the councils risk appetite.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The results of the consultation are set out at 2.1 above.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 If the Committee agrees to recommend the name change to full council a special council meeting will be held to consider this in December 2017 or January 2018 to enable the name change if agreed to be incorporated into the new electoral register which will be published on 1 February 2018. A

number of actions are then required including issuing a press release, notifying teams in the council to update systems and publishing notices.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Limited risk.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers.	
Privacy and Data Protection	If the recommendation is carried at full council to change the name systems across the council will need to be updated, the volume of data will not be increased and the activity will not be high risk in relation to data protection	[Legal Team]
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

	We will ensure our communications reach all residents, including hard to reach groups.	
Crime and Disorder	N/A	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	N/A	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A – Comments received in response to consultation

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None