

Agenda Item 7

Cabinet Member	Councillor Chris Hunt
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Date	26 th March 2019

Ward (s) affected	Bookham North and Bookham South	Key Decision	Yes
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Subject	Great Bookham and Little Bookham – proposed postal address consultation
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Recommendations

That the Cabinet advise the Royal Mail that MVDC gives its approval to the Royal Mail to consult residents on changes to the address of properties in the Bookham KT 23 postcode to distinguish between Great Bookham and Little Bookham.

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 12th February, Council received a petition requesting MVDC gives its approval to a consultation taking place that would seek the views of local residents on the proposal to add “Great” or “Little” to the relevant Bookham KT23 postcodes. There will be some implications for MVDC in terms of making changes to the Local Land and Property Gazetteer address data base and sending notification to all affected properties in the event of a change being agreed.

Corporate Priority Outcomes

The proposal to introduce Great Bookham or Little Bookham into the postal addresses of properties in Bookham has been supported by a petition signed by 641 local residents. Support for the proposal reflects the community wellbeing priority of encouraging active communities and fostering community spirit.

The Cabinet has the authority to determine the Recommendations

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 12th February, Council received from Mr. Grant Woodham of Little Bookham a petition containing 641 signatures. The petition states:

“Royal Mail are willing to conduct a consultation with residents to add “Great” or “Little” to the relevant Bookham KT23 postcodes so that our addresses are correct. MVDC have to give their approval for this consultation to take place and have asked me to create a petition to gauge the level of support for this. Please sign if you

support our village being addressed correctly by Royal Mail as “Great Bookham” and “Little Bookham”.

- 1.2 In his presentation to Council Mr Woodham proposed the boundary between Great Bookham and Little Bookham should broadly be defined by Little Bookham Street and Rectory Lane. This is indicated on the annexed plan. The boundary has been based on self-identification by those who Mr Woodham spoke to when preparing the petition and reflects the descriptions of house sales and the points where village signs mark the border.
- 1.3 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Services responded to the petition, indicating that he would ask for a report to be presented to the Cabinet so that a decision could be taken as to whether to give approval to the Royal Mail carrying out a consultation on the proposal.

Next steps

- 1.4 If the Cabinet agrees to advise the Royal Mail that it supports the proposal for a consultation on adding “Great” or “Little” to the relevant Bookham KT23 postcodes, then the Royal Mail will:
 - Contact other operational and customer relations managers within Royal Mail to sign off the delivery office and support.
 - Carry out a site visit to the area (if required) to make sure they have the correct addresses included in the consultation.
 - Carry out a month long consultation with addresses in the affected area. The Royal Mail will deliver a return post card to every affected address¹ inviting the owner/occupier to express their views on the proposed demarcation between Great Bookham and Little Bookham.
- 1.5 It is estimated that around 6,000 properties will be affected.
- 1.6 If less than 20% of those consulted object to the proposal, the Royal Mail will amend the postcode address and write to each affected address to explain the result of the consultation and their updated postal address details.
- 1.7 If more than 20% of those affected by the change object to the proposed change of postal address, the Royal Mail will poll all addresses affected by the change. Provided more than 50% of those polled respond, a simple majority of those in favour of the change will trigger its implementation. Royal Mail will aim to conclude such a poll and implement any address changes within two months of the ballot being initiated and advise customers of any changes to these timescales. If a ballot is required, the Royal Mail will advise Ofcom of the feedback.

Implications for MVDC

- 1.8 If the change to the Bookham postal addresses is agreed there will be knock on effects for MVDC’s records that are based on property addresses². It will be necessary to carry out work to MVDC’s gazetteer system which is the address database of properties in Mole Valley. Some of this work will be manual and some will be automated.
- 1.9 MVDC will need to agree the date on which the gazetteer records will be changed to

¹ This includes dwellings, businesses, shops, community facilities etc.

² For example, Revenues and Benefits; Electoral Registration; Land Charges.

reflect the distinction between Great Bookham and Little Bookham. Once this is agreed it will be necessary to notify by letter the owners of affected properties of the date on which the change to addresses will take place. MVDC will advise the Royal Mail of the agreed date when the change will take place so they can amend their records at the same time. A general notification will also be set to all relevant parties, including emergency services, Land Registry and business units within MVDC who will need to amend their records.

- 1.10 Property owners will be responsible for ensuring all the service providers they engage with are notified of the change to their address even though the post code will not have changed.
- 1.11 At this stage it is not clear how much work the address change will create for MVDC's Team responsible for the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. It will however be a one off task and should be containable within existing resources and day to day operations.

Financial Implications – The cost of updating databases and notifying residents of changes to the address of their property can be absorbed within budgets.

Legal Implications – MVDC is required to give the Royal Mail its approval before consultation on changing a postal address can commence.

2.0 Options

- 2.1 There are two options the Cabinet is asked to consider:

Option 1 - That MVDC gives its approval to the Royal Mail to carry out a consultation to assess the level of support for changing postal addresses in the Bookham KT23 postcode to distinguish between Great Bookham and Little Bookham.

Option 2 – That MVDC does not give its approval to the Royal Mail to carry out a consultation to assess the level of support for changing postal addresses in the Bookham KT23 postcode to distinguish between Great Bookham and Little Bookham.

The Cabinet is recommended to support Option 1 which would demonstrate recognition of the views of the petitioners.

3.0 Corporate Implications

Monitoring Officer commentary

The Monitoring Officer confirms that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account

S151 Officer commentary

The s151 Officer confirms that all the financial implications have been taken into account.

Risk Implications

Option 1:

That MVDC gives its approval to the Royal Mail to carry out a consultation to assess the level of support for changing postal addresses in the Bookham KT23 postcode to distinguish between Great Bookham and Little Bookham.

Risks - This would recognise MVDC had listened to the views of the 641 petitioners; it would reflect the corporate priority of encouraging active communities and foster community spirit. It would involve some commitment of resources by MVDC's to

make changes to the address database and to notify all owners/occupiers of affected addresses but it is felt this can be accommodated within existing work programmes.

Option 2:

That MVDC does not give its approval to the Royal Mail to carry out a consultation to assess the level of support for changing postal addresses in the Bookham KT23 postcode to distinguish between Great Bookham and Little Bookham.

Risks - This would not sit well with the corporate priority to encourage active communities and foster community spirit.

Equalities Implications

There are no specific equalities implications as a direct consequence of this report.

Employment Issues

None.

Sustainability Issues

None.

Consultation

The proposed change to addresses in the Bookham KT23 postcode has been the subject of a petition which has been considered by Council.

Communications

A press statement will be issued.

Background Papers

None

