

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	15 May 2024
Subject:	Consideration of Council Name Change
Report of:	Chief Executive
Director:	Director: Transformation
Lead Member:	Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

Following feedback from Councillors, community groups and local businesses, it became clear that many people in the borough do not identify with the name 'Tewkesbury Borough' - it is not considered representative of the entire district, and it creates confusion between the town and borough councils.

These concerns were also raised by councillors during the development of the new Council Plan. In addition, officers highlighted that the council's logo is outdated and difficult to use on digital assets such as the website and online forms and would need to be updated.

Following a request from councillors, officers have explored the impact of changing the council's name, including the rationale for doing so, the cost, and an appropriate rollout approach.

This report provides an overview of the findings of this exploratory work, and a recommendation to make a 'minded to' decision subject to further consultation.

Recommendation:

To be **MINDED TO** change the council's name to North Gloucestershire Borough Council, subject to a six-week consultation to allow for stakeholders to submit their representations on the proposal and to feedback on the proposed logo options before a final decision is taken on any changes.

Financial Implications:

The council has set aside £10k from year end balances to cover any costs associated with updating the council's logo (which is required) and a name change. A phased rollout means that changing physical asset logos will only happen as part of their normal maintenance cycle and so the cost will be covered within their own budgets. If the name change was approved, then the council would make the cost control associated with changing the name a virtue, rather than a disadvantage.

Legal Implications:

Under section 74 of the Local Government Act 1972 a borough council may change its name at an Extraordinary Council meeting convened for this purpose only if two thirds of the members voting agree to the change of name. Our borough status will not be affected by a name change, a notice is required to be given to the Director General of the Ordnance Survey and to the Registrar General.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None associated with this report. Physical assets will only be updated during normal maintenance.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

The resource implications will be minimised through a phased rollout approach, with digital assets being prioritised and physical assets only being updated as and when required through their normal maintenance schedule.

Safeguarding Implications:

None associated with this report.

Impact on the Customer:

Changing the name of the council will have a mostly positive impact on residents, communities and businesses as set out within the detail of this report. There may be some initial confusion, although the change will provide an opportunity to clearly restate what the council provides for residents and businesses and differentiate our services from those provided by parish councils and the county council.

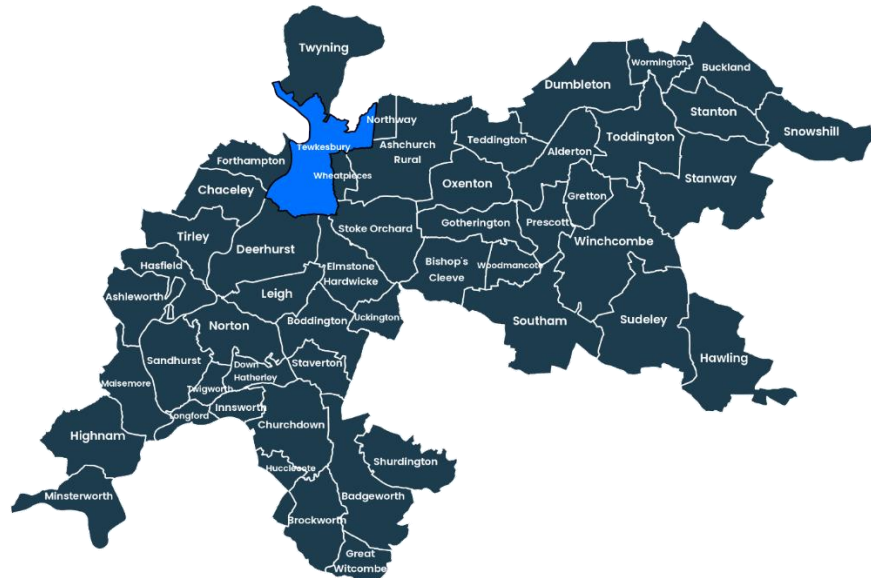
The direct impact on our customers will be that letters, bills and other communications they receive from the council will be branded with the new name and logo. Where possible, we will explain the name change in letters and communications. A webpage will be created where residents and stakeholders can find out more about the new name and the rationale behind changing it.

To minimise costs, a phased approach will be used to implement a name change. Some physical assets, such as signage and bins, will keep the old name and logo until they need to be updated during their regular maintenance cycle.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Exploring an alternative name for the council originated from discussions on the new Council Plan, where concerns were raised that the council's logo is outdated, and our in-house designers find it difficult to use on digital assets such as the website and online forms.
- 1.2** As part of these discussions and from feedback from councillors, community groups and local businesses, it became clear that many communities in the borough do not identify with the name 'Tewkesbury Borough' - it is not considered representative of the entire borough, and it creates confusion between the town and borough councils, and the town and borough mayors.
- 1.3** Following a request from councillors, officers have explored the impact of changing the council's name, including the rationale for doing so, the cost, and an appropriate rollout approach.

- 1.4 For context, our borough is 160 square miles and consists of 51 parishes, as shown in the map below. Tewkesbury Parish accounts for under 3% of the borough's geographic footprint and around 10 per cent of the borough's population. The parish of Bishop's Cleeve has more people living in it than any other parish in the borough.



2.0 NORTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

- 2.1 The name North Gloucestershire Borough Council was put forward multiple times as part of the exploratory work - in the consultation (more information in paragraph 5), informally by Councillors, and by businesses. North Gloucestershire Borough Council was also the name put forward when this was last considered in 2008 – the name itself had support but given the higher number of physical assets to update at that time, it wasn't taken forward.
- 2.2 The map below shows the location of the borough (named as North Gloucestershire) in the context of the wider county of Gloucestershire, highlighting that it clearly sits as the most northern borough:



3.0 WHAT ARE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR A NAME?

3.1 To understand whether North Gloucestershire Borough Council is an appropriate alternative name, we considered the issues the council faces, and the pros and cons associated with the existing and proposed names:

3.2

External considerations	Tewkesbury Borough	North Gloucestershire Borough Council
Is it representative of our geographical location and the different communities across our 160 square mile area?	X	✓
Does it demonstrate to our residents and communities that the council is committed to supporting the entire borough and not just a single town or parish?	X	✓
Does it reflect our strategic location, rather than what the current name is synonymous with, which is flooding?	X	✓
Does it support business and job creation, as well as supporting the borough's regeneration and inward investment on a national/international scale?	X	✓
Does it provide clarity and accountability between Tewkesbury borough and town councils?	X	✓
Does it have local recognition, and is it a trusted name?	✓	X*
Internal considerations		
Does it support an internal culture, which reinforces the mindset shift that we are here to support the entire borough and not just one locality? In moving to a new Place approach, it is important our name is representative of the whole geography.	X	✓
Does it help to boost recruitment by reflecting the scale of opportunities that are on offer through working for this council?	X	✓

*Over a short period of time, the recognition and trust associated with the borough will be attached to the new name, as has been the case in other council name changes (including those that have moved from two tier to unitary, such as Somerset).

3.3 North Gloucestershire Borough Council directly responds to these issues, and it:

- Provides immediate geographic context (as highlighted in the map in paragraph 2.1), and it would help to raise the borough's profile regionally and nationally.
- Has strong brand appeal that could support economic development, tourism, and attracting investment.
- Avoids prioritising one town (Tewkesbury) over others within the borough, promoting a more representative identity that more equally represents all communities.
- Responds to the concerns from businesses, that our current name does not reflect our strategic location.
- Would support a wider recruitment pool for both the council and local businesses. Many businesses based outside of Tewkesbury have told us they link themselves to Cheltenham or Gloucester because the name Tewkesbury Borough does not represent where they are located.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE NAMES CONSIDERED

4.1 Other names that have been proposed throughout this exploratory work, include:

- Severn Vale Borough Council
- Gloucestershire Rural Borough Council
- East Cotswolds Borough Council.

4.2 Each of these names were tested against the rationale for exploring a name change, with the following issues raised:

- They do not clearly clarify where the borough is, so identity issues would remain.
- Each of the alternative name options risk excluding other areas, which wouldn't solve the inclusivity issue.
- They do not help to increase awareness that we are a Gloucestershire borough with a strategic location.
- Gloucestershire Rural and East Cotswolds could be confused with other rural areas of Gloucestershire.

5.0 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

5.1 As part of the Council Plan consultation, respondents were asked to consider if the name Tewkesbury Borough is representative of the area in which they live:

55% of respondents said that they do not think the name Tewkesbury Borough represents the area that they live in.

45% of respondents said they do think the name Tewkesbury Borough represents the area that they live in. Of these, almost half recognised that the existing name doesn't represent areas outside of the town's catchment area.

The further away respondents lived from Tewkesbury town, the less represented they felt by the name Tewkesbury Borough.

5.2 During a Tewkesbury Borough Business Voice event held on 27 February 2024, it was raised organically by businesses that North Gloucestershire Borough Council as a name would have a significantly positive impact for them – particularly as it would enable better recognition by customers of the strategic location in which their businesses are based. In addition, businesses from the west and south of the borough reported that they felt a ‘Tewkesbury Borough Business Voice network’ wouldn’t be applicable to their businesses because they aren’t based in the Tewkesbury area.

5.3 A range of comments were submitted as part of the consultation, with several concerns about changing the council’s name, including:

Concern	Our judgement
Tewkesbury is a historic name. It has always been Tewkesbury Borough.	Tewkesbury Borough was only introduced in 1974. Before that, the borough of Tewkesbury only covered the town itself. With significant growth since then, the largest parish is now Bishop’s Cleeve.
It’s going to cost a lot of money.	The cost of a new name is explained in paragraph 6. A name change would take place in two cost-conscious phases, and most of our assets are digital, which can be updated at no additional cost to what would be required to update our logo anyway.
Time would be better spent delivering other council services.	The name change would be done through a phased approach and will not be prioritised over delivering our essential services. All physical assets would be delivered within their routine maintenance schedule. The work required to update the council’s name on our digital and physical assets would be required by the necessary logo update anyway.
This is the first step in creating a unitary council.	Changing the council’s name to respond to the issues with our current name is not linked in any way to creating a new council.

5.4 There were also supportive comments for changing the council’s name, including:

- *North Gloucestershire is a great suggestion, it reflects the scale and ambition of the borough.*
- *I think North Gloucestershire is much more inclusive of all settlements and areas of the borough.*
- *North Gloucestershire is much less parochial.*
- *Tewkesbury town is right on the edge of the council area, the name is outmoded. North Gloucestershire is a good alternative.*
- *As I live in Tewkesbury, the name does represent my area however the name doesn’t take into account the size of the borough.*

6.0 COST OF CHANGING THE COUNCIL’S NAME

6.1 Changing the council’s name would be delivered in a phased way, and in line with an approach that would be adopted if we were to be updating the logo only. A budget of £10,000 has been identified for this.

6.2 Design work and digital asset updates can be done in-house and physical signage would be updated and replaced in line with normal maintenance cycles.

6.3 The rollout would be undertaken in two cost-conscious phases:

Phase one – focused on areas where the new name can be applied without any additional spending e.g. our digital channels and assets

Phase two – onwards: updating physical assets, such as street furniture, vehicles and signage. Only items due for replacement – ensuring no additional cost to the council.

7.0 LOGO OPTIONS

7.1 Logo options have been designed in-house and these can be found at Appendix 1.

7.2 It is proposed through the recommendation of this report that at least two logo options are subject to the six-week consultation (as described in paragraph 9) so that feedback from the public can inform the final design if the decision is made to change the council's name.

7.3 The design of the logos has been done in a way that ensures accessibility, inclusivity, futureproofing and flexibility for use.

8.0 IMPACT ON BOROUGH STATUS

8.1 Section 74 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides the opportunity for a council to change its name. Under these provisions the council may change its name by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the Members voting thereon at a meeting of the council specifically convened for the purpose.

8.2 Where the name of a district, which has been granted Borough Status, is changed in pursuance of the Act, the charter shall affect as if the new name was substituted for the old.

8.3 Legislation requires notice of any change made to be sent by the council concerned to the Secretary of State, the Director General of the Ordnance Survey and the Registrar General, and to be published in such manner as the Secretary of State may direct. Some places, mainly ancient cities, require the Kings Warrant for a name change. Gloucester City is on the list, but that relatively short list does not include Tewkesbury Borough.

8.4 A change of name does not affect any rights or obligations of the Council or of any Council, authority or person, or render defective any legal proceedings and any legal proceedings may be commenced or continued as if there had been no change of name.

9.0 FURTHER SIX WEEK CONSULTATION

9.1 It is proposed through this report that a further public consultation is carried out for a period of six weeks following the decision at Council on 15 May.

9.2 The consultation will run from 17 May 2024 to 28 June 2024. Members of the public, local businesses, town and parish councils, and other partners and interested parties will be welcome to make representations in relation to the proposed change of name to North Gloucestershire Borough and logo options.

9.3 For stakeholders who are unable to access the consultation online, our customer services team will be available to fill it out on their behalf over the phone or in person at the council offices, or at our advice and information centres in Winchcombe and Churchdown.

9.4 The feedback from the consultation will be analysed and any issues or concerns raised that are not addressed in the council's rationale for changing the name will be directly responded to.

9.5 A further report, including a summary of findings from the consultation, will be brought to an Extraordinary Council meeting following the scheduled Council meeting on 30 July 2024 for a final decision on the name change.

10.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

10.1 The other option is to keep the council's name as Tewkesbury Borough, although this would not resolve the issues set out in paragraph 3.2.

10.2 If the council's name remains as Tewkesbury Borough, a new logo is required, which will incur similar costs to changing the council's name.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 The Council Plan consultation asked respondents if they felt Tewkesbury Borough represents the area in which they live. The survey found that 55% of those who responded to the question said they

11.2 Heads of Service and Managers have been consulted through engagement sessions to discuss what changes to their service areas could be phased, contractual and partner obligations and to calculate associated costs.

11.3 Consultation with our partners and stakeholders will be a focus for the consultation period following this report.

12.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

12.1 Changing the name of the council will have a mostly positive impact on residents, communities and businesses as set out within the detail of this report. There may be some initial confusion, although the change will provide an opportunity to clearly restate what the council provides for residents and businesses and differentiate our services from those provided by parish councils and the county council.

12.2 A robust communications plan will support changing the council's name. Where possible, we will explain the name change in letters and communications. A webpage will be created where residents and stakeholders can find out more about the new name and the rationale behind changing it.

12.3 Listening to the views of residents, parish councils and stakeholders is important. The proposed six-week consultation will ensure the council provides opportunities for feedback, including concerns, to be responded to.

13.0 MONITORING

13.1 None associated with this report.

12.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

12.1 Council Plan

Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: Director: Transformation
01684 272291 clare.evans@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Logo Options