

Report To: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 15 January 2014

Lead Member / Officer: Corporate Director: Customers

Report Author: Corporate Research and Intelligence Co-ordinator

Title: Street Naming and Numbering Policy

1. What is the report about?

In May Cabinet agreed a new Street Naming and Numbering Policy for the county that replaced the 1997 policy, which had become out of date. There had been particular Member and public interest in enabling street name changes to take place to rename some streets that currently have a single language name to change to a new bilingual name. A procedure for doing this was included in the new policy.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

At the time that the new policy was agreed at Cabinet it was also agreed that it be brought to Performance Scrutiny 'to consider the progress made with the implementation of the new policy'.

3. What are the Recommendations?

The recommendations are that Scrutiny:

- 3.1 provides observations on the progress with implementation of the policy and make any suggestions for improving these processes; and
- 3.2 considers whether further promotional work should be undertaken to encourage more street name changes.

4. Report details.

The new policy was agreed in May. There has been one new street named bilingually in Llangollen on an industrial development near Cilmedw Farm.

There has also been contact with developers who had already been through the street naming and numbering under the previous process, but are either expanding or only now developing the sites. One is the former Bronwylfa Nurseries in St Asaph. This was named in 2009 but is only now undergoing development. The other is land off Cefndy Road and Ffordd Derwen in Rhyl. This site was named bilingually when the industrial units were being developed in June 2013. At that time there had not been a decision about whether the residential section of the development would

proceed. The developer has now undertaken this so the residential plots have now been officially numbered.

These transitions with developers have all progressed smoothly and successfully.

We have had one request for a street name change from a member of the public. This was initially received in the form of a request that the council immediately provide bilingual street signs for the street. In correspondence it was explained that we were unable to do this without following the new policy and procedure because we need to consult with residents of the street and other stakeholders before making a change. The request was then re-submitted following the procedure and the consultation phase commenced. A small majority of the residents responding to the consultation were in favour and there were no objections from other stakeholders other than concern raised by the Chair of Trefnant Community Council regarding the County Council funding such changes during a time when other services were being cut.

At the time of writing we are in correspondence with both Trefnant Community Council and our colleagues in Highways and Environmental Services with a view to securing funding for the change.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The operation of the new policy does not directly contribute to a Corporate Priority. It will, however, benefit residents and communities, by allowing street naming in line with local cultures. It will also benefit the emergency services through ensuring clear street naming and improve the ease at which properties can be located etc.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

The policy does not automatically incur costs of its own. However, it does provide for the possibility of street name changes. Street name changes will involve two sets of costs. Firstly, a street name change requires a consultation exercise with residents and, if it proceeds to the second stage, will require official notices to be erected in the street (similar to notices placed on lamp posts when planning permission is sought).

Secondly, there would be the cost of replacement street signage. The cost of producing and installing a new sign is approximately £200 - £220 depending on the whether one line of text or two lines of text are required. The number of signs required in any given street will vary depending on street length etc. We would be obliged to place signs at reasonable intervals, at corners and junctions. This cost will usually be recouped from the relevant Town or Community Council, if they have agreed to act as sponsor to the change. If a name change has been agreed to go ahead without a sponsor (e.g. at the request of the emergency services) then the cost of replacement signage would have to be borne by Denbighshire County Council.

Finally, there is a small risk of a legal challenge being made to a Street Name Change (although the consultation process is designed to prevent this). This would

require staff time and support from the Legal and Democratic Services Department. The cost of which would not be recoverable.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?

An equality impact assessment was undertaken on the original policy when presented to Cabinet. Since the policy has been in operation we have not identified any equality issues or received any equality related complaints.

8. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The policy should try to ensure that the risk of additional costs being incurred by the council is minimised.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

When the policy was considered by Cabinet the following risks were identified:

- Firstly, if the demand for street name changes is great then these could have financial implications for the local authority or for the sponsoring Town and Community Council if these requests go ahead. If a large number of requests were to be rejected then this could have negative reputational consequences.

Update: This has not been the case thus far and only one request for a street renaming has been received.

- Secondly, there is a risk that legal challenges are made once a notice to rename the street has been drawn up. The consultation process which will be undertaken prior to any notice being issued is designed to resolve any potential issues before they reach the stage of a legal challenge.

Update: It is too soon to know if any appeals will be launched. The first name change request is still in the consultation phase and an appeal (if any) would not take place until later in the process.

10. Power to make the Decision

The main power to make the decision about street naming and signage arises from the Public Health Act 1925 (Sections 17 to 19 and 29 to 31). This instrument empowers the Local Authority to issue and receive street naming notices before a street is named, to issue orders to name streets, to alter the name of a street, and to enforce the display of officially assigned street names. It repeals section 160 of the Public Health Act 1875 and Town Improvement Clause Act 1847.

The Local Government Act 1972 (Section 180 (3)) has a secondary relevance. This instrument clarifies that it is not possible to apply the Public Health Act 1925 together with the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847. This is relevant because some of the practices included in Denbighshire County Council's previous (1997) Street Naming and Numbering Policy (1997) related to the 1847 Act.

Scrutiny's powers with respect to policy development are stipulated in Article 6.3.3(a) of the Council's Constitution, whilst its powers in relation to reviewing the Council's performance with respect to policy objectives are detailed in Article 6.3.4(b) of the Constitution.

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