

This Report will be made public on 9 October 2018



Report Number **C/18/38**

**To:** Cabinet

**Date:** 8<sup>th</sup> October 2018

**Status:** Non Key Decision

**Head of service:** Amandeep Khroud – Head of Democratic Services and Law

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Mrs Ann Berry

**SUBJECT:** Street Naming and Numbering Policy update

**SUMMARY:** This report provides an update on the Street Naming & Numbering policy adopted in April 2017, and suggestions for potential improvements to assist with the running of the service.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations below because:

1. The implementation of the policy has been a success and of great use in the management of the street naming and numbering service.
2. Areas for improvement have been identified; adopting them will assist the department in providing the best possible service to customers and the wider district.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To receive and note report C/18/38.
2. To continue to make use of the Street Naming and Numbering policy.
3. To consider the improvements to the policy suggested in this report.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The Council is the street naming and numbering authority for the district. The naming and numbering of streets is governed by various agreements and statutory provisions, including the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847, the Public Health Act 1925, the County of Kent Act 1981 and the Public Sector Mapping Agreement (PSMA).
- 1.2. Street Naming and Numbering is an important function as it allows the Council to maintain a comprehensive and accurate address database covering all properties in the district. In turn this enables:
  - Emergency Services to find a property quickly and effectively
  - Post to be delivered efficiently
  - Visitors to locate their destination
  - Statutory undertakers will not normally connect their services until such time as the premises have been given a formal postal address
  - Reliable delivery of services and goods by courier companies
  - Records of Service Providers to be kept in an efficient manner
  - Companies to accept an address for official purposes. For example, insurance, credit rating, contract acceptance
- 1.3 As of April 2017 the Council adopted a new [street naming and numbering policy](#). This has served to codify previous working practices, providing consistency of approach for service users.

## 2. POLICY IMPACT

- 2.1. The implementation of the policy has been positive. The street naming and numbering officer has cited the usefulness of having a defined policy which acts as an effective reference for members of the public when explaining why a naming or numbering decision has been taken.
- 2.2. The policy has clearly codified the working practices of the department, providing additional transparency to the public about the department's processes. This acts to ensure that cases are processed uniformly without arbitrary decision making.
- 2.3. Utilising the policy, Key Performance Indicators have been consistently met, and no formal complaints have been raised about the conduct of the service. On this basis, it can be concluded that the introduction of the policy has been a success and its use should be maintained going forward.
- 2.4. Despite this, some practical lessons have been learned from the implementation of the policy, identifying areas where some improvements could be made. These are explored below in section 3.
- 2.5. Statistics for the Council's addressing caseload are as follows:

	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>New property address</b>	297	725	289	493
<b>Change of address</b>	54	77	31	25
<b>Address queries</b>	24	17	85	26

### 3. POTENTIAL IMPROVEMENT

- 3.1. The Council's current stance is that all new properties must have a property number. Similarly, properties with existing numbers may only apply for a name *in addition* to the property's number. A relatively small number of properties pre-date uniform mapping requirements and currently have a property name but no number. Given the distinct public interest in Council addressing remaining consistent and accurate, it is suggested that the Council waive its addressing charge for applications to add a number, when the property is situated in a street that is already numbered. This would ensure consistency with surrounding properties. It should be noted that it is not suggested that this concession should be offered to properties located on streets that lack any pre-existing numbering. This is due to the additional complications that would be introduced by needing to number an entire street at the same time.
- 3.2. Additional guidance should be offered regarding unacceptable names for proposed properties and street names. Currently the Council retains a discretionary right to refuse requests, primarily relating to applications which could be considered rude, obscene, racist, or which would contravene any aspect of the Council's public sector equality duty. This definition is currently provided under Section 6 ('New Developments'). It is proposed that this definition should be extended to Sections 4 ('Naming Residential and Commercial Buildings) and Section 7 (Address Changes) in order to avoid ambiguity.
- 3.3. Additionally, it is proposed that the above definition is broadened to include names that are 'likely to be highly controversial or contentious in the locality'. This permits Council officers to take stock of a proposed name's wider context and the potential impact it could have on the surrounding area, even if the name were not rude or obscene when taken in isolation. An example of names falling under this category could include highly charged political references.
- 3.4. There are some outstanding general housecleaning issues relating to the Council name change. Contact details and some grammatical / syntax issues have been updated.
- 3.5. Proposed changes to reflect the above suggestions are included in the annex 1 revised policy document.

### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1. There is not a great deal of risk management involved in the implementation of the above proposals. The small element of risk is as follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Reputational damage due to lack of tools to refuse inappropriate naming requests.	Low	Low	Adopt above suggestions relating to inappropriate names.

## 5. OFFICER COMMENTS

### 5.1. Legal Officer's Comments (DK)

There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report other than those already referred to therein.

### 5.2. Finance Officer's Comments (LW)

The report suggests the Council waive a fee for numbering under specific circumstances however, this is expected to affect a very small number of properties and therefore have a very small financial impact. Over the last few years there has only been 1 case where this has occurred and the cost was £57.

### 5.3. Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)

There are no equalities implications arising directly out of this report.

## 6. CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

6.1. Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting:

*Jamie Naylor, Senior Information Officer*  
e-mail: [Jamie.Naylor@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:Jamie.Naylor@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

The following documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report:  
None.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Street Naming and Numbering Policy draft.