

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Executive Member Growth, Gordon Bambridge

To: Overview and Scrutiny – 24th November 2016
Full Council – 8th December 2016

Author: Riana Rudland, Breckland Place Manager

Subject: Review of Street Naming and Numbering Policy

Purpose: To consider proposed amendments to the Street Naming and Numbering Policy

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That option 2.2 is approved and the revised Street Naming and Numbering Policy (July 2016) is adopted.

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 There are a number of national and local drivers that make it necessary for the Council to define and implement a Policy for address management:

- Breckland Council has a Legal duty under the Data Co-operation Agreement (DCA) to have, maintain, continually improve and actively promote the use of its Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) which must be THE definitive master address list of all land and property within the Authority area.
- The Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 (Sections 64 & 65) and Public Health Act 1925 (Sections 17 to 19 inclusive) place a statutory duty on the Council to supply and maintain correct addressing for every property within the Authority area. This includes re-naming and re-numbering of properties and streets.
- The provision of correct address information, via the LLPG, is of critical importance to the Emergency Services and is essential to numerous other organisations, local/central government services and the convenience/safety of the general public.
- The LLPG is a key building block for a number of departments within the Authority and is a prerequisite for a number of other Government initiatives.

1.2 Breckland Council has a duty to ensure that all roads in the Breckland District are named and all properties numbered or named. The responsibility for dealing with applications for street naming and numbering, re-naming or re-numbering of properties and streets together with confirmation of street name plates is administered by the Spatial Information team under the Capita Contact for Planning and Building Control Services. The Spatial Information Team ensure that this information is relayed to appropriate organisations and internal sections of the Council.

1.3 To ensure that the service is operated effectively and efficiently it is necessary to set out procedures, performance standards and specifications. The current Street Naming and Numbering Policy is attached in Appendix A. This policy has been reviewed by the Spatial

Information Team in line with best practice and some minor amendments have been recommended to ensure it aligns with National Guidance and takes in to account feedback from Emergency Services. The proposed revised policy is attached in Appendix B.

1.4 Clearly legible street name plates and property numbers/names are essential for the emergency services and postal services as well as for the convenience and safety of the general public. Therefore the District Council requires street name plates to conform to the Council's agreed specification and for all property numbers/names to be clearly indicated.

1.5 The key amendments that are recommended are:

- Removal of parent shells from the Policy. "Parent Shell" refers to the name associated with a collection of properties or a grouping of land parcels. The Council had numerous Street Naming and Numbering cases since 2007 where "Parent Shells" were allowed under the existing policy and this has subsequently caused the residents unnecessary upset, distress and multiple problems. An example of this is "Eastgate House" on Eastgate Street where there was a property number 5 which was split into 5 flats. Under the existing policy these flats were addressed as Flat 1, 5 Eastgate Street and Flat 2, 5 Eastgate Street etc. This method of addressing put them into a parent shell situation. Subsequently the residents at **house** number 1 Eastgate Street started having problems with deliveries which were meant for Flat 1, another house started having debt recovery agencies visit when they should have gone to one of the flats and so on. Each of these properties have experienced issues with utility companies sending bills to the wrong address, issuing final utility demands or cutting off services, as well as missed deliveries. In extreme cases, this method of addressing properties has caused issues for health care professionals (community nurses, doctors and midwives) missing appointments as they cannot locate the relevant property. The problem occurs because although the flats are numbered flat 1, 5 Eastgate Street many web sites can only handle a property number and street name thereby making it property 1 on Eastgate Street which is not the flat but the house number 1 Eastgate Street. The same issues arise over the phone, the address for the flats misses off the parent shell (number 5) likely due to the fact that the computer system being used cannot cope with the two numbers in the address and street line.
- The SNN service would strongly advise that parish councils do not use people's names for streets due to the possible legal ramifications of not getting the appropriate living relatives permission and this risk that the residents that live there would have to pay to get their address changed with, for example, banks, deeds, utilities etc and have all the upset/stress that goes with the change of address should the address be subsequently deemed inappropriate.
- Removal of "THE" from the naming of a street. This is requested by the Emergency services, as every second counts and allowing "The" easily causes confusion. For example: if you allow "The Walk" as a street name when someone phones to give the address of the incident they don't say "17 the THE Walk" they just say "17 the Walk". It's just our vocabulary and the way we use "The" when we talk however to the emergency services who have to type it into their central address search system, it can lose valuable seconds if they are not sure whether to include "The" or not. It should be remembered that the emergency services are no longer always coming from a local station and are therefore reliant on the information they are given from the control room rather than from local knowledge. Similarly in the case of naming properties, if "The Farmstead" is allowed under current policy as a property name, however when the resident phones the emergency services they don't say "we are at the THE Farmstead" they say "we are at the Farmstead". Again this causes

unnecessary confusion and delay in finding the address using national search systems.

- Closer collaboration between Town and Parish Councils and the Developer. The existing process (policy version 1.8) stipulates that the developer could approach the parish and discuss a potential street name, but the developer must also be allowed to approach the Council direct. The developers suggested name would be sent to the parish on a standard proforma but the parish could only object if the name was invalid. However any comments the parish put onto the proforma would be passed back to the developer for consideration but the developer is allowed to keep their original suggestion.

In practice the SNN team would not allow or send out an invalid name suggestion on a proforma to a parish and therefore as the name suggestion is valid the parish could not object. This wastes a lot of time for the parish, developers and the Street naming and numbering team. To streamline the process and make it more efficient and effective the proposed new process would be to stop using the Proforma and instead suggest that developers discuss with the parish first or use a Preferred Street Name List. We would insist all Town and Parish Councils to have a pre-approved list of preferred names which they can share with developers at their earliest opportunity (even at the point they are submitting comments regarding a planning application in their area). If developers know that this list is pre-approved then they will understand that adopting one of the names from the list will speed up the process and prevent the need for them to seek approval of their suggestions against policy. Developers should still be allowed to approach the Council directly if necessary. Once the street name is agreed, the developer, parish and all parties would be informed of the approved street name.

- Removal the reference to 25 working days to allow for change over of address details, as this is not workable within the Council's address system and the statutory requirements when combined with wider national updates and use of addresses on the internet. Essentially the date that an address is renamed is 'live' at the point the national database is updated. The process of allowing 25 working days for residents to change their details in practice causes issues as the new address will not appear on any system drawing from the national database until it is registered. There is not the ability to have two 'live' addresses during the change-over period.
- A summary of other proposed minor changes is included in Appendix C.

2. OPTIONS

- 2.1 Do nothing and continue using the existing Policy. This option is not recommended due to the feedback which has been received from the residents of properties where Parent Shall applies and from Emergency Services in particular.
- 2.2 Accept the proposed amendments to the existing policy and adopt the new version (July 2016).
- 2.3 Accept some of the proposed key changes and amend the policy accordingly.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 To ensure the policy is consistent with National Guidelines and to address anomalies within the existing policy. Furthermore it will address issues raised by Emergency Services and

provide further clarification to town and parish councils regarding the way they can influence and feed in to the decision making process.

4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

- 4.1 Improve the efficiency and speed of the process.
- 4.2 Respond to feedback from the Emergency Services and help mitigate the risk of delays in accessing locations in the event of an emergency.
- 4.3 Provide clarification to Town and parish councils, members of the public and developers.
- 4.4 To encourage the production of local pre-approved lists which can be used to speed up the process of naming and numbering thus mitigating the potential costs incurred to developers of a delay in the naming of developments for connection of services.
- 4.5 To remove anomalies within the existing system and ensures consistency of decisions.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

- 5.1.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.2 **Constitution & Legal**

- 5.2.1 Statutory matters dealt with in the body of the report and in the Policy itself. Policy changes are a matter for Full Council to determine.

5.3 **Contracts**

- 5.3.1 The function of street naming and numbering is undertaken by Capita under the Councils Planning and Building Control contract. It is in the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.4 **Corporate Priorities**

- 5.4.1 *"Providing the right services, at the right time and in the right way".*

5.5 **Crime and Disorder**

- 5.5.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.6 **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

- 5.6.1 It is in the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.7 **Financial**

- 5.7.1 It is in the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.8 **Health & Wellbeing**

- 5.8.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.9 Risk Management

5.9.1 Failure to address some of the key proposed amendments – Parent Shell in particular, could result in continued dissatisfaction from residents and emergency services confusion.

5.10 Safeguarding

5.10.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.11 Staffing

5.11.1 It is in the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.12 Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales

5.12.1 Amendments to the policy have been recommended as a result of changes in National Guidance and feedback from emergency services. The Policy also seeks to encourage greater collaboration between developers and Town and Parish Councils to agree street names in partnership wherever possible notwithstanding the final decision will remain with the developer assuming their request is compliant with policy.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 All Wards.

Background papers:-

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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a function with statutory powers and duties.