

## **Cabinet**

**30 July 2024**

### **Adoption of a Street Naming and Numbering Policy**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alex Paterson, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement

Report from: Phil Watts, Chief Operating Officer, Business Support

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#### **Summary**

This report presents a new Street Naming and Numbering Policy for the approval of the Cabinet, which would replace the council's current street naming and numbering conventions.

The policy aims to:

- ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and national standards and guidelines for street naming and numbering.
- provide clear and comprehensive guidance for the council when carrying out its legal duties and responsibilities for creating unique and unambiguous addresses for every property in Medway.
- promote the use of street names and property names that have a local, historic or heritage significance, and to avoid names that may cause confusion, offence, or inconvenience.
- Increase transparency and accountability within street naming and numbering processes.

#### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. Cabinet is recommended to approve the draft Street Naming and Numbering Policy, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 1.2. Cabinet is recommended to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, to implement the policy and make any minor changes to the policy as necessary.
- 1.3. Cabinet is recommended to agree that, subject to the exemptions process set out within the policy, it will be the decision maker for the use of names of recently deceased persons, who have given or been recognised for

outstanding service to Medway and its communities, within the naming and numbering of streets and properties in Medway.

- 1.4. Cabinet is recommended to agree that it will be the decision maker in relation to considering and deciding on requests to alter an existing street name where there is at least two-thirds support for the proposal amongst affected council tax and business rate payers.

## 2. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 2.1. The Street Naming and Numbering Policy will provide clear and comprehensive guidance for the Council in carrying out its street naming and numbering functions, which are essential for the creation of unique and unambiguous addresses for every property in the authority.
- 2.2. The policy will indirectly support the delivery of various public services, such as emergency response, postal delivery, utilities connection, electoral registration, council tax and non-domestic rates collection, and evidence-based decision making.
- 2.3. The policy will also promote the use of street names and property names that have a local, historic or heritage significance to the area, and avoid names that may cause confusion, offence, or inconvenience to the public.
- 2.4. The policy will ensure compliance with the relevant legislation, such as the County of Kent Act 1981, the Local Government Act 1972, the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023, as well as the national standards and guidelines, such as the British Standard for addressing, BS7666.

## 3. Budget and policy framework

- 3.1. The agreement of a street naming and numbering policy is an executive function and is a matter for Cabinet to decide.
- 3.2. The street naming and numbering functions are statutory duties of the Council, and this policy provides the framework for their effective and consistent delivery. This Cabinet report is within the Council's policy and budget framework.

## 4. Background

- 4.1. Street Naming and Numbering is an important function as it allows:
  - The creation of a unique and unambiguous address for every property in the authority.
  - Emergency Services to find a property quickly and effectively.
  - The efficient delivery of post.
  - The identification of properties for visitors, delivery of goods and other services.

- Statutory undertakers, for example electricity, gas and water, to connect their services to premises and link them to a postal address for billing.
  - Referencing and recording of addresses and streets, as part of Local Land and Property Gazetteers (LLPG) and Local Street Gazetteers (LSG).
  - Companies to accept an address for official purposes. For example, insurance, credit rating, contract acceptance etc.
- 4.2. The council has legal powers to ensure that all streets and properties are correctly named and numbered. The council carries out these powers under:
- Section 10 of the County of Kent Act 1981
  - Section 111, Local Government Act 1972
  - Section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847
  - Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023
- 4.3. Except for the postcode and post town, these Acts allow the Council to set all elements of an address, including:
- Altering existing street names (subject to a consultation) or assign a street name to a previously unnamed street; this can be for all or part of a street.
  - Objecting to street names proposed to the Council.
  - Ensuring that street names are displayed.
  - Giving new properties numbers, or renumbering existing properties,
  - Objecting to a numbering scheme proposed to the Council.
  - Ensuring properties are marked with appropriate numbers.
  - Ensuring that street names and property numbers displayed are those approved by the Council.
  - Giving a name to a property.
- 4.4. When naming and numbering properties and streets the council must also ensure it conforms to BS7666. By applying BS7666 when creating addresses, it ensures the consistency and quality of address and street information in Medway and contributes to high quality addressing across the entire country.
- 4.5. The council currently uses the Street Naming and Numbering Conventions 2008 to apply the relevant legislation, standards, and best practice when naming and numbering properties and streets in Medway. These conventions have, over time, become outdated and do not adequately reflect the current requirements.
- 4.6. This new policy will create a framework for all stakeholders to understand the requirements and responsibilities for naming and numbering in Medway.

## 5. Options

- 5.1. Option 1: Continue with the Street Naming and Numbering Conventions 2008. This option would cause confusion for stakeholders when applying for naming and numbering as they do not reflect current requirements and legislation making them less transparent for all stakeholders and reducing accountability.

5.2. Option 2: Adopt the new policy. This option ensures that all stakeholders have access to a single document which states the council's principles and processes for street naming and numbering, referencing all relevant legislation and best practice. The new policy also creates clear distinctions between officer responsibilities and those for Cabinet, with decisions for renaming existing streets and using the names of recently deceased individuals reserved for Cabinet as the executive function.

## 6. Advice and analysis

6.1. The Street Naming and Numbering Policy is based on a thorough analysis of the current legislation and best practice in relation to street naming and numbering and will ensure that the council is compliant in its application of the rules when conducting its naming and numbering functions. This is essential for the creation of unique and unambiguous addresses for every property in Medway.

6.2. The policy development has been informed by a benchmarking exercise of other local authorities' policies and procedures, to ensure it reflects best practice and standards in the field.

6.3. The policy will ensure there is clear and comprehensive guidance for the council and relevant stakeholders when carrying out its street naming and numbering functions.

6.4. The policy, through the creation of quality addresses, will indirectly support the delivery of public services, such as emergency response, postal delivery, utilities connection, electoral registration, council tax and non-domestic rates collection, and evidence-based decision making.

6.5. The policy recognises the importance of street and property names that have a local, historic or heritage significance to the area, and ensures names that may cause confusion, offence, or inconvenience to the public are not used.

6.6. The policy makes clear that the provision of the street naming and numbering service is a chargeable activity to recover the council's costs. Fees and charges are reviewed annually and agreed at full council.

6.7. The policy details the relevant parties' responsibilities as part of the application process and the action the council will take, including the notification of relevant agencies on completion of a street naming and numbering application.

6.8. The policy is expected to have a positive impact on the quality and consistency of street naming and numbering across Medway, and to enhance customer satisfaction and service delivery by setting out all the considerations that must be made in a single policy document.

6.9. The policy change is likely to advance equality and foster good relations through:

- the creation of quality addresses, which will indirectly support the delivery of public services, such as emergency response, postal delivery, utilities connection, electoral registration, council tax and non-domestic rates collection, and evidence-based decision making.
- the prevention of the use of names that can cause offence.

6.10. The recommendations include a request for delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Highways and Enforcement, to make any minor changes to the policy as necessary. This will include small administrative changes only, such as typographical errors.

## 7. Risk management

7.1. Risk management is an integral part of good governance. The Council has a responsibility to identify and manage threats and risks to achieve its strategic objectives and enhance the value of services it provides to the community. Any significant risks arising from this report have been identified in the following table.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Change in regulations for altering existing street names	There are provisions within the Regeneration Act 2023 for new regulations to determine the mechanisms for the alteration of street names that may be contrary to the provisions set in this policy.	Any new regulations requiring a material change to the policy will be brought to Cabinet to agree as part of the Council's normal democratic processes.	BIV
Reputational risk – inconsistent street naming and numbering processes	The outdated nature of the current conventions may lead to inconsistencies in street naming or numbering	The proposed Street Naming and Numbering Policy sets a transparent framework, with clear guidance and decision-making processes.	DIV

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Reputational risk – inappropriate name used for a street or property	With no policy the council may not be able to reject inappropriate names or get challenged on the clarity of its conventions to support decision-making.	The proposed Street Naming and Numbering Policy sets a transparent framework, with clear guidance and decision-making processes, that will reduce the risk of an inappropriate name being used.	DIV
There may be concern that the policy will attempt to force changes to street names that could potentially be considered as controversial.	With no clear policy residents may be concerned that their street name can be altered without their involvement.	The proposed Street Naming and Numbering Policy sets a transparent framework, with clear guidance, stating resident involvement in changing existing street names, and the associated decision-making processes.	DIV

For risk rating, please refer to the following table:

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1. Benchmarking of other local authorities' policies and procedures has been conducted to ensure it reflects best practice and standards in the field.
- 8.2. There has been no public consultation as part of the policy development process as legislation and BS7666 dictate the key parts of the policy.

## 9. Climate change implications

- 9.1. The Street Naming and Numbering Policy is not expected to have any significant direct or indirect impact on the climate change plan or carbon emissions.
- 9.2. An effective Street Naming and Numbering Policy contributes to easily finding addresses in Medway. This should speed up deliveries to homes and businesses and reduce the need for re-delivery from addresses not being found first time, resulting in less travel, fuel consumption, and CO2 emissions.

## 10. Financial implications

- 10.1. The Street Naming and Numbering Policy does not have any significant financial implications for the Council.
- 10.2. Fees and charges to recover the costs of providing a street naming and numbering service are reviewed annually and agreed at full council.

## 11. Legal implications

- 11.1 The Street Naming and Numbering Policy ensures the council's compliance with relevant legislation, namely the County of Kent Act 1981, the Local Government Act 1972, the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023, which give the Council the legal powers and duties to carry out the Street Naming and Numbering functions.

### Lead officer contact

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### Appendices

Appendix 1 Medway Street Naming and Numbering Policy

### Background papers

None