



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

**RESPONDING TO THE IMPACTS OF COVID 19
ON WATFORD'S BAME COMMUNITIES AND
STREET NAME POLICY REVIEW TASK GROUP**

Tuesday, 5 January 2021

6.00 pm

Publication date: 21 December 2020

Agenda

Councillor F Ezeifedi (Chair)

Councillors D Allen-Williamson, P Jeffree, A Khan and J Pattinson

1. Apologies for absence

2. Disclosures of interest

3. Welcome and introduction

The chair to introduce the task group and the background to this aspect of the work.

4. Research update (Pages 3 - 14)

Councillor Jeffree to be invited to update the task group on his research on street naming. He has drafted a policy for the task group to consider which is attached.

5. WBC street naming policy documents (Pages 15 - 18)

The Senior Geographic Information Officer and the Head of Customer Experience to present the WBC guidance documents on street naming.

6. Street naming themes

The task group is asked to consider any themes that they would like to be considered as part of a policy for street names which reflect the Watford's rich, diverse and positive history.

7. Recommendations

The task group is asked to determine recommendations for the final report arising out of the discussions on the street naming policy.

Street Naming and Numbering Policy
 First Draft - 13th November 2019

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(1) PURPOSE

The address of a property is becoming an increasingly important issue, with the Emergency Services particularly needing an efficient and easy means of locating properties.

Watford Borough Council (WBC) has the legal responsibility to ensure that streets are named and properties numbered. The authority has the power to approve or reject property addresses submitted by developers or members of the public under the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 (S64 and S65) in conjunction with S21 of the Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907. These powers also extend to commercial properties as well as domestic.

This policy is designed to provide guidance to developers, businesses and residents who undertake property development and address changes and these applications will be subject to the official Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) process. It is essential that a comprehensive and efficient standard for naming streets and numbering or naming properties is maintained as it facilitates:

- Emergency Services locating properties
- Consistency of property based information across local government databases and within the community
- Reliable delivery for post and other such deliveries
- Location of addresses for visitors to the area

Street Naming and Numbering is a chargeable service and the process is only carried out when the relevant Planning Permission has been granted for a development and the Street Naming and Numbering fees have been paid. WBC makes these charges on the basis that the Council may charge for the provision of such a service, provided the person to whom the service is given has agreed to its provision. This excludes the statutory elements of the SNN function for which there should be no charge, but allows for charges to be made for the discretionary elements on a "not for profit" basis therefore allowing the Council to recover costs incurred. The discretionary services are those that an authority has the power, but not a duty, to provide, and for SNN purposes these services include:

- (i) consultation and liaising with other external organisations such as the Royal Mail, Parish and Town Councils and Emergency services;
- (ii) the naming and numbering of new properties;
- (iii) alterations to either a name or numbers for new developments after initial naming and numbering has been undertaken;
- (iv) notifications to relevant organisations
- (v) confirmation of addresses;
- (vi) challenges to existing official naming/numbering schemes/addresses held within the street naming and numbering records; and
- (vii) obtaining a postcode from the Royal Mail.

Developers and individuals must not allocate property or street names themselves and should follow the process set out in this policy. If a property is not lawfully assigned a proper address through the SNN process it will not appear on the Council's Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) which is used by the Royal Mail, Emergency services, credit agencies and many other companies, and may well lead to difficulties in receiving mail, goods services or when applying for a credit card.

The LLPG forms a basis for feeding correctly named and numbered streets and properties in to the National Land and Property Gazetteer.

Where street names or previous numbers have been established without going through the official SNN process WBC has the authority to issue Renaming or Renumbering Orders, under Section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847.

Allocation of post codes are managed by the Royal Mail and must be confirmed by them. WBC undertake this process on the applicant's behalf and inform the applicant and other interested parties. The provision of a full postal address, including a post town, and post code is the discretionary element of the SNN service for which a charge is made. However, the Royal Mail will not provide a post code to any applicant without receiving the street name and number or name of the property within the street from the Council.

Royal Mail will only list valid delivery points on the Postcode Address File (PAF) if the land has a permanent building that is occupied daily on a business or residential basis. (This does not include barns, stable blocks etc.). Royal Mail will not allocate a postal address/postcode to a piece of land, allotment or stable block simply for the delivery of feed, obtaining of utilities etc.

(2) APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

2 (a) Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847

Section 64: Houses to be numbered and streets named

The commissioners shall from time to time cause the houses and buildings in all or any of the streets to be marked with numbers as they think fit, and shall cause to be put up or painted on a conspicuous part of some house, building, or place, at or near each end, corner, or entrance of every such street, the name by which such street is to be known; and every person who destroys, pulls down, or defaces any such number or name, or puts up any number or name different from the number or name put up by the commissioners, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Level 1 on the standard scale for every such offence.

Section 65: Numbers of houses to be renewed by occupiers

The occupiers of houses and other buildings in the streets shall mark their houses with such numbers as the commissioners approve of, and shall renew such numbers as often as they become obliterated or defaced; and every such occupier who fails, within one week after notice for that purpose from the commissioners, to mark his house with a number approved of by the commissioners, or to renew such number when obliterated, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Level 1 on the standard scale and the commissioners shall cause such numbers to be marked or to be renewed as the case may require, and the expense thereof shall be repaid to them by such occupier, and shall be recoverable as damages.

2 (b) Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907

Section 21: Power to alter names of streets

The local authority may, with the consent of two-thirds in number of the ratepayers, and persons who are liable to pay an amount in respect of council tax, in any street, alter the name of such street or any part of such street. The local authority may cause the name of any street or of any part of any street to be painted or otherwise marked on a conspicuous part of any building or other erection.

Any person who shall wilfully and without consent of the local authority, obliterate, deface, obscure, remove or alter any such name, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding Level 1 on the standard scale.

(3) CHARGING FOR THE STREET NAMING & NUMBERING SERVICE

3 (a) Local Government Act 2003

Section 93: Power to charge for discretionary services

(1) Subject to the following provisions, a best value authority may charge a person for providing a service to him if –

- a. the authority is authorised, but not required, by an enactment to provide the service to him and
- b. he has agreed to its provision.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply if the authority-

- a. has power apart from this section to charge for the provision of the service, or
- b. is expressly prohibited from charging for the provision of the service.

(3) The power under subsection (1) is subject to a duty to secure that, taking one financial year with another, the income from charges under that subsection does not exceed the costs of provision

(4) The duty under subsection (3) shall apply separately in relation to each kind of service

(5) Within the framework set by subsections (3) and (4), a best value authority may set charges as it thinks fit and may, in particular-

- a. charge only some persons for providing a service;
- b. charge different persons different amounts for the provision of a service

(6) In carrying out functions under this section, a best value authority shall have regard to such guidance as the appropriate person may issue

(7) The following shall be disregarded for the purposes of subsection (2)(b)-section

- a. 111(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 (c. 70) (subsidiary powers of local authorities not to include power to raise money)
- b. section 34(2) of the Great London Authority Act 1999 (c. 29) (corresponding provision for Greater London Authority), and
- c. section 3(2) of the Local Government Act 2000 (c. 22) (well-being powers not to include power to raise money).

(8) In subsection (1), “enactment” includes an enactment comprised in subordinate legislation (within the meaning of the Interpretation Act 1978 (c.30)).

(4) NAMING OF NEW STREETS

Property developers and local residents may suggest names for new streets and these should be submitted to the SNN Officer for consideration against our criteria. Consultation is undertaken with Borough Councillors for the ward, who can either accept the suggestion or object to it and offer their own alternatives. Any alternatives will again be assessed against our criteria and can be rejected if they do not meet these criteria. Once a suitable suggestion has been selected the SNN officer will seek agreement with the developer.

Where a street is created as part or all of a new development, all costs for the erection of new street name plates will be paid for by the property developer. The specifications for the plates and their location are provided at Appendix A. Maintenance of the street name plates only becomes the responsibility of WBC once the street has been adopted by Hertfordshire CC.

No street name plate will be erected until the street name has been confirmed in writing by WBC.

4 (a) Criteria for Naming of New Streets

From this point forward developers, residents and Councillors should use the criteria set out below when considering suggestions for naming of streets:

- 1) There must be at least two properties with entrances from a street/private access way before a street name is proposed.
- 2) New street names shall not be assigned to new developments when such developments can be included in the current numbering scheme of the street providing access.
- 3) Phonetically similar names will also be avoided e.g. Willows Avenue and Winnows Avenue.
- 4) New street names shall not duplicate any name already in use in the area, or neighbouring area. A variation on the street name by thoroughfare type (avenue, street, road) will not be allowed e.g. if there is already a street named Oak Road, Oak Lane will not be allowed.
- 5) Consideration should be given to existing historical or geographical connections that have already been established within the area, and new names should be in keeping with any existing local themes.
- 6) Street names are unacceptable if they are likely to cause spelling or pronunciation difficulties as these may lead to confusion for Emergency Services.
- 7) Street names that may be considered or construed as obscene, racist, sexist or which could be considered to contravene any aspect of the council's equal opportunities policies will not be acceptable.
- 8) Street names that may be open to re-interpretation by graffiti or shortening of the name shall be avoided.
- 9) New street names should not end in "s" where it can be construed as a possessive or plural.
- 10) No new street name to start with the word "The".

11) All punctuation, including apostrophes, shall be avoided.

12) Words of more than three syllables and the use of more than two words (excluding the thoroughfare type) shall be avoided.

13) All new street names must end with one of the following suffixes only:

Street - any thoroughfare that is lined with buildings

Road - any street

Way - any street

Avenue - any street (often lined with trees)

Drive - any street (often lined with trees)

Grove - any thoroughfare or cul-de sac (often lined with trees)

Lane - any street (often narrow or in the country)

Rise - a street on a sloped hill

Mews - a small street, alley, or courtyard

Gardens- for streets (not properties) – subject to there being no confusion with local open space

Crescent - for a curved street

Close - for a cul-de-sac only

Square - for a square only

Hill - for a hill side street only

Terrace- for a terrace of houses (i.e. not facing on to an existing named street and therefore not a subsidiary name for a row of properties within an already named street)

Parade - a public square or promenade

14) All new pedestrian ways should end with either Walk or Path.

15) Naming of a street after a living, or recently deceased, person will not be accepted, however the responsible officer shall have discretion to waive this if he/she believes there are valid and appropriate reasons to do so.

Any such proposed exception would be considered by the responsible officer if:

- a. The proposal is supported by the Member of Parliament and/or local authority Councillor
- b. The person can be shown to have been of the highest standing and such a view is likely to be shared by the public
- c. The proposer has obtained written consent from a close member of the family of the person or a direct descendant. If that is impracticable a statement of reasons made to obtain consent must be submitted with the application

(Note: it is likely that such names would only be considered if the proposer can provide proof that the person has been deceased for more than 20 years. This is in line with the heritage “blue plaque” regulations).

16) Street Names are not acceptable where they could be construed as advertising.

17) Naming a street after a company or association with a company that has or has not traded in the area in the past will not be accepted. However, the responsible officer shall have the discretion to waive this if he believes there are valid and appropriate reasons to do so.

18) The consent of the Lord Chamberlain's office must be obtained if a name with any reference to the Royal Family or the use of the word "Royal" is suggested.

(5) RENAMING OF EXISTING STREETS

Renaming of existing streets will be dealt with on an individual case bases

Renaming an existing street will generally be avoided. It should only be considered in cases where historic street names are likely to cause offence, or in cases where the naming is causing problems for the emergency services. Renaming a street is a time consuming process and any change can be very disruptive and cause financial costs to all those occupiers affected.

Before an application can be considered, it is the responsibility of the applicant to conduct a ballot of all the occupiers to ensure views of all those affected are taken into account. The results must be submitted in writing to the Council as part of the application process.

Consultation with all affected Council Tax payers and Business Rate payers will then be undertaken and the consent of two thirds of those affected must be obtained before consideration will be given to re-naming a street. All costs associated with a change to a street name or numbering sequence instigated by the property owners shall be met by the individual property owners affected by the change.

A report which provides evidence of the rate payers' approval will be given to the Portfolio Holder for Street Naming and Numbering and will seek their endorsement to instigate the change.

All street re-naming will be done in strict compliance with the criteria set out under Naming of New Streets.

(6) NAMING OF EXISTING UNNAMED STREETS

This will be considered only where there is difficulty in locating the street due to a lack of name. This delay in locating the street can be a problem even though there are no properties addressed in the street, or where properties are using the nearest named street as their address e.g. where they are situated on private access road.

The same process and criteria set out under Renaming of Existing Streets will apply.

(7) ADDRESSING OF NEW PROPERTIES

When a developer or resident submits an application to have a new plot or development named and numbered they must do so via the online application form. The following information will be required:

- a. **The Planning Application Reference Number** – Street naming and numbering for new developments can only be undertaken once the application is approved by the Development Management Department, as without this an address cannot be allocated. An annexe cannot be issued a separate postal address unless it has planning permission to be used as a separate dwelling.
- b. **Plans** – A location plan which clearly identifies the new scheme in relation to existing land or properties. A detailed site plan clearly marked with plot numbers which also indicates where the front door or primary access points are for each property.
- c. **Internal Layout Plans** – Where appropriate, clearly indicating the front doors for each property, the main access points for the block, floor levels, and plot numbers.
- d. **Street/Building Names** – The preferred name, plus two alternatives to be considered if the preferred option is unsuitable, for any streets within the developments, or building names where flats/units are involved.
- e. **Payment of Fees** - in accordance with the fees set by WBC

For developments of 1-6 properties the name of the development will be agreed by the SNN Officer with the developer, using the criteria set out under Naming of New Streets.

For developments of 7 properties or more consultation will take place with the Councillors for the Ward, for their views on the names suggested for the streets involved. If there are any objections to the names suggested, the developer will be advised and further suggestions can be made at this point if required.

7 (a) Criteria for Addressing of New Properties

The following criteria will apply for addressing of all new properties/buildings:

1. All new property developments will be numbered rather than named. Exceptions will only apply in existing streets where no numbering scheme currently exists, or where the extent of infill numbering has been exhausted.
2. All new streets shall be numbered with odd numbers on the left and even numbers on the right, starting at the primary entrance to the street. Where the street runs between two other streets, the numbering will start at the end of the street nearest the centre of the town or village.
3. Consecutive numbering may be used in a cul-de-sac or in a situation where there is no scope for future development.
4. The number of a property/building will be allocated to the street onto which the front door or main entrance faces, except in circumstances where the front door or main entrance provides no direct access from that street.
5. Numbers will remain sequential with no exception being made for superstition in the use of the number 13 or any other number considered to be unlucky, or personal preferences.
6. Flats and units within a building will be numbered sequentially in a clockwise direction from the main entrance/stairwell. Properties that have more than one entrance in a street

(but form part of the same property) will have the internal flats/units numbered in a clockwise direction within each part of the building served by a separate entrance.

7. Properties will be given a street number according to the street in which the main entrance is located and allocated a building name. The internal flats/units will be numbered individually e.g. Flats 1 – 17 Brickfield Court, 45 Chester Road.
8. When new properties are built on an existing numbered street, and there are no available numbers to use whilst retaining the current sequence, a letter will be used as a suffix e.g. 21A.
9. A business name will not be accepted as taking the place of a number or a building name.
10. Private garages or buildings used for housing vehicles and similar purposes will not be numbered.
11. A piece of land cannot be given an official address; only property on that piece of land can have a conventional address for the purposes of delivering mail and services.
12. On a street without numbers a name may be allocated to a new property/building.
13. Where a residential house is named and there is an assigned property number, the number must continue to be used. The name cannot be used instead of the number, and the number must be displayed in conjunction with the name.
14. The name of the property/building should not duplicate the name of the street, pedestrian way, geographical area or any other property within the area. This is the responsibility of the owner and not the Council, but the SNN Officer can offer assistance on names already in use. A variation in the end word e.g. Court House or Lodge will not be accepted as sufficient reason to duplicate a name e.g. if there is a building named Oak Court, Oak Lodge would not be considered.
15. When assigning a new property/building name in an area where existing properties have theme e.g. historical or geographical connections, the new name should if possible be in keeping with this.
16. Property/building names are unacceptable if they are likely to cause spelling or pronunciation difficulties as these may lead to confusion for Emergency services.
17. Names of more than three syllables should not be used.
18. All new property/building names should, wherever possible, end with one of the following suffixes:
 - House - Residential or commercial properties
 - Lodge - Residential or commercial properties
 - Court - Residential or commercial properties
 - Heights - Residential or commercial properties
 - Point - commercial propertiesNo property/building names to start with the word "The"
19. Naming a property/building after a company is only acceptable if the company no longer occupies the building and there is a positive local association and does not

cause confusion. A business name cannot take the place of a number or a building name.

20. Names that could be seen as advertising are not acceptable.

21. family name will not generally be considered acceptable, however:

The Officer responsible shall have discretion to waive this if he believes there are valid and appropriate reasons to do so. Any such exception would only be considered by the Director if:

- i) the proposal is supported by a Member of Parliament and/or local Councillor.
- ii) the person can be shown to have been of the highest standing and such a view is likely to be shared by the public.
- iii) the proposer has obtained written consent from a close member of the family of the person or a direct descendant. If that is impracticable a statement of reasons and efforts made to obtain consent must be submitted with the application.

(Note that it is likely that such names would only be considered if the proposer can provide proof that the person has been deceased for more than 20 years. This is in line with the heritage “blue plaque” regulations).

22. The consent of the Lord Chamberlain’s office must be obtained if a name with any reference to the Royal family or the use of the word “Royal” is suggested.

(8) ADDING A NAME OR RENAMING AN EXISTING PROPERTY

A property owner can apply to add a name to their already existing numbered property, or change the current name, via the online application form, using the criteria set out under Addressing of New Properties.

APPENDIX A (to be checked for compliance with existing Watford standards)

Specifications for Street Name Plates and their location:

STREET NAME PLATE SPECIFICATION

POSTS

Black recycled plastic posts.
Post dimensions 80 x 80 x 1220mm with bevelled tops.
Milled (routed) at top of post to accept main backboard assembly.

Base of post drilled to accept anchor pins 10mm x 160mm

BACKBOARD

30mm x 150mm section, overall height and length of backboard is dependent upon number of lines and length of wording

SIGN FACE

Stabilised impact resistant polycarbonate with legends applied directly to the reverse side.
Double sided SNP's can be produced.

CHANNEL

"U" Section aluminium channel fitted top and bottom of backboard to retain sign face.
"U" Section channel can be supplied in various colours.
"U" channel bonded with 3m Scotchweld EPX bonding adhesive.

LETTERING

The maximum number of letters permitted per line is 12 to 13 where road name allows.
Font is Kindersley 89mm letter

FRAME

Posts and backboard can be used in conjunction with Die Pressed Aluminium Street Name Plate

FOUNDATION

1220mm posts require foundations 450 x 450 x 450mm,
Need to be 800mm above ground level (to top of sign)
Backfill with compacted concrete.



Background

All district councils have a statutory responsibility for the naming and numbering of streets within their boundary. The purpose of Street Naming and Numbering is to ensure that any new or amended street, building name and/or property numbers are allocated in a consistent manner.

Watford Borough Council is the street naming and numbering authority for the area. It carries out these functions under the provisions of the Public Health Act 1925 sections 17-19.

It is also a statutory duty for the council to maintain an electronic register of all addresses within Watford. This populates the national address databases which many organisations rely on to provide services, including the Royal Mail and emergency services. The Royal Mail will not issue a postcode until they receive official notification of a new or amended address from the council.

The council also notifies all utility companies of new or updated addresses so they can provide their services if required by the property occupiers.

It is essential that the information we hold is correct, presented in a standard nationally recognised format and that all relevant parties who require the information are notified of any additions or changes as soon as possible.

Applications should be made at the earliest opportunity following planning permission being granted. Possible issues that could arise if applications are not made as soon as possible are:-
Utility companies may refuse to install services where an official postal address has not been allocated.

Application for an unofficial street name or number under which the property has been marketed and purchased may not be approved.

Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, councils can charge a fee which covers the overheads of providing the street naming and numbering service, both in terms of resource and other costs incurred.

The fee structure will apply to all new business and residential developments which require the use of the Street Naming and Numbering function

Street / Block naming guidelines

- Developers are encouraged to preserve any historic link to the land which they are developing, i.e. field names the land may be previously known as, or previous property names located on site such as farm names, or any other associated historic link. Street names with historical significance to the area are much preferred to those that are not.
- For suggestions to commemorate fallen soldiers/dignitaries, only the surname will be used as part of the street name. Acceptance in writing from the person's family should be obtained prior to consideration

- Street names should not be duplicated or be similar (either phonetically e.g. Churchill Road/Birchill Road or with a different suffix eg Hempstead Road/Hempstead Close) to those currently used in the same locality and/or town. This is not acceptable as it can delay the emergency services to locate a property.
- No punctuation in the use of street names will be used. For example “St. Mary’s Road” will appear in all street naming documentation and street nameplates as “St Marys Road”.
- Street names will not end in “s”, where it can be construed as either a possessive or plural. For example Bennetts Close will be Bennett Close
- Street names should not start with “The”
- Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell, considered offensive or controversial
- The name of a street should not advertise an organisation. Street names that could be construed as advertising will also not be allowed.
- Names of living persons will not be allowed.
- Street names with historical significance to the area are much preferred to those that are not.

Numbering Guidelines

- New street/developments should be numbered in the most logical manner, with consideration to potential future development.
- All properties with an external door should be allocated its own distinguishing number.
- Streets/Roads will be numbered with odd numbers on left side and evens on the right side from the start of the road, which is usually the end accessed via the nearest important road. Cul-de-sac/Close can be numbered sequentially (clockwise).
- The address of the property will depend on the location of the main entrance. Properties will be addressed to the street where the main entrance is situated.
- If a property is built in between two numbered properties (e.g. 17 & 19 High Street), the new property will be addressed with a number and letter, for example - 17A High Street.
- If a building has an entrance in more than one street and each entrance leads to a separate occupier, each entrance should be numbered in the appropriate road. Exceptions may be made for houses divided into flats depending on the circumstances
- If an existing property is converted, retain its existing number and address the properties as Flat 1, 1 High Street & Flat 2, 1 High Street.

- Where two or more properties are combined to form one single property, the property will be numbered using one of the existing numbers and will be based on the location of the main entrance.
- If an existing building is demolished and a new building constructed in its place, incorporate the old number in to the new address
- Where a block of flats is built, it should be named and given a street number. Flats should then be numbered clockwise starting from the ground floor and working upwards.
- Properties can be named (subject to Royal Mail's approval) but won't form a part of the official address. The official address relates to the property number and the street name only.
- Number 13 can be omitted when numbering new developments if requested by the developer.
- Where a property has a number, it must be used and clearly displayed on doors or gates.

House Names

If a property is already numbered, a property owner can additionally name their property without contacting the council as long as it does not conflict with an existing property name in that locality. The property name in this case will not officially form part of the property address, and the property number must still be displayed and referred to in any correspondence e.g.

'My House' (not part of official address)
 1 My Road (official address)
 Town
 County
 Postcode

You only need to seek permission from the council if there is no number allocated in the official address (i.e. if the property has been allocated a name as part of its official address).

It is the responsibility of property owners to inform their own personal contacts etc.

You must be the freeholder of the property or have the permission of the freeholder to request a change of name to a property.

Changing an existing House Name

Any suggested names should not conflict with those already in existence in the postal delivery area.

Renaming of streets

1. This is usually only done as a last resort in the following circumstances

- When, there is confusion over a street's name and/or numbering
- A group of residents are unhappy with their street name
- New properties are built in a street and there is a need for other properties to be renumbered to accommodate the new properties

- The number of named-only properties in a street is deemed to be causing confusion for visitors, the delivery or emergency services
- Royal Mail will be consulted as part of the process and their views taken into account.
- To change a street name we will ballot the local residents on the issue, we require at least a two-thirds majority to make the change.
- Due to the complexity of the process we are only able to progress one of these issues at any time.

Postcodes

An important element of addressing is the postcode, which are allocated by Royal Mail after the Council issues a numbering notice. The maintenance and future changes to postcodes is the responsibility of Royal Mail.