

## REPORT OF THE: HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & PLACE

To: Full Council

Subject: Street Naming & Numbering Policy

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Reference: SNN Policy

### PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To request that the committee adopt a new Street Naming & Numbering Policy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Current Street Naming & Numbering Policy was originally created and approved by the then Policy, Community & Resources Committee in June 2008. This policy sets out the procedures and rules for the Council's Street Naming & Numbering (SNN) Service. This statutory function is responsible for the administration of postal addresses in the district. The Estates Department, after conducting research, observing situations of past cases, and conversing with counterparts in Mid Devon & North Devon Districts have produced the draft policy for your consideration.

## 2. REPORT

The Estates department has conducted research to find situations that are left in ambiguity by the current policy and to recommend alterations to certain parts of the existing policy which no longer align with best practice. We have also included updates which will improve the overall efficiency of the service. Please see below for a summary list of the major changes detailed in the draft policy. The relevant page numbers in the draft policy have been included for the benefit of members.

- Amend the language in the policy to allow for Holiday Lets to be addressed. (Page 7)
  - o This would provide more accurate location data to emergency services and would allow for owners of holiday lets to access services that require an address, including internet, television, and takeaway deliveries.
  - o Improves efficiency considering the changes to Council Tax and NNDR Legislation affecting holiday lets with effect from April 2023.
- Impose new restrictions on publicly announcing a street name before it has been approved by TDC. (Page 6)
  - o This will prevent organisations from using public pressure to influence the process, thereby circumventing the rules, and to ensure that Parish Councils will receive a fair and unbiased consultation period.
- Clarify the addressing criteria relating to planning permission. (Page 7)
  - o This allows us to address properties that do not require planning permission, so long as they can obtain a Certificate of Lawful Development from the Planning Department.
  - o It will also allow us to ensure that auxiliary properties are being used as an auxiliary to the main property, rather than a standalone property.

- Amend the restrictions on the use of names of deceased persons to set a defined limit. (Page 6)
  - o This will resolve the current confusion related to naming properties after deceased persons and will reduce the current presumed limit of 100 years post-mortem down to a fixed limit of 60 years post-mortem.
- Amend the procedures to ensure that addresses will only be allocated once construction has begun on the addressed site. (Page 7)
  - o Many developers obtain multiple planning permissions on a site before they build their new properties. The SNN service uses the drawings and plot numbers approved in the planning permission to allocate addresses effectively. However, some of the developers will provide the incorrect planning permission references or apply for alterations to their planning permission after they have submitted an SNN Application.
  - o The Proposed policy implements a rule that will prevent addresses from being allocated until building work has begun on the sites of the addresses, thereby locking in their planning permission. This will not affect developers, as they are able to sell properties using the plot numbers approved in their planning permission.
- Impose time restrictions on street name consultations. (Page 7)
  - o Under the old policy, some parish councils and developers took over a month to respond to a street name consultation. This held up the process and affected the workflow of the SNN Officer and the applicants.
  - o The proposed policy draft will introduce a time limit of 10 working days for parish councils and 5 working days for applicants. This allows a reasonable amount of time to determine if the parish council support or object to a proposal and will also give the applicant enough time to consider any counterproposals. The parish council is afforded more time in recognition that councillors are not always able to meet up and discuss such things due to their engagements outside of their role.
- Introduce formal requirements for digital site plans for developments of 5 or more properties. (Page 11)
  - o Over the last couple of years, the Council's IT department has requested digital site plans for developments of 5 or more properties. They use these plans to perform their duties as the Local Land & Property Gazetteer for Torridge. The role of collecting the digital site plans fell to the SNN Officer, as part of the application process.
  - o The new section will give the SNN Officer formal ground to require these plans and will also provide recourse if suitable plans are not provided.
- Alter the written procedures & information to better reflect the actual processes.
  - o Over time the best practices in Street Naming & Numbering have changed. As such, the Estates department have tried to follow these best practices within the constraints of the existing policy. However, it is also good practice to update the policy on occasion to ensure that it does not impede the functions of the service.
  - o Over the last few years, other departments of the council have begun to request new information that was not previously needed. This includes georeferenced digital site plans for developments of 5 or more properties. They have put the

duty of collecting this information on the SNN Officer. As such, new provisions are needed to ensure this can be done effectively.

### **3. IMPLICATIONS**

#### Legal Implications

Under current legislation and case law, the Council has the right to decide its practices relating to SNN, so long as the following conditions are met:

- The Policy must comply with the Equalities Act & Human Rights Act.
- The Policy must allow officers to provide the SNN service in an effective manner.
- The Policy must uphold British Standard BS7666:2006.
- The Council has an implied duty to perform a resident's consultation when choosing a name for a new street. (The current policy fulfils this by consulting parish councils, though ward member consultations or a public postal consultation would also meet this requirement. This has not been changed in the draft policy.)

#### Financial Implications

This revision in policy will have minimal impact relating to income, but the changes are projected to reduce processing times, which will have a positive effect on the finances of the service.

#### Human Resources Implications

N/A

#### Sustainability/Biodiversity Implications

The introduction of digital forms has cut back on the use of paper. The draft policy states that paper forms will only be issued at the discretion of the SNN Officer. This would generally only occur if there were no other options available to an applicant. This aims to reduce paper use and waste.

#### Equality/Diversity

The Draft Policy states that all street and property names must comply with the Equality Act 2010.

#### Risk Management

N/A

#### Compliance with Policies and Strategies

N/A

#### Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

The SNN Officer only shares personal data with the Revenues and Planning Officers to report suspected illegal activity or to report when an application is made that does not match the tax or planning records for a property or site. If the SNN Officer becomes aware of a crime outside of the Council's remit, this would also be reported to the relevant authority. These disclosures are permissible under Schedule 2, Part 1, Section 2 (1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

#### Climate Change

N/A

#### Ward Member and Lead Member Views

