

Street Naming and Numbering Policy

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Introduction

Local authorities have the legal responsibility to ensure that streets are named and properties numbered. In a two-tier area this duty lies at district council level. The Council therefore has the power to approve or reject property and street addresses.

The service was originally located in the Technical Department, but now lies within Property Services.

Context

The Council covers an area of 150,659 hectares (581 square miles) and is pre-dominantly rural in nature. There are five market towns where generally the properties are numbered onto a street. In the case of the remainder of the district, a very small proportion of the villages/settlements have had some form of numbering scheme established in the past, but these have generally been overtaken by infill development and/or have fallen into disuse. The remainder of villages/settlements have named properties. Occasionally properties have no identifying marks (names/numbers).

Why is Street Naming and Numbering Important?

Maintaining a comprehensive and high standard for naming streets and numbering or naming properties is important as it allows: -

- Emergency services to find a property quickly - delays can cost lives and money
- Post to be delivered efficiently
- Visitors to locate their destination
- Reliable delivery of goods and services
- Records of service providers to be kept in an efficient manner

These functions are increasingly being supported by developments in computer technology in two important ways: -

- A national database has been constructed which contains in a consistent way brief details on every address in the country. This file is called the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG). Addresses are held in the British Standard (BS 7666) format. This standard defines how address information should be structured. Local authorities are responsible for building and maintaining that part of the NLPG that covers their area. This is known as the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG).
- Every address contains grid references, which will make it possible to locate it quickly on the computerised mapping systems. This information will support emergency services and service providers. It is also making possible a whole range of locational services available through mobile phones, in-car navigation systems, internet mapping, etc.

The Council has committed to the LLPG process and this is linked to a number of e-government and business transformational projects. The national Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) in the LLPG enables links and information to be obtained from other software systems while at the same time only holding address data once.

Legislation

The law is in need of review but there are currently two sets of powers: -

- Sections 64 and 65 of the Town Improvements Clauses Act 1847, together with Section 21 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907
- Sections 17 - 19 of the Public Health Act 1925

The legislation enables the Council to:

- Allocate numbers to new dwellings
- Allocate names to new streets
- Change a street numbering scheme where expedient

Specific Policy Areas

Naming Streets and Numbering Houses.

Anyone responsible for building developments that will give rise to new addressable properties should deal with naming any new streets and postal numbering as soon as possible after the necessary Planning and Building Regulations have been obtained.

Developers are encouraged to propose a street name (or names).

All applications must be submitted, preferably electronically, with:

- A location plan clearly identifying the new scheme in relation to any existing streets or means of access
- A detailed plan of the development clearly marked with the plot numbers of the proposed scheme. This plan must indicate the postal delivery point for each property in context with the adjacent highway
- An internal layout, if appropriate, for developments that are sub-divided at unit or floor level, e.g. a block of flats. The main entrance to the flats shall be clearly marked in relation to the adjacent highway

What Constitutes An Acceptable Naming and Numbering Scheme

By its nature satisfactory addressing cannot be precisely defined. The guidelines set out cannot cover all cases and the Council reserves the right to reject street or building names suggested for other reasons.

Street Names

The following is a list of guidelines:

- Proposals should not duplicate existing street names within the district. To prevent new road names, which are close to and may conflict with those in adjoining localities, the Royal Mail will be consulted.
- Wherever possible a street name should have a proven historical connection to the land intended for development. Developers may wish to consider seeking advice from the local historical society or civic trust.
- Proposals relating to a person's name (either living or recently deceased) will not be permitted, unless there is a proven historical connection to the land intended for development or a proposal is put forward for commemorative purposes. The Council would require acceptance from the named person, the person's family or estate administrators.
- Names that could be construed as obscene, racist or which would contravene any aspect of the Council's Equal Opportunities policies will not be acceptable.
- Names are unacceptable that would give rise to spelling difficulties, would involve punctuation (not acceptable in BS 7666) or which could be considered excessively fashionable.

Numbering

Once new road names have been established, it is the District Council's responsibility to produce the numbering scheme for a new development. This is undertaken by consulting the developer's plans and allocating each plot number a house number. Developers should note that only the District Council can issue the formal postal number and developers should not allocate their own numbering as part of their marketing strategy.

The Council will usually adhere to the following conventions:

- Street numbering schemes should allow for odd numbers on the left and even numbers on the right.
- In small developments properties can be numbered consecutively, for example 1 - 5.
- For infill developments of one or two houses it may be necessary to use an alphabetical suffix, for example 9a.
- Succeeding numbers should be approximately opposite one another.
- Side roads should be numbered ascending from the main road.
- Number 13 will not be allocated.

- It should be noted that new properties are always numbered according to the street on which the main entrance is accessed. The manipulation of numbering by developers or homeowners, in order to secure a perceived more prestigious address will not be accepted by the District Council.
- In small groups of low-rise flats, dwellings should be numbered within the ordinary street numbering system. The numbers of the flats contained in each block should be clearly displayed at the entrance, in a position clearly readable from the roadside.
- Complex commercial developments such as industrial estates often cause problems because the unit numbers applied at the point of development are not carried through when the premises are occupied. This often forces people to include the name of the occupying firm as part of the address which is discouraged in BS 7666 and which gives rise to repeated requests to change the address to suit a new occupant. Developers will therefore be issued with numbers for all plots and these must be allocated. It is accepted that subsequent plot sub-divisions may well result in the allocation of suffixes. The sole use of a collective name such as "Xoffice Park" causes difficulties, as a street name is now an item required by BS 7666 to be part of an address.
- Where a property has been allocated a number by the Council it must be used and displayed. Where a name has been given to a property together with a number, the number must always be displayed. The name cannot be regarded as an alternative. This applies to both domestic and commercial properties. This is to ensure an effective mail delivery and emergency response.

Changing an Address

If a property has a number it is quite acceptable to supplement this with a name. However, the number must always be displayed on the property.

To request a change to an address, the owner must give the Council written notice (letter/on line form/request a form) and the following information:

- The existing house name, address and postcode.
- The proposed new name.
- A plan showing the exact location of the property.

Requests can only be accepted from owners of properties and not tenants.

We cannot formally change a property name where the property is in the process of being purchased, that is until the exchange of contracts, although we can give guidance on the acceptability of a chosen name before this.

A check is made by us to ensure there is no other property in the location with the name or similar name. The Royal Mail will then be asked for its opinion on the suitability of the chosen name in case it may cause delivery problems due to the similarity with other local names. The Royal Mail cannot guarantee

mail delivery if their advice is ignored. In these situations, we will formally advise the applicant against the name and also contact those other affected properties.

Once all checks are satisfactorily completed, we will change the name of the property and advise the relevant parties including the Royal Mail, Ordnance Survey, Council Tax, the Local Land and Property Gazetteer team and the emergency services. A full list of those informed is included in Appendix A.

We will then confirm in writing to the owner of the property, the new official address.

Postcodes

An important element of addressing nowadays is the Postcode. This identifies a number of postal delivery points and is defined by the Royal Mail. The Council is **not** responsible for allocating these codes; they are a Royal Mail product. The Council works closely with the Royal Mail to ensure that proposed addresses are acceptable postally and consults the Royal Mail on proposed schemes. Postcodes will generally be allocated before a scheme is approved.

If for any reason an approved scheme is issued without a postcode, developers will need to liaise with the Royal Mail - telephone number: 08456 045060; e-mail address: development@royalmail.com or to find out what the relevant new codes are, via the Post Code/Address Finder on the Royal Mail Website address: <http://www.royalmail.com>

As a matter of policy, the Royal Mail does not publish on its website addresses that are not completed and/or occupied. This means that in certain cases addresses that have been agreed with the Council may not, for a while, be visible to anyone using the website to validate an address for purposes such as providing goods or services related to that address or its owner. The Royal Mail should be contacted if problems of this nature are being experienced.

Street Nameplates

Every street must be clearly signposted, with nameplates being positioned at principal junctions so as to be easily readable by both pedestrians and drivers. Developers can either provide these plates themselves, in accordance with the Council's Standard Specification, or can have them produced and installed by the Council and be re-charged for the cost of doing so.

Postal Addresses For Rural Areas

New properties built in rural areas or barn conversions are usually identified by name only. Numbering schemes are often non-existent within the rural areas of the district.

The steps below are taken:

- An officer may undertake a site visit to identify the exact location, orientation and accessibility of the new property.
- A standard letter is distributed to the planning applicants, requesting their choice of name within two weeks of their receipt of the letter.
- Upon receipt of the applicant's choice of name, the Council will check that there is no other property within the immediate area of the same name. If there is, the owner will be required to produce an alternative name.

There are a number of villages and settlements within Ryedale, which do have a house-numbering scheme.

With the advent of new spatial technology it would be ideal if every property were formally numbered. However, it is accepted that this is not going to happen for some time due to a variety of reasons, mainly concerning resources.

In any case, the request (in writing) to provide a numbering scheme would have to originate from the appropriate Town/Parish Council. Town/Parish Councils can only make such a request if they can demonstrate that the owners of all affected properties have been consulted and that two thirds are in agreement.

When a request is received we will produce a numbering scheme and carry out any necessary consultations that are requested as part of the process.

Name/Re-name An Existing Street

Again, all such requests have to originate from the relevant Town/Parish Council. Town/Parish Councils can only make such a request if they can demonstrate that the owners/residents of all affected properties have been consulted and at least two thirds are in agreement.

Once raised by the Town/Parish Council we will confirm with the Royal Mail that the name is acceptable and seek final confirmation from the Community Services and Licensing Committee.

Decision Levels

Numbering schemes

Property Services Manager

Street Names

Following agreement by the appropriate Town/Parish Council and the Royal Mail the formal approval is delegated to the Chairman of the Community Services Committee.

Need For Numbering Schemes

Where only property names exist:
Community Services and Licensing Committee.

Outcomes

- A modern Street Naming and Numbering policy, which is clear and easily understandable by our staff, developers and members of the public.
- Appropriate involvement of all interested groups, including our Town and Parish partners.
- Address and street number systems, which comply with the needs of the Royal Mail and emergency services.
- Addresses entered into the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and maintained in our systems in British Standard 7666 format.