

Brighton & Hove City Council

Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee

Agenda Item 33

Subject: Street Naming and Numbering Service – Introduction of Charges

Date of meeting: 15th September 2022

Report of: Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report advises Members of a proposal to introduce charges for the discretionary elements of the City Council's Street Naming and Building Naming/Numbering service as a contribution to the running costs of the service.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Committee agrees the introduction of charges for the discretionary elements of the Street Naming and Numbering function.
- 2.2 That Committee agrees the schedule of charges set out in Appendix 1, to be applicable from 1st October 2022 (subject to the necessary changes to the ICT systems and procedures.)
- 2.3 That Committee agrees that the schedule of charges in Appendix 1 be subject to its first review as part of the annual process in Winter 2023

3. Context and background information

3.1 The Council's duties and powers in respect of naming and numbering of streets and buildings are set out in Sections 17 to 19 of the Public Health Act 1925, Section 21 of the Public Health Amendment Act 1907 and Sections 64 and 65 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847.

3.2 The statutory responsibilities are complemented by a discretionary service inviting applications to change addresses, discussing and consulting on such applications, and then notifying interested parties of the authorisation. This discretionary service, which encourages public involvement and best practice in naming and numbering, has until now been provided without charge. However, a local authority may charge for providing discretionary

services as a contribution to its running costs in accordance with Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003.

- 3.3 The naming and numbering service processes applications to change street names or building names/numbers which are usually the result of the redevelopment of City buildings or their change of use or occupier. This involves proactive engagement with developers/owners to ensure compliance with our naming and numbering guidelines, consultation notices being posted on site, and notification of interested parties after authorisation.
- 3.4 In addition, the service regularly submits updated addressing data to the National Address Gazetteer where it is available for public, emergency service and commercial use through the Ordnance Survey Address Base product. National Address Gazetteer data is used widely within the City Corporation and beyond for indexing a range of property information (e.g. Planning, Building Control, Council Tax, Electoral Registration). Gazetteer updating will not be included in the proposed charges as it also fulfils the responsibility to keep a record of streets which are highways maintainable at public expense in accordance with the section 36 of the Highways Act 1980. It is also a contractual obligation under the national Public Sector Mapping Agreement by which we supply address updates and receive access to Ordnance Survey maps.
- 3.5 Charging for the processing of naming or numbering applications would contribute to the costs of providing this service and would help deliver service budget efficiency savings. It would help ensure the City Council continues to deliver an important, high-quality service and to maintain accurate and up to date addresses for local use and submission to the National Address Gazetteer.

Current Charging Context & Service Delivery

- 3.6 The City Council does not currently charge applicants to process a naming or numbering application. Most local authorities now charge for processing such applications to cover some of the processing costs incurred. All 12 district/borough councils across East and West Sussex currently charge for processing applications.
- 3.7 The City Council has discretion to set its own charge rates, but they must not generate an income which exceeds the cost of providing the discretionary service, taking one financial year with another, in accordance with powers in Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. The proposed approach is consistent with this Act and has had regard to the statutory guidance relating to the exercise of this power.
- 3.8 Following internal discussions, it is also proposed to transfer the responsibility for service delivery from IT&D to Planning and Building Control. This will enable IT&D to redirect resources to support existing systems. Planning and Building Control will be able to integrate the service within the existing support team, enabling service efficiencies also to be realised.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 A comparison was made of the proposed schedule with both the 12 Sussex district and boroughs and nearby comparator unitary councils to ensure that the proposed rates broadly aligned with other councils (Appendix 1.)
- 4.2 Initial estimates indicate that fee income of around £15k per annum can be anticipated. However the actual sums achievable may be subject to significant variation year on year, as the demand for naming and numbering of larger developments fluctuates though completion of these schemes on site.
- 4.3 The option to continue to provide the discretionary work associated with street naming and numbering for free has been discounted, due to the budget pressures that the council is facing in the short and medium term.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The charges will be made to property developers (for creating and registering new addresses) and residents (wishing to officially change or name their property.)
- 5.2 The council appears to be in the minority of local authorities not charging for this service. Developers have not therefore been consulted, as they will expect an authority to usually make a charge and the proposed rates have been set to broadly align with other councils in the region.
- 5.3 As residents are only likely to want to name/re-name a property that they have recently acquired, it is not possible to identify particular groups to consult on this aspect with.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The introduction of charges for the discretionary elements of the naming and numbering service would provide a source of income to cover part of the cost of processing the applications. Most local authorities have introduced such charges and the charge rates being proposed are considered to strike a reasonable balance between cost recovery and not deterring formal applications which are desirable to maintain the quality and reliability of the National Address Gazetteer.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1.1 The introduction of charges for the discretionary elements of naming and numbering would bring the Council in line with other local authorities.
- 7.1.2 The estimated annual income is £15,000, based upon levels of activity in previous years. Therefore, if the charges were introduced wef 1st October 2022, additional income of £7,500 would be expected in the current financial

year. The schedule of charges would be reviewed in winter 2023, as part of the Council's annual review of fees and charges.

Name of finance officer consulted: Jill Scarfield Date consulted (23/08/22):

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The powers and procedure for street naming can be found in the Public Health Act 1925 and the Public Health Amendment Act 1907 while the powers and procedure for numbering can be found in the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847.
- 8.2 The City Council may charge for the provision of discretionary services in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 as outlined in the report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alison Gatherer Date consulted (25/08/22):

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 An EQIA has not been undertaken for this proposal for the reasons set out below.
- 9.2 The majority of clients using this service are developers undertaking development of new homes and commercial property across the city.
- 9.3 Charging for the discretionary parts of this service means that the city council is consistent with all other districts and boroughs across Sussex.
- 9.4 The proposed charging scheme will provide for any qualifying applicant (usually disabled residents, charities) to receive the same level of discount that they were eligible for when making their planning application for the development being named or numbered.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 All application processes are undertaken online using existing ICT systems. Where site notices are required, these will be posted as part of the established routine within the Planning and Building Control Service, using the City Car Club or requiring applicants in residence to post the notices themselves.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1 None.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Analysis of Fee Charges by Sussex Councils and Unitary comparators and proposed charges

