

# Birmingham City Council

## Street Naming and Numbering Policy

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## 2. Introduction

The primary aim of good Street Naming and Numbering Policy (SNN) is to enable properties to be located quickly and easily. Birmingham City Council follows the [Data Entry Convention \(DEC\) to BS 7666-2:2006](#) for Addressing in discharging its powers and duties to name streets and number properties. The contents of the National Best Practice for Street Naming and Numbering will also be incorporated into Birmingham's practices as it is released.

The policy enables new addressing to be created in a format which ensures the provision of unique and clear addresses which can be used to deter and combat fraud and are compatible for electronic processing (where permitted under Data Protection laws).

## 3. Legislation

Birmingham City Council has adopted the [Public Health Act 1925 \(PHA\)](#) for the purposes of Street Naming and Numbering. This is supported by Section 9 of the West Midlands County Council Act 1980 (WMCCA) for numbering and other means of identification of properties.

Section 17 of the [Public Health Act 1925 \(PHA\)](#) sets out minimum procedures for proposal of a street name to the Local Authority. The Council may object to the proposed name within one month of service of notice. The proposed name cannot be brought into use until the objection is removed. The proposer may appeal to the Magistrates Court against the objection within 21 days.

Section 18 of the [Public Health Act 1925 \(PHA\)](#) sets out procedure for a Local Authority to alter the name of a street, or part of a street, or to name a new street, by Order. This procedure requires notices to be displayed on site for 1 month and allows 21 days for any objections to be lodged with the Magistrates Court. This timescale is often too lengthy for the developer's programme of works, so Birmingham requests that developers suggest new street names.

Section 19 of the [Public Health Act 1925 \(PHA\)](#) requires the Authority to ensure that all street names are marked. The developer is required to erect signage according to BCC's specification.

## 4. Street Naming

### 4.1. Street Naming Policy

Birmingham City Council uses the Data Entry Convention (DEC) to BS 7666-2:2006 for Addressing in discharging its powers and duties to name streets. The contents of the National Code of Practice for Street Naming and Numbering will also be incorporated in Birmingham's practices as it is released.

In the following sections, policy is shown in bold. Additional explanation is given in italics.

#### 4.1.1. The current policy states:

- **Street Names must have a local connection which is historically, geographically, or culturally relevant.**
- **Names of living people must not be used.**
- **Names cannot be duplicated within Birmingham, within Sutton Coldfield, or the same postcode district.**
- **Street names must not serve any commercial interest.**
- **Street names should not sound similar to existing street names in the same area or be deemed easily misspelt or confusing.**
- **Repetition of a street name with a different suffix in the same locality is not normally recommended.**

#### 4.1.2. Additions to Policy

The policy is supplemented with following criteria

- **Suggested street names should be inclusive and may be used as a vehicle to promote community cohesion.** *This measure can be used particularly, but not exclusively, in the choice of names after a person no longer living and should represent the local community/ies*
- **Where a street is to be named after a person no longer living this cannot be introduced within 25 years of that person's death. Applications should clearly identify the individual, give their date of birth and death and the reason for naming the street after that person.** *There have been a small number of isolated cases where the naming of a street after a person has resulted in significant reputational damage. This delay is expected to ensure that any unfavourable revelations have materialised.*
- **Where it is approved that a street be named after a person no longer living, the surname will form the street name, plus an appropriate suffix.**

- **Street name suffixes will be applied according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definition unless the name is in a foreign language or there is a cultural reason for the naming of the street in which case the relevant translation will be considered.** *Common suffixes include “Road”, “Street” and “Boulevard” but we are occasionally requested to use more unusual suffixes such as “Rise” on a hillside, “Halt” which might indicate a station or “Meadow” on a green-field site.*
- **New street names must not include punctuation or abbreviations with the only exception of St for Saint.** *Punctuation can be misinterpreted by automatic processing.*

## 4.2. Street Naming Procedure

Applications may be made on an [electronic](#) or a paper form and submitted by post or email.

Applications will be checked for completeness, compliance with policy and acknowledged. An expected date of supply of addresses will be given.

Names for new Streets can be proposed by The Council or Developers. If The Council proposes a new name, notices must be posted on site for one month and anyone can object within 21 days of the end of the month. This extends the addressing process which may cause delays in the developer being able to order utility connections. To save time, the Council requires developers to suggest new street names where they are required. The Council has one month to object to names suggested by developers.

### 4.2.1. Applications for a new Street Name

Local Ward Councillors will be consulted on suggested street names where a new name is required. If Local Ward Councillors have no objection to the suggested name/s the decision to accept the suggested names will be delegated to the Address Custodian and Team except where the application is for naming of a street after a person no longer living or for renaming of an existing street.

### 4.2.2. Naming after a Person no longer living

This decision will be delegated to the Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity.

The Applicant must supply details to enable that person to be clearly identified: i.e. date of birth and death, full name and title where applicable. Detailed evidence of character and the reason for the suggestion must also be supplied. This information will be verified and assessed in accordance with criteria in the Equalities Impact Assessment Report reference [EQUA740](#) dated June/2022 in advance of consultation with the local Ward Councillor(s).

If the initial equalities impact assessment discovers any reason for further consideration a detailed assessment specific to the application will be carried out. A detailed assessment is likely to require an extended period for consideration so any such cases will be rejected at this point and the developer/applicant requested to allow additional time for consideration, should they wish to continue with that suggested name.

A report for Delegated Authority to name the street in accordance with the Ward Councillor(s) preference is prepared and passed to Legal Services and Finance for approval before final approval from the Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity

This is a change from current procedure in that reports currently are placed with the Cabinet Member for Transport. The change is proposed to rationalise procedure and speed the process as report approval can be lengthy. There are no financial implications for the addressing of properties as the developer is responsible for erecting street name plates. Adoption of new streets has already been considered under the planning application.

### 4.2.3. Alteration of an existing Street Name

The Public Health Act 1925 states the authority may alter the name of any street or part of street or may assign a name to any street to which a name has not been given. A Notice shall be posted at each end of the street or part of the street affected not less than one month before the making of a Street Renaming Order. Any person may appeal to the Magistrates Court within twenty-one days of posting of the notice.

This decision will be delegated to the Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity.

No additional criteria are proposed to be added to renaming an existing street.

Applications to rename an existing named street cause severe inconvenience to owners and occupiers of properties as all contacts and contracts holding that address must be notified and changed. Businesses must change stationery and web sites. In some instances, this is recorded as a change of address which may affect an individual's credit rating. For this reason, two-thirds of the interested parties must agree to the change of an existing street name.

Applications to rename an existing named street must give detail of the reason for the change and evidence actual problems caused by the current street name. Such applications must be accompanied by written evidence of the agreement of two-thirds of people resident, managing a business, or with a legal interest in property, on that street.

The local Ward Councillor(s) will be consulted on the suggested new name for the street.

A report for Delegated Authority to name the street in accordance with the Councillor(s) preference (if a choice is available) is prepared and passed to Legal Services and Finance for approval before final approval from the Assistant Director, Transport & Connectivity.

#### 4.2.4. Alteration of a Street Name due to Redevelopment

The most common reason for renaming part of a street is where a redevelopment scheme changes the existing road layout and position of junctions. Under the British Standard for Addressing, BS\_7666, properties must be addressed into the street last used to gain access. Generally street names change at a junction. If the junction moves, then it no longer makes sense for the original street name to be used. Due to the legal status of streets, an Order must be made to rename in these instances. An example is shown at Appendix B

### 4.3. Approved list of Street Names

Occasionally suggestions are received for names on non-specific schemes. A process is proposed for the recording, checking, consultation and approval of such suggestions which will be added to a list of pre-approved street names, appropriate for use in specific geographic areas of the Council. The list will be made available to developers who do not have an acceptable suggestion available.

The availability of pre-approved street names will speed the processing of applications. In 2009 the Council held a consultation exercise for the public to suggest new street names for inclusion on the existing list which received a Best Practice Award from the National Address Custodian Exemplar Awards. The current list is shown at Appendix A. Names which have been used are scored though. It is expected that this process will replenish and restore the list.

Suggestions of new street names for non-specific developments will be checked for compliance with the Council's policy and eligible suggestions will be passed to the relevant Local Ward Councillor(s) for consultation.

A process will also be available to consider names of people deceased less than 25 years, which will increase the number of suggestions from newly settled communities. Such suggestions will not be accepted for specific developments, which require consideration within one month. This exception process will allow more time for consideration.

Where such suggestions are for names after people who have been deceased less than the required 25 years, the local Ward Member(s) will be consulted and asked to vouch for the suitability of the individual to be commemorated in this way. Consultation will require consideration of the reason for suggesting commemoration; the individual's good character; any outstanding achievements.

All suggestions for new street names for non-specific schemes which meet the Council's policy will be included in an annual report to the Cabinet Member for Transport.

The pre-approved list will be made available to developers with insufficient knowledge of the area of their development to make relevant suggestions.

## 4.4. Recording of Street Name Decisions

Street naming is an executive function of the Council and all reports and background papers must be available for inspection at the Authority offices and on the Authority website with the exception of private reports. Decisions will be available for public inspection on the Council's website.

As soon as practicable after a SNN decision is taken by an Officer with delegated authority from the executive, the Officer must produce a written record of the decision containing the date, the decision taken, reasons, details of any alternatives considered and rejected and whether any elected member has declared a conflict of interest.

Written records of decisions and reports that must be available for public inspection must be retained in perpetuity.

## 5. Property numbering

### 5.1. Property Numbering Policy

**Birmingham City Council uses the Data Entry Convention (DEC) to BS 7666-2:2006 for Addressing in discharging its powers and duties to number properties. The contents of the National Best Practice for Street Naming and Numbering will also be incorporated in Birmingham's practices as it is released.**

**All new properties, regardless of use, must be numbered by the Council. This includes new build properties and conversions of existing property; residential, commercial and industrial.**

**All properties will be numbered into the street last used to gain access to the main entrance. Numbers will be allocated incrementally according to the location of the new property on that street. Infill development will be allocated numbers in sequence with the existing properties surrounding them. Where necessary suffixes will be used.**

**Buildings in a single use will be given a number (the Primary Address) and a street name.**

**Buildings which are split internally for separate uses or separate occupiers will be subject to numbering of the self-contained units within the building (the Secondary Address), with reference to the (Primary Address) number of the building into the street.**

### 5.1.1. Numbering Sequences

Generally properties along a street will be allocated odd numbers on the right, even numbers on the left unless numbering in the immediate vicinity differs from this rule. Numbering will commence at the start of the street. The start of the street is considered to be:

- at its junction with a street;
- or if the street runs between two existing streets, at the more major of those streets;
- or if both streets are of equal importance then at the end of the street closest to the nearest town centre

Numbers will only be dropped to allow for future potential development.

Properties on a cul-de-sac may be numbered consecutively if there are fewer than 10 properties and no scope for future development from the cul-de-sac.

Where the existing retained numbering is consecutive, this pattern will be reflected in new numbering on the same street.

## 5.2. Property Numbering Procedure

### 5.2.1. Applications

Applications may be made on an electronic form or a paper form and submitted electronically or by post.

Applications will be checked for completeness, compliance with policy and acknowledged. An expected date of supply of addresses will be given.



Numbering of properties onto a new or existing street, and numbering of sub-divisions of a building, is delegated to the Address Custodian and Team.

### 5.2.2. New-build developments

Numbering will be odds on the right, evens on the left.

Numbers may be dropped for future infill development.

Infill developments will be numbered in sequence with the surrounding properties. If there are insufficient numbers for the properties being built, suffixes will be used.

Certain letters will not be used for suffixes, i.e. I, J, L, O, Q, Z. Depending on the font used, these letters can be confused with numbers: 1, 0 and 2

Where the use of suffixes is deemed excessive or confusing alternative identification of properties will be considered.

### 5.2.3. Flats and Apartments

Where a new block of flats is constructed, the building will be allocated a number to the street and the internal flats will be numbered in a logical manner according to the layout of the building. Numbering on the ground floor will commence at the main entrance. On upper floors numbering will commence at the main stair core. Where certain floors are accessible by a secondary stair core only, numbering will commence from this stair core.

Where the building contains a single continuous corridor flats will be numbered to the right and left in order of approach.

Where there are multiple internal corridors numbering will begin from the main entrance or the main stair core and proceed clockwise around the corridors.

Where a block of flats has multiple entrances, each entrance having separate corridors then each entrance will be numbered separately, and the flats accessed therefrom will be addressed into this door number.

Where a building has multiple entrances but continuous corridors then the main entrance will be numbered, and all flats addressed into this door number.

Flats may be addressed with the prefix of Flat or Apartment and be consistent within the building and/or development. Studio and Penthouse are to be avoided.

#### 5.2.4. Commercial buildings.

Commercial buildings must be subject to numbering.

Numbering sequences will be as per residential premises. Where commercial premises have an entrance directly to a street, they will be allocated a number into that street. If there are insufficient numbers within the existing sequence suffixes will be used.

Where premises are subdivided internally a logical numbering sequence will be applied according to the internal layout of the building and the order in which units are approached

#### 5.2.5. Industrial buildings

Industrial buildings must be allocated a number onto a street.

It is not acceptable for industrial buildings to be addressed by the occupier's name alone.

#### 5.2.6. Public Buildings

Where possible new public buildings will be allocated a number to the street. Where no appropriate number is available or use of a number would cause confusion, the building will be named. This will include schools, places of worship, leisure facilities and other public buildings.

#### 5.2.7. High-Rise buildings

Buildings containing more than 10 self-contained units on one floor and are more than five storeys high may be numbered hotel style: e.g. on the ground floor would be flats G1 to G12; on the first floor, flats 101 to 112 ; on the second floor, flats 201 to 212 etc.

#### 5.2.8. Building Conversions

Building conversions will be numbered internally in a logical manner according to circulation within the building and the order in which the individual units are approached. In buildings containing a single internal corridor, units will be numbered to the right and left in the order they are reached. Where there are multiple internal corridors units may be numbered circulating clockwise in the order units are reached.

Units may be addressed with the prefix of Flat, Apartment, Unit, Studio (commercial use), or Suite (commercial use) and be consistent within the building and/or development.

### 5.2.9. Naming of Buildings

In rare circumstances buildings may be allocated a name but must always include the number in addressing. Where a name is required this must be submitted with the application. For example, the official address of The Rotunda is

The Rotunda, 150 New Street, Birmingham.

Where all existing properties on a street have names and no numbers, then a name only may be considered. However, numbers will always be offered and are recommended for use. In rare instances there is little documentation of early addressing and the original numbering pattern maybe obscured by later unofficial additions. In rare cases it may be necessary to issue a name only, but every attempt will be made to issue a number.

Names of buildings should have a link which has an historical, geographical, or cultural to link to the area. Buildings should not be named after living people.

Building names must not include punctuation or promote commercial purposes.

## 5.3. Recording of Numbering Decisions

Numbering is an executive function of the Council and all reports and background papers must be available for inspection at the Authority offices and on the Authority website with the exception of private reports. Decisions will be available for public inspection on the Council's website.

As soon as practicable after a SNN decision is taken by an Officer with delegated authority from the executive, the Officer must produce a written record of the decision containing the date, the decision taken, reasons, details of any alternatives considered and rejected and whether any elected member has declared a conflict of interest.

Written records of decisions and reports that must be available for public inspection must be retained in perpetuity.

## 6. Fees

Fees will be charged for applications and reviewed annually. Our existing fees can be found [here](#).