



Applications for dual language street signs for Knock Eden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Wynchurch Road, Sicily Park, Upper Knockbreda Road, Annandale Crecent, Kingsberry Park and Ardenlee Court

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Subject: | Applications for dual language street signs with the second language in Irish for Knock Eden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Wynchurch Road, Sicily Park, Upper Knockbreda Road, Annandale Crecent, Kingsberry Park and Ardenlee Court. |
| Date: | 7 th October 2025 |
| Reporting Officer: | Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control |
| Contact Officer: | Ian Harper, Building Control Manager ext 2430 Alan Mayrs, Principal Building Control Surveyor, ext. 2428 |

Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?

Yes

☐

No

☒

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number ☐

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision

After Council Decision

Sometime in the future

Never

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |

| | |
|--|--|
| Call-in | |
| Is the decision eligible for Call-in? | Yes <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|------------|--|
| 1.0 | Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues |
| 1.1 | To consider if a street survey of occupiers will be carried out for eight applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish within the city where potential adverse impacts have been identified by the initial assessments and/or elected member objections |
| 2.0 | Recommendation |
| 2.1 | <p>1. Members are asked to consider the report and matters raised in relation to the applications for dual language street signs in Irish received for Knock Eden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Wynchurch Road, Sicily Park, Upper Knockbreda Road, Annandale Crecent, Kingsberry Park, Ardenlee Court and either:</p> <p>a) Agree that surveys of occupiers of these streets be carried out.</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Agree that no surveys will be carried out on the grounds of the potential adverse impacts identified and that these applications are closed.</p> |
| | Main Report |
| 3.1 | <p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The power for the Council to consider applications to erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.</p> <p>Initial Assessments</p> <p>The Dual Language Street Sign policy states that “<i>each application will be subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs and where any adverse impacts are identified that information will be brought to Committee.</i>”</p> <p>The initial assessments were carried out for all the streets listed and potential adverse impacts were identified in relation to the following streets: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knock Eden Crescent • Willowfield Gardens • Sicily Park • Upper Knockbreda Road • Annandale Crecent <p>Draft equality screenings were therefore carried out, assessing the request for dual language street signs in Irish for Knock Eden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Sicily Park, Upper Knockbreda Road and Annandale Crecent for equality and good relations issues.</p> <p>The screenings have identified that the carrying out of surveys and the erection of Irish language street signs in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension.</p> |

| | |
|------|--|
| | <p>Conversely the screenings also identified that the process could assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. The findings are outlined in the equality and good relation section below.</p> <p>Objections from Elected Members</p> <p>Objections have also been received from elected members for the following streets during the elected member notification procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wynchurch Road • Annandale Crecent • Kingsberry Park • Ardenlee Court <p>Details of the objections are as follows: -</p> |
| 3.7 | |
| 3.8 | <p>Wynchurch Road - Cllr Davy Douglas, member for Lisnasharragh raised an objection stating: -</p> <p><i>“Wynchurch is a mixed area close to the Cregagh estate and Flush Park, both traditional unionist areas. It is an area where people of both denominations live side by side without issue. I feel that the adoption of Irish street signage could be seen as divisive and have an adverse impact on good relations within the community, creating division where none currently exists. This has already been seen recently in Wynchurch Avenue where the street was surveyed twice, resulting in an increasing majority rejecting the proposal each time. Despite this, the views of the people who live in the street were ignored and dual language street signage was imposed against their wishes, damaging community relations in the process”.</i></p> |
| 3.9 | <p>Annandale Crecent, Kingsberry Park and Ardenlee Court – Cllr Bradley Ferguson member for Lisnasharragh raised an objection stating: -</p> <p><i>“While I fully respect the cultural traditions and identities of all communities in Northern Ireland, I believe the introduction of bilingual signage in Lisnasharragh is divisive, unnecessary, and does not reflect the wishes of the majority of residents in the area. Lisnasharragh is a diverse and shared space and introducing street signs that are strongly associated with one particular political and cultural identity risks undermining community cohesion and alienating those from a different background.</i></p> |
| 3.10 | <p><i>Public consultation should play a central role in decisions of this nature. However, I have serious concerns about the consultation process, particularly around the weighting of responses, the level of local engagement, and whether it genuinely reflects the majority opinion in each affected street. The interests of the whole community must be taken into account – not just those of activists or lobby groups.</i></p> |
| 3.11 | <p><i>The Irish language is, for some, a deeply valued part of their cultural heritage. However, for others, it is seen – fairly or not – as a political symbol. As such, I strongly believe that street signage should remain neutral and inclusive to foster a shared future for everyone in Belfast.</i></p> |
| 3.12 | <p><i>I urge the council to prioritise policies that promote inclusivity and mutual respect rather than those that risk increasing division”</i></p> |

| | |
|------------|---|
| 3.13 | <p>These applications are therefore being brought to Committee to determine if surveys of residents of these streets will take place, considering this information.</p> <p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> |
| 3.14 | <p>If it is decided to carry out surveys, the resulting tasks are included within existing resources and budgets for the process.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> |
| 3.15 | <p>An EQIA was carried out on the main Dual Language Street Signs policy in 2021-22. This confirmed the initial assessment process to be carried out, which may indicate the requirement for equality screening.</p> |
| 3.16 | <p>The applications for dual language street signs (with the second language in Irish) at Knock Eden Crescent, Willowfield Gardens, Sicily Park, Upper Knockbreda Road and Annandale Crecent were assessed for equality of opportunity and good relations issues through the initial assessment process. This process identified that the potential for adverse impact existed and recommended further screening prior to referral to committee for authority to proceed to survey.</p> |
| 3.17 | <p>The draft screenings have identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore has the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It is acknowledged; however, the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.</p> |
| 3.18 | <p>The applications were also presented to elected members as part of the elected member notification procedure and objections were received from Cllr Davy Douglas with regard to Wynchurch Road and from Cllr Bradley Ferguson with regard to Annandale Crecent, Kingsberry Park and Ardenlee Court. The members were concerned about the potential for adverse impacts on good relations with full details of their objections in paragraphs 3.5-3.15 above.</p> |
| 3.19 | <p>The council retains 'residual discretion' in relation to these applications. In effect this gives elected members the option to not proceed to survey and/ or halt the erection of an Irish language street sign in this street where, in the view of elected members taking into account the agreed criteria, this action would be considered inappropriate.</p> |
| 4.0 | Appendices |
| 4.1 | None |