



<b>Subject:</b>	Proposal for dual language street signs at Wynchurch Avenue
<b>Date:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> October, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager Roisin Adams, Property and Legal Coordinator

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</b>	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Information relating to any individual</li><li>2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual</li><li>3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)</li><li>4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter</li><li>5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained</li><li>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</li><li>7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime</li></ol>	
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider the results of the resurvey of residents in Wynchurch Avenue relating to an application for the erection of dual language streets signs in Irish. Members are reminded that

	the decision to resurvey the occupiers of this street was approved at a Committee meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> June 2023 and subsequently ratified by full Council on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2023.								
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>								
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consider the contents of this report and determine if a second street nameplate in Irish is to be erected at Wynchurch Avenue.</li> </ul>								
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>								
	<u>Key Issues</u>								
3.1	The Council may erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English pursuant to Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.								
3.2	Members are asked to consider the following application to erect a second street nameplate showing the name of the street expressed in a language other than English. The second language is Irish.								
3.3	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>English Name</th> <th>Non- English Name</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Persons surveyed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Wynchurch Avenue, BT6 OJP</td> <td>Ascaill Wynchurch</td> <td>Off Rosetta Road, BT6</td> <td>113</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed	Wynchurch Avenue, BT6 OJP	Ascaill Wynchurch	Off Rosetta Road, BT6	113
English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed						
Wynchurch Avenue, BT6 OJP	Ascaill Wynchurch	Off Rosetta Road, BT6	113						
3.4	The translation was authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.								
3.5	At the meeting of the Council's People and Communities Committee on 13 <sup>th</sup> June, the Elected Members considered the application from an occupier of Wynchurch Avenue to erect a street nameplate in Irish, in addition to the English name. The original survey of occupiers for this application took place between 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 and 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 and obtained the following results:								
3.6	<p><b>Original Survey – 113 Occupiers Surveyed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 occupiers (17.70%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>30 occupiers (26.55%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li> <li>4 occupiers (3.54%) had no preference either way.</li> <li>59 occupiers (52.21%) did not respond to the survey.</li> </ul>								

3.7	Exercising the residual discretion afforded to it, the Committee decided that a resurvey of the occupiers of the street should be carried out and this decision was ratified by full Council on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2023.
3.8	A resurvey of Wynchurch Avenue took place between 8 <sup>th</sup> August 2023 and 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 and the outcome is reported below.
3.9	In accordance with the Council's policy for the erection of dual language street signs, surveys of all persons appearing on the electoral register plus owners or tenants in actual possession of commercial premises, on Wynchurch Avenue were carried out and the following responses were received.
3.10	<p><b>Re-survey – 113 Occupiers Surveyed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 17 occupiers (15.04%%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li><li>• 32 occupiers (28.32%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.</li><li>• 2 occupiers (1.77%) had no preference either way.</li><li>• 62 occupiers (54.87%) did not respond to the survey.</li></ul>
3.11	<p>One survey response which was not in favour of the erection of the dual language street sign was received after the survey closed on 4<sup>th</sup> September. This is not included in the figures above; however, it is a matter for members to determine whether they should take this representation into account and the weight to be attached to it.</p> <p><b><u>Assessment against policy</u></b></p>
3.12	The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate requires that at least fifteen percent (15%) of the occupiers surveyed must be in favour of the proposal to erect a second street sign in a language other than English, to progress to Committee for consideration.
3.13	The re-survey for Wynchurch Avenue demonstrates compliance with the threshold contained within the Policy. However, the Committee is reminded that the Council retain a residual discretion under the Policy to decide to erect or not to erect a street sign in a language other than English in certain circumstances. This will be done on a case-by- case basis.

3.14	<p>The Policy states that it may be appropriate to depart from the procedures in this Policy when there are clear reasons for doing so. This may include taking into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the views of the Occupiers of the street;</li> <li>(b) the results of the initial assessment for the application, including any identified potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs;</li> <li>(c) consideration of the local context of the application;</li> <li>(d) any other Council policies or strategies related to the application; and</li> <li>(e) all material considerations relating to the application.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></b></p>
3.15	<p>There is a cost of approximately £570 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of approximately 4 dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.</p> <p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b></p>
3.16	<p>Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs.</p>
3.17	<p>The initial assessment and elected member notification carried out for the Wynchurch Avenue application did not identify any potential adverse impacts to prevent the surveys being carried out.</p>
3.18	<p>One resident in favour of the dual language nameplates sent a letter raising concerns for the attention of the People and Communities Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023 following the Committee decision on 13<sup>th</sup> June to resurvey Wynchurch Avenue. They believed that a new canvass of residents would likely see more votes against bi-lingual signage, and it is profoundly undemocratic. They are of the opinion “that the practice of “recall” votes initiated by Committee is likely to have a chilling effect on future applications for bilingual signage”.</p> <p>They allege that “the committee believes the anti-Gaelic talking point that a supplementary sign is a sectarian marker rather than, as the rest of the world believes, evidence of tolerance and pluralism.”</p> <p>The council received comments on three returned survey forms.</p>
3.19	<p>One resident who responded in favour of the dual language sign has stated “please do not ignore our vote and make us do this a third time”.</p>

3.20	<p>Another resident from Wynchurch Avenue who is not in favour of the dual language name plate has concerns about the cost of the sign and feel that it is a waste of money. They are happy for a second sign as long as it's not public money and feel that those who really want it should pay for it.</p>
3.21	<p>A resident who is not in support of the dual language name plate said that this was an inclusive mixed area where both communities have coexisted beside each other. While they support the rights on those who use the Irish language, they do not see the benefit of the change, and feel it will add nothing except to single out the street.</p>
3.22	<p>Another resident provided a letter addressed to the Elected Members regarding this application. They raised concerns that the majority of voting residents do not want the signs erected, that people live in the street due to the fact that it is mixed, and that the erection of the signs would create an opportunity for a sense of unease in a street where people live in harmony.</p>
3.23	<p>They also raised concerns that the street could become a target for those who oppose the signs, that erecting signage reflecting one or other community is divisive and unnecessary, and that the money could be used much more effectively.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
	None