



Subject:	Dual Language Steet Signs Applications - Proposal to Re-Survey 20 Streets Impacted by a Postal Issue and Survey Response Time Extension.
Date:	9 th September 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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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 <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. 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 matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

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Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No
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1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider a proposal to re-survey 20 streets being processed under the dual language street signs policy which were affected by postal issues and to consider an extension to survey response times which may be impacted by delivery schedule changes.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to agree to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The re-survey of 20 streets where residents' returns have been impacted by a postal service issue. • To extend the survey response times to 21 days from the current 14 days for all applications going forward to reduce impact of delivery schedule changes for second class post (Initially one month on policy implementation)
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p><u>Re-survey of 20 Streets</u></p>
3.2	The Director of Planning and Building Control provided an update to members at the People and Communities Committee on 5 th August regarding an issue which affected the return of dual language street sign surveys using prepaid envelopes.
3.3	An account suspension applied to BCC Royal Mail account between 15 th April 2025 and 17 th July 2025 has impacted a number of survey returns being processed and delivered to BCC by Royal Mail. It is unclear and we have been unable to ascertain to date when this suspension resulted in letters being held by Royal Mail. During our account suspension the Royal Mail Delivery Centre held 375 surveys. In addition, a number of surveys had been internally transferred to their National Returns Centre for return to sender (residents).
3.4	Whilst we have received all the survey returns held by the Royal Mail Delivery Centre and are continuing to receive surveys from the National Returns Centre we are unable to obtain accurate numbers for the surveys which were sent back to residents. A small number of residents have contacted BCC directly to advise they had received their survey back. This involved the surveys of Rosetta Avenue, Skegoneill Avenue and Victoria Road.
3.5	Officers have been closely monitoring the returns and have been able to identify 20 Streets which have been impacted by this issue. Given the unknown number of surveys that have been returned to residents and the inability to obtain accurate figures from Royal Mail, officers consider the only option to ensure fully accurate survey results would be to carry out a re-survey of these streets. This re-survey has been extended to any streets where we consider there is the potential for results to have been affected by residents returns. This analysis took into consideration streets we have received held mail from the Delivery Centre and National Returns Centre, and those streets where surveys were returned to the residents.
3.6	The list of these streets and the number of surveys involved in the re-survey are listed in Table 1 below which will follow the same process as the original survey. Return will be by prepaid envelope for all surveys in line with existing processes.

3.7

Table 1 - List of Streets to be Re-Surveyed

Street	No of Surveys to be Re-Issued
Lagmore Downs	152
Upper Dunmurry Lane	173
Rosetta Avenue	87
Wellesley Avenue	122
Skegoneill Avenue	242
Victoria Road	173
Burmah Street	70
Delhi Street	123
Lismain Street	53
Sunningdale Gardens	145
Donegall Park Avenue	205
Mill Valley Gardens	22
Alexandra Gardens	47
Appleton Park	130
Oldpark Road	757
Woodland Avenue	34
Lagmore View Crescent	45
Cliftondene Gardens	93
Colinvale	244
Bearnagh Drive	187
Total Number of surveys	3104

3.8

As part of the re-survey, correspondence will be included providing an explanation to residents of the reason for the re-survey and that any existing returns from the original survey expressing a preference in respect to the proposal will not be counted.

Review with Royal Mail

3.9

Officers have used the information available at present in the proposal above. The account has now been confirmed as operational, and a review is ongoing internally within BCC. To facilitate this, we are working to establish a senior contact within Royal Mail to discuss this matter to ensure that this issue cannot happen in the future, it is proposed that a further update report will be brought once this review is complete.

Survey Response Times

3.10

Royal Mail second class postal services have changed their delivery schedules which include discontinuing Saturday deliveries and implementing a weekday rotation schedule. These changes took effect on July 28, 2025.

The breakdown of these changes is as follows:

- Second-class letters will no longer be delivered on Saturdays.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second-class mail will be delivered on a two-week rotating schedule: Week 1: Monday, Wednesday, Friday; Week 2: Tuesday, Thursday.
3.11	The revised dual language street signs policy indicates that replies should be received with one month. At a meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 24 th March 2023 it was agreed to reduce the response times for surveys to 14 days. However, given the reduced delivery schedules 14 days may now not be sufficient to allow all residents to have their preferences lodged within time.
3.12	Members are asked to consider the proposal to increase this time period to 21 days for all surveys moving forward, which officers believe will have minimal impact on the processing of applications and should not create any delays.
	<u>Financial and Resource Implications</u>
3.13	The cost for the re-survey of the 20 streets will be covered by existing budgets. Dedicated existing staff working on the current process will process the new surveys.
3.14	There are no costs or resource implications associated with increasing the survey response times to 21 days.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.15	None
4.0	Appendices
	None