



Subject:	Proposals for dual language street signs
Date:	4 th March 2026
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
Contact Officer:	Ian Harper, Building Control Manager, ext. 2430 Heather Wylie, Property and Legal Coordinator, ext. 2464

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	
Sometime in the future	
Never	

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

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues																														
1.1	To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for six existing streets within the city.																														
2.0	Recommendation																														
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree to the erection of a second street nameplate in Irish at Onslow Gardens, Kimberley Street, Stormont Park, St Johns Place, Indiana Avenue and Mountainview Drive.																														
3.0	Main Report																														
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u> 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.</p>																														
3.2	Members are asked to consider the following applications to erect dual language street nameplates 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>Onslow Gardens</td> <td>Gairdíní Onslow</td> <td>Off Cregagh Road, BT6</td> <td>115</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kimberley Street</td> <td>Sráid Kimberley</td> <td>Off Sunnyside Street, BT7</td> <td>139</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stormont Park</td> <td>Páirc Chnoc an Anfa</td> <td>Off Upper Newtownards Road, BT4</td> <td>83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Johns Place</td> <td>Plás Eoin</td> <td>Off St Johns Avenue, BT7</td> <td>38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Indiana Avenue</td> <td>Ascaill Indiana</td> <td>Off Cavehill Road, BT15</td> <td>78</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mountainview Drive</td> <td>Céide Radharc an tSléibhe</td> <td>Off Mountainview Park, BT14</td> <td>67</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed	Onslow Gardens	Gairdíní Onslow	Off Cregagh Road, BT6	115	Kimberley Street	Sráid Kimberley	Off Sunnyside Street, BT7	139	Stormont Park	Páirc Chnoc an Anfa	Off Upper Newtownards Road, BT4	83	St Johns Place	Plás Eoin	Off St Johns Avenue, BT7	38	Indiana Avenue	Ascaill Indiana	Off Cavehill Road, BT15	78	Mountainview Drive	Céide Radharc an tSléibhe	Off Mountainview Park, BT14	67
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3.4	The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.																														
3.5	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 for the above streets were carried out and the following responses were received.																														
3.6	<p>Onslow Gardens, BT6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 occupiers (25.22%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 41 occupiers (35.65%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 1 occupier (0.87%) had no preference either way. 																														
3.7	A resident telephoned to question why the 15% threshold is so low.																														

3.8	A resident made a comment on their survey that they have no objection to anyone learning or using Irish but see no need for street signs in Irish when virtually everyone using the street speaks English and only a small minority understand Irish. They also commented that they could not understand how 15% can lead to approval.
3.9	A resident sent a letter to the department stating that they believe the policy has the effect of deploying Irish as a device to mark out territory in an already divided city. They also believe Onslow Gardens is a mixed area and wish it to remain a place with a warm welcome for all residents. The resident further takes issue with the dual language process and questions what engagement the Council has attended or convened to ascertain local feelings and circumstances.
3.10	<p>Kimberley Street, BT7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 occupiers (18.71%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 11 occupiers (7.91%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
3.11	A resident emailed to say that they do not believe the policy represents a good use of council resources. They state that existing street names are long established, neutral and function effectively for residents.
3.12	<p>Stormont Park, BT4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 occupiers (15.66%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 56 occupiers (67.47%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
3.13	A resident sent a letter to the department to say that they believe 15% to gain approval is not democratic and feel that the dual language application is politically motivated.
3.14	A resident made a complaint expressing opposition to the proposed changes to street name signage and objecting to the 15% threshold, which they believe lacks legitimacy and is purpose built to create division and resentment, not foster community cohesion. They urge the council to reconsider and review the policy as a matter of fundamental democratic principle and to replace it with a process that is fair, legitimate and truly representative of the will of the community.
3.15	<p>St Johns Place, BT7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 occupiers (39.47%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 6 occupiers (15.78%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
3.16	<p>Indiana Avenue, BT15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 occupiers (47.43%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 1 occupier (1.28%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 1 occupier (1.28%) had no preference either way.
3.17	<p>Mountainview Drive, BT14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 occupiers (41.79%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.

3.18	<p><u>Assessment against policy</u></p> <p>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.</p> <p>All the surveys listed above demonstrate compliance with the threshold contained within the Policy.</p>
3.19	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>There is a cost of approximately £2800 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of the dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.</p>
3.20	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>Each application for a dual language street sign is subject to an initial assessment and an elected member notification process to identify any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs.</p> <p>The initial assessment for Onslow Gardens identified that the carrying out of the survey had the potential to cause adverse impacts on the grounds of good relations. This application was subsequently screened and the draft screening identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in this street had the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore had the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It was acknowledged however the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. The elected member notification carried out for Onslow Gardens did not identify any potential for adverse impacts. The application was presented to Committee in April 2025 prior to survey in line with the agreed process referencing the initial assessment and screening and the street was approved for survey by Committee and full Council.</p> <p>The initial assessment for Kimberley Street identified that the carrying out of the survey had the potential to cause adverse impacts on the grounds of good relations. This application was subsequently screened and the draft screening identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in this street had the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore had the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It was acknowledged however the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. The elected member notification carried out for Kimberley Street did not identify any potential for adverse impacts. The application was presented to Committee in April 2025 prior to survey in line with the agreed process referencing the initial assessment and screening and the street was approved for survey by Committee and full Council.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices</p>
	<p>None</p>