



Subject:	Proposals for dual language street signs which have been identified as long streets
Date:	9 th June 2026
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
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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	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Yes No

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	
1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider applications for the erection of dual language street signs for two existing streets within the city which have been designated as long streets in line with the policy.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>1. Members are asked to consider the Dual Language Street Sign survey results for Donegall Park Avenue and Oldpark Road which have been identified as “long streets” in line with Policy and either:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Agree that dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish be erected along the full length of the streets.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Agree that dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish be erected in specified locations within the streets taking into consideration the breakdown of survey results along the length of the street and the current/proposed street sign locations shown on maps provided.</p> <p>2. Members are further asked to note the survey results for Skegoneill Avenue which failed to meet the 15% threshold in favour of a proposal to have dual language street signs with a second language in Irish erected and agree to this application remaining closed.</p>
3.0	Main Report
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	Members are reminded of the Committee report in March 2025 which sought approval to survey Oldpark Road, Donegall Park Avenue and Skegoneill Avenue. These streets were identified as ‘long streets’ in line with policy during the initial assessment process which also identified the potential for adverse impacts in relation to the carrying out of the survey.
3.2	<p>In relation to long streets the policy states as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>‘Consideration will to be given to “long streets” where opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the street. In these circumstances, the decision as to the erection of dual language nameplates in certain portions of the street will be made by Committee, exercising its residual discretion and taking into account advice from officers.’</i></p>
3.3	The Committee agreed that, in respect of the applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish for Oldpark Road, Donegall Park Avenue, and Skegoneill Avenue, that surveys of occupiers of those streets should be carried out with further analysis of the results using the proposed approach for “long streets” as set out in the report.
3.4	Surveys were carried out on all three streets in line with policy and both Oldpark Road and Donegall Park Avenue met the 15% threshold of occupiers in favour of the proposal at survey to have dual language street signs erected with the second language in Irish.
3.5	Accordingly, 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.

3.6

English Name	Non- English Name	Location	Persons surveyed
Donegall Park Avenue	Ascaill Pháirc Dhún na nGall	Between Antrim Road & Shore Road, BT15	205
Oldpark Road	Bóthar na Seanpháirce	Between Ballysillan Road and Crumlin Road, BT14	756

3.7

The translations were authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.

3.8

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.

3.9

Donegall Park Avenue, BT15. Survey conducted between 6th November 2025 to 3rd December 2025

- 74 occupiers (36.10%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
- 53 occupiers (25.85%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
- 2 occupiers (0.98%) had no preference either way.

3.10

One person commented that they have concerns about erecting dual language signs at the bottom of the Avenue as it would cause conflict or incite vandalism.

3.11

Oldpark Road, BT14 Survey conducted between 9th December 2025 to 14th January 2026.

- 136 occupiers (17.99%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
- 58 occupiers (7.67%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate.
- 5 occupiers (0.66%) had no preference either way.

3.12

One person commented that the upper part (of the Oldpark Road) is a Unionist area and is part of UK.

3.13

One person commented that the section of the Oldpark Road which starts at the bottom junction with Crumlin Road and the top section at the junction of Ballysillan Road are Unionist areas. In relation to the middle section (The Bone) they have no objection to dual language signage being erected. The person believes the survey process causes friction and upset between Catholics and Protestants. They also believe money will be wasted as the street signs will be damaged.

3.14

One person commented that the Oldpark Road is long and covers a large area. They noted that the bottom and top ends of the Oldpark are Unionist/Loyalist and the middle section (The Bone) is Nationalist/Republican. They also note that the area towards the top end is of mixed religion. They note that it would be a waste of money to erect dual language signs at the top and bottom of the road as they will be vandalised.

Additional Survey Analysis

3.15

As previously agreed by Council, additional analysis of the results of the surveys has been carried out by officers to confirm any difference of opinion in readily identifiable sections, of the street in line with the policy consideration outlined at 3.3 in the report.

3.16	<p>Members can review this analysis which is represented on maps within Appendix A (Donegall Park Avenue) and Appendix B (Oldpark Road). Based on this analysis Members are asked to consider if all the signage locations identified should be replaced with dual language streets signs with a second language in Irish. Alternately members can decide if only specific signs should be replaced / erected and confirm these locations.</p> <p><u>Application Not Meeting Overall Threshold at Street Survey</u></p>
3.17	<p>Skegoneill Avenue, BT15 Survey conducted between 16th October 2025 to 12th November 2025. 242 persons were surveyed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 occupiers (11.98%) were in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 43 occupiers (17.77%) were not in favour of the erection of a second street name plate. • 1 occupier (0.41%) had no preference either way.
3.18	<p>The current policy on dual language street signs states as follows: -</p> <p><i>“If the minimum threshold of fifteen percent is not met, the Applicant will be given two weeks to advise the Council of any special circumstances in relation to the application. If such special circumstances relate to the processing of a survey, the Strategic Director of Place and Economy, in conjunction with the City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services will determine whether such exceptional circumstances exist to refer the matter to Committee. Where exceptional circumstances relate to matters other than the processing of a survey, the matter will be referred to Committee. If there are no special circumstances, the application will end.”</i></p>
3.19	<p>In this regard the applicant was advised by letter that Skegoneill Avenue failed to meet the threshold and was given two weeks to provide details of any special circumstances pertaining to the application. This correspondence was issued on 14th November 2025 with a deadline of 28th November 2025. No correspondence detailing any special circumstances was received.</p>
3.20	<p>Therefore, given that the survey for this street did not meet the minimum 15% threshold to be considered for approval by committee, and that no exceptional circumstances were raised, no further analysis was carried out, and the application was closed.</p>
	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.21	<p>If all the signage in Oldpark Road and Donegal Park Avenue are to be replaced there will be a cost of approximately £2490 to cover the manufacture and erection of the dual language street signs. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.22	<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>
3.23	<p>The initial assessment for Donegall Park Avenue, Oldpark Road and Skegoneill Avenue identified that the carrying out of the surveys had the potential to cause adverse impacts on the grounds of good relations.</p>
3.24	<p>These applications were subsequently screened and draft screening identified that the carrying out of surveys in themselves 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.</p>

3.25	It was acknowledged, however, that the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. It also determined that the streets met the definition of "long streets" contained in clause 3 (X) of the policy, in that opinion on whether to have a second language street sign may differ between readily identifiable, substantial lengths of the streets.
3.26	The elected member notification carried out for Donegall Park Avenue, Oldpark Road and Skegoneill Avenue did not identify any potential for adverse impacts. The applications were presented to Committee prior to survey in line with the agreed process referencing the initial assessment and screening and the streets were approved for survey by Committee and full Council.
4.0	Appendices
4.1	Appendix A – Survey Results for Donegall Park Avenue Appendix B – Survey Results for Oldpark Road