

Extract from minutes of:

PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

11th January, 2022

Matters referred back from the Council/Motions

**Item referred back - Erection of Dual
Language Street Sign at Clifton Street**

(Ms. N. Largey, Divisional Solicitor, and Mr. I. Harper, Building Control Manager, attended in connection with this item.)

The Committee considered the undernoted report:

“1.0 Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues

1.1 To consider the dual language street sign application for Clifton Street.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to:

- consider the report and decide to approve or refuse the application based upon the updated survey results.

3.0 Main Report

Key Issues

Background

3.1 The Clifton Street dual language street sign application was considered under the existing Street Naming and Numbering policy.

Policy:

3.2 For the Clifton Street application, based on the information taken from the electoral register, and site checks of commercial properties, 12 surveys were originally issued, to both residential and commercial properties. 10 were hand delivered. 2 survey forms were posted through Royal Mail as they could not be hand delivered due to no letter box or no one present.

3.3 On review of the processing of this application, it was noted that two occupiers who had signed the initial petition had not been surveyed as their properties were deemed to be vacant at the time

officers carried out their physical inspection of the street. However, it now appears they are in fact occupied.

- 3.4 At the committee meeting on 9th November members agreed to survey these two occupiers and asked that a report be brought back to December committee.
- 3.5 Survey forms were hand delivered to these two properties, with an explanation on the survey to confirm the decision of committee, and that these surveys were being carried out without prejudice, pending ratification at December council meeting.
- 3.6 At December committee members agreed to defer considering the application until the deadline for the surveys to be returned had passed and the results finalised. The deadline has passed and of the two additional surveys, one survey form was returned, and one was not. These occupier's preferences are reflected in the revised percentage totals in the report.
- 3.7 In addition, following the agreement at the committee meeting on 9th November a survey form was also re-issued by post to the secretary of Belfast Orange Hall, a property on the street. This property was originally surveyed by post and was declared a non-return and therefore the occupiers were deemed not be in favour of a dual language street sign in accordance with the policy. This survey has since been returned and is reflected in the revised percentage totals.

3.8 **Application details**

English Name	Non-English Name	Location	Applicant	Persons surveyed
Clifton Street	Sráid Clifton	Between Carrick Hill, BT1 and Carlisle Circus, BT14	Carrick Hill Residents Association	14

- 3.9 The translation was authenticated by Queens University, the approved translator for Belfast City Council.

Results for survey carried out for Clifton Street

- 3.10 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 carried out and the following responses were received.
- 3.11 A revised number of 14 surveys have now been issued in total, 12 hand delivered and 2 posted using Royal Mail. The revised results are:

- 9 occupiers (64.3%) were in favour of the erection of a second street nameplate
 - 1 occupier (7.1%) had no preference either way
 - 2 occupiers (14.3%) were not in favour of the erection of a second nameplate
 - 2 occupiers (14.3%) did not respond to the survey
- 3.12 The Council's policy on the erection of a second street nameplate establishes a threshold of two thirds (66.6%) of the occupiers on the street surveyed being in favour of the proposal is sufficient to erect a second street sign in a language other than English.
- 3.13 In this instance 64.3% of occupiers were in favour of erection of dual language street signs. The Committee does have discretion in exceptional circumstances to approve an application notwithstanding the fact that the threshold is not met. On 17th December officers wrote to the applicant to advise that the application does not meet the two thirds threshold and has been asked whether there are any exceptional circumstances which warrant departure from the policy. The applicant has responded to confirm that there are no exceptional circumstances in relation to this application. Members will be aware that a new street naming dual language policy is currently being consulted on and that the threshold under that policy would be met.

Provision of street signs

- 3.14 The practice on siting the street signs is to identify those that exist on the street, and these are either added to or replaced to reflect the street name in a second language, as approved. The position of the street signs on Clifton Street are as follows:
- Junction with North Queen Street – on metal railings
 - Junction of Westlink on-slip (north) – wall mounted to bridge
 - Junction of Westlink on-slip (south) – wall mounted to bridge
 - A sign on railings at the junction with Carlisle Circus was damaged and is not currently in place.
- 3.15 If the Committee was minded to exercise its discretion to grant this application, as per standard practice the dual language street signs would be erected at the locations at which the current street signs are located. Committee will note that none of the existing street sign locations set out in paragraph 3.14 are on or immediately beside the Belfast Orange Hall building.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 3.16 There is a cost of approximately £450 to cover the cost of the manufacturing and erection of the dual language street signs in the current locations. The cost for these street signs has been allowed for in the current budget.

**Equality or Good Relations Implications/
Rural Needs Assessment**

3.17 There are no direct equality/rural needs implications.”

Moved by Councillor Magee,
Seconded by Councillor Garrett,

“That the Committee agrees to use its discretion to approve the application for the erection of dual language street signs on the basis that, one participant had no preference either way, and if this response were to be excluded from the results, the threshold of two-thirds would be met, in addition, there was nothing specific in the current policy relating to an occupant stating no preference.”

A Member stated that she did not think it was appropriate for the Committee to use its discretion to approve the application, as it did not meet the requirements of the Council’s current street naming policy. She stated that the threshold had not been met and therefore there were no exceptional circumstances to support the application.

On a vote, twelve Members voted for the proposal and four against and it was declared carried.