



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Applications for dual language street signs for Ballysillan Road, Ebor Street and Sunningdale Park North</b>
<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
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<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>
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1.1	To consider if a street survey of occupiers will be carried out for three applications for the erection of dual language street signs for a street within the city where potential adverse impacts have been identified and objections have been received from elected members.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	<p>Members are asked to consider the report and objections raised in relation to the applications for dual language street signs received for Ballysillan Road, Ebor Street and Sunningdale Park North and either:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) Agree that surveys of occupiers of these streets be carried out.</p> <p>or</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b) Agree that no surveys will be carried out on the grounds of the potential adverse impacts identified and these three applications are closed.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u> The power for the Council to consider applications to erect a second street nameplate in a language other than English is contained in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995.</p> <p>3.2 The Dual Language Street Sign policy states that “each application will be subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs. This assessment will commence when the application is received and where any adverse impacts are identified that information will be brought to Committee.”</p> <p>3.3 The initial assessments were carried out and potential adverse impacts were identified. Draft equality screenings were therefore carried out, assessing the request for dual language street signs in Ballysillan Road, Ebor Street and Sunningdale Park North for equality and good relations issues.</p> <p>3.4 The screenings have identified that the carrying out of surveys and the erection of Irish language street signs in these areas could cause community tension, as outlined in the equality and good relation section below.</p> <p>Objections to the applications were also raised by Elected Members.</p> <p>3.5 Ballysillan Road - Oldpark DEA member Cllr Jordan Doran raised an objection stating “Ballysillan is an over-whelming Unionist community, and I have strong concerns that the proposal to add an Irish street name to Ballysillan Road would have a strongly negative impact on community relations within the area.”</p> <p>3.6 Ebor Street – Botanic DEA Cllr Tracy Kelly raised an objection stating “We must not forget that this is a strong unionist community, and this will not be welcomed at all. My fear is that it will greatly impact community relations and cause upset when it is not necessary.”</p> <p>3.7 Sunningdale Park North – An objection was raised to this application by Court DEA member Cllr Ron McDowell stating “The area has been settled for a few years now after some tensions around parading and flags etc. The flags having been curtailed and the parade passing quietly and peacefully again for the first time in a few years. This is a predominantly Unionist area and I do fear a tinderbox effect if these signs are to be erected where they are not wanted.”</p>

3.8	While Cllr McDowell is not a DEA member for Castle in which this street falls, this objection has been included for consideration by committee.
3.9	These applications are therefore being brought to Committee to determine if surveys of residents of these streets will take place, considering this information.
	<u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u>
3.10	If it is decided to carry out surveys, the resulting tasks are included within the normal resources for the process.
	<u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.11	An EQIA was carried out on the main Dual Language Street Signs policy in 2021-22. This confirmed the initial assessment process to be carried out, which may indicate the requirement for equality screening.
3.12	The request for dual language street signs (in the Irish language) for Ballysillan Road, Ebor Street and Sunningdale Avenue were assessed for equality of opportunity and good relations issues and the applications for the streets were presented to Elected Members through the notification process. On this occasion objections were raised stating that due to the fact that these are Unionist communities the proposals may lead to a negative impact on community relations within these areas.
3.13	The applications were subjected to an initial Section 75 assessment to determine what impact the potential erection of dual language signs might have in the areas surrounding these streets. A full screening process was carried out to address the issues associated with carrying out a survey and the placing of street signs in these streets.
3.14	The draft screenings have identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in these areas could cause community tension, as could the erection of the street sign and therefore has the potential to cause an adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It is acknowledged; however, the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.
3.15	Cllrs Doran, Kelly and McDowell have raised potential for adverse impacts on good relations grounds through objections received during the Elected Member notification procedure as outlined above.
3.16	The council retains 'residual discretion' in relation to these applications. In effect this gives Elected Members the option to not proceed to survey and/ or halt the erection of an Irish language street sign in this street where, in the view of Elected Members taking into account the agreed criteria, that this action would be considered inappropriate.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices - Documents Attached</b>
4.1	None