



Subject:	Applications for dual language street signs with the second language in Irish for Ormeau Road, Delhi Street, Whitewell Road, Victoria Road, Upper Dunmurry Lane, Burmah Street, Upper Newtownards Road, Sunningdale Gardens, Donegall Road and Belmont Avenue
Date:	4th March 2025
Reporting Officer:	Kate Bentley, Director of Planning and Building Control
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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

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider if a street survey of occupiers will be carried out for ten applications for the erection of dual language street signs in Irish within the city where potential adverse impacts have been identified by the initial assessments. Objections have been received from elected members for two of these streets with further representations from the community regarding another street.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>1. Members are asked to consider the report and matters raised in relation to the applications for dual language street signs in Irish received for Ormeau Road, Delhi Street, Whitewell Road, Victoria Road, Upper Dunmurry Lane, Burmah Street, Upper Newtownards Road, Sunningdale Gardens, Belmont Avenue and either:</p> <p>a) Agree that surveys of occupiers of these streets be carried out.</p> <p>or</p> <p>b) Agree that no surveys will be carried out on the grounds of the potential adverse impacts identified and these applications are closed.</p> <p>2. Members are also asked to agree that the application for Donegall Road is closed on the basis of the agreement at SP&R in October 2023 that dual language street signs would only be erected in the section of Donegall Road within the Gaeltacht Quarter boundary between the Falls Road and the Broadway roundabout. Note signs have now been erected on this section of road.</p>
	Main Report
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>
3.2	The Dual Language Street Sign policy states that <i>“each application will be subject to an initial assessment for any potential adverse impacts on equality, good relations and rural needs and where any adverse impacts are identified that information will be brought to Committee.”</i>
3.3	The initial assessments were carried out for all the streets listed and potential adverse impacts were identified. Draft equality screenings were therefore carried out, assessing the request for dual language street signs in Irish for Ormeau Road, Delhi Street, Whitewell Road, Victoria Road, Upper Dunmurry Lane, Burmah Street, Upper Newtownards Road, Sunningdale Gardens, Donegall Road and Belmont Avenue for equality and good relations issues.
3.4	The screenings have identified that the carrying out of surveys and the erection of Irish language street signs in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension. Conversely the screenings also identified that the process could assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity. The findings are outlined in the equality and good relation section below.

3.5	Objections to the applications for Ormeau Road and Donegall Road were also raised by Elected Members during the elected member notification procedure.
3.6	<p>Ormeau Road – Cllr Davy Douglas, member for Lisnasharragh raised an objection stating: -</p> <p><i>“Ormeau Road is a mixed community and progress has been made in recent years around issues with flags in the area. I feel that the adoption of Irish street signage could be seen as divisive and have an adverse effect on good relations within the community, undoing some of the progress that has been made. I would therefore ask that the Council exercise its discretion not to apply its policy at this location”</i></p>
3.7	<p>Donegall Road – Cllr Tracy Kelly, member for Botanic raised an objection stating: -</p> <p><i>“The Donegall Road splits in two, it is my understanding that the Nationalist side is already approved for Irish Language and Cllrs agreed that the Unionist side would be left as is due to the sensitivities.</i></p>
3.8	<p><i>I would like to raise my objection to the Unionist side of the Donegall Road having Irish language street signs as this is a strong unionist area that will totally object this proposal, I believe any consultation may raise tensions and create division in a community that has recently just settled down after a spate of serious ASB and rioting”</i></p>
3.9	<p>Members are further advised that the Donegall Road was discussed at an SP&R meeting as part of the proposal to erect dual language signs in Irish within the Gaeltacht Quarter. At a meeting on 20th October 2023, it was agreed “that those streets which form the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter also be included as part of the area, with only that portion of the Donegall Road within the boundary of the Gaeltacht Quarter, as set out in the appendix to the report, to be included”. This was ratified at full council.</p>
3.10	<p>In this regard dual language street signs with a second language in Irish have already been erected on the portion of the Donegall Road which runs from the Falls Road to the Broadway Roundabout.</p>
3.11	<p>Based on this decision and given that dual language street signs have now been erected within the GQ section of Donegall Road, members are asked to confirm that the application for Donegall Road be closed.</p>
3.12	<p>Further to objections raised for the two streets above and following the member notification for Sunningdale Gardens the Director of Planning and Building Control received 19 emails from residents of Sunningdale Gardens and the wider local community. These emails expressed concerns about the application for this street and the negative impact on good relations which would be created by the installation of street signs in Irish.</p>
3.13	<p>These applications are therefore being brought to Committee to determine if surveys of residents of these streets will take place, considering this information.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>
3.14	<p>If it is decided to carry out surveys, the resulting tasks are included within the normal resources for the process.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>

3.15	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.
3.16	The applications for dual language street signs (with the second language in Irish) for Ormeau Road, Delhi Street, Whitewell Road, Victoria Road, Upper Dunmurry Lane, Burmah Street, Upper Newtownards Road, Sunningdale Gardens, Donegall Road, and Belmont Avenue were assessed for equality of opportunity and good relations issues through the initial assessment process. This process identified that the potential for adverse impact existed and recommended further screening prior to referral to committee for authority to proceed to survey.
3.17	The draft screenings have identified that the carrying out of a survey in itself in these areas has the potential to give rise to community tension, as could the erection of the street signs and therefore has the potential to give rise to adverse impact on the grounds of good relations. It is acknowledged; however, the process could alternatively assist in promoting cultural and linguistic diversity.
3.18	The applications were also presented to Elected Members as part of the Elected Member notification procedure and objections were received from Cllr Davy Douglas with regard to Ormeau Road and from Cllr Tracy Kelly with regard to Donegall Road. The members were concerned about the potential for adverse impacts on good relations with full details of their objections in paragraphs 3.5-3.8 above.
3.19	Emails from the residents and wider local community were received regarding the application for Sunningdale Gardens which expressed concerns about the potential for negative impact on good relations caused by the installation of street signs in Irish.
3.20	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, this action would be considered inappropriate.
4.0	Appendices - Documents Attached
4.1	None