

Street naming and numbering policy

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Introduction

Luton Borough Council is the authority responsible for the street naming and numbering process. This is to ensure that new street names, property names and property numbers are given logically and consistently. Avoiding duplication and ensuring that finding a property is effective and efficient. This policy outlines the guidelines for this process.

Street naming and property numbering underpins the local land and property gazetteer, the councils address database. This data is used throughout the council, but also feeds into national land and property gazetteer that many organisations rely on. It is essential that the information is correct and that all parties who need the information are notified on time.

The council recognises that street naming and property numbering is a key role that must be properly funded to provide the community with a robust and reliable service. The service is an application-based procedure, which requires a cost recovery fee to be paid, the amount of which will depend on the numbering of properties involved. Please refer to the council's website for details of the latest charges.

Where street and building names or numbers have been set up without reference to us, we have the authority to issue renaming and renumbering orders.

New street and building names suggested will be considered by the authority and street names will be subject to consultation process with the appropriate stakeholders such as ward councillors, primarily to avoid duplication or confusion arising from use of similar names in proximity but also fitting the naming conventions.

For avoidance of doubt, it should be noted that the council has the legal responsibility to ensure that streets are named, and properties are numbered. Therefore, the council has the power to approve or reject property and street names that are given by developers. This power extends to commercial property as well as domestic properties. Legislation to support this statutory power is outlined in section 2.

Ensuring the council has a comprehensive street naming and numbering policy is important because we want to make sure:

- emergency services can find a property quickly, delays can cost lives and money
- mail is delivered efficiently
- visitors can easily find where they wish to go
- there is reliable delivery of services and products such as gas, electricity and water
- service providers have up to date and correct records. Poor record keeping is only a disadvantage to the customer
- the council will bill the right person, in the right property, at the right time for council tax and national non-domestic rates
- to keep correct records for electoral registration, legal transactions and provisioning better delivery of services

Royal mail assigns all postcodes in the UK. Luton Borough Council will notify royal mail of every new street name, new addresses, and address amendments as part of street naming and numbering process, who will confirm the postcode with us.

Legislation

Luton Borough Council has responsibility for assigning names to streets and buildings and numbers to buildings in the borough, under powers granted by the following acts of parliament:

- Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 (sections 64 and 65) (for numbering of properties and street naming)
- section 21 of the Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907 (for alternation of names of streets.)
- Public Health Act 1925 (sections 17 to 19) (for notification of street names and name plates.)
- for naming, adoption of section 18 of Public Health Act 1935 causes section 21 of the Public Health Acts Amenity Act 1907 automatically to cease to apply. Adoption of section Improvement Clauses Act 1847 to cease to apply.

Under delegation authority, the address and street custodian have power to approve the following:

- naming of new streets and paths
- renaming existing streets, this is normally only considered when changes occur which give rise (or likely to give rise) to addressing problems, especially for the emergency services and/or the inclusion of more development
- giving house numbers to properties that only have a house name. This function is conducted largely for public safety reasons
- any other schemes requiring addresses put forward, at the discretion of the street naming and numbering team

Applications for street and building naming and numbering

The application will be the notice to the council from the applicant, who will need to be the freeholder of a property, or on behalf of the freeholder. The following documentation is needed:

- the completed street naming and numbering application webform
- if applying on behalf of the freeholder, we would need consent from the freeholder
- planning application number, street naming and numbering can only be administered subject to detailed or reserved matters planning approval, without this an address will not be given.
- plans (1:1250 maximum) clearly showing the street to be named, if applicable, and the individual properties to be numbered. The plan should show the main external entrance to each property, clearly marked in a distinct colour to the rest of the plan.
- internal layout plans showing the plot numbers with each application showing the location of the streets or building affected by the naming or numbering application.
- building regulation number, once available to show that work has begun
- the proper fee

Charges are applicable for all applications requiring street names or new or amended property names or numbering. Please refer to the council's website for details of the latest charges.

Consultation and notification

The council's local land and property gazetteer will be checked to avoid duplication of road names, to ensure the correct spelling of road names and to ensure the proposal meets with current best practice guidance issues by central government.

The council has the sole right to decide on a name if we give interested parties proper notice in which to register an objection and that any objections received are fairly considered.

Street naming and numbering team will consider suggestions for street names and will conduct an internal search to find duplication of names and approved names will be put forward for consultation with ward councillors before going ahead with the allocation of road names.

Street naming and numbering team will consider suggestions for building names and will conduct an internal search to find duplication of names and only unique names will be approved.

Consultation letters will be sent to occupiers if there is a proposed change of road name, and later notification letters should the name change go ahead.

If any suggested street names are received from residents, ward member may request the matter be brought before the proper delegated officer.

Notification of all new street names, new addresses and address amendments are sent to the council's electoral registration, revenues and benefits and waste teams, as well as royal mail, land registry, the valuation office, ordnance survey and the blue light services.

Street naming conventions

A developer who creates a new street name must give notice to the council of their intentions. The proposed names should be given by a street naming and numbering webform.

A new street should consist of a minimum of three properties (subject to exclusion in rural areas). Smaller developments will be addressed onto the road from which they are accessed, or as seen proper.

Communication relating to new streets should be through the street naming and numbering team to prevent conflict with council procedure.

The street naming and numbering team may reject a proposed street name for a variety of reasons. Should this happen and nothing suitable can be found, the street naming and numbering team will propose a name to be used. The decision of the team is final.

Choice of names

Developers are encouraged to preserve any historical link to the land which they are developing, such as field names the land may be previously known as, or earlier property names found on site such as farm names or any other associated historic link.

The use of names of living persons will be rejected for naming of streets and buildings.

Naming of streets and buildings after deceased persons is no longer allowed and will be rejected.

The use of a name with royal connotations. The consent of the lord chamberlain's office must be obtained if a name with any reference to the royal family or the use of the word 'Royal' is suggested.

If a 'local' name is unsuitable, there is no reason any attractive name cannot be chosen. Where considerable number of roads are involved, a theme linking the names can be used to help find the area, taking care not to repeat a theme already being used locally.

Cal-de-sacs accessed off a no-through road often require long descriptive 'leading to' nameplates. In these cases it is recommended just one street name be used to describe all the roads that are linked to form a no-through road.

Where a new road is an extension of an existing road, it is not normally necessary to give that section a new name. The extension would still have to be registered formally through the street regularisation process.

The use of multiple street name suffixes so that the names can be used more than once (Orchard Drive, Orchard Close) or particularly long names are not acceptable as these can cause problems with automation of addresses and form filing. The council will not accept similarly spelt or similar

sounding names where they already exist in an area and will recommend strongly multiple street name suffixes in an area or particularly long street names.

Duplication of street and building names in the same area or within proximity of another parish or town is not permissible.

The developers are recommended to contact the council to find a suitable marketing name for the development prior to the official street name registration process. Marketing names that have no connection to the local area or have prior approval will be rejected as the official name.

New building or street names should not begin with “the” or “a”.

The north, east, south or west (as in Alfred Road South) is only acceptable where the road is continuous and passes over a major junction. It is not acceptable when the road is two separate parts with no vehicular access the two. In such as case, one half should be completely renamed.

Street names that include numbers are avoided as they can cause confusion, for example 20 Seven Foot Lane sounds the same as 27 Foot Lane.

Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell.

The use of names and their combination with numbers that could be easily vandalised or changed into any of the above, for example, “Canal Turn” will be rejected.

The use of names that can be constructed to be used for advertising or commercial gain will not be accepted.

The use of names that cause spelling or pronunciation problems will not be accepted.

The use of names and their combination with numbers that could be considered rude, obscene, or inflammatory, or which would contravene any aspect of the council’s equal opportunities policies are not used, nor are names that encourage defacing nameplates.

Names that have religious or cultural associations should be avoided for residential properties and organisational names with religious and cultural associations can be used for non-residential units but will not form part of the official address.

Street name suffices are not always essential for major roads (for example, “Broadway”), but if used must be descriptive of the road. The following is a list of road name suffixes. This is by no means exhaustive, and sometimes other descriptive words may be more proper. The council will decide the most proper suffix to use:

- street
- road
- way
- avenue
- drive
- grove
- lane
- chase
- croft
- gardens
- place
- crescent
- court/close
- square

- hill
- circus
- vale
- rise
- row
- wharf
- mews

All new pedestrian way should end with the following suffixes:

- walk
- path
- way

All new building names should end in one of the following suffixes:

- house
- court
- lodge
- apartments
- mansions
- point
- tower/heights

The list above is not exhaustive, so please contact the street naming and numbering team if you would like to use a different word in your street or building name.

Numbering sequence

The council has the power to assign numbers to houses and buildings 'as they think fit' and require the number to be displayed (sections 64 and 65 Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847). All properties will be given a number unless there are exceptional circumstances.

There will be no sanction given to the avoidance of any numbers (number 13) for any reasons (superstitious, religious beliefs) and a proper sequence shall be kept.

Convention requires number '1' to be on the left-hand side of the road. Through roads are numbered odds and evens in the direction they will be accessed from the centre of the town or community. Convention is to number odds on the left and evens on the right when travelling away from the town centre. However, numbering also depends on the layout of the development and roads.

For flats the internal numbering begins with the first property to the left of the main entrance and continues in a clockwise direction. This process continues next levels from the first property to the left of the main access point for that level.

Cul-de-sacs are usually numbered sequentially in a clockwise direction starting with number '1' on the left-hand side of the entrance at some time in the future and where it is appropriate, we will number the sides odds and evens rather than sequentially to allow the numbering scheme to be extended at a future date.

If open space or development areas exist along a length of road it is usual to leave spare numbers. As a guide, one number per 4m frontage is used. The street naming and numbering team will leave from this convention at their discretion. Open spaces can be used to allow numbers either side of a road to be brought in line with each other.

If suitable numbering sequence cannot be found, temporary house names will be assigned to plot numbers until the numbering can be decided later.

It is recommended that a building consisting of at least six 'sub buildings' (flats, units) be given a name in addition to a street number. These names should not be derived from the street name that the building is found on, nor should it duplicate any names in the same area, or within proximity of another parish or town.

A property consisting of flats with internal front doors will be lettered (Flat 1 to 8 xx Street and not Flats a to h xx Street; nor 13a to 13h). However, a property consisting of flats, each with a door fronting the street will be given proper suffix – 13a, 13b, 13c.

Infill plots, properties built between existing properties or in the grounds of an existing property, will be given the same house number before the infill followed by suffix of 'a', 'b'. For example, 13a, 13b. The only exception to this is if an infill is built before number '1' (or number '2' on the evens side). In this instance, and if proper, a suffix to number 1 would be used 1a.

Commercial premises that consist of multiple units will be given unit numbers in addition to their street number, unit 1, 13 and unit 2, 12.

Two buildings in one street may not have the same number, name, or similar naming.

Private garages and similar buildings used for housing cars, and such like, will not be numbered.

Buildings on corner plots are numbered with the street where pedestrian access is gained.

If in fill plots are added to a proposed development later, due to a revised layout, these plots will be given existing numbering suffixes of 'a', 'b'. For example, 13a, 13b.

When properties are merged the existing numbering sequence will not be kept. Appropriate numbering is issued by street naming and numbering team based upon the principal entrance point.

Renumbering existing properties or renaming a street

Renumbering existing properties and buildings or renaming streets may cause costs and or disruption to individual occupiers and where possible should be avoided. For new developments within an existing street the use of suffixes, 'a', 'b', or renumbering where just a few properties are affected, is preferable to wholesale renumbering of a large street. However, this is not always possible, and the renaming of streets and renumbering of properties will be at the discretion of the street naming and numbering team.

Consultation is conducted with ward members and affected property owners. If any representations to renaming or renumbering are received from residents, the ward member may request the matter be brought before the proper committee for its views. The street naming and numbering team will make the final decision as to whether the revised scheme is necessary.

Renumbering existing properties and buildings is normally only considered when changes occur which give rise (or are likely to give rise) to problems for the emergency services and the inclusion of more development. Before any consideration will be given to changing an existing scheme the following issues must be satisfied:

- there is a clear identified problem
- the problem cannot be overcome by reasonable displaying of property numbers or street names
- the problem can be fully resolved by renumbering property and or renaming streets following this procedure

- all occupiers on each street, whose properties are to be changed, are requesting the change or that over two thirds of the people on each street agree with the change.
- the change is practical and will have no detriment to any other property and will cause no conflicts

Sections 64 and 65 of Town Improvements Clauses Act 1847 allow a council to require buildings to be marked with numbers 'as they think fit'. There is no right of appeal or requirement for consultation. However, if there is a renumbering of properties the council will send notification letters to occupiers. The notification to occupiers should give a specific date on which the renumbering comes into effect. The council will normally allow eight weeks for the new number to be displayed.

Renaming a street is normally only considered in exceptional circumstances when changes occur which give rise (or likely give rise) to problems (emergency services).

An order of the council must be made for renaming. Where a street is to be renamed, notices will be displayed on that street under section 18 Public Health Act 1925 and will remain in place for at least 1 month before an order changing the name will be made. A copy of the order will be sent to the magistrates' court informing them of the proposed change. If an appeal is made, the council must wait until that appeal is heard.

When renaming a street, the residents will be notified as soon as possible. Once the new name is decided, occupiers will be informed a week before the new names comes into effect, (this will be at least six weeks from the date of the notice) to allow residents time to re-organise their personal correspondence and consider the need to seek advice from a solicitor regarding any change to their property deeds. Changes at once before Christmas will be avoided where possible.

Allocation of numbers to properties with only names

The council will consider requests from emergency services, ward councillors or members of the public to give numbers to properties, which only have names. Numbering is conducted on receipt of such a representation for public safety reasons.

Consultation is conducted with property owners. The street naming and numbering team will make the final decision.

After the numbering has been completed, occupiers will be sent a formal notice. The council will normally allow eight weeks for the number to be displayed.

Changing an existing name of a property

Whilst the council will always see to number properties, there are properties in the district that have not been numbered and are known officially by their property name. The council will only allow occupiers to change the property name with a suitable reason if there is no conflict with any other address.

The occupier must apply to change the name and the naming and numbering procedure must be followed.

Adding names to a property with an existing number

A name will be added to the official postal address providing there is no conflict with any other address. However, the property number must always be used in conjunction with the house name; the number must always be included and displayed (this request will only be considered after redevelopment of an existing building).

It is not allowed to unofficially change a property number, or a name approved by the custodian under Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 sections 64 and 65.

The occupier must apply to change or add the name, and the relevant procedure must be followed.

Claims for compensation

The council is not liable for any claims for compensation arising directly or indirectly from the naming of roads, renaming of roads, numbering, renumbering or properties, or non-acceptance of marketing names.

Decision and discretion

The council's decision is final for the naming of roads, renaming of roads, numbering, or renumbering of properties and it is at the discretion of the address and street custodian. However, in cases where the objections have been logged with the magistrates' court then the decision of the court will be upheld.

The council is not responsible for

Correspondence and deliveries not delivered to the correct address. Any complaints should be directed to relevant delivery or mail organisations customer services.

The address being unavailable on databases used by third parties, such as retail outlets (including internet-based ones) or satellite navigation systems.

Responsibility for displaying numbers and nameplates

It is the responsibility of the building occupiers to display the property numbers. The only requirement is that the numbers are adequately displayed, and the council does not have any specific requirements.

It is the responsibility of the developer to display street name plates. For exact specification, please contact the council's street services.

The council will assume responsibility for street name plates once the first sign has been positioned and where the street has been formally adopted as part of the publicly kept highway.

Definitions

All references to 'council' or 'the council' relate to Luton Borough Council.

All references to the 'occupier' relate to the person or persons responsible for paying council tax or business rates.

All references to the 'owner' relate to the freeholder recorded in the land registry title.

Any reference to a 'property number' may include a 'property name' where this is an existing situation where it is not practical to number the property.