

# Planning Committee

10.00 am, Thursday 7 August 2014

## Review of Policy and Criteria for New Street Names

Item number	7.2
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

### Executive summary

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The purpose of this report is to discharge the remit set by Committee on 15 May 2014 to carry out a review of the Charter and naming guidelines and report back to the next meeting. It seeks Committee's agreement to proposed amendments to the Statutory Addressing Charter and Council policy in relation to the naming of streets after people.

The report proposes changes to the naming policy for the use of deceased peoples' names, reducing the timescales after which a name is available for use, and introducing a mechanism by which names can be used earlier in exceptional circumstances. If approved, this revised policy will be implemented immediately and the relevant changes will be included in the next full review of the Statutory Addressing Charter.

### Links

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Coalition pledges	<a href="#">P44</a>
Council outcomes	<a href="#">CO19</a> , <a href="#">CO23</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	<a href="#">S04</a>

## Review of Policy and Criteria for New Street Names

### Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
1. agrees to continue the policy of not naming streets after living people;
  2. agrees to reduce the number of years after death that a name can be considered for use from 10 to 5 years;
  3. agrees that, should a name be suggested that does not meet the proposed 5 year criteria, that it should be referred to Development Management Sub-Committee for a decision; and
  4. agrees that this report discharges the remit set by the Committee's decision on 15 May 2014.

### Background

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- 2.1 The policy of The City of Edinburgh Council (and its predecessor) has always been to avoid naming streets after living people. This is due to the risk that public perception of a person may change as a result of events occurring after a name is used.
- 2.2 In addition, it has been the practice for over 20 years of not naming a street after a deceased person until a period of time has elapsed. This policy was formalised with the review of the Street Naming Charter in 2007, when the period was set at 10 years to create clarity and consistency.
- 2.3 On 15 May 2014, the Planning Committee determined that a new street be named after the footballer Lawrie Reilly who died in 2013. This was less than 10 years after his death and therefore did not comply with the policy.
- 2.4 At the same meeting, the Committee instructed that a review of the Charter and naming guidelines be carried out and reported back to the next meeting. This report discharges that remit.

### Main report

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- 3.1 The 10 year rule was introduced for two reasons: (1) to allow a respectful period of time to elapse before publicly proposing the use of a person's name, and (2) to address the risk that, following a person's death, the public perception of that person could change as a result of events that have taken place throughout their

lifetime. The current Council policy reduces this risk by setting a time period after which a name could be used.

- 3.2 This approach enables the Council to reduce the risk of having to rename a street in the future, causing disruption to residents and owners.
- 3.3 There have been recent examples in other local authority areas where streets named after living or recently deceased persons have had to be renamed, following a change in public perception of the person. This can bring reputational damage to a local area and have a disturbing impact on residents affected.

#### **Practice in Other Local Authorities**

- 3.4 A consultation was carried out with the other 31 Scottish local authorities on their policy with regards naming streets after people.
- 3.5 Of the 31 Councils approached 4 did not respond to enquiries.
- 3.6 Of the 27 Councils that responded, 21 have a similar policy to Edinburgh and only name streets after deceased persons. Out of these councils, none publish a specific time period after which a name becomes available for use.
- 3.7 However three of the councils have unofficial guidance regarding the use of names immediately following a person's death. The time after which they would use a person's name varies between 2 years and 10 years. Many councils leave the decision on whether to use a name to elected members and/or community councils.
- 3.8 Six local authorities have a policy where they will use the name of a living person for a street name.

#### **Proposed Changes to Guidelines**

- 3.9 It is proposed that the council policy of not naming streets after living people should remain.
- 3.10 The comparison with other local authorities suggests that a period of 10 years before considering the use of a person's name may be over-cautious and that the elapsed time before a name should be considered for use could be reduced. It is proposed that the elapsed time should be reduced from 10 years to 5 years. Names proposed prior to the expiry of the 5 year period would still be eligible for inclusion in the appropriate local neighbourhood street name bank for future use, subsequent to local verification.
- 3.11 This reduced timescale would still maintain a period of sensitivity following a person's death whilst enabling the Council to minimise any risks associated with the use of a person's name.
- 3.12 However, it is recognised that, on occasion, there may be particular circumstances that justify the use of a name before 5 years has elapsed. In these cases and where there is agreement between all ward councillors, it is proposed that the final decision is taken by the Development Management Sub-Committee.

## Summary

- 3.13 By reducing the time after which a name becomes available for use from 10 years to 5 years the proposed changes will increase the number of potential names. This would nevertheless continue to minimise the risk to the Council in the use of recently deceased person's names.
- 3.14 The proposed revisions also introduce circumstances where an exception to the criteria may be acceptable. These would allow for the use of a name immediately following a person's death, if there is an overwhelming support for the use of such a name and the proposal is supported by the Development Management Sub-Committee.
- 3.15 If approved, this revised policy will be implemented immediately and the relevant changes will be included in the next full review of the Statutory Addressing Charter.

## Measures of success

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- 4.1 The adoption of the proposed changes to the naming of streets after deceased people will increase the number of available names for use across the city currently held within the street name banks.

## Financial impact

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- 5.1 There is no financial impact to the Council amending the street naming policy and guidelines.

## Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

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- 6.1 There is an identified risk in naming streets after people. Naming streets in commemoration of a person is a risk, as information has the potential to come to light following their death, which would make the name and commemoration unacceptable to the public. This is a known risk, which is managed by introducing the timescale by which names can be used.

## Equalities impact

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- 7.1 The impacts of the report in relation to the Public Sector Equalities Duty and the ten key areas of rights have been considered. The report has no significant impact on the Council's three equalities duties or the ten areas of rights.

## Sustainability impact

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- 8.1 The proposals in this report have been considered in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties. Positive impacts were identified for
- Social Cohesion
  - Sense of Place

## Consultation and engagement

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- 9.1 Benchmarking was carried out against other Scottish local authorities regarding the use of people's names for new streets. This included identifying any policy, procedures and timescales by which other councils use the names of people for new street names.

## Background reading / external references

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- 1 Statutory Addressing Charter for the City of Edinburgh Council 2013 ([http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3555/statutory\\_addressing\\_charter](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3555/statutory_addressing_charter))
- 2 Street Naming Guidelines ([http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3554/street\\_naming\\_guidelines](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3554/street_naming_guidelines))
- 3 Report to Planning Committee 9 August 2007, Planning Charter : Statutory Addressing.

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## Links

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<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P44 Prioritise keeping our streets clean and attractive
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO19 Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards CO23 Well engaged and well informed – Communities and individuals are empowered and supported to improve local outcomes and foster a sense of community
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	SO4 - Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
<b>Appendices</b>	None
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