

The background of the slide features a large, faint, light blue watermark of the City of Vancouver coat of arms. The crest includes a crown with four maple leaves, a shield divided into four quadrants (top-left: a ship, top-right: a stag, bottom-left: a ship, bottom-right: a grizzly bear), and a banner at the bottom with the motto 'A NE FOR A'.

Agenda Item 13

Street Signs - Provenance Information

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Title: Street Signs - Provenance Information
Meeting: Executive
Date: 29 October 2019
Submitted By: Director of Development Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 At its meeting of 27 August, the Executive agreed, subject to a report on cost and practicality, that street name signs should identify in brief the provenance of the name, that this should apply to any future names and that there should be retrospective application, where possible and appropriate to do so. This report presents information on the cost, practicality and road safety implications of the proposal to add provenance information to street name signage.

2. Recommendation

Members are requested to:

- (1) Note that where signage is provided by a developer for new developments, there would be no further cost to the Council.**
- (2) Note that should the Council be required to provide such signage, the estimated additional cost of street name plates with additional provenance commentary, and the potential cost implications of introducing such signage retrospectively across the Council area.**
- (3) Note the potential additional resources required to research and verify provenance information where this is not known.**
- (4) Note the potential road safety implications arising from the introduction of additional signage information, and the potential dilution of the primary public safety consideration for street names to be readily identifiable, particularly in the event of an emergency.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Provision for street name signage is made under section 97 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, and the Council has defined a specific format for street name signage within housing developments. This is illustrated in the current sign layout, being the first example shown at appendix 1.
- 3.2 For new housing developments, the housing developer will provide street name signage as part of the Road Construction Consent for the development,

however the Council is then responsible for the repair, maintenance and replacement of the signage thereafter.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Whilst the cost for a developer to provide signage would not be borne by the Council, as it would be provided as part of the Road Construction Consent for a new development, the Council has undertaken replacement of some 97 street name signs over the last two years at an average supply cost of £55 per sign, with installation costs varying from £60 per sign for a simple wall mounted sign, to £280 for a post mounted sign requiring 2 posts and concrete footings. It is noted that these costs generally reflect street names captured in single line signage, as illustrated in the current sign layout at appendix 1. It is further noted that signage prices are determined by the number of letters and the sign material, with the Council's supplier noting a cost of £3.95 per letter (for a reinforced sign suitable for post mounting) and £2.95 per letter (for a wall mounted sign).
- 4.2 A sign incorporating provenance information would contain a second line of smaller text, around half the size of the principal text, as illustrated in the second example at appendix 1. The Council's current signage supplier has advised that the cost per letter of an additional line of smaller text would be similar to that of the primary street name lettering (£2.95 per letter or £3.95 per letter dependant on sign type), therefore the cost of supply per sign is likely to be double that of a sign to the current arrangement
- 4.3 A review of the Council's Corporate Address Gazetteer (CAG) records notes that there are some 2,500 street name records within the Council area, and whilst the number of signs naming these streets is not specifically recorded, each will have at least one sign, with many having multiple signs (for example either side of a road junction, and potentially each end of a through road).
- 4.4 The primary consideration for street naming and the related signage is public safety, ensuring that street names are readily identifiable, particularly in the event of an emergency. Research indicates that the greater the number of signs and/or information which drivers are presented with simultaneously (signage clutter), the greater the difficulty they are likely to have in assimilating the information presented. Research also indicates that this problem in dealing with information overload increases with age, therefore older drivers may suffer disproportionately if presented with too much information in a single location. Furthermore, research indicates that that there are two specific situations where the risk factor of sign clutter is at its highest: at junctions (where most of our street name signage is), and on long monotonous roads. The introduction of supplementary provenance information could, therefore, present a road safety issue, depending upon the number and location of both existing and any new signage proposed.

5. Implications

Financial

- 5.1 The Council has finite resources for managing and maintaining the road network and related assets, including signage. The retrospective introduction

of additional provenance information would be anticipated to double the supply cost of a typical street name sign from £55 to £110.

- 5.2 Whilst housing developers would provide signage for new developments at no cost to the Council, were the Council to replace retrospectively a single name plate to all streets recorded in the CAG, an estimate of total cost would be between £425,000 (if all were wall mounted signs at an approximate installed cost of £170) and £975,000 (if all were post mounted signs on new posts at an approximate installed cost of £390). It should be noted that wall mounted signs are generally replaced with post mounted versions, where practical, to remove the need to access and mount signage on privately owned property. The number of signs requiring replacement and the cost of doing so can be extrapolated based on the above figures. If more than one sign is required to be replaced in a street, the figures provided above will increase.

Resources

- 5.3 The current budget and staff resource to manage and replace street signage is modest (noting from section 4.1 that only 97 street name plates have been replaced in the last two years), and presently accommodated within existing resources delivering road maintenance services. Any significant signage replacement programme would require both additional budget and staff resources to implement.
- 5.4 Whilst provenance information for new developments is likely to be readily available, such information for existing street names is not held within the current CAG records, therefore any planned addition of retrospective provenance information would require that such information be researched and verified to ensure that there were no unintended consequences from the information being considered either incorrect or disputed. It is not clear how such information could be fully verified, given that there may be numerous and potentially differing views of the provenance of street name information.

Legal

- 5.5 Provision for street naming and the associated signage is made under section 97 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, and the Council has defined a specific format for street name signage within housing developments. The legislation is silent on the design and style of signage, other than to note that signage must be readily legible to members of the public. There are not considered to be any further legal implications.

Risk

- 5.6 As noted in section 4.4 the introduction of supplementary provenance information on street name signage could present a potential road safety issue, depending upon the number and location of existing signage, and the potential for drivers to be faced with dealing with information overload.

Equalities

- 5.7 Road safety research suggests that the matter of information overload, as noted in sections 4.4 and 5.6 above, may affect older drivers disproportionately.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 5.8 Whilst there are not considered to be any significant sustainability or environmental impacts as a result of the installation of street signage, it must be noted that the renewal or replacement of signage that has not yet reached the end of its useful life is not considered to be a sustainable action.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Should the Council be responsible for the installation or replacement of signage, the supply cost of a street name sign incorporating provenance information is expected to be approximately double that of one without such information.
- 6.2 Significant additional financial and staff resources would be required were the Council minded to implement a retrospective replacement programme.
- 6.3 The road safety implications of replacement signage would require to be considered in locations where signage information overload may be a factor.

Director of Development Services

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Falkirk Council standard street name sign layout, with variant illustrating additional information

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, as amended.

Appendix 1 – Standard and additional information sign layouts

