

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
24th August 2006

Street Naming & Numbering
Application to request a change of postal addresses
Numbers 8 and 9 Bewdley Grange, Kidderminster

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	A Better Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Managing the Local Environment
KEY PRIORITY:	Forward Planning
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Mrs Anne Hingley
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Rebecca Mayman – Ext 2554 Rebecca.Mayman@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Copies of letters received in response to consultation.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the recent consultation process relating to an application to change property addresses at 8 and 9 Bewdley Grange, Kidderminster and to decide whether to proceed with re-numbering.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.1 Approval be given to the re-numbering of numbers 8 & 9 Bewdley Grange to numbers 1a and 1b The Lea;
- 2.2 The Head of Planning Health & Environment be authorised to write to all consultation respondents to inform them of the Cabinet's decision.
- 2.3 The nameplate on The Lea indicating 'Bewdley Grange' outside number 8 Bewdley Grange be removed.
- 2.4 The Head of Planning, Health & Environment be authorised to negotiate appropriate out of pocket expense payments with the owners of 8 and 9 Bewdley Grange as set out in paragraph 6.1 of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This relates to the long-standing issue of residents reporting postal confusion arising from the numbering of the housing development at Bewdley Grange off The Lea, Kidderminster. The Forward Planning Section received a request for postal naming and numbering of the new development from the developers Antler Homes in late 2003. This was accompanied by a request to formally name the development "Bewdley Grange" in line with the developer's marketing strategy. Ward Councillors were consulted over the naming proposal and did not raise any concerns.
- 3.2 The new development was numbered in February 2004 and due to the lack of available postal numbers in The Lea, all the new properties were numbered into Bewdley Grange. This information was then included on the District Council's postal information circular along with the location plan of the development. This information was also passed on to Antler Homes prior to the circular being distributed and no concerns were raised over the numbering scheme. A location plan of the properties in relation to 8 The Lea is enclosed at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.3 During September 2004, a complaint was received from the occupier of 8 The Lea, Kidderminster stating that on several occasions his parcels had been delivered to 8 Bewdley Grange. The problem had arisen due to two of the new properties, which are directly accessed from The Lea, being numbered into Bewdley Grange. It was acknowledged that all low numbers within The Lea are in use, but that options would be for the houses to be known by their names only i.e. Chaddesley House, The Lea and Arley Lodge, The Lea; or that they could be renumbered as 1a and 1b The Lea. The occupant also stated that if renumbering was not feasible, that suitable and obvious signage needed to be erected to identify the houses as being part of Bewdley Grange.
- 3.4 The Forward Planning Section has devoted a lot of time including research, site visits, internal discussions and correspondence to this matter, dating from September 2004 to the present. Initially an attempt was made to resolve the situation by requesting that the residents at Numbers 8 and 9 Bewdley Grange change their addresses by dropping their house numbers as suggested by the complainant in the letter dated 26th August 2004. However, the occupants at Number 8 Bewdley Grange strongly opposed this proposal and the Council received no response from the residents at Number 9 Bewdley Grange. In light of this response it was felt that it would not be possible to insist that the residents change their addresses without their co-operation and that it would be best to try to resolve the situation with the erection of clear street signage.
- 3.5 The Street Scene Section of Cultural, Leisure and Commercial Services afforded a great deal of time erecting the appropriate signage in consultation with the developers. However, some problems were experienced with the erection of the agreed sequence of street nameplates, as the resident at 9 Bewdley Grange would not agree to the location of a nameplate outside their property.
- 3.6 The occupant at Number 8 The Lea has complained to the Local Government Ombudsman about the Council's failure to resolve this situation; the Council has responded to the Ombudsman saying that the local solution of considering an

application to re-number should be considered before the Ombudsman proceeds with an investigation.

4. FORMAL APPLICATION TO AMEND PROPERTY NUMBERING

- 4.1 Officers have endeavoured to resolve this issue without resorting to a formal application. However, due to the failure of the original request for the owners of numbers 8 and 9 Bewdley Grange to consider changing their address, consistent problems with the implementation of the street nameplates and a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman, as a last resort it was considered that the complainant should be invited to make a formal application to change the numbering scheme. The Council's policy in relation to this is set out at Page 6 of the Street Naming & Numbering Advice Policy (March 2006) and needs to be triggered by the person experiencing the difficulty.
- 4.2 The alteration of an existing street naming and numbering scheme is a discretionary power of Council under Section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847, and is considered as follows:
- The Council is obliged to take account of the effect of the alteration on statutory service providers, the emergency services and local residents.
 - The Council will only recognise an alteration to an existing street naming/numbering scheme in exceptional circumstances, where the proposed alteration is in the wider public interest, and not where it is only for the benefit of private individuals.
 - The proposed alteration of an existing approved scheme should take account of the DETR Circular 3/93 advice for convention in street numbering.

5. RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 A formal application to change the property numbering was received from the complainant on 13th May 2006. It stressed that the whole problem centres on the displaying of another number "8" on 8 Bewdley Grange, thus duplicating the house number.
- 5.2 Following the receipt of this application, consultation letters were sent to the recipients listed below:
- Royal Mail
 - Emergency Services
 - Utility Companies
 - All residents of The Lea, Kidderminster
 - All residents of Bewdley Grange, Kidderminster
 - Worcestershire County Council
 - Ordnance Survey
 - Coventry District Land Registry

5.3 The consultation letter set out proposals to amend the numbering scheme under Section 64 of the TICA, 1847 as follows:

- Chaddesley House, 8 Bewdley Grange, Kidderminster, Worcestershire. DY11 6JZ be amended to **Chaddesley House, 1b The Lea, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.**
- Arley Lodge, 9 Bewdley Grange, Kidderminster, Worcestershire. DY11 6JZ be amended to **Arley Lodge, 1a The Lea, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.**

5.4 The Consultation period ran for 28 days and the following responses were received. Copies of the consultee's letters are included for Members' information at Appendix 1 to this report.

Respondent	Summary of Response
Occupiers of 9 Bewdley Grange	Strongly object to the recent application. We have had only one problem with the emergency services and have not experienced any other disruption to our postal services. After two years it seems that more confusion will be caused by changing the addresses.
Occupiers of 1 The Lea	Strongly object to the proposed re-numbering system. Feel that changing to 1a and 1b will cause more confusion and possibly impact on my own postal service. Suggests that 8 The Lea should rename/renumber their property.
Fladgate Fielder Solicitors on behalf of the occupiers at 8 Bewdley Grange	<p>Strongly opposed to the proposed renumbering. There have been no instances of postal confusion in the past 12 months. The Council has made full provision for identifying the properties by providing additional street nameplates. This is more than adequate. The key point is that people are now familiar with the addresses of the properties and it appears that there is only one resident who is unhappy with the existing numbering. Rather than assisting, the Council would actually be making the position more difficult for those identifying the properties and prejudicing the interests of the residents.</p> <p>Further letter received on 17th July - the Council has received no overall majority of support for or against the proposed renumbering. There is not enough support to proceed with the renumbering. Any changes to the numbering will create a new sphere of confusion. In light of this the proposed re-numbering should not be implemented.</p>
Occupiers of 7 The Lea	Does not have objections to changing the addresses. However, the situation you are trying to resolve is caused by the incompetence of the Council in erecting the replacement street signs.

Respondent	Summary of Response
	He has experienced problems with people trying to locate 7 Bewdley Grange. New street signs placed at the junction by Nos. 5 and 8 The Lea indicating that "The Lea no's 6-8 5-21, would remove much of the confusion.
Occupiers of 6 The Lea	Welcomes the application to change the addresses. Trusts that the Council will insist that the plaque bearing No 8 on 8 Bewdley Grange, is removed, as this is the cause of all the confusion in the first place.
Occupiers of 9 The Lea	Would be delighted to see the proposed change of addresses. We have been caused stress and inconvenience by the occupiers of Arley Lodge, 9 Bewdley Grange continually stating their address as 9 The Lea, Kidderminster
Occupiers of 9 Bewdley Grange	Telephoned on 23 rd June 2006 to advise that they had signed a letter objecting to the proposed renumbering which their neighbour had prepared. They signed the letter without sufficient time to consider it fully as they were about to go on holiday. However, wished to inform us that they do not object to the renumbering and "are not bothered either way."
Royal Mail – Address Management	Confirms that Royal Mail has no objection to the change of address to 1A and 1b The Lea. If implemented then the postcode will change to DY11 6JY.
Head of Cultural, Leisure & Commercial Services.	We have attempted to assist the occupants of these properties with the erection of additional street nameplates, which had eased the problem, albeit not provided a total and satisfactory solution. Under these circumstances, I have no objection to the application for change of postal address.

- 5.4 The consultation period resulted in a varied response as the above table demonstrates. It is unfortunate that the responses demonstrate a lack of consensus in that three residents strongly object to the proposal and four (including the applicant) strongly support it. However, it is notable that no objections have been received from statutory consultees, including emergency services.
- 5.5 The objections by No.1 The Lea have been considered carefully, however, it is convention to number additional properties as "a", "b", etc; this is not uncommon in the district and does not appear to cause the problems which the occupant of No. 1 The Lea suggests. This has to be balanced against any alternative discrete numbering which would have to take the higher even or odd numbers beyond those already used in The Lea, which could cause even greater confusion. On balance, it is considered that 1a and 1b is the preferred approach.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As a consequence of re-numbering 8 and 9 Bewdley Grange, it is to be expected that the owners of these properties will suffer some expense in having to make consequential arrangements. It is recommended that the Council offer to meet these reasonable out of pocket expenses upon proof that they have been incurred under the following headings.
- Costs associated with notifying statutory undertakers, where these are not notified by Council officers, and financial providers by way of postage, telephone calls and any administrative charges.
 - Costs of amending house deeds, mortgage details and land registry (if not undertaken by Council officers) by way of postage, telephone calls and any administrative changes made by those bodies.
 - Costs of printing new letterheads and business cards.
 - Costs of removing and replacing new house number plaques.
 - Any other legitimate costs arising from service providers and/or regular correspondents where they are not notified directly by Council officers.
- 6.2 The above costs will be met from the existing Administrative and Street Naming & Numbering budget.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The legal implications of this report are covered within the Street Naming and Property Numbering Advice Policy under Section 64 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 If the Council chooses to make no change to the current situation then the occupant of No 8 The Lea will undoubtedly continue to pursue his complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman. If the Council re – numbers 8 & 9 Bewdley Grange their legal advisers may pursue a claim for compensation.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 There is no solution here which will satisfy everyone concerned. The current situation is unsatisfactory. Re-numbering numbers 8 & 9 Bewdley Grange with a postal address of The Lea is the most appropriate solution. Using 1a and 1b is the preferred numbering.

10. CONSULTEES

CMT
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Head of Cultural Leisure & Commercial Services

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Street Naming & Property Numbering Advice Policy (March 2006)

12. APPENDICES

Copies of letters received in response to consultation.