

**Decision Maker:** Renewal & Recreation Portfolio Holder

**For pre-decision scrutiny by the Renewal and Recreation PDS Committee**

**Date:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 2013

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** **INTRODUCING FEES FOR STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING**

**Contact Officer:** Jim Kehoe, Deputy Chief Planner  
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**Chief Officer:** Marc Hume, Director of Renewal & Recreation

**Ward:** (All Wards)

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1. Reason for report

1.1 At present, the Council does not charge for Street Naming and Numbering services unlike nearby Councils. This report proposes that a fee be charged due to the wider financial pressures on the Council. The fee would be set at a similar level to an adjoining Council.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 The Portfolio Holder agree to introduce the proposed fees for Street Naming and Numbering services with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 as set out in Appendix One.

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council:
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost One-off cost of software £5,000, to be met from existing budgets.
  2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost: Additional income of £25,000
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Planning
  4. Total current budget for this head: £1.881m
  5. Source of funding: Existing revenue budget for 2012/2013 and future years.
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## Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 2 FTE (directly)
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: additional 2 per week (to administer fees)
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## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 125 cases per annum
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### **3. COMMENTARY**

- 3.1 The Council is the street naming and numbering authority for the borough and ensures all roads are named and all properties are either numbered or named. Councils have the duty to name new streets being developed and check the proposed new names with the emergency services to ensure names are not duplicated or too similar to others to avoid problems being encountered if called to attendance. A valid postal address is necessary for the allocation of post codes from the Royal Mail and the supply of services from the utility companies. The database held by the Council's Address Management (Street Naming and Numbering) Team is the most accurate list of addresses held and is used by most sections within the council and has a commercial value.
- 3.2 Regular requests are received from residents and developers about a new address or name. In many cases there is a perfectly adequate address already in place but the applicant wishes to have what they consider to be a more desirable name or number. The time and resources required to resolve such issues, as well as to consult with the emergency services and the Royal Mail, can be substantial. At present there is no charge for this service and the cost of providing it falls to all Council tax payers.
- 3.3 Currently Bromley does not charge for street naming and numbering services but neighbouring authorities such as Bexley do charge. It is proposed to introduce a street naming and numbering scheme on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 to ensure the cost of providing the service is recovered from the service users and does not fall on the general Council Tax payer. The Address Management Team report that developers often expect to be charged when working in Bromley for the first time.
- 3.4 The charging schemes and amounts charged at present vary between different Councils although most use a basic unit charge and a lower charge for additional units. The charging scheme at Bexley is such a scheme and has been in operation since 2010. As the Bexley scheme has withstood the test of time and is already understood by local developers it is considered that a similar level of charging set out in Appendix One should be adopted by the London Borough of Bromley. Based on the quantity of roads and properties named and numbered in Bromley recently an annual income of around £25,000 could be expected. The expected volume of requests is shown at Appendix Two, together with the estimated annual income.
- 3.5 The number of new developments are influential and this means that future income levels are also likely to vary considerably and be sensitive to the charge made on new developments. There are some risks, including a fall-off in some requests upon a fee being charged and challenges to the principle of charging.
- 3.6 It is proposed to review the charges for the street naming and numbering service periodically, in the light of charges made by the other nearby Councils for this service and any significant change in the cost of providing the service. Appendix Three shows the charges currently made by nearby Councils and this will be reviewed annually and increased with inflation unless the benchmarking information in Appendix Two indicates that there is scope for a higher increase.
- 3.7 One-off costs of £5,000 will be incurred to purchase software to enable better administration of the service.

### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The proposals should achieve an income of around £25,000 per annum and this sum has been built into the budget for 2013/14.
- 5.2 There is a one-off cost of £5,000 to purchase specialist software and this cost will be met from within the overall planning budget during 2012/13.
- 5.3 The VAT status of these charges is not known at this time. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council is the street naming and numbering authority for Bromley. This function is provided by Part II of the London Building Acts (Amendment) Act 1939 which was applied to the Borough by the Local Government Act 1985 on the abolition of the Greater London Council. The Act provides that there is a duty on the Council to name new streets, but there is no explicit duty to name or number new individual buildings. There is no specific legal power to make charges in the 1939 Act. However other London Boroughs have introduced charges, mainly relying on section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. This Act enables a charge for a discretionary service to be made to a person if the Council is authorised, but not required by an Act to provide the service and the person has agreed to its provision. As the Council will exercise its powers in response to a request to name streets and buildings, the legal advice is that section 93 does provide power to charge. The remaining requirements of section 93 will need to be met, i.e. taking one financial year with another, the income from charges must not exceed the costs of provision. The recommendation in the report that the introduction of the charges will be reviewed in the light of the costs of providing the service is therefore warranted to ensure that this requirement is met.

## 7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None

<b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>	Policy and Personnel Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	