West Suffolk Council street naming and numbering guidance

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the procedures that West Suffolk Council employs to deliver an effective street naming and numbering function for the benefit of West Suffolk residents, businesses and visitors . It also contains guidance for developers and property owners submitting applications and for parish councils when considering new street names.

West Suffolk Council has a duty to name streets and is the authority responsible for allocating property names and numbers. The adopted legislative schemes under which street naming and numbering functions can be carried out within West Suffolk are outlined in **Appendix F.** Addresses registered through street naming and numbering will be officially recognised by West Suffolk Council and third parties such as Land Registry, emergency services and utility companies.

The primary consideration when allocating an address is that postal address provides the occupier of a property with a unique address for service delivery, which does not have the potential to cause ambiguity, misunderstanding or confusion with another address.

Planning status will not be affected by the provision of an address.

Address information created by West Suffolk Council feeds into many national systems, and is closely linked to Royal Mail, so it is essential that the addresses are sensible, created in good time, displayed on the property and then used consistently.

The guidance sets out West Suffolk Council's process and procedure for all street naming and numbering matters including:

- naming of new streets and numbering or naming of properties on those streets
- renaming existing streets
- numbering or naming new properties
- renumbering properties
- changing the names of properties
- allocation of numbers to properties with names only
- addition of a name to a numbered property
- new addresses created as the result of a property split or merge
- registering addresses for long standing properties that were not previously registered

2. Street naming and property numbering

2.1 Street naming

The developer of the street should apply for street naming and numbering as soon as reasonably possible once construction of the street has started.

Street names will be assigned:

- if properties accessed via the road or pedestrian way require a new street name for addressing purposes, and
- will not be assigned to any new development which could be satisfactorily included in the current naming or numbering of the street providing access to the properties.

Once planning has been approved, West Suffolk Council recommends discussion between the parish council and the developer of the street to agree street names that are to be put forward to West Suffolk Council for consideration.

Local residents should be given an opportunity to express any street naming opinions to the parish council or developer before the street naming consultation begins.

Street names must meet the criteria set out in **Appendix B** and West Suffolk Council may approve or reject proposals submitted by the applicant. If a proposed name is rejected, the applicant will have the opportunity to suggest alternative names until a suitable name is selected.

Once a street name has been accepted by West Suffolk Council, a consultation will commence with the parish council and ward members for the local area who will have 21 working days in which to raise any concerns with the proposal. Any concerns raised during the consultation will be reviewed by West Suffolk Council and a decision will be made on whether to approve the street name. If West Suffolk Council does not approve the street names, a new name suggestion will be requested from the developer and the consultation will be repeated. If no response is received from the parish council or ward members, the street name will be approved.

In the case of two consecutive consultations where valid concerns have been raised, West Suffolk Council will make the final decision. This makes sure that any new streets are named within a reasonable time frame and prevents delay in addressing new properties.

Upon a successful consultation, the street name will become official and West Suffolk Council will issue a street naming and numbering notice to the developer.

2.2 Property naming and numbering

All new properties shall be numbered rather than named, unless there is no numbering scheme on the street, or the numbering scheme has been exhausted.

2.2.1 Property numbering

Property numbers are the primary identifier for the property and should be clearly displayed on the property for identification purposes.

Property numbers should never be substituted for a name and any requests to remove a property number from an address will be rejected unless the property has a number which is illogical to the numbering scheme and is causing unnecessary confusion.

Property numbers shall be allocated with odd numbers on the left and even numbers on the right-hand side, starting at the primary entrance of the street. If the street is a thoroughfare, the numbers should commence at the end of the street nearest the centre of the town or village.

Numbers will be allocated by West Suffolk Council in the order that you would arrive at each front door if you were walking on one side of the street.

Consecutive numbering may be used in certain situations such as a cul-de-sac or a street where there is no possibility for further development.

A property between two existing numbered properties will be allocated a suffixed number.

Numbers will not be repeated on the same street.

No numbers will be excluded from the numbering sequence and requests to allocate a number which is not in sequential order, or to omit a number will be refused.

2.2.1.1 Buildings with internal subdivisions

Buildings with internal subdivisions such as flats or offices will be allocated a name or number. Postal addresses may be obtained for the subdivisions however the building itself will not have a postal address.

Properties such as flats or offices that share a communal front door shall be numbered in a clockwise direction starting from the ground floor with 1 being on the left-hand side as you enter the building. Residential subdivisions shall be allocated the prefix 'Flat', 'Apartment' or 'Studio' and commercial subdivisions shall be allocated the prefix 'Office', 'Suite', 'Unit' or 'Studio', whichever is more appropriate.

2.2.2 Property naming

Properties will require a name if there is no numbering scheme on the street, or the extent of the numbering has been exhausted.

Property names should be clearly displayed on the property for identification purposes.

Property names may be suggested by the property owner and must be approved by West Suffolk Council.

Property owners may decide to name a property which also has a number. In this instance, the property number remains as the main property identifier and should not be substituted for the name.

Property names must meet the criteria in **Appendix D** to be approved by West Suffolk Council.

2.2.3 Changing a property name or adding a name to a numbered property

Existing property names may be changed by the property owner via the street naming and numbering application process. Additionally, names may be added to a property with a number. The new property name must comply with the criteria set out in **Appendix D**.

Once a suitable name has been selected and agreed with West Suffolk Council, Royal Mail will be asked to amend the address held on their database. Once this change has taken place, West Suffolk Council will update internal systems and notify the parties listed in **Appendix E**.

The new property name will take effect as soon as West Suffolk Council issue a confirmation to the customer that the new property name has been registered, and the new property name must be displayed immediately.

Only the owner of the property can apply to add or change a property name. If the property is in the process of being purchased, the new owner must wait for completion of the sale before applying to add or change the propertyname.

2.2.4 Street name plates

Where a street is created as all or part of a new development, all costs for the installation of new street name plates will be paid for by the developer. There is a specification for the plates and their location, and West Suffolk Council should be contacted for advice. Providing street name plates and replacing damaged ones becomes the responsibility of West Suffolk Council only once the developer has left the site and the street has been adopted.

There is no separate budget for cleaning street name plates. With the increased focus on community action (corporate vision: 'West Suffolk Council will support communities to create the best possible future for people in West Suffolk') we will continue to encourage residents to take pride in their local environment which could include keeping street name plates clean and promptly reporting those which are damaged.

If any problems arise concerning street name plates. email the Operations Leisure and Culture Highways Officer at: Facilities.Management@westsuffolk.gov.uk.

2.3 Royal Mail – allocation of postcode

Once West Suffolk Council has agreed an address with the applicant, West Suffolk Council will ask Royal Mail to allocate a postcode to the property and add the address to their database.

Royal Mail should only provide postal addresses upon request from West Suffolk Council. West Suffolk Council may ask Royal Mail to remove addresses from their database which have not been approved.

West Suffolk Council will not notify Royal Mail of new addresses in the absence of a street naming and numbering application.

Postcodes are owned by Royal Mail, who will allocate the most practical postcode for the purposes of sorting and delivering mail. West Suffolk Council do not have any control over which postcodes are allocated.

Addresses for buildings which are under construction will be added to Royal Mail's Not Yet Built file. Once the building is ready to become occupied, the applicant should inform West Suffolk Council who will request that the address is moved to Royal Mail's Postcode Address File.

Once an address is registered with Royal Mail, it may take some time to filter through to end users of Royal Mail's address data. West Suffolk Council does not have any control over how frequently third parties update their address information and are unable to expedite this process.

Royal Mail has various response timescales and West Suffolk Council is unable to expedite this process.

2.3.1 Non-postal addresses

Royal Mail has strict criteria for allocating a postal address to a property and will not

allocate postcodes to a building which does not meet their criteria.

To be allocated a postal address by Royal Mail, commercial properties must be occupied during business hours and have a mailbox or letterbox which is accessible to Royal Mail.

Properties that do not meet Royal Mail's criteria for a postal address may still be allocated an official name or number from West Suffolk Council for identification purposes however Royal Mail will not be notified, and the address will not be allocated a postcode.

Queries relating to the installation of utilities at a non-postal address should be directed to the utility company as they have their own internal processes for fulfilling such requests.

2.4 Renaming a street and renumbering a sequence of properties

Renaming a street or renumbering a sequence of properties can cause disruption to residents and property owners. West Suffolk Council will therefore pursue alternative solutions and only rename or renumber a street if it is deemed necessary.

2.5 Derelict, demolition of properties and replacement dwellings

Derelict properties which are uninhabitable will be recorded in the Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) (**Appendix G**) as a non-postal address. Following the renovation of a derelict property, the owner or developer should apply for street naming and numbering to reactivate the address.

Addresses relate to buildings and not the site the building is situated on, therefore any properties which are demolished will be made historic in the LLPG.

Any replacement properties will require a new address, and the developer or owner should apply for street naming and numbering. The new address will be subject to the same criteria as any new build property and therefore it may not be allocated the same address as the original building.

2.6 Street naming and numbering charges

Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, West Suffolk Council may charge for the provision of services that it is authorised but not required to perform, making sure that the income does not exceed the costs of provision from one financial year to another.

The cost of the application depends on the type of application and the amount of properties it relates to. The full schedule of charges is shown in **Appendix A**.

A fee will be incurred in the following instances:

- West Suffolk Council requests an addition or an amendment to Royal Mail's database, unless the amendment is for the correction of a spelling mistake, or it has been removed in error.
- West Suffolk Council allocates a building name or number. This includes new

builds, as well as new addresses created as the result of a building split or merge, regardless of how long the structure has existed for.
- The application is to allocate a name or number to a building or land which does not meet the criteria for a postal address.
- Allocating names or numbers to an address regardless of how long the structure has existed for.
- Renaming or renumbering properties
- Removing a property name from a numbered property.

West Suffolk Council will not charge for:

- allocating new street names
- the correction of a spelling mistake.

Once the street naming and numbering application is complete and the address has been registered with West Suffolk Council, further changes to the address will incur an additional fee.

In the absence of a street naming and numbering application and associated fees, West Suffolk Council may allocate an addressing scheme and will notify necessary parties for business purposes only. These addresses will not contain postcodes, and West Suffolk Council will deem these addresses as unofficial.

Appendix A – Charging schedule

The charges for street naming and numbering are detailed in the table below.

Application type	**Charge**	
Property name or number change	£70 per property	
Adding a name to a numbered property	£70 per property	
Allocating a name or number to a non- postally addressable object or land	£70 each	
Obtaining postal addresses for new properties	1 plot	£70
	2-24 plots	£35 per plot
	25-49 plots	£30 per plot
	50-74 plots	£25 per plot
	75+ plots	£20 per plot
Renaming of scheme following development replan (after addresses have been registered with Royal Mail)	£150 + £10 per plot	
Street name change	£360 + £25 per property	

Fees will not exceed £1,500.

No action will be taken until payment has been received in full.

Appendix B - Street naming criteria and application guidance

Street naming applications should be submitted by the developer of the street and

must be accompanied by:

- a site plan including the layout of the site, any future phases that will be linked to the site, any properties that will be built on the site and a north arrow
- a location plan identifying the outline of the development in relation to existing structures and roads, including a north arrow
- a minimum of two suggested names per street
- an explanation of why those names have been selected.

West Suffolk Council encourages discussion between the developer and the parish council before the street naming application is submitted to give the parish council an opportunity to make the developer aware of any preferences or suggestions that they may have.

Street naming themes are encouraged on large developments. For developments that are split into phases with different developers responsible for each phase, the theme will be determined during the first street naming application for the development.

New street names must:

- end with a suffix that distinguishes the street from a building or locality name. The following list is not exhaustive, and sometimes other suffixes are more appropriate:
  - Street
  - Road
  - Way (streets and pedestrian ways)
  - Avenue
  - Drive
  - Grove
  - Gate
  - Lane
  - Gardens (subject to there being no confusion with local open space)
  - Place
  - Crescent (for a crescent shaped road only)
  - Close (for a cul-de-sac only)
  - Square (for a square only)
  - Hill (for a hill only)
  - Circus (for a large roundabout)
  - Vale
  - Rise
  - Row
  - Mews
  - Path (for pedestrian ways only)
  - Walk (for pedestrian ways only)
- be easily identifiable without ambiguity or confusion
- allow mail and goods to be delivered successfully
- allow emergency services to locate the street quickly in an emergency
- allow visitors to locate where they want to go.

New street names must not:

- be the same or similar to the marketing name for the development, or the developer's name
- be construed to be used as advertising or marketing for commercial gain
- be, look or sound similar or the same as another street name within the postal

town. Names such as Church and Birch would be considered too similar. A variation of the street suffix does not provide sufficient distinction
- be, look or sound the same or similar to another street within a phonetically similar town, village or postal town, for example West Stow and West Row. A variation of the street suffix does not provide sufficient distinction
- cause offence or be considered rude obscene, discriminatory, racist, controversial or contravene any of West Suffolk Council's equal opportunities policy either on their own or in combination with property numbers
- be named after any living person
- be difficult to pronounce or spell
- end in such a way that makes it plural or possessive
- start with 'A' or 'The' as this causes problems for emergency services
- contain any punctuation or special characters
- contain more than 30 characters including the suffix
- contain more than 4 words, including the suffix
- include numbers that could cause confusion, for example 20 Seven Foot Lane sounds the same as 27 Foot Lane.

The consent of the Lord Chamberlain's office must be obtained if a street name will have any reference to the Royal Family, the use of the work 'Royal' or any other protected Royal titles. West Suffolk Council will request this consent following a successful street consultation. If a proposed street name will require consent from The Lord Chamberlain's office, it should be accompanied through the consultation process with an additional name in case consent is not granted.

Street names should not be given to anybody until West Suffolk Council has confirmed the adoption of the name.

Naming streets after people

The usual street naming process applies to naming streets after people, with the addition of the following criteria:

- The person must be of significant historic relevance to the area in which the street is to be named.
- A minimum of 20 years must have elapsed since their passing.
- The requester must obtain written permission from the closest living family member of the person if possible, unless the person has been deceased for more than 100 years. This should be submitted to West Suffolk Council before the consultation begins.

The use of the first or last name is preferred, however in some cases it may be necessary to use the person's full name.

Consideration should be made to the sensitivities that may arise from naming streets after people, as public perception of a deceased person may change considerably in the future.

Appendix C – Applications for new addresses

The street naming and numbering application should be submitted by the developer or property owner as soon as reasonably possible after construction has commenced. This applies to new build properties as well as new addresses created due to building splits or merges. The application must be accompanied by:

- the fee (**Appendix A**)
- a location plan showing the outline of the site in relation to existing streets and structures, including a north arrow
- a block plan showing the situation of each property with the main access to each property clearly marked. For developments consisting of more than one property, plot numbers should be included on this plan
- internal floor plans for any building which is subdivided, for example a block of flats
- if the application relates to the naming of properties, at least two proposed names per property.

Application process

West Suffolk Council will review the street naming and numbering application.

If the property requires a number, West Suffolk Council will allocate the property number and inform the applicant before requesting the postal address from Royal Mail.

If the property requires a name, West Suffolk Council will request property naming options from the applicant. Property names will be checked against the criteria in **Appendix D** before being approved or rejected. If the proposed property names are rejected, the applicant will have the opportunity to provide additional suggestions until a suitable one is selected.

Once the property name or number has been agreed, West Suffolk Council will request the postal address from Royal Mail. Royal Mail is responsible for allocating postcodes and West Suffolk Council does not have any control over the postcode issued by Royal Mail.

If construction of the property is complete, West Suffolk Council will request that the address is added to Royal Mail's Postcode Address File. If the property is under construction, West Suffolk Council will request that the address is added to Royal Mail's Not Yet Built file. The applicant will be advised how to request that the address is moved to the Postal Address File once the property is ready for occupation.

Once the postcodes have been received from Royal Mail, West Suffolk Council will add the addresses to their database and provide the applicant with a confirmation that the addresses have been registered. Property names or numbers should be clearly displayed as soon as possible once this confirmation has been sent to the applicant. A plot to postal schedule will be issued for developments where the plot numbers differ from the postal numbers.

West Suffolk Council will notify those listed in **Appendix E** of the new address.

Appendix D – Property name criteria

West Suffolk Council has a responsibility to ensure addresses are clear, practical and free of confusion.

All property names must be unique to the postcode area. For postcodes starting with CB8 or CB9, the postcode area is defined as the first 4 digits of the postcode, for example CB8, 9. For postcodes beginning with IP or CO, the postcode area is defined as the first 5 digits, for example IP32 6. West Suffolk Council may consider exceptions

in particularly large postcode areas such as IP28 6 if West Suffolk Council deem that the whole address is sufficiently distinctive from any existing addresses.

The following criteria is applicable to all property names:

Property names must:

- have an appropriate suffix which accurately describes the property type. For example, a two-storey house may not be called 'Bungalow'
- contain less than 30 characters
- be easy to spell and pronounce
- be sustainable regardless of the business that is occupying the premises
- not contain any special characters or punctuation
- allow emergency services to locate the property quickly in an emergency
- be easily identifiable without ambiguity or confusion
- allow mail and goods to be delivered successfully
- allow visitors to locate where they want to go.

Property names must not:

- cause offence or be considered obscene, discriminatory, racist, controversial or contravene any of West Suffolk Council's Equalities Scheme either on their own or in combination with property numbers or street names
- be named after any living person
- be the same or similar to an existing property name in a town or locality which sounds similar to another (for example Ickworth and Ixworth) unless West Suffolk Council deem that the whole address would be sufficiently different. A variation of the suffix does not provide sufficient differentiation between property names
- be the same or similar to an existing property name in a town or locality which sounds similar to another (for example Ickworth and Ixworth) unless West Suffolk Council deem that the whole address would be sufficiently different. A variation of the suffix does not provide sufficient differentiation between property names
- be shared amongst a group of properties, for example 1 and 2 New Cottages.
- begin with 'The' or 'A' as these can cause problems for emergency services
- be based on the trading name, products or services provided by any business occupying the property
- contain numbers that could cause confusion, for example One House.

The consent of the Lord Chamberlain's office must be obtained if a property name will have any reference to the Royal Family, the use of the word 'Royal' or any other protected Royal titles. West Suffolk Council will request this consent once the property name has been checked against the criteria above. If a proposed property name will require consent from The Lord Chamberlain's office, it should be accompanied by an additional name in case consent is not granted.

Naming buildings after people

The usual building name criteria apply to naming buildings after people, with the addition of the following criteria:

- The person must be of significant historic relevance to the area in which the building is to be named.

- A minimum of 20 years must have elapsed since their passing.
- The requester must obtain written permission from the closest living family member of the person if possible, unless the person has been deceased for more than 100 years. This should be submitted to West Suffolk Council alongside the street naming and numbering application.

The use of the first or last name is preferred, however in some cases it may be necessary to use the person's full name.

Consideration should be made to the sensitivities that may arise from naming buildings after people, as public perception of a deceased person may change considerably in the future.

Appendix E – Notifications

There is no requirement for West Suffolk Council to provide street naming and numbering updates to external parties, however as a matter of good practice the following parties will be notified of any new addresses or changes to existing addresses. This list is not exhaustive and may change occasionally:

- Emergency services
- Land Registry
- Ordnance Survey
- Valuation Office Agency
- All relevant internal departments

The above parties may not update their records automatically and it is the responsibility of the property owner to ensure that any legal documents relating to the property are updated accordingly.

Appendix F – Legislation

The adopted legislative schemes under which street naming and numbering can be carried out within West Suffolk Council is:

- Sections 17 and 19 of the Public Health Act 1925 for the purposes of naming a street
- Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 for the purposes of renaming a street
- Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 for the purposes of charging a fee for this service
- The First Scheme (jointly sections 64 and 65 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and section 160 of the Public Health Act 1875) and section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the purposes of property naming and numbering
- a British standard exists (BS7666:2006 Spatial datasets for geographical referencing) which comprises a number of parts covering street gazetteers, land and property gazetteers and delivery points, for example the structure required for a typical address. All addresses will be compliant with BS7666.

Appendix G – Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG)

The Local Land and Property Gazetteer (LLPG) is the master list of all land and

property addresses in the West Suffolk Council district.

Each council across England and Wales has their own LLPG which feeds into the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) held by GeoPlace.

The council has a legal duty under the Data Cooperation Agreement with GeoPlace to maintain, improve and promote the use of the LLPG.

Street naming and numbering is an important source of information for the LLPG and the two functions are closely linked. West Suffolk Council recognise that some addresses on the LLPG do not comply with the street naming and numbering guidance we have today, as many addresses existed before the creation of the LLPG and street naming and numbering function. However, this will not justify any future decisions to deviate from this framework.