



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

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Date of Meeting: 21 April 2008

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Public

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Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

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Inside Policy Framework?

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**Title:** Historic Street Name Plates  
**Report of:** Director of Development Services  
**Report reference:** DS.46/08

**Summary:** This report sets out a proposal for a preferred approach to treatment of historic street name plates across the District. This report consists of a summary of the current national and local guidance, and existing approaches, together with recommendations for a revised approach based on a 'retain, refurbish or replace' approach, which would actively conserve examples of historic street nameplates across the District. This would typically apply to pre-1930 streets where these plates are usually found.

It is recommended that these suggestions are adopted as the preferred approach to addressing the maintenance, restoration and provision of street nameplates, in particular where there are historic surviving examples.

**Recommendations:** That the following criteria be adopted as the preferred approach across all sites within the district where historic street nameplates exist:

- Retain and maintain sound historic nameplates;
- Repair and refurbish original plates where feasible and viable;
- Replace with matching nameplate in cast iron where retention of the original is not appropriate; and,

**Note:** in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

- New nameplates in historic areas should be made up to match adjacent historic examples.

That the provision of new plates of the standard 'Carlisle Crest' model is made in accordance with national guidance and that preference is given to mounting new plates on buildings in preference to free-standing poles where this is practical.

**C Elliot**

Director of Development Services

**Contact Officer:** Roger Higgins

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

- 1.1 Street nameplates are required to be provided by Local Authorities in order to assist the effective navigation of our towns, villages and other areas by pedestrians, vehicle users, the post office, emergency services and others. The relevant powers for local authorities are contained in Sections 64 and 65 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, Sections 17-19 of the Public Health Act 1925. The 1925 Act gives Councils powers to place street nameplates on private properties as required.
- 1.2 The Department for Transport's Circular Roads 3/93 reminds Councils of their responsibility to maintain a good standard to street nameplates. The Circular specifically states that existing plates of character and distinction can be retained.
- 1.3 Carlisle District has a wealth of historic street nameplates that can be seen in urban and rural areas, and both within and without Conservation Areas. Surviving examples are often from the late Victorian period, and are usually in cast iron and mounted on buildings or other permanent structures. Examples are included in the appendix.
- 1.4 Late twentieth century street nameplates within the District have tended to be in pressed aluminium, and are frequently free standing and pole-mounted. In part this is due to the tendency for post-war housing developments to lack the boundary walls or development of buildings close to the footpath that facilitated the more usual wall-mounting. It also reflects an apparent unwillingness of householders to allow surface mounting, although this is specifically provided for under the above Acts.
- 1.5 Circular 3/03 states that 'Whenever practical, street name plates should be mounted on walls, buildings or other boundary structures at the back edge of the footway. Post mounting or finger mounting should only be used where normal mounting does not make the plate conspicuous'.
- 1.6 Wall mounted signage has the advantage of minimising street clutter, of eliminating the need for poles and fixings, and of tending to make the signage less vulnerable to vandalism or obscuring of the sign by parked cars (see appendix). In the absence of a clear approach to this issue there are also examples of the tendency to duplicate existing signage rather than to refurbish the historic examples.
- 1.7 However, in recent years, both the County and City Council have supported the re-provision and refurbishment of historic examples. Examples of a series of new cast nameplates at Brampton are included in the appendix. These lend considerable

charm to the Brampton Conservation Area but have tended to be the exception rather than the rule.

- 1.8 The traditional, cast iron, black on white, sans serif, heavy 'Carlisle' lettering is very similar to that recommended in Circular 3/93. Replacement castings can be cast in iron, aluminium or resin.
- 1.9 Additional national guidance, notably the DfT/English Heritage 'Streets For All' publication, recommends the retention and refurbishment of older signs in order to reinforce local character.
- 1.10 Section 4.13.11 of the Cumbria 'Layout of New Residential Developments' refers developers to their Local District Council for their preferred approach.
- 1.11 There is the opportunity to strengthen any preferred approach through the public realm elements of the City Council's emerging Urban Design Guide and Public Realm Framework.
- 1.12 The criteria for 'retain, refurbish and replace' would apply to all areas where historic plates are found. Typically this is in areas predating the 1930s. Refurbishment and replacement would take place as funds allow, with reinstatement of entirely absent plates typically occurring within conservation areas.

## **2.0 CONSULTATION**

### **2.1 Consultation to Date**

Dialogue with Director of Community Services and discussions with the Highways Manager.

### **2.2 Consultation Proposed**

No further consultation proposed.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **3.1 That the following criteria be adopted as the preferred approach across all sites within the district where historic street nameplates exist:**

- Retain and maintain sound historic nameplates;
- Repair and refurbish original plates where feasible and viable;
- Replace with matching nameplate in cast iron where retention of the original is not appropriate; and,

- New nameplates in historic areas should be made up to match adjacent historic examples.

3.2 That the provision of new plates of the standard 'Carlisle Crest' model is made in accordance with national guidance and that preference is given to mounting new plates on buildings in preference to free-standing poles where this is practical.

## 4.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide for and maintain street nameplates. There is an opportunity to use this process to contribute to, maintain and enhance the appearance of many parts of Carlisle District through the refurbishment of existing historic street nameplates, or the provision of replacements where this is deemed appropriate.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – This work will be done within existing budgets for street nameplates, which is at, present approximately £23,000 pa. There is the possibility of supplementing this if desired via additional environmental enhancement funds held by Planning or via Members Small Scale Community Project funds.
- Financial – The work will be done within existing budgets.
- Legal – The relevant powers for local authorities are contained in Sections 64 and 65 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847, Sections 17-19 of the Public Health Act 1925.
- Corporate – The adoption of these criteria contributes to a more coherent approach to this element of the street environment, in support of the corporate policies of Cleaner, Greener and Safer and supporting Carlisle Renaissance initiatives regarding the public realm.
- Risk Management – Continued lack of clear approach to the issue of street nameplates, provision and maintenance. Lack of this approach would be inconsistent with the design quality ambitions indicated in the emerging UDPRF.
- Equality and Disability – Fonts and colour schemes on Carlisle historic plates are legible according to Guidance in Circular 3/93. No other issues raised

- Environmental – This report raises issues relating to the retention and enhancement of the environmental and townscape character of Carlisle and of the reduction in use of resources by the refurbishment of existing materials.
- Crime and Disorder – The report has the potential to reduce the costs and opportunities for acts of vandalism.
- Impact on Customers – Positive impact by improved environmental quality.

**C Elliot**

Director of Development Services

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