

Terms and Conditions for Changing the Name of your Property

The council is the official body that deals with **changes to the official names and numbers of existing properties** under sections 64 and 65 of the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847 for properties within the West Berkshire Council area.

The naming of new properties or of amending an address for a property where the access or use has changed is dealt with through a separate process at [Street Naming and Numbering - West Berkshire Council](#)

Who can change an address?

- Only the **property owner** can amend the property's address. You are required to provide proof of ownership.
- The council bears no responsibility if you are not the property owner and amend the address.
- If you are an agent, the council requires proof that you are acting on behalf of the owner.
- Applications to rename a property will be accepted if you have exchanged but not completed on the sale of a property, subject to:
 - Completion date is within 10 working days of the application.
 - The name change will not come into official effect until the date of completion or after.
 - It is the Applicant's responsibility to inform the Council of any failure or delay to completion or otherwise to contact the council in writing to amend the application.
 - The council will validate your proposed names according to nationally and locally agreed rules see [Validating A Proposed Address Change](#) below.

Adding or Changing the Name of a Numbered Property

- If your address has a number on a numbered street, the council will refuse permission to remove the number.
- A property name "alias" can however be registered. An alias is an optional name that can be used as part of your address, but the number remains a mandatory part of the address and cannot be removed.
- The house number should remain clearly displayed at your property.
- The council will validate your proposed names according to nationally and locally agreed rules see [Validating A Proposed Address Change](#) below.

Changing the Name of an Existing Property

- The council will validate your proposed names according to nationally and locally agreed rules see [Validating A Proposed Address Change](#) below

Properties without Sufficient Planning Permission

- Only properties that have the correct planning permission can apply for change of address. A property which has usage dependent upon another property does not have sufficient planning permission for independent usage and therefore cannot register for a separate, official and postal address. Examples include properties such as an annexe or staff accommodation with planning permission for ancillary usage to a main house.

Fees Payable

- A fee is payable for this service. This fee is for the administration of the property name change and does not guarantee the success of your application. If your application fails, the fee is non-refundable. Fees are reviewed annually and the relevant fee at the time of application will be applied. The council's ability to charge is authorised under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 and is subject to provisos
- Fees are reviewed on an annual basis and the fee current at the time of application will be applied.

Property name change applications must be made using the online application form. You will be required to provide the following:

- The current address of the property
- Your preferred property name
- Two other alternative property name options (which we will use if your first choice conflicts with another local property)
- Proof of ownership: either the property title deed or Mortgage Statement.
- Payment of the applicable fee
- Agreement to the Terms and Conditions

Validating A Proposed Address Change

- House name changes or alias additions or amendments will be accepted if the proposed name fits the council's naming policy.
- The council's naming policy seeks to ensure that property names are sufficiently unique and non-contentious to avoid problems for residents and service providers. Therefore, the council will reject:
 - names that are the same or too similar to an existing nearby property.
 - names that are deemed to be obscene or discriminatory.
 - business names or names deemed to be advertising.
 - family names that identify living people – such as surnames
 - names including the word "Royal"
 - house name including "Manor" or similar that is not accurate historic or geographic representation of the role of the property
 - Farm is reserved for working farms and will require proof of such status.
 - Farm House separated from the land cannot inherit the Farm name where there is potential for confusion between the two entities.
 - house names that include the street name that provides access to the property or any nearby street name

Explaining the Process

- The property name change process can be used to amend residential or commercial property names within West Berkshire Council (WBC) area.
- Your choice of property name will be checked for locally conflicting address names, and if acceptable will then be updated in the council's corporate address gazetteer: the Local Land and Property Gazetteer. (For further information on the Local Land and Property Gazetteer see the appendix).
- The application will be checked to ensure that it complies with the street naming and numbering policy of the council.
- The application will be checked to ensure that it complies with the currently published terms and conditions.
- The success or failure of your application will be sent to you.

- If your proposed names are rejected, the council will work with you to agree an acceptable house name.
- If there is no agreement, you have a right to make a complaint via the council's complaints process, but there is no legal right of appeal to the council decision.
- The change will be sent to Royal Mail for update to the Postal Address File (PAF) or the Alias File as relevant. The Royal Mail Alias File is updated on a monthly basis and therefore there can be some delay in the alias house name being published.
- When Royal Mail has confirmed the change, the council will send change information to internal departments such as Planning, Council Tax and Electoral Registration and via the national addressing hub at Geoplace to external parties such as Valuation Office, Land Registry and the Emergency Services.
- The council will send an official confirmation of name change to you.
- Communication including the official confirmation will be sent to you via email as a preference. It is your responsibility to use the correct email contact details.
- The process can take up to 10 working days to complete.

What is not covered:

Please note that the council bears no responsibility for the update of address amendments to third party systems and companies, including Google. You are advised that address change information can take months to flow through to such third parties.

The applicant is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the correct signage is erected on site for the change and that any planning regulations have been followed.
- Completing your own address changes for official documentation such as passport or insurance etc..
- That any occupiers or tenants of the property have been informed of the change

Appendix

In addition to complying with the appropriate legislation this policy is compliant at time of publishing with the best practice LLPG and LSG documents:

"Data Entry Conventions and Best Practice for the National Land and Property Gazetteer" version 3.2 available from GeoPlace at www.nlpg.org.uk

"Data Entry Conventions and Best Practice for the National Street Gazetteer; DEC-NSG, Version 3.6 available from GeoPlace at www.thensg.org.uk

The national addressing standard: BS7666-2006

S93 of the Local Government Act 2003 enables WBC (as a best value authority) to charge for functions carried out as a power, because they are discretionary

Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847

64. Houses to be numbered and streets named.

The commissioners shall from time to time cause the houses and buildings in all or any of the streets to be marked with numbers as they think fit, and shall cause to be put up or painted on a conspicuous part of some house, building, or place, at or near each end, corner, or entrance of every such street, the name by which such street is to be known; and every person who destroys, pulls down, or defaces any such number or name, or puts up any number or name different from the number or name put up by the commissioners, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding [level 1 on the standard scale]¹ for every such offence."

s.65: The occupiers of houses and other buildings in the street shall mark their houses with such numbers as the commissioners approve of, and shall renew such numbers as often as they become obliterated or defaced; and every such occupier who fails, within one week after notice for that purpose from the commissioners, to mark his house with a number approved of by the commissioners, or to renew such number when obliterated, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding [level 1 on the standard scale], and the commissioners shall cause such numbers to be marked or to be renewed, as the case may require, and the expense thereof shall be repaid to them by such occupier, and shall be recoverable as damages.