

## STOP NAMING IN NaPTAN – IMPLICATIONS FOR EBSR AND OTHER USERS OF THE DATA

### 1 Background

NaPTAN data is increasingly being used for other applications outside of the authority that originally created the data. For example, it is a key component of applications such as Transport Direct and EBSR, is now also appearing on Google maps and is used in the new NextBuses service. This means that the data is being used in ways that were not envisaged when NaPTAN was originally populated all those years ago and sometimes the names that now appear seem “strange”.

New users of NaPTAN work on the basis that the data complies with the schema and guidance, and construct their applications accordingly. As a result these new users have to rely on NaPTAN field names being consistent between authorities and between individual records within those authorities; unfortunately, sometimes history and the old legacy systems that these names came from don't always follow the rules for the NaPTAN standard.

### 2 The Impact

For EBSR a combination of *Locality*, *Common Name* & *Indicator* is recommended to create an unambiguous name for a registration. Thus a real EBSR example will look something like this:-

#### Outbound, Monday to Friday

	7	7	7	7	7
Farcet, St Mary's Street, opp	06:35	06:55	07:15	07:35	07:55
Farcet, Lawrence Avenue, near	06:35	06:55	07:15	07:35	07:55
Farcet, Peterborough Road, o/s No 119	06:35	06:55	07:15	07:35	07:55
Stanground, Stanground College, opp	06:37	06:57	07:17	07:37	07:57
Stanground, Hi-Q Tyres, adj	06:37	06:57	07:17	07:37	07:57
Stanground, Sunset Aquarists, opp	06:38	06:58	07:18	07:38	07:58
<b>Stanground, Stanground Corner, opp</b>	<b>06:39</b>	<b>06:59</b>	<b>07:19</b>	<b>07:39</b>	<b>07:59</b>
Fletton, Coach and Horses, adj	06:39	06:59	07:19	07:39	07:59

A more detailed stop name can also be created by adding *Street Name*. In this example, *Stanground Hi-Q tyres, adj* has the *Street Name* of *Whittlesey Road* and in some systems this will appear as *Stanground, adj. Hi-Q tyres, (on Whittlesey Road)*. All of which helps to give a very clear stop name to users.

The approach of creating stop names using *Locality*, *Indicator*, *CommonName*, (*on StreetName*) is also being used in other systems. This format is beginning to appear on the Transport Direct Portal, where it is already used in responses from some of the Trapeze regions, and will be used later this year in responses from MDV regions.

However, NaPTAN names don't always lend themselves to such unambiguous and straightforward names. Often there is duplication between fields, with the locality name appearing in the common name, the street name also appearing in the common name and the indicator being something arbitrary or missing altogether!

Take the following stop as an example:-

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Street</b>	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Firshill	Firshill Crescent/Firshill Glade	Firshill Crescent	25215

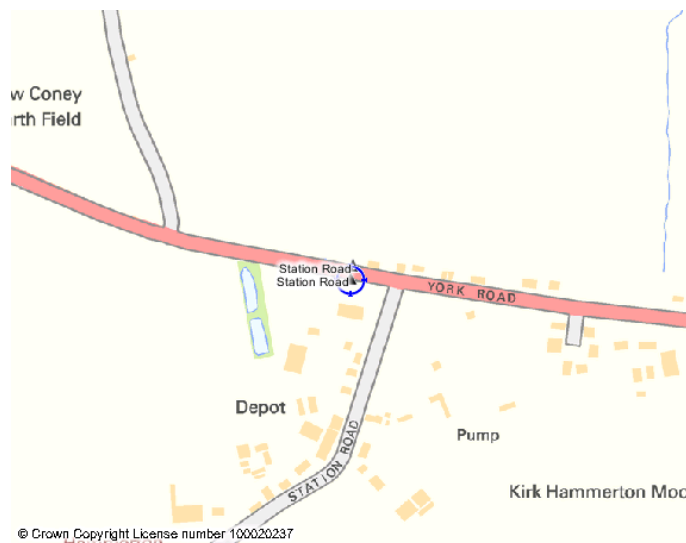
This stop appears on Transport Direct as **Firshill, Crescent, Glade, 25215** because TD applies de-duplication rules to remove duplicate entries in consecutive fields (in this case Firshill). It will be a challenge for anybody to identify which is this stop.

### 3 Advice on Stop Naming

Essential advice on stop naming is to create a name that the public would recognise. The key components of the stop name are contained in two fields in NaPTAN – the **CommonName** and the **Indicator** and the following guidance on naming describes how to do this:-

- The **CommonName** should be a simple name – typically the name of a nearby landmark, or a nearby side-street or (in some cases) the name of the street on which the stop is located. It should NOT be a composite of two street names or of a landmark and a street name – and it should NOT include details which should fall within the **Indicator** field, as this could interfere with other uses of the data or cause unnecessary duplication. The aim should be to have a unique name for each obvious group of stops (pairs or stop areas) within a single “**locality**” – a name that is shared between stops that belong to that pair or to that stop area, but which is otherwise unique within that **Locality**.
- The **Indicator** is intended to be a very short way of qualifying which stop (of two or more that may have the same **CommonName**) is being referred to, and is a qualifier to the **CommonName**. So these could be items such as: o/s, opp, adj, Bay1, Stance B, Stop C, o/s 23, E-bound. The test that should be applied is “*does this **Indicator** work well with this **CommonName**?*” - so good examples of this combination would be :
  - St Peter’s Church, opp
  - Coronation Street, adj
  - Post Office, o/s
  - Bus Station, Bay 1
  - War Memorial, stop C
  - High Street, o/s 23
  - Redfield Farm, E-bound
- In contrast, indicators to avoid include:- blank fields, N/A, sequential numbers (especially when used simply to fill the field), in vicinity (especially when used generally on all stops), anything that duplicates what is already in the street name or common name and fillers such as “---“

One final example below shows how using an indicator can make a stop name clear and unique to passengers:-



The current stop names do not differentiate between stops because there is no Indicator provided, and these stop names appear as:-

*Kirk Hammerton, York Road, Station Road, N/A*  
*Kirk Hammerton, York Road, Station Road, N/A*

An operator trying to register a service using these stops would have to use guess-work to choose the right one. However, using indicators allows for clear differentiation between these stops and improves the information available to both operators and passengers:-

*Kirk Hammerton, York Road, Station Road, **adj***  
*Kirk Hammerton, York Road, Station Road, **opp***

#### 4 What Do I Need To Do?

All “owners” of NaPTAN data are encouraged to review their NaPTAN data and ask themselves two important questions. Firstly, *will a stop name composed of either, locality, common name & indicator, or of locality, common name, indicator and street name give a clear and unique stop name to a user?* Secondly, *have we used the indicator field in the right way to help make it easy for passengers to identify the correct stop?* If the answer to either of these questions is NO, then such names will need to be reviewed and amended.

#### 5 How Do I Get Further Help and Advice?

A short one page aide-memoir to NaPTAN stop names accompanies this note. More detailed guidance on NaPTAN can be found at <http://www.naptan.org.uk/> and a brief guide to NaPTAN stop naming is available at [www.journeyweb.org.uk/documents/naptan-070325.doc](http://www.journeyweb.org.uk/documents/naptan-070325.doc). Further advice is also available from Transport Direct; email us at [ebssr@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ebssr@dft.gsi.gov.uk) and we will do our best to help.