

SIGNAGE WORKING PARTY

30 September 2013 – 3.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Sutton (in the Chair), Councillors Linden and Marsden and Dr J Langley.

Messrs K Balls (Senior Strategic Planner) and M Stephenson (Environmental Strategy Officer) and Miss S Davis (Senior Member Services Officer).

1. FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION EXERCISE

The Chairman reported that only four responses had been received back from the public consultation exercise relating to signage in the town centre area, two referred to the Nelson Museum and the promotion of Nelson's connection to Great Yarmouth and Norfolk; one related to road signs in Bradwell which was outside this Working Party's remit and the last asked why traffic was not diverted to the seafront at Jellicoe Road.

The Senior Strategic Planner circulated notes of a meeting he had with the Town Centre Manager on 19 August 2013, together with information from a "Purple Flag" Environmental Visual Audit that took place on 21 June 2013 which included reference to signage. He suggested that there was a need to decide where the focal points were in the town and the relationship between the Seafront and the Town Centre eg make greater use of the Regent Road "corridor" with boards placed in natural congregating points. The point was made that any boards required funding.

A suggestion was made that additional signage was required around the train station eg showing how long it took to walk into town and perhaps a larger overview sign that could give visitors more information about other places to go/attractions in the town centre area. It was added that perhaps a map could be created that used circles to demonstrate walking distances and different types of quarters eg retail/heritage etc. The point was made that further consultation should also take place with Centre 81 and DIAL as the Disability Forum no longer existed and there should not just be a reliance on finger posts.

The Environmental Strategy Officer reported that he had undertaken an audit of finger post signs in the town and it was noted that there were 23 car park signs and 39 heritage ones which had been erected as part of the inteGREAT project. He added that the Council had recently purchased 12 new finger posts that would be erected across the town to direct visitors to St George's Theatre and it was possible that these could be added to with other signs. Clarification was sought as to the state of repair of the existing signs and it was noted that structurally most were sound but some needed repainting at the base, whilst four along South Quay which were older required further attention.

The Senior Strategic Planner suggested that the information from the Purple Flag audit should be matched against the fingerpost information provided by the Environmental Strategy Officer to look at the quality of the signs and ensure they were fit for purpose. He also queried whether signs should be the same type or colour coded so that it was clearer for visitors, although he acknowledged the most important point was that the information was up to date. The Environmental Services Officer suggested that consideration should also be given to moving some of the signs if they were in close proximity to get the best use from them and make it clearer for visitors. Reference was made to the toilets underneath Market Gates and it was suggested that signage to these were inadequate especially regarding disabled access.

The Group discussed whether it would be better to segregate the town into different zones eg seafront, town centre and the heritage quarter. A suggestion was made that consideration be given to maps with concentric circles that showed everything within 5 and 10 minute walking times and also flagged up amenities such as toilets and car parks. The point was made that it might also be possible for the signs to be sponsored which could help pay for them. Whilst it was acknowledged that there was a need to avoid providing too many signs that visitors were confused, it was a good idea to provide signage around the key routes eg from the train station to the town centre and seafront with the addition of the detailed maps.

A discussion ensued on the best way forward bearing in mind that no budget had been identified for this project and the Senior Strategic Planner had now been seconded part time to a different Department. It was agreed that Officers would finish the consultation exercise and put forward several options with costings attached.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Environmental Strategy Officer email a copy of the fingerpost information to Members.

(ii) That the Senior Strategic Planner determine a timetable for moving the project forward and reconvene a Working Group meeting once various options with costings were available.

2. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 4.10pm.