

MEETING:	OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	19 MARCH 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	TASK & FINISH GROUP REPORT – TOURIST AND TEMPORARY EVENT SIGNAGE REVIEW
REPORT BY:	Task & Finish Review Group

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the findings arising from the Task & Finish Group – ‘Tourist and Temporary Event Signage Review’ and to recommend the report to the Executive for consideration.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the Committee considers the report of the Task & Finish Group – Tourist and Temporary Event Signage Review, in particular its recommendations, and determines whether it wishes to agree the findings for submission to the Executive;**
- (b) **Subject to the Review being approved, the Executive’s response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response;**

Key Points Summary

- A scrutiny Task & Finish Review has been undertaken into the Council’s Tourist and Temporary Event Signage Policy.
- The findings and recommendations of the Review Group are contained in the attached report. The principal recommendation is that the Herefordshire Tourism Signing Policy did need to be reviewed and that the Council’s guidance documents relating to signage issued by either planning or highways should be reconciled with current regulations.

Alternative Options

- 1 The Committee can agree, not agree or can vary the recommendations. If the Committee agree with the findings and recommendations from the review, the attached report will be submitted to the Executive for consideration. It will be for the Executive to decide whether some, all or none of the recommendations are approved.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 This Committee commissioned a Task & Finish Group to look at Tourist and Temporary Event Signage. The Task & Finish Group has completed its task and its report is required to be submitted to this committee for approval. The recommendations also set out how the report should be progressed in accordance with the Council's Constitution, if approved by the Committee.

Introduction and Background

- 3 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task & Finish Group to undertake a review into Tourist and Temporary Event Signage in the County. The Review has been undertaken and the resultant findings and recommendations are to be reported back to Committee for its consideration prior to being referred to the Council's Executive for consideration and approval.
- 4 Tourist signing is the white on brown signs that are placed along highways to provide directional information to vehicle drivers in order to guide them safely to their destination. They are not intended to be a form of advertising. Nationally, tourism signing falls under circular roads 93/04 "Traffic signs for tourist attractions and facilities in England" and the type of signs that can be used is defined by the Traffic Sign Regulations and general Directions 2002 issued by the Department of Transport. Within these parameters, Herefordshire Council has its own Tourism Signing Policy which was last reviewed in February 2003. At its meeting on 27 July 2011 Overview & Scrutiny Committee decided it was timely to commission a review of the policy and any associated issues.

Key Considerations

- 5 Tourism to the County contributes to a thriving economy and the creation of a resilient Herefordshire. The Tourist Signing Policy and associated guidance should provide clarity on the use of tourist and temporary event signage, thereby encouraging tourists to visit attractions and for local temporary events to be supported utilising appropriate highway routes.
- 6 The Task & Finish Group considered the range of information put before it and its principal findings were that the Herefordshire Tourism Signing Policy did need to be reviewed and that a review of all signage across the authority should be carried out and all guidance documents relating to signage issued by either the planning or highways authority should be reconciled with current regulations. The Review Group also make a number of recommendations in relation to: the removal of the different rules between signs for commercial and non-commercial events; the greater use of symbol rather than word signs; the removal of redundant signs; the costs for signs, and reducing the volume of sign clutter.
- 7 The Task & Finish Group are of the opinion that as the local policy and guidance will need to be revised to reflect recently issued government guidance it is an opportune time to implement the findings of the Review Group.

Community Impact

- 8 The findings and recommendations from the review are in accordance with the Herefordshire Community Strategy in that it: seeks to increase visitor spend in the County, preserve and enhance the environment and protect people's health and wellbeing.

Equality and Human Rights

- 9 In essence the report recommends that the policy be reviewed. If the Committee agree with the findings of the Group the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, any resultant revised policy and guidance will need to be assessed against the Equality Analysis and be reported to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

- 10 The Tourist Signing Policy and guidance documents will need to be reviewed following new government guidance and therefore the cost of implementing any of the recommendations from this Task & Finish review can be incorporated into that work. The cost of undertaking this work will have to be met from within existing resources. The Review Group recommend (see Recommendation 5) that a review should be carried out to ensure reasonable costs are met to ensure that cost recovery happens.

Legal Implications

11. The Council is required to take into account the changes to recent government guidance to which the review report refers. If the Committee and the Executive agree with the findings of the Group, legal input will be given to the resultant revised policy and guidance.

Risk Management

12. There is reputational risk if the Council does not operate a sound policy. The recommendations in the Review report should help mitigate this risk. The potential risk has been highlighted to the relevant department to assess whether the risk warrants inclusion in the risk register.

Consultees

- 13 As part of the Review interviews were held with Sir Ben Gill, Chair, Visit Herefordshire and Mr B Widdowson, representing the Council for the Protection of Rural England. Mr M Tansley (Team Leader Enforcement) and Mr C Hall (Head of Highways and Community Services) were also consulted.

Appendices

- 14 Task & Finish Review Group Report – Tourist and Temporary Event Signage Review (Appendix 1).

Background Papers

Department for Transport/Highways Agency Policy Guidance - Policy Guidance; TA93/04 Traffic Signs To Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England – Introduction; TA94/04 Traffic Signs To Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England – Guidance Local Roads; TD52/04 Traffic Signs To Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England – Guidance Trunk Roads.

Herefordshire Council /Amey - Herefordshire Council Policy – 2003; Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member Report 20/2/2003; Tourist Signing Leaflet – 2011; Tourist Signing Application Form – 2011; Form RE2 signing agreement; Policy Delivery; Cost comparisons (with other authorities)

Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 - Extract approved Tourist Symbols; Extract tourist signing examples.

Policies from other Authorities obtained from the websites - Cheshire East policy; Cornwall policy; Devon leaflet and application form; Lancashire policy; Somerset policy; Staffordshire policy; Stoke on Trent policy; Shropshire policy and application form; Worcestershire policy.

'Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers' produced by the Communities and Local Government. (Available via the web)

'Traffic Signs Policy Paper' (Oct 2011) produced by the DfT. (Available via the web)

'Government Tourism Policy' (March 2011) produced by Department of culture, media and sport. (Available via the web).