

ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 96

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Pedestrian Signing Strategy

Date of Meeting: 27 January 2009

Report of: Director of Environment

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Key Decision: No

Wards Affected: Regency; St Peter's & North Laine

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove is one of the main tourist and shopping destinations in the south-east and attracts 8 million visitors a year, bringing in £480 million to the local economy (2006). Visitors to Brighton & Hove, especially when visiting the city for the first time, need assistance to help them understand what the city has to offer and where key destinations and attractions are located. Current pedestrian signing, is incomplete and inconsistent. Research has indicated that if people feel well orientated in a city and thus able to find their destination or attraction quickly they are more likely to return to that city. People who become lost and frustrated as a result are less inclined to return.
- 1.2 For Brighton & Hove to remain competitive as a preferred tourist and shopping destination it is important that visitors are able to negotiate the city and its attractions using a consistent and coherent signing system.
- 1.3 This report is intended to inform the Cabinet member of the proposed Pedestrian Signing Strategy and request approval to implement the first phase.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 (1) That the Cabinet Member for Environment approves the Pedestrian Signing Strategy and authorises implementation of the proposed implementation area.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The proposal for a pedestrian signing programme was agreed by Policy & Resources Committee as part of a package of capital schemes in the current Local Transport Plan 2006/7-2010/11.
- 3.2 Currently pedestrian signing in the city is incomplete, inconsistent, and of poor quality. The objective of the pedestrian signing programme is to deliver a comprehensive signing system that will provide high quality wayfinding guidance to visitors, workers and residents.

- 3.3 The programme has been designed for city-wide implementation. The first implementation phase will focus on the central areas of North Laine and The Lanes. Any further expansion of pedestrian signing will be brought to cabinet for approval.
- 3.4 The system will consist of a combination of Monoliths (map boards), Miniliths (narrower versions of Monoliths) and fingerposts. Signs will be positioned along the key pedestrian routes with the signs that contain the most information (monoliths) placed at key decision points, miniliths at minor decision points and a minimal number of fingerposts used where appropriate.
- 3.5 Information included on the maps and signs has been selected from a pedestrian's point of view. Places included are those that are most recognisable, useful or attract a wide audience. The city's most prominent buildings have been depicted in 3D, helping the user to imagine themselves 'in the map' and consequently visualise their journey better.
- 3.6 The programme is focussed on contributing towards the city council's Tourism Strategy 2008/18, specifically:
- Promotion of sustainable transport options to and from the city region and within. (pg 19)
 - Improve accessibility through signage (pg 22)
 - Ensure a quality standard of materials and design are used in all infrastructure improvements and new developments in particular focussing on street furniture, street pavements and signage. (pg 27)
 - Develop a pedestrian network that takes the visitor around the main cultural quarter of Brighton to include the Royal Pavilion Estate, New Road, Theatre Royal, Dome Complex etc. (pg 33)
 - Develop new signage/tourism routes in line with the Public Space Public Life Study especially to encourage visitors to experience the city away from the established routes. This includes the North Laine area from Brighton station, George Street from Hove Station and Kemptown from the bus station. This could include signage and interpretation improvements for significant buildings and spaces to lead from the main gateways to cultural areas, attractions and retail neighbourhoods. (pg 43)
 - Signage is essential with a consistent approach throughout the city. Brighton city centre behind the main streets can be a maze of narrow lanes and it is essential the visitors can find the key visitor attractions easily without feeling unsafe or lost. (pg 44)
- 3.7 The programme is focussed on contributing towards the city council's Economic Strategy 2005/08 objectives, specifically:
- Improve access to and from and within the city and, where possible, encourage a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport. (3a)

- Link key sites to support the business and leisure economy (3c)
 - Improve the effectiveness of street and business area management (4b)
- 3.8 The programme will also contribute towards achievement of the LTP objective to increase walking trips by 10% by 2011.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Development of the strategy has required regular engagement with stakeholders and on-street user testing.
- 4.2 Representatives from the Economic Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership, the Brighton & Hove Bus Company, the Brighton & Hove Hotels Association, tourist and cultural attractions, cycling groups, pedestrian groups, disability groups, and conservation groups have all been consulted.
- 4.3 All relevant internal Brighton & Hove City Council officers have been consulted.
- 4.4 If approval to implement is granted then Advertisement Consent will be required for each sign. Additionally Listed Building Consent will be required for signs in certain locations. Officers will also consult directly with key stakeholders from representing visually impaired groups in the city to ensure the exact location of signs on public highway ensures access and appropriate thoroughfare is maintained.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Any costs associated with the pedestrian signing strategy will be covered by the allocation of funding to Pedestrian Wayfinding and Signing within the Local Transport Plan. This amounts to £158k for 2008-9 and has already been identified for spend in this financial year.

Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw Date: 03/12/08

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 Part V11A of the Highways Act 1980 contains powers enabling highway authorities to carry out works and place objects or structures in the highway for the purposes of, inter alia, enhancing the amenity of the highway and its immediate surroundings and providing a service for the public or a section of the public.
- 5.3 Any consents required for the signage under planning legislation will need to be the subject of listed building/advertisement consent applications as appropriate.

Lawyer Consulted: Hilary Woodward Date: 04/12/08

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 The signs will be designed to provide information in a way that reflects the latest accessible design guidance within the constraints of an information-rich, on-street system.
- 5.5 For those who are blind or severely visually impaired an audio description service is being investigated. In this implementation phase a pilot of a wayfinding system for visually impaired will be tested. Options to work with the existing REACT system being used at bus stops is being investigated, as is the potential to test the Legible London audio information system.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.6 The majority of the city's existing signage is corroded and in a state of disrepair. In order to prevent a repeat of this problem the signs have been designed using durable materials specifically able to withstand Brighton & Hove's atmospheric conditions and remain in good condition whilst requiring minimal maintenance.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.7 The durable design of the signs will help reduce the risk of vandalism.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 There are no significant risks attached to this scheme.
- 5.9 There is the opportunity to co-ordinate arrival point information at places such as stations and car parks with the signing system. Negotiations are on-going with the Parking Team to integrate the system with the car park refurbishment programme.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.10 The Pedestrian Signing Strategy will encourage residents and visitors to walk, provide confidence to explore the city, and highlight areas of economic activity. All contributing to the council priority to 'protect the environment whilst growing the economy.'

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 Development of the scheme was an iterative process, with each stage subject to user testing and stakeholder consultation. Details of options considered during the design process can be seen in the Pedestrian Signing Strategy document.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Over the last five years a number of British cities have sought to improve their city for visitors, residents and businesses by developing a consistent, high quality pedestrian signing system. The proposals in this report seek to achieve the same for Brighton & Hove by replacing the disparate and dilapidated existing signs with a single effective system.
- 7.2 The system has been designed specifically to benefit pedestrians and will allow people the freedom to walk in the city safe in the knowledge that they will receive regular and accurate wayfinding information when they need it.
- 7.3 The system will also act as a promotional tool for the city, demonstrating the breadth of attractions on offer. The signs themselves have been designed to reflect and enhance the character of Brighton & Hove and their presence will reinforce the identity of the city.
- 7.4 The Strategy has provided a good opportunity for BHCC to reassess the amount of unnecessary street clutter in the implementation area to improve the aesthetic qualities of the city by simplifying the public realm.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Existing signs
2. Impression of proposed signing system

Documents In Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

1. Brighton & Hove Pedestrian Signage: Audit, Strategy and Concepts
2. Local Transport Plan 2006/7-2010/11
3. Legibility Study – Public Space Public Life – Brighton & Hove

