

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	5 th March 2014
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Aberdeen City Centre - Wayfinding Project
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/14/040

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report was requested by the City Centre Regeneration Board (CCRB) at its meeting of 10 February 2014 following the presentation of the Aberdeen City Centre - Wayfinding Project by Aberdeen Inspired.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Council:

- a) Agree to joint fund the pilot scheme with Aberdeen Inspired, as outlined in Section 5.4.3; and
- b) Instruct officers to report back to Members on the outcome of a review of the pilot scheme.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The following is a breakdown of the currently estimated costs for the pilot and full scheme, including whole life costs:

Pilot Scheme

Manufacture and implementation of sign prototypes - £100k (2014/2015)

Cleaning (4 no. signs cleaned weekly) £1-2k per annum (2014/2015)

A funding bid is included in the Bus Lane Enforcement Expenditure report to Enterprise Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 13th March 2014 for 50% funding for the pilot scheme from the Bus Lane Enforcement net income programme. Aberdeen Inspired has agreed to fund the remaining 50% for the pilot scheme in financial year 2014/15.

There has been no provision made within budget costs for maintenance within the first year of the pilot scheme. Actual costs of maintenance will be gathered through the pilot scheme period and will provide information towards the overall project and future whole life costs of the scheme.

Full Scheme (Costs are provided for information only at this stage)

It should be noted agreement to install the full scheme, with the same sign design, potentially restricts ACC to one company and one supplier in future years.

Manufacture and implementation signs £735k (2014/2016)
Cleaning (estimate - to be confirmed following the pilot scheme phase) £15-30k per annum
Maintenance (to be confirmed following the pilot scheme phase) estimated at £20k per annum (2014/2025) Confirmation regarding future maintenance costs will be required to be agreed to ensure best value for ACC throughout the project.

The signs have a design life of 10 years.

An allowance would also be required for the removal of all redundant signs from previous wayfinding schemes. As yet this figure has not been quantified.

Funding for the implementation of the potential full scheme has not been identified and approved at this time

There are no known implications for approved PBB options.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

An agreement is in place with Aberdeen Inspired that the final design of the signs will become the intellectual property of Aberdeen City Council (ACC).

All sign locations have been agreed with the appropriate ACC officers.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Background

During the early to mid 1990's a scheme was developed for the City Centre using replica heritage fingerpost and noticeboard signs. Since then these signs have been added to by a variety of information signs using contemporary tubular steel, highlighting specific locations or points of interest. A small maintenance budget is available to update

the signage however issues have occurred with the design copyright which has limited this process. There was an identified desire within Aberdeen City Council to update the existing schemes. However this work was not an immediate priority for budget or staff resources. As a result, the wayfinding schemes are now disjointed, outdated and in some cases inaccurate, not keeping up with the pace of change within the City Centre.

During 2013/14 Aberdeen Inspired (AI) led a project to design and develop a new wayfinding scheme for Aberdeen City Centre. This work is jointly funded and managed by Aberdeen City Council and the scheme options have been developed with assistance from officers throughout Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure (EP&I).

An independent wayshowing and sign consultant was appointed by AI in July 2013 to plan, design and provide a specification for signage, and to deliver a pilot scheme. The design and specification process is due to be completed by the end of March 2014.

5.2 Wayfinding – The Strategy

Source: Aberdeen Inspired, February 2014.

“Benefits of good quality wayfinding and design:

The scheme is designed to:

- Enable orientation, navigation and journey planning, helping people understand their location, identify and reach their destinations;
- Reduce stress and confusion;
- Give first time visitors to Aberdeen a positive and safe experience and thereby encourage their return;
- Help everyone gain a better understanding of the City Centre;
- Encourage walking and confident exploration within the City Centre
- Connect the various parts of the City Centre; and
- Provide a well-designed system suited to the City and capable of providing long term support.”

The regeneration value of the project was also identified:

“The project is particularly suitable as a flagship regeneration project for Aberdeen City Centre for the following reasons:

- A highly visible, self-confident and forward-looking project;
- Express something unique and tangible about the City and what it has to offer;
- Present the City as an accomplished, adept and aspirational place;
- Relatively low cost and quick to implement;

- Democratic, of benefit to the entire City Centre;
- Able to create awareness of the various parts of the City and their character, encouraging visitors to explore them;
- Reinforce the importance of Union Street as the backbone of the City Centre;
- Contribute to regeneration, in particular of areas which are less well-known and perhaps not immediately obvious to visitors (such as Castlegate, the West End, areas around Crown Street and Langstane Place), through increased awareness;
- Creating a framework for future regeneration and development aimed at better connecting key new developments (e.g. St Nicholas House) and important off-site areas (assets) with high potential (e.g. the Beach and the Harbour); and
- Help position Aberdeen such that it can achieve future long term aims in respect of growth and development.”

5.3 Progress To Date

5.3.1 Sign Locations

A strategy to cover the City Centre has been developed. Within an area of nearly 1 km² a total of 58 locations are recommended to accommodate four different sign types. Standard map totems would be the most frequent sign type accompanied by slim map totems, identification signs and additional signs which have yet to be determined.

The challenging topography of the City Centre, the length and breadth of Union Street with the various points of interest off route, the location of bridge decks under existing footways, and entry points for visitors to the City Centre include car parks, the rail and bus stations, tourist information and Aberdeen Harbour have been identified as factors impacting the locations of these signs.

The dimensions of the signs take into account the confined nature of the City Centre street network and many are placed in locations currently occupied by the outdated finger posts or information signs which exist throughout the area. These existing signs would be removed and further rationalisation of signs may be possible as a result of the volume of information provided on the new signs.

The sign locations and orientation have been reviewed by the design consultant and appropriate officers of the Council to ensure their suitability and viability.

5.3.2 Sign Design

The map totems are bespoke, freestanding, robust and purpose-designed for the City Centre environment.

They will present and communicate clearly and comprehensively an understanding of the City. The signs will be accessible and adhere to best practise guidance. Examples of the appearance and content of the signs are included within Appendix A of this report. This design has not yet been finalised and therefore colour scheme, text and map details may change prior to implementation of the pilot scheme.

A full study of key and amenity destinations has been undertaken including retail, civic, leisure, heritage and transport hubs.

Directional guidance and average walking times will be noted on the signs.

Highlighted within the signs will be buildings of architectural and/or historical importance, using simple building elevations. This will further impress the character of the area on visitors whilst adding wayfinding landmarks.

The signs are robust and the design seeks to take into account the local environmental challenges. Estimated maintenance costs have been identified based on the requirement for some annual updates of sign information and occasional, unpredictable misadventure that may require full or partial sign replacement.

5.3.3 Suspended Letter Signs

A proposal to introduce further suspended letter signs, similar to that found on Belmont Street, directing people to the Art Gallery, is in the concept stage at present.

The following three areas have been identified and it is hoped to involve local artists in the design of final proposals.

“West End shops and restaurants”

“Shiprow & Maritime Museum”

“The Green & Merchant Quarter”

Permissions will be required from building owners, conservation planning and structural engineer colleagues prior to suspended letter signs being installed at the above locations.

5.4 Next Steps

The design process is due to be completed by the end of March 2014 and a tender process will then be undertaken to manufacture and install a pilot scheme as described below.

5.4.1 Pilot Scheme

It is intended to install signs at four busy, linked locations providing a measurable pilot scheme for the project. See the plan in Appendix B for details.

The assessment process for the pilot scheme has yet to be fully determined however a survey of visitors and sign users will be carried out to determine, amongst other evaluation points, any issues with the sign content, impact on visitors in terms of legibility, ease of use and usefulness.

During the pilot period it would be anticipated that an appropriate cleaning routine could be identified. The main structure of the signs and the ease of updating the information can also be evaluated. Maintenance and cleaning costs will be evaluated during the pilot scheme period.

The monitoring results would be used to inform any necessary redesign of the signs. An allowance has been made in the budget for the replacement of these initial signs to ensure a consistency with the final scheme.

It is hoped that there will be limited modifications required to the sign units as a result of the design refinement and therefore the project can progress to full implementation soon after the completion of the monitoring period subject to available funding being available.

The pilot scheme will be monitored for a period of six months from implementation. This is anticipated to be over the summer (July and August) allowing for a substantial volume of visitor and local views to be gathered.

5.4.2 Final Design and Full Scheme Implementation

It is essential that the final scheme takes into account any issues encountered through the pilot scheme which should be responded to before any final decision is made to implement the wider scheme.

The final scheme may also be able to take into consideration the forthcoming output from the City Centre Masterplan, currently subject to tender. This would enable any specific zones to be identified within the signage.

The potential to extend the scheme outwith the defined area of the city centre should also be considered as part of the full scheme with associated funding opportunities identified during this period.

5.4.3 Funding Opportunities

Aberdeen Inspired presented the project to date to CCRB to request a contribution towards funding for the pilot scheme and to identify the future full scheme. AI sought a minimum of 50% of the total costs, or up to 75% if appropriate.

In addition to this, a bid has been made for 50% funding of the pilot scheme through the new Bus Lane Enforcement fund. This funding process will be considered by the Enterprise Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 13 March 2014 within the report entitled Bus Lane Enforcement Expenditure and a decision on this bid will be known then.

5.5 Summary

In partnership with Aberdeen Inspired, Aberdeen City Council officers have been working with external consultants to identify a bespoke wayfinding scheme for Aberdeen City Centre.

The results of this study, whilst not fully concluded have identified 58 locations for map totems and supporting signage within the City Centre.

Agreement in principle to and funding of the implementation of a pilot scheme in summer 2014 is being sought. The pilot focuses on four sites and would enable the refined sign design to be informed by public response and officer evaluation and a maintenance regime established prior to consideration of the installation of the full scheme.

6. IMPACT

The contents of this report link to the Community Plan vision of creating a sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all.

The project will contribute to the delivery of the Smarter Mobility aims of Aberdeen – The Smarter City: We will encourage cycling and walking, and We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.

The project will assist in the delivery of actions identified in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013, in particular the Thematic Priority of Safer Communities (Safer Roads) and the Multi-lateral Priority – Integrated Transport (Aberdeen is easy to access and move around in).

The project will also assist delivery of the 5 year Corporate Business Plan, in particular the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Directorate's aim to Protect and enhance our high-quality, natural and built environment.

An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has been undertaken on this report and is attached in Appendix C.

This report will be of interest to members of the public as it has the potential to affect pedestrian members of the travelling public in the City Centre.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There is a risk that the signs used for the pilot scheme may require to be replaced during the full scheme due to design changes agreed following the monitoring process. This cost is included within the estimated full cost of the scheme.

The specification of these high quality signs requires the proposed materials to withstand vandalism and damage. A maintenance budget would be required to be prioritised to ensure the quality and relevance of the signs is maintained to avoid the scheme falling into disrepute and to fail to meet its objectives. The material must also be available in the long term and this should be considered within the design and testing process.

As part of the assessment process, during the pilot scheme, officers will investigate potential opportunities regarding future sponsorship of the signage and consider the related implications.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen Inspired presentation to City Centre Regeneration Board February 2014.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Vycki Ritson, Senior Engineer, Vritson@aberdeencity.gov.uk and 522704.

Appendix A – Draft Sign Design Details



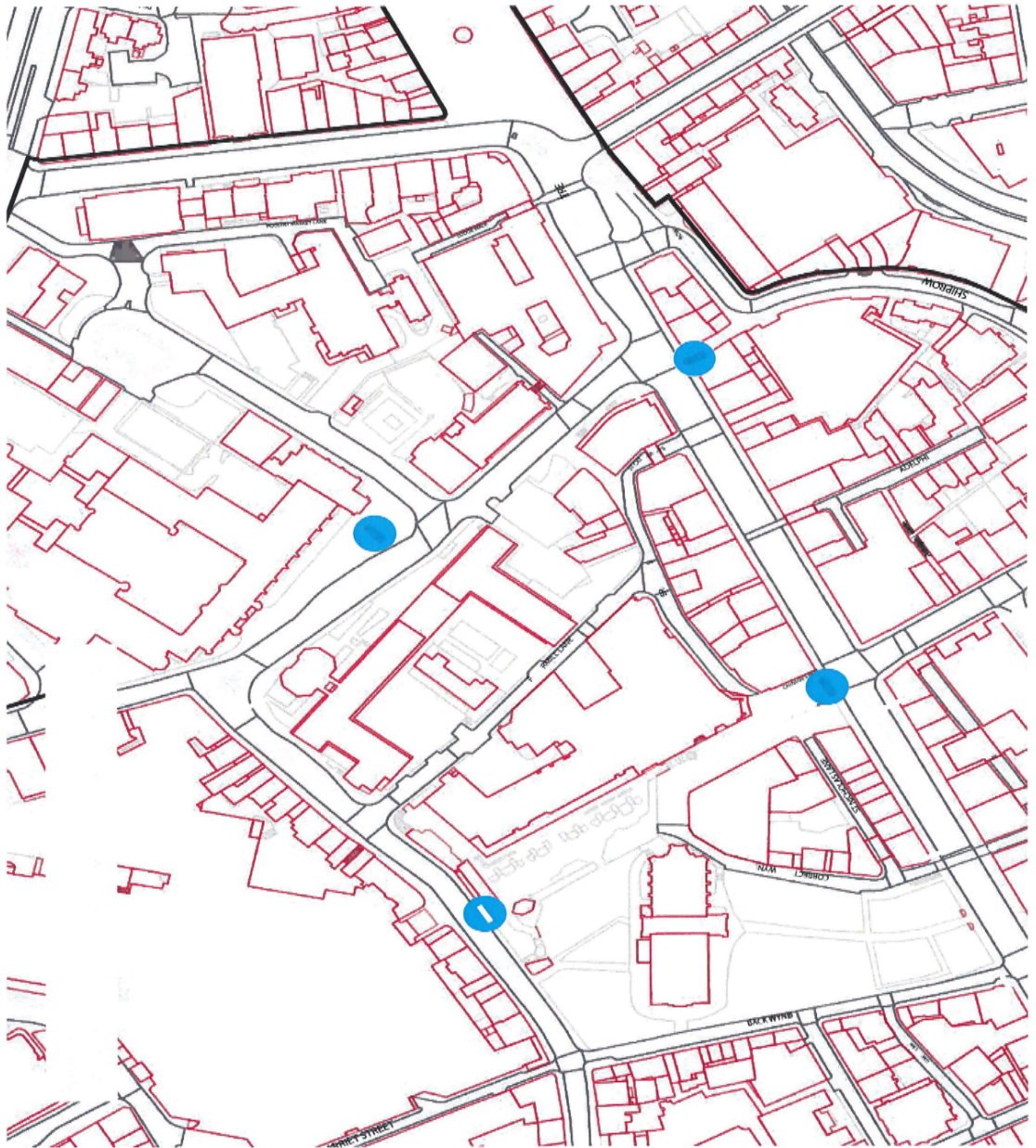
UNION STREET
TOWARDS CASTLEGATE

↑ **Castlegate** 7 mins
Tourist Information **i**

← **Bon Accord & St Nicholas** **🚏** 2 mins

Merchant Quarter & The Green →
4 mins **Maritime Museum**
6 mins **🚏** **Union Square**

Appendix B – Location Plan of Pilot Scheme



The Pilot Area taken in St Nicholas Street, Tourist Information, Broad Street at Marischal College and Schoolhill at the St Nicholas Centre.



Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment - the Form

There are separate guidance notes to accompany this form – “Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment – the Guide.” Please use these guidance notes as you complete this form. Throughout the form, **proposal** should be understood broadly to include the full range of our activities and could refer to a decision, policy, strategy, plan, procedure, report or business case, embracing a range of different actions such as setting budgets, developing high level strategies and organisational practices such as internal restructuring. Essentially everything we do!

STEP 1: Identify essential information

1. Committee Report No.

ESPI/14/040

2. Name of proposal.

Aberdeen City Centre – Wayfinding Project

3. Officer(s) completing this form.

Name	Designation	Service	Directorate
Vycki Ritson	Senior Engineer	P&SD	ESP&I

4. Date of Impact Assessment.

26.02.14

5. When is the proposal next due for review?

Not yet known

6. Committee Name.

Full Council

7. Date the Committee is due to meet.

5.03.14

8. Identify the Lead Council Service and who else is involved in delivering this proposal (for example other Council services or partner agencies).

The liaison and progression of the scheme will be undertaken by ESP&I.

9. Please summarise this Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA). This must include any practical actions you intend to take or have taken to reduce, justify or remove any adverse negative impacts. This must also include a summary of how this proposal complies with the public sector equality duty for people with protected characteristics - see Step 2. **Please return to this question after completing the EHRIA.**

This project is to provide guidance to visitors to Aberdeen on finding their way around the City Centre, informing them of specific locations or points of interest and providing a uniformity of sign provision within the City Centre. There is also the opportunity to reduce street furniture clutter as the new signs will hold more information and many are to be located at the site of existing provisions. The signs are designed to be accessible. With information available at different heights and text and plans to be easily legible.

10. Where will you publish the results of the Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment? Tick which applies.

Para 9 of EHRIA will be published in committee report in Section 6 "Impact"

Full EHRIA will be attached to the committee report as an appendix

Copied to Equalities Team to publish on the Council website

STEP 2: Outline the aims of the proposal

11. What are the main aims of the proposal?

The proposal aims to encourage confidence for those moving round the City Centre on footpaths. It provides guidance on areas of interest or alternative links that might otherwise be missed and provides guidance timings to walk to other areas which should reduce the public's concerns about travelling on foot around the City Centre.

12. Who will benefit most from the proposal?

Visitors to the City Centre and those looking to explore the area using active modes.

13. You should assess the impact of your proposal on equality groups and tell us how implementing this proposal will impact on the needs of the public sector equality duty to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations.

The signs will be able to highlight pedestrian friendly routes also routes which maybe difficult to those with particular issues. (I.e. steps, steep footpaths).
 The signs will contain information at different levels for those in wheelchairs or standing.
 The text and mapping will be clear and concise for those with visual impairments or learning difficulties.

STEP 3: Gather and consider evidence

15. What **evidence** is there to identify any potential positive or negative impacts in terms of involvement, consultation, research, officer knowledge and experience, equality monitoring data, user feedback and other? You must consider relevant evidence, including evidence from equality groups.

This scheme is currently in the design phase and no formal consultation has taken place on the design. It is intended to implement a pilot scheme which will be evaluated to determine what improvements could be made for users, prior to implementation of the final scheme.
 There will be no audible elements to the signs therefore those with severe visual impairments will not be benefitted.

STEP 4: Assess likely impacts on people with Protected Characteristics

16. Which, if any, people with protected characteristics and others could be affected positively or negatively by this proposal? Place the symbol in the relevant box. Be aware of cross-cutting issues, such as older women with a disability experiencing poverty and isolation.

(Positive +, neutral 0, - negative)

Protected Characteristics					
Age - Younger	0	Disability	+	Gender Reassignment*	0
Older					
Marriage or Civil Partnership	0	Pregnancy and Maternity	0	Race**	0
Religion or Belief	0	Sex (gender)***	0	Sexual orientation****	0
Others e.g. poverty	0				

Notes:

- * Gender Reassignment includes Transsexual
- ** Race includes Gypsy/Travellers
- *** Sex (gender) i.e. men, women
- **** Sexual orientation includes LGB: Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual

17. Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above.

In making the assessment you must consider relevant evidence, including evidence received from individuals and equality groups. Having considered all of these elements, you must take account of the results of such assessments. This requires you to consider taking action to address any issues identified, such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and exploiting any potential for positive impact. If any adverse impact amounts to **unlawful discrimination**, the policy must be amended to avert this. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.

Positive impacts (describe protected characteristics affected)	Negative Impacts (describe protected characteristics affected)
Those with mobility issues will have a greater understanding of the distances required to cover to visit points of interest in the City Centre.	People with severe visual impairments will have no alternative to the visual representations.
People in wheelchairs and those standing will be able to view information on the signs.	

STEP 5: Human Rights - Apply the three key assessment tests for compliance assurance

18. Does this proposal/policy/procedure have the potential to interfere with an individual's rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998? State which rights might be affected by ticking the appropriate box(es) and saying how. **If you answer "no", go straight to question 22. - No**

- Article 3 – Right not to be subjected to torture, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment
- Article 6 – Right to a fair and public hearing
- Article 8 – Right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence
- Article 10 – freedom of expression
- Other article not listed above

How?

Legality

19. Where there is a potential negative impact is there a legal basis in the relevant domestic law?

Legitimate aim

20. Is the aim of the policy identified in Steps 1 and 2 a legitimate aim being served in terms of the relevant equality legislation or the Human Rights Act?

Proportionality

21. Is the impact of the policy proportionate to the legitimate aim being pursued? Is it the minimum necessary interference to achieve the legitimate aim?

STEP 6: Monitor and review

22. How will you monitor the implementation of the proposal? (For example, customer satisfaction questionnaires)

A public survey will be carried out following implementation of the pilot scheme. The full details of this have not yet been determined.

23. How will the results of this impact assessment and any further monitoring be used to develop the proposal?

The feedback from this assessment and the monitoring of the pilot scheme will be used to refine the design prior to implementation of the final scheme.

STEP 7 SIGN OFF

The final stage of the EHRIA is formally to sign off the document as being a complete, rigorous and robust assessment.

Person(s) completing the impact assessment.

Name	Date	Signature
Vycki Ritson	26.02.14	

Quality check: document has been checked by

Name	Date	Signature

Head of Service (Sign-off)

Name	Date	Signature