

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	18 March 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Review of Wayfinding Pilot Scheme
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/111
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report has been prepared in response to the Full Council 5th March 2014 where the Council resolved:

- (i) to provide up to 50% of the capital costs capped at £50,000 of the wayfinding scheme outlined at appendix B to the report, and that this be met from the City Centre Regeneration Fund; and
- (ii) to instruct officers to report to the appropriate committee on the suspended letter sign scheme outlined at paragraph 5.3.3 of the report once Aberdeen Inspired had completed all necessary preparatory work on the scheme.

The report details the outcome of the pilot scheme following its implementation in November 2014.

At this time there is no update on the suspended letter sign as the preparatory work is currently being undertaken by Aberdeen Inspired.

Subject to the Members agreement that the pilot has been completed successfully, this report also requests that the Committee agree to the scheme being taken forward for full implementation within the City Centre as detailed in Section 5 below.

It is recommended that the signs are cleaned on a weekly basis to maintain their clarity and visual presence on street. It is anticipated that this frequency can be reduced in sheltered or quieter locations however this will be determined following implementation. The annual cleaning cost, based on weekly cleaning of all totems, is estimated as £19k. This will be an ongoing revenue burden to the Council as will ad hoc repairs to the totems and the review and updating of the map sections as described below in Section 3.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that this Committee:

- a) note the outcome of the review of the pilot scheme;
- b) instruct officers to progress the implementation of the full scheme if 50% funding from the City Centre Regeneration Fund and 50% from Aberdeen Inspired, as outline in Section 3 below, is secured; and
- c) acknowledge that the cleaning and ongoing maintenance of the signs will result in an ongoing revenue burden for the Council and ask officers to investigate options to help deliver this funding.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The following is a breakdown of the actual scheme costs for the pilot scheme and the estimated full scheme costs.

Pilot Scheme – Four totems

Whilst the initial estimate for these works (preparation of prototype totems, and construction and implementation of four pilot totems) was £100,000 with costs to be met jointly by Aberdeen Inspired and Aberdeen City Regeneration Fund, the actual cost of implementing the pilot was £33,908 with ACC's contribution being £16,954. Due to the innovation of the signs it was impossible to accurately determine the cost of the units.

Costs were incurred as spare panels were purchased for the signs. These would enable any damaged panels to be replaced as quickly as possible minimising risk to the public and the public image of the signs. Spares cost £2620 with Aberdeen Inspired bearing 50% of the costs.

Cleaning costs for the pilot totems are being funded by an existing budget until end March 2015. A budget for the future cleaning costs of the totems has not yet been identified. These costs are estimated to be £1352 per annum. This is based on a weekly cleaning regime as has been carried out to date.

Full Scheme

The full scheme has been estimated on the basis of 46 standard totems, 7 slim totems, 6 identification signs and 3 directional signs being provided. The totems are based on the format used in the pilot scheme with the exception of the identification signs which are suspended signs. The full scheme costs include for the replacement of the pilot signs as there are design refinements proposed for the final signs based on the outcomes of the pilot phase, it is important that the final scheme looks consistent and presents the best option for the City Centre.

An estimated cost for design improvements, product design improvements and implementation support has been received from the designer of the signs. These costs are estimated at £45,000.

The estimated cost of implementing the full scheme is £564,000.

It is also highly recommended that spare panels are created at the same time. This cost is estimated at £36,000. The further engraving of these panels would be £225 per totem and would be required as and when totem panels require to be replaced. An implementation cost would also be incurred depending on the final supplier chosen and sensitivity of the location the following examples have been given by the supplier of the pilot scheme e.g. daytime installation estimated at £500 per shift or Sunday installation estimated at £700 per shift.

Changes to the panels are unlikely to be required on a regular basis as the locations chosen are all on footpaths with safe areas around them for pedestrians to gather. The estimate below allows for 50% of the map panels to be replaced each year, this will ensure that any changes to the City Centre as a result of development and the City Centre Masterplan are recorded and represented timeously. Map prints are estimated at £80 per totem.

The cleaning costs for the full scheme i.e. 56 totems, is estimated at £18,928 per annum based on weekly cleaning.

These estimates are based on the costs provided for the pilot plus contingencies. Due to the variation in the volume of signs between the pilot and the full scheme, it may be that economies of scale will reduce the overall costs however there will also be additional costs incurred should another contractor be employed and a new prototype sign needs to be created.

Aberdeen Inspired have again stated their willingness to fund 50% of the final scheme. Risks are attached to this funding, please see Section 7 below.

The full scheme costs are summarised in Table 1 below

Table 1: Final Scheme Wayfinding

Totems/ signs (a)	Spare panels plus engraving (b)	Total capital costs for year of implementation (a)+(b)=(c)
£564k	£36k	£619k

An additional £45k is estimated revenue cost of design support for the final scheme.

Engraving panels (e)	Cleaning (f)	Replacement maps vinyls (g) (vinyls	Total revenue cost of on-going for maintenance per
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		plus installation)	annum (c)+(d)+(e)=(g)
£6k	£19k	£5.5k	£30.5k

The totems have been designed for a 25 year lifespan subject to on-going maintenance and updating of data.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal support will be required to support officers with the financial and design agreements between Aberdeen Inspired and ACC.

The implementation of the full scheme would necessitate the removal of the various existing wayfinding signs and schemes currently present within the City Centre. Many of these signs are expected to be replaced by the new totems however there will be some additional work required to ensure that existing schemes are cleared.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Review of the Pilot Scheme

The pilot signs were installed at four locations in early November 2014. The installation was successfully achieved in two parts, firstly the foundations were installed by the Roads Service acting a sub-contractor to the Sign Manufacturer and then the signs fitted into the foundations during a separate visit by the sign manufacturer.

A design change was identified following implementation. It is recommended that the current galvanised steel frame is replaced with a precision aluminium and steel frame to ensure that the frame tolerances are minimised. This has no additional associated costs.

As reported in the bulletin to this Committee in January 2015 a public survey was carried out before and after implementation of the wayfinding pilot scheme. The surveys concluded that 88% of respondents thought the new totems were an improvement on the previous signs and 92% believed the totems would improve navigation around the city centre. 94% of respondents thought the signs easy to read and understand.

With regards to the maintenance of the pilot signs, no damage incidents have occurred at the time of writing. The locations of the signs were chosen as regular pedestrian or tourist locations and therefore would attract attention. These locations are remote from vehicular traffic. No damage has been sustained by the signs as a result of the varying weather conditions however no extreme weather events have occurred during the assessment period.

One design change is proposed to assist with the use of the signs in wet conditions; this is to use of self-cleaning glass to repel water and assist run off.

A weekly cleaning regime has been in place since the signs were installed and this is working well. No significant vandalism has been identified and the signs remain fresh and clear. It is recommended that a weekly cleaning regime is maintained however it is likely that this could be reduced in more sheltered or less busy locations.

5.2 Final Scheme Implementation

Following the implementation of the pilot scheme no significant issues were identified with the signs and public support was measured as supportive of the totems.

Final scheme costs have been estimated based on the pilot scheme costs and these are identified in Section 3 above.

A bid has been made to the City Centre Regeneration Fund to fund 50% of the costs of the final scheme. This will not consider the ongoing maintenance costs of the scheme. Aberdeen Inspired have confirmed their willingness to pay the remaining 50% of the implementation of the final scheme.

It was proposed to bid for Bus Lane Enforcement Funding however the timescales for agreement of this expenditure means that Aberdeen Inspired could not commit the match funding.

The cost of finalising the design of the totems and supervising the development of the tendering and construction process is estimated at £45k based on the current design company continuing in this role. This cost was covered solely by Aberdeen Inspired during the pilot scheme. Whilst this did not create any significant problems during the pilot phase, it would be important for ACC to have the leading role in the final scheme development and implementation as ACC will ultimately have the maintenance responsibility. 50% of the design and support costs are therefore included within ACC bids for funding.

5.3 Remedial Works following Pilot Scheme

If the final scheme does not go ahead it is recommended that the pilot signs are removed and the footpaths reinstated. This will reduce any confusion for visitors from having a range of wayfinding signs presented to them around the City.

The estimated cost of repairing the footpaths in these locations is £8k. This cost would only be incurred if the final scheme is not progressed.

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.

This project contributes to delivery of the Smarter Mobility aims of Aberdeen – The Smarter City: We will develop, maintain and promote road, rail, ferry and air links from the city to the UK and the rest of the world. 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 identified in this report 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 listed projects will also assist delivery of the 5 year Corporate Business Plan, in particular the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Directorate's aims to Protect and enhance our high-quality, natural and built environment and Support the delivery of a fully integrated transport network.

This report may be of interest to members of the public as it concerns the city centre transport network which has the potential to affect all members of the travelling public particularly those travelling by public transport.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

There is a risk that any delay in progressing the implementation of this scheme may result in the loss of the 50% funding from Aberdeen Inspired, due to their timescales for bidding to be retained as the Business Improvement District management body.

There is a risk to the reputation of the scheme if a budget for cleaning and maintenance in future years is not identified.

Should Aberdeen Inspired be appointed to the BID again following January 2016 then they have suggested that they would be willing to fund 50% of the cleaning budget of the totems.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Reports

“Aberdeen City Centre – Wayfinding Project” - Full Council, 5 March 2014

<http://councilcommittees/documents/s36108/Wayfinding%20Project.pdf>

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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