



Report of the Director of City Development

To Executive Board

Date: 22nd June 2010

Subject: **DEPUTATION TO COUNCIL, 21 APRIL 2010
REINSTATEMENT OF HISTORIC MARKET TOWN SIGN ON A1(M)**

Electoral Wards Affected:

Wetherby

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

Executive Summary

A deputation to Council on the 21 April 2010 requested the reinstatement of the Wetherby Historic Market Town signage on the improved A1(M). This report is the response to that request and identifies the process required to progress a possible solution.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 This report provides information relating to the deputation received by Council at the April 2010 meeting concerning the Wetherby Business Association's request for the reinstatement of the Wetherby Historic Market Town signage on the improved A1(M)

2.0 Background Information

2.1 A deputation from the Wetherby Business Association was heard by the 21 April 2010 meeting of Council. The subject was the reinstatement of an Historic Market Town sign, which was removed by the Highways Agency during works to upgrade the A1 to the A1(M).

2.2 In 2005 the Highways Agency (HA), which is an Executive Agency of the Department for Transport (DfT), indicated its intention of upgrading to motorway standard the A1 between Darrington and Dishforth. This included upgrading the section of the A1 between the A64 at Bramham Crossroads and the junction near Kirk Deighton north of Wetherby by converting the existing 2-lane dual carriageways of the A1 to 3-lane dual carriageways and introducing motorway regulations.

2.3 As part of the upgrade the road signing was amended to meet current regulations. Road signing on motorways, trunk and local roads is regulated by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD). This is a comprehensive document detailing the signs which are approved for use on the highway. Any variations require special authorisation from the DfT.

2.4 The upgrade work started in 2007 and a completion ceremony was held in December 2009.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The upgrade removed a brown 'Historic Market Town' sign indicating 'Wetherby' for traffic heading northbound to exit the former A1. The HA have confirmed this was removed because it was no longer an approved sign within the TSRGD and the junction at which it was situated is no longer there. Signing for 'Wetherby' was provided at the new junction arrangement by the standard white lettering on blue background motorway direction signing.

3.2 The deputation from the Wetherby Business Association, detailed in the background information, indicated that since the removal of the 'Historic Market Town' sign:

- Wetherby businesses have seen a significant reduction in footfall,
- The provision of a Motorway Service Area, just north of Wetherby, has reduced the number of vehicles attracted to the town,
- Shops started to close soon after removal of the sign,

3.3 The businesses and residents have requested that the sign is reinstated.

3.4 Because the A1(M) is managed by the HA, the Council is unable to provide the sign but has contacted the HA seeking their consideration to the provision of a replacement white lettering on brown background 'tourist' sign indicating 'Wetherby' to be located prior to the northbound exit of the junction for Wetherby. (See attached drawing).

3.5 The HA has indicated that any request for the provision of a tourist sign will be considered upon submission of the appropriate application form. Details of how to apply, guidance on the criteria used to consider signing and a copy of the application form are available on the HA website. Should the sign be approved, the full costs of the work must be met by the applicant. This may be significant given the potential size of the sign and the traffic management work needed to allow for safe installation of the sign and posts.

3.6 The HA have advised that the application should not be submitted by the Council because, as Highway Authority for the local roads between the A1(M) and Wetherby, the Council will be consulted if the HA have any concerns about suitability of the route or the continuity of signing. The Council therefore needs to be able to demonstrate an independent view.

3.7 The HA have further advised that they will be looking at continuity of the style of signage from the M1 into Wetherby. It could potentially improve the likelihood of a successful application if the three roundabouts on the approach to Wetherby also had brown tourist signs. These would require a separate application to the Council and could cost around £2,200.

- 3.8 The applicant would be advised to discuss the proposals with the HA and the Council to agree an approach that would be successful without incurring unnecessary cost.
- 3.9 The route between the A1(M) and Wetherby is considered to be already adequately signed but does not use the brown tourist signs.
- 3.10 Neither the HA or the Council can provide “Historic Market Town” signs due to the lack of compliance with the TSRGD. The seeking of special authorisation can be a lengthy process and is highly unlikely to be given in these circumstances because of the precedent this would set.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 4.1 This report does not raise any specific implications for Council policy and Governance.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 This report has no specific legal and resource implications for the Council provided the full costs are borne by the third party.

6.0 Risk Assessments

- 6.1 No risks, other than those normally associated with working on the public highway are associated with the scheme.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 A request for consideration of providing a tourist sign on the A1(M) should be submitted to the Highways Agency by an appropriate organisation from Wetherby. , This organisation is also advised to consider submitting a supporting application to the Council for signs on the local road network.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 Members of the Executive Board are requested to:
1. NOTE the contents of the report,
 2. SUPPORT the application for appropriate brown tourist signing for Wetherby from A1(M), from a third party, for example either the business community in Wetherby or the Wetherby Town Council and
 3. AGREE the applicant should fund all associated costs.

9.0 Background Papers

The following documents provide background information for this report:

- i) Deputation to Leeds City Council concerning the reinstatement of the Historic Market Town sign for Wetherby.