

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 7th April 2015
Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Key Decision: Yes: Recorded in the Notice Ref:KD07/15
Within Policy and Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: PUBLIC REALM
Report of: Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 15/15

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek Executive consent to proceed with a number of public realm projects within Carlisle.

Recommendations:

That the Executive

1. **Approve the programme of public realm projects proposed**
2. **Release £255,000 identified within the Capital Programme to fund the proposed works**
3. **Authorise the Director of Governance to amend any of the Car Park Orders as appropriate.**

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In March 2014 the Executive granted consent for the development of a comprehensive signage and interpretation package (ED 10/14) in order that public realm projects could be undertaken as part of the process of improving public realm in the City.
- 1.2 Over the last 12 months a City Centre Signage Audit & Strategy has been commissioned, an initial signage suite developed and subsequently cost engineered to provide cost effective signage solutions, and a procurement process has been completed to appoint a contractor to manufacture and install signage.
- 1.3 Now that the background preparation and design work is complete we are proposing to move forward a number of public realm projects outlined below. Costings for each project are contained in Table 1 under Section 2.6 below .

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 Gateway Signage

- 2.1.1 In order to improve the “Welcome to Carlisle” we propose to install gateway signage on all major vehicular routes into the City. Two concepts have been developed and are show in Fig 1 in the Appendices to this Report.
- 2.1.2 Initially 10 standard signs will be installed on the main cultural routes into the City.
- 2.1.3 A higher specification gateway sign has been developed to be used at key gateway locations, such as Motorway Junctions. These signs rather than being constructed of metal utilise stone and are significantly more expensive to produce, circa £15,000 + installation.

We propose to offer local businesses the opportunity to sponsor these key gateways and the signs will only be produced as and when sponsorship becomes available.

- 2.1.4 Further information on costings is contained in Table 1.

2.2 City Centre Orientation

- 2.2.1 The City Centre Signage Audit of Strategy highlighted that orientation around the City Centre is poor due to outdated and poor quality signage. The proliferation of signage evidenced creates a negative impression for visitors and residents alike.
- 2.2.2 Again, a suite of signs has been developed to improve orientation, these are shown in Figure 2.
- 2.2.3 Initially we looked at refurbishing the existing finger posts however this proved difficult as they are expensive to update and their design also offers limited space for text. It is proposed to install a new system of finger posts, 30 initially, within the City Centre area. They will offer greater flexibility for naming and colour coding areas, such as the Historic Quarter, Rickergate etc to aide navigation. Updating is also more cost effective than the existing system.
- 2.2.4 we also propose to install 10 Information Points at relevant locations (car parks, train and bus station, entrance to historic quarter, Rickergate etc) to improve the Carlisle Welcome and ease navigation around the City Centre. These Information Points will be combined with the Finger Posts where appropriate.
- 2.2.5 Again the Information Points are designed to be easily updateable as and when required.
- 2.2.6 The new City Centre orientation signage will help boost the visitor economy building on the improvements currently underway to the Tourist Information Centre at the Old Town Hall and will drive visitors to the Historic Quarter.
- 2.2.7 The new signage will also allow for the de-cluttering of the City Centre by the removal of outdated and superfluous signage.

2.3 Car Park Renaming

- 2.3.1 In line with the Signage Audit of Strategy we propose to rename several car parks to direct visitors to the most appropriate and make the names more relevant. The proposed changes are as follows:-

Current Name	Proposed Name
Devonshire Walk Car Park	Castle Car Park
Town Dyke Orchard Car Park	West Walls Car Park
Upper Viaduct Car Park	Viaduct Car Park
Lower Viaduct Car Park	Caldew Riverside Car Park
West Walls Car Park	Marks & Spencer Car Park

2.3.2 The Car Park renaming would be undertaken concurrently with the other City Centre navigation proposals to ensure a smooth transition to the new system. We intend to utilise the existing car park signage and rebrand accordingly.

2.4 Court Square

2.4.1 Carlisle Train Station is a key gateway into the City Centre. The current welcome is poor and it is particularly confusing for visitors as to a safe route of passage through Court Square. By removing the railings and copings around the former underground toilets and covering the steps this key gateway could be significantly enhanced. The works would be undertaken to allow re-use of the underground space should a future redevelopment of the Court Square area occur.

2.4.2 Discussions are ongoing with Virgin Trains regarding rebranding of the exit area on Platform 4 to re-inforce the Carlisle Welcome.

2.5 Replacement Bandstand

3.5.1 The current bandstand is nearing the end of its life-expectancy and needs replacing. Plans are being developed to replace the existing facility with a permanent solution. The new bandstand would be demountable and also provide a base which could be used to locate the Christmas tree. This would allow greater flexibility over the pedestrian area during the Christmas Events period.

2.6 Summary financial position

The costs of each project are outlined in the table overleaf along with the current budget available.

Proposal	Source of funding	Estimated cost
Gateway signs (10)	Existing public realm budget	£30,000
Car park renaming	Existing public realm budget	£10,000
Court Square	Existing public realm budget	£35,000
Sub total:		£75,000
City Centre Orientation (10 information points & 30 finger posts)	Old Town Hall/Greenmarket budget	£130,000
Replacement bandstand	Old Town Hall/Greenmarket budget	£50,000
Sub total:		£180,000

3. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The projects outlined above will significantly enhance public realm in the City and improve the Carlisle Welcome. They will significantly improve visitor navigation and help drive the visitor economy.
- 3.2 A comprehensive signage package will also allow significant progress to be made in de-cluttering of the City Centre.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 4.1 Improvements to Public Realm will help to promote Carlisle and help showcase City of Carlisle.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

- The Council has the legal power to carry out works for the environmental enhancement of its area. Appropriate consent must be obtained for the removal of existing street furniture which isn't in our ownership/control and also for the installation of new signage. Any procurement must be in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules. The renaming of car parks may need to be reflected in the Council's car park regulation orders.

Local Environment –

Resources –

- There is £100,000 within the 2014/15 capital programme to fund Public Realm Improvement Works around the City Centre, Botchergate and Rickergate, subject to further reports to the Executive prior to any expenditure being incurred. The Executive has already approved the release of £25,000 and this report requests release of the remaining £75,000 of the budget provision to fund Gateway Signs, Car Park Renaming and Court Square public realm works.

There is also £702,000 within the 2014/15 capital programme to fund improvements to facilities, appearance and services of the buildings within the Old Town Hall/Greenmarket area of the city, subject to further reports to the Executive prior to any expenditure being incurred. This report requests release of £180,000 of the budget provision to fund City Centre Orientation improvement work and the replacement of the bandstand. This leaves a balance of £522,000 for other public realm works in this area, and Portfolio Holder Decision Notice PF.002/15 approved an additional £90,000 to be released to cover emergency repairs at the Old Town Hall, and report ED.16/15 considered elsewhere on this agenda requests the release of a further £52,000 from this budget for additional optimisation works at the Old Town Hall.

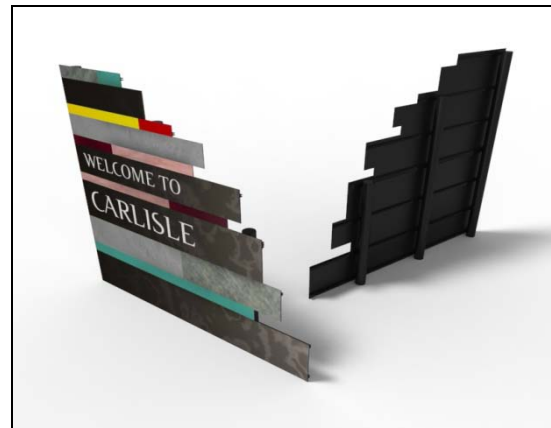
If both requests are approved, the remaining balance earmarked within the 2014/15 capital programme for further public realm works within the Old Town

Hall/Greenmarket area of the City would be reduced to £380,000. Further reports to Executive will be required prior to any expenditure being incurred against this remaining balance.

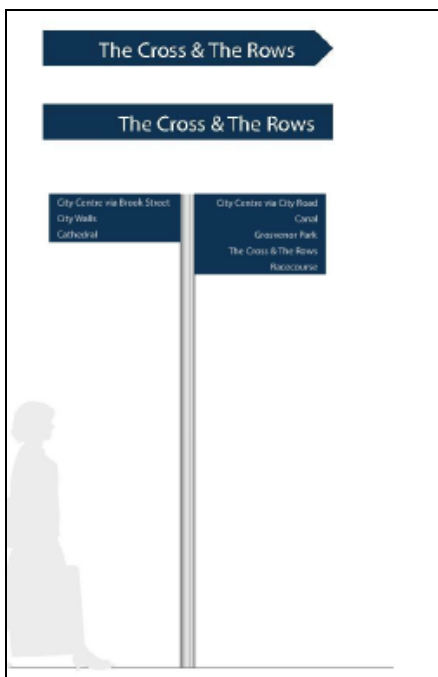
Appendix 1: Proposed Public Realm Signage



Gateway sign (stone)



Gateway sign (metal)



Finger post



Information point



Combined information point/finger post