



Committee and Date

Place Overview Committee

5 September 2019

Item

8

Public

Terms of reference for the Signs, Boards and Banners Policy Task and Finish Group

Responsible Officer

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1.0 Summary

1.1 This report includes a draft terms of reference and outline work programme for the Signs, Boards and Banners Policy Task and Finish Group.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Agree the draft terms of reference and work programme, subject to any amendments that the committee agrees.

3.0 Opportunities and risks

3.1 Incoherent, disjointed or incomplete policies with regard to signs, banners and street furniture could result in less accessible footpaths and pedestrian areas, and could result in risks to road safety.

3.2 A review of these policies creates the opportunity to ensure that our policies are fair and proportionate, and balance the differing needs of highways users.

4.0 Financial assessment

4.1 There are no financial considerations to this report. Any recommendations that are made to Cabinet will need to carry a full financial assessment.

5.0 Report

5.1 In recent years, this committee has considered a number of related highways and street scene issues, namely:

- banners and other advertising items on the highway, and how we regulate them
- A boards on high streets
- Pavement permits and current licencing and charging arrangements for them and
- housing development signs

5.2 The committee noted that these closely related issues were subject to assorted

uncoordinated policies and in some cases no policy at all. This had sometimes contributed to tensions between the different needs of people as they used highways and public space, and could miss opportunities to use these policies to make high streets better places to be. The committee therefore thought it would be useful to look at these different policies together, to see whether they would benefit from more coherence.

- 5.3 The committee also wanted to explore the best way to agree and administer policy. In particular, it wanted to look at whether it would be better for towns and parishes, where they wished to, to agree and administer their own policies for A boards, banners and advertising on the highway. The committee agreed to also look at this within a task and finish group.
- 5.4 Draft terms of reference and work programme for this group are attached as appendix 1.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

None

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Highways

Local Member

All

Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft terms of reference and work programme for the Signs, Boards and Banners Policy Task and Finish Group

Appendix 1

Signs, Boards and Banners Policy Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

Introduction

In recent years, this committee has considered a number of related highways and street scene issues, namely:

- banners and other advertising items on the highway, and how we regulate them
- A boards on high streets
- Pavement permits and current licencing and charging arrangements for them and
- housing development signs

The committee has noted that it is often considering the same issues with regard to these topics, such as:

- whether it should attract a licencing scheme
- whether any scheme would be administered by Shropshire Council or by the local town and parish council
- any charges that the suggested licencing authority should make, and the purpose of those charges
- how to balance the differing needs of people as they use public space and highways and
- the policies and arrangements that similar local authorities have.

The committee noted that these closely related issues were subject to assorted uncoordinated policies, and in some cases no policy at all. This had sometimes contributed to tensions between the different needs of people as they used highways and public space, and could miss opportunities to use these policies to make high streets better places to be. The committee therefore thought it would be useful to look at these different policies together, to see whether they would benefit from more coherence.

The committee also wanted to explore the best way to agree and administer policy. In particular, it wanted to look at whether it would be better for towns and parishes, where they wished to, to agree and administer their own policies for A boards, banners and advertising on the highway.

Aims of the task and finish group

The purpose of the task and finish group is therefore to:

- Understand existing policies, charges and administrative arrangements for:
 - banners, and how we regulate them
 - A boards on high streets
 - street furniture, and current licencing arrangements and
 - housing development signs.
- Scrutinise existing policy and suggest draft policy.
- Identify opportunities to set and administer policy and licencing arrangements with town and parish councils.

- Look at how other local authorities set and administer policy, to identify potential ways to improve arrangements in Shropshire.

What information will the group need?

The task and finish group will hold an initial meeting with officers to determine the final scope of the review and the information that they will need to achieve the group’s aims.

This is likely to include, but by no means limited to:

- Existing Shropshire Council, town and parish council policies, licensing arrangements and charging structures for A boards, banners, street furniture and housing development signs.
- Any proposed changes to these arrangements.
- Town and parish council attitudes towards holding policy and licensing arrangements for the above.
- Public opinion, with a particular focus on key groups such as businesses, disability groups and local access forums.
- Arrangements in similar local authority areas.

How will the group carry out its work?

The group will hold two meetings. An initial meeting to scope the work, followed by a period of time to allow officers and members to carry out and share the findings of their research. A following meeting will then review their research and survey findings, conduct focussed discussion on particular aspects of the review such as A boards, and agree draft recommendations for changes to current policy, licencing, and charging arrangements.

Scoping meeting - September 2019		
Purpose	Information required	Officer
Scope existing policy and identify gaps in arrangements	Existing Shropshire Council, town and parish council policies, licensing arrangements and charging structures for A boards, banners, street furniture and housing development signs	Highways and Transport Regulatory Services
Identify survey research required	Suggested draft survey Suggested focus groups at meeting 2 Draft list of groups and organisations to focus on	Highways and Transport Regulatory Services
Identify and agree similar local authorities and other areas of interest	List of ‘statistical neighbours’	Insight team

Review meeting – October 2019		
Review research findings	Survey findings	Insight team
A boards: focus group	Survey findings Invited focus group participants	Highways and Transport Regulatory Services Group chair
Pavement permits: focus group		
Banners and bunting: focus group		
Conclusions and recommendations	Group discussion	Group chair

Timescale

Following agreement at the meeting of the People Overview Committee, we will hold an initial meeting in September to scope the main work of the group. We will follow this with an all-day review in October to scrutinise the research findings, conduct focus groups and draft broad recommendations. Officers will then produce a final report on behalf of the group, to present to a meeting of the Place Overview Committee in November 2019.