

Cabinet

10 February 2015

Report of the Interim Director of City and Environmental Services

Legible York Wayfinding Project

Summary

1. Improving the City Centre public realm to make it as accessible and robust as possible for residents and visitors while maintaining and enhancing its unique qualities is an important priority for the city. Central to these ambitions is effective signage and other means to help people find their way around. A budget of £200k was allocated for 2014/15, supplemented by £30k from the Better Bus Area Fund. Consultants, Placemarque were contracted to carry out research, deliver design options and propose a phased delivery to reflect uncertainties around funding for the whole city. These options have been tested through intensive stakeholder involvement and public consultation.
2. The project team has worked with a range of communities with specific concerns about navigating the city, in particular the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Guide Dogs for the Blind to ensure that the project helps meet the needs of dementia sufferers and people with visual impairments.
3. The overwhelming response was supportive of implementing a contemporary wayfinding solution to replace existing street furniture and digital and paper mapping.
4. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the contemporary designs and delivery of phase one of a five year phased programme within existing budgets. This report also seeks approval for implementing a complementary digital wayfinding project.

Recommendations

5. Cabinet Members are asked to approve Option One as outlined at paragraph 22 below.
6. **Reason:** That it is fully supported by stakeholders; that it has been tested through a full and robust public consultation exercise; that it is fully supported by existing capital allocation; that it significantly addresses accessibility shortcomings of current signage, significantly enhancing the experience of many Communities of Identity; and, through sensitive implementation will address concerns about clutter and character.

Background

7. Since 2009 there have been a number of initiatives examining public space and movement and accessibility within the city. These include:
 - New City Beautiful – Towards an Economic Vision (2009)
 - City Centre Movement & Accessibility Framework (2010)
 - Footstreets Review (2011).
 - York Central Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal (2012).
 - Access and Mobility Audit of York City Centre (2013)..
 - City of York Streetscape Strategy and Guidance (2014).
8. York is one of Europe's premier historic cities and attracts around 7m visitors a year from across the world. It also has an aging population; the Council is working in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and others towards creating a dementia friendly city. Wayfinding is an important practical contribution to this and JRF have been active stakeholders with this project.
9. The Access and Mobility Audit highlighted serious failings with the present system of wayfinding aids especially the legibility of existing finger posts and the quality of available mapping. Visit York has been an active stakeholder, as they need to update their existing maps, both digital and paper.
10. The evidence shows that to do nothing is not a realistic option, as the city needs to continue to deal positively with access issues and to welcome visitors.

Funding

11. The Cabinet Report of 4 September 2012 which funded a number of Reinvigorate York schemes for improvements to the City Centre public realm identified the Wayfinding project as one of the key initiatives to be delivered by 2015. A budget of £200k to include consultant fees was identified. In addition, £30K has been allocated to the project from the Better Bus Area Fund resources awarded to the City by the Department for Transport.
12. The total available budget stands at £230k.

Project implementation

13. Specialist consultant Placemarque were appointed to work up options for a new wayfinding scheme beginning in April 2014. The company has a strong track record for such projects, including in Cambridge; Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon. They have received a number of awards for their work including best public realm project from the Oxford Civic Trust.
14. The team prepared early concept designs for contemporary wayfinding totems and fingerposts based on analysis of setting, colour pallet and local character. The concept designs formed the basis of discussions with key stakeholders including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation; Guide Dogs for the Blind; the City of York Council City Connect Team and the Better Bus Initiative Team.
15. Placemarque and the City Council are developing a parallel project for of a digital wayfinding and visitor information system to present locations and routes in combination with the wayfinding information and walking navigation (Annex E).
16. As an aid to pedestrians with sensory or cognitive impairments including dementia, Placemarque, in partnership with Guide Dogs for the Blind, will also be trialling a system called Way-Fairer.

Public Consultation

Overview

17. Detailed designs (Annex A), including a full size mock-up of a contemporary wayfinding totem formed part of the full public

consultation which ran from 1 September to 13 October 2014. 174 individuals completed a questionnaire. 81 on paper and 93 on-line.

18. Specific discussions were held with dementia sufferers and dementia consultants working for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation; People with Learning Difficulties through York People First, and Blind and Partially sighted through Guide Dogs for the Blind. People with hearing impairments and children and young people will be consulted as part of the roll out of phase one.
19. The majority of respondents (73%) agree that York needs a new wayfinding system. A significant majority are in favour of a contemporary wayfinding solution (in total, 69%).
20. The reuse and retrofit of existing cast iron finger posts and map holders received little support (21%). A fourth option, do nothing, was not supported. (10%). The substantial summary and detailed analysis of the consultation is available to members on-line.

Final designs (Annex B)

21. Placemarque prepared final designs meeting all the substantive critique of the consultation proposals. The redesign was tested at a second stakeholder workshop on 26 November 2014, and separately with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and York People First. All stakeholders agreed that the final design was a huge improvement on the consultation version. JRF in particular were very supportive of the new design and felt that the version with location flags was particularly helpful to dementia sufferers.

Options

22. **Option one:**
 - To approve the contemporary design for finger posts, totems and mapping developed by Placemarque as detailed in the Annex B; and
 - To approve adoption of the wayfinding map as the city wide standard; and
 - To approve securing a preferred manufacturer through the Council's procurement process for wayfinding street furniture; and
 - To approve implementation of phase one (see Annex D for phasing), Station to Minster wayfinding subject to further analysis on detailed locations and quantity of street furniture; and

- To approve implementation of the complementary digital wayfinding and to support the implementation of Way-Fairer for people with visual impairments as detailed in the annex.

23. **Option two:** to approve the contemporary design for finger posts and mapping, but not the totems developed by Placemarque as detailed in Annex B. To approve further consideration of utilising the existing cast iron wayfinding street furniture for delivering accessible wayfinding solutions.
24. **Option three:** Do nothing.

Analysis

25. **Option one** – Approval and adoption under option one will ensure that a city centre wayfinding solution is delivered for the city that makes a significant contribution to creating a dementia friendly city. It will ensure that Visit York (Make it York from April 2015) are able to develop a new suite of digital and paper mapping consistent with other mapping the city may wish to produce. It will also ensure best value pricing can be secured through procurement and deliver phase one, the priority route for new wayfinding. Delivery of phase one will allow the project team to assess how the new system works; how it beds into the historic landscape; and how residents and visitors feel about the contemporary designs.
26. Approval and adoption under option one will allow the project team to bring forward the digital element of the project, in particular the Way-Fairer solution for people with visual impairments. Option one is fully deliverable within existing budgets. Existing budgets will also resource further roll out of wayfinding furniture under phase two and possibly parts of phase three. Delivery of the full project will require further funding.
27. **Option two** – The Civic Trust have argued that retrofitting more legible fingerposts to the existing cast iron wayfinding columns will be less expensive than the proposed new kit. They have argued that the proposed contemporary designs are not in keeping with the special qualities of York. They have also argued that the proposed wayfinding solutions will lead to increased clutter in the public realm.

28. They are supportive however, of the new mapping designs and see no reason why they could not be used within the existing cast iron map frames.
29. The full cost of retrofitting the existing fingerposts is not known as the manufacturers (CIS Signage) will need to use new fonts and produce new finger designs. However, initial research by Placemarque suggests that costs will not be significantly less. Also, the requirement for contemporary, legible mapping as part of a wayfinding strategy cannot be so easily retrofitted into the existing cast iron map frames.
30. The contemporary totem designs are proven to be effective in other historic towns and cities, notably Chester, Oxford, Bath and various areas of London. A mix of cast iron finger posts and contemporary designed totems would not work aesthetically and may cause confusion, a point raised by English Heritage. It is important for legibility that wayfinding elements are similar in design.
31. Key stakeholder English Heritage is fully supportive of contemporary wayfinding for the city.
32. Approval of option two will significantly delay the project and increase the amount of fees payable to the consultant. The phasing as detailed in the Annex D would remain broadly the same as for option one.
33. **Option three** – The project has incurred costs to date, namely consultant's fees and internal officer time and resource. The public consultation and stakeholder analysis has been clear that the city needs a contemporary wayfinding solution. Also, this is a perfect opportunity for the city to deliver practical outcomes to support a dementia friendly city. The current wayfinding situation is inadequate and this represents the only opportunity for the foreseeable future resolve this situation. To do nothing will not resolve the very real issues flagged up by a variety of studies over the past few years.

Council Plan

34. This project will help **Get York Moving** through developing York's pedestrian network and improving movement in the city centre. It will also help **Build Strong Communities** through contributing to community engagement and improving community infrastructure. It will help **Protect Vulnerable People** through investing in services to support people in the community.

35. This project makes a positive contribution to creating a dementia friendly city and an urban realm that is universally accessible and legible.

Implications

36. **Financial** – The budget allocation of £200k included consultant fees and implementation. Placemarque were asked to prepare new designs and provide us with a five year delivery programme to reflect uncertainties around what the current budget could reasonably deliver. The five year delivery programme reflected known priorities for improvement. Phase one (2015/16) is the key Station to Minster route, the city's main pedestrian entry point. Phase two (also 2015/16) deals with the currently challenging route from the city centre to Clifford's Tower and the Castle Museum.
37. The actual costs of installing new wayfinding across the city are not known. Placemarque have provided indicative costs based on their previous experience and presented proposals for the relative quantities of finger posts, totems and wall mounted maps for each phase. This gives us a total cost in the region of £432k of which £86k is removal and installation and £70k is fees. The rest of the cost is for purchasing the totems, map units and finger posts.
38. Placemarque have provided indicative costs as follows:
- Wayfinding totem at £7500 per unit.
 - Wall mounted map unit at £800 per unit.
 - Finger post at £1700 per unit.
39. Stakeholders took the view that Placemarque's proposed distribution was over ambitious and fewer totems and finger posts would be required. Stakeholders suggested that wall mounted maps should be used wherever possible and feasible. These are significantly less expensive.
40. A revised estimate based on fewer totems results in an overall projected cost of £348k, of which £50k is removal and installation and £70k is fees. The rest being totems, map units and finger posts.
41. Taking the existing budget of £230k into account, a shortfall of £118k remains for delivery of the whole project. This shortfall is not significant in terms of delivery against the programme highlighted in paragraphs 1

and 9. The shortfall notwithstanding, existing budgets will deliver phase one, phase two, the digital wayfinding and possible elements of phase three. If Option one is approved, the project team will work with Make it York and other key stakeholders to draw down further funding and sponsorship.

42. A broad estimate of project cost is indicated in the following table where figures in bold indicate capital funding from existing resources. Digital wayfinding will incur an annual maintenance contract of £3,600 per annum as well as a £95 per month web hosting fee. Both could be secured as part of the council's own web server.

| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 (estimated and in budget) | £'000 (estimated and not in budget) | £'000 (estimated and not in budget) | £'000 (estimated and not in budget) |
| Physical wayfinding | | | | | |
| Design Phase | £70k | £11k | £5k | £5k | £5k |
| Phase 1 | | £50k | | | |
| Phase 2 | | £40k | | | |
| Phase 3 | | | £50k | | |
| Phase 4 | | | | £40 | |
| Phase 5 | | | | | £50k |
| Digital wayfinding - optional | | | | | |
| Way-fairer pilot | £2.5 | | | | |
| Web pages | | £20k | | | |
| Total | £72.5k | £121k | £55k | £45k | £55k |

43. **Human Resources (HR)** – there are no HR issues.
44. **Equalities** – there are significant equalities issues and rolling out a successful wayfinding strategy will deliver major improvements for many Communities of Identity especially early onset dementia sufferers and blind and partially sighted (See Community Impact Assessment for details – Annex C).
45. **Legal** - The Council has powers to erect wayfinding signs. In doing so it has specific obligations under the Highways Act 1980 to have regard to the needs of disabled persons and blind persons. This is in addition to the Council's obligations to have due regard to the public sector

equality duty imposed by the Equalities Act 2010. In the context of this report the duty to have regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity is particularly significant. That duty involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

46. **Crime and Disorder** - There are no implications
47. **Information Technology** - There are none for this phase although implementation of the digital element will certainly have significant implication. This will be developed separately.
48. **Property** None
49. **City Centre Management** - The totems etc. will need cleaning and generally maintaining although they have been designed to be maintenance light and current prediction are that maintenance will be fully supported through current budgets.
50. **Risk Management** - There are no known risks associated with implementing phase one of the City of York Wayfinding Project within existing capital funding.

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**Report
Approved**



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2015

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

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Wards Affected: *Guildhall and Micklegate*

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

[Access and Mobility Audit \(online\).](#)

[Reinvigorate York – Investing £200,000 in the City, Cabinet 17th July 2012 \(online\).](#)

[Stakeholder Involvement and Public Consultation \(online\)](#)

[Public Consultation Summary \(online\)](#)

Annexes

Annex A: Public consultation designs

Annex B: Final design

Annex C: Community Impact Assessment

Annex D: Phasing plan

Annex E: Digital wayfinding