

SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting	Place-Making and Protection Item 2.10
Date	23 February 2020
Author	Project Officer
Subject	Signage Project

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Councillors on the status of the Town Signage report.
- 1.2 For councillors to decide how they wish to progress with the wayfinding signage project.
- 1.3 For councillors to consider and agree a design for the boundary signs.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At an Open Spaces committee in July 2020, it was agreed that an audit of the town's wayfinding signage be commissioned. The recommendation in the audit report was for all current wayfinding signage (fingerposts, wall maps and pedestrian directional signage) be replaced by a new, consistent signage system.
- 2.2 At an Open Spaces committee meeting in October 2020, delegated authority was given to a working party to progress the 'signage project'. In reality, there are two projects at hand: wayfinding signage and boundary signage. One of the first tasks of the working party was to consider the options for progressing these projects and define the council's expectations and requirements of any new signage. Of the original four members of the working party, two resigned from the working party and therefore the working party was unable to meet given insufficient representation. As a result, the committee is now being asked to consider the options and decide on the way it wishes to proceed with both projects.
- 2.3 The project officer has continued to research the project by speaking with signage manufacturers, signage design consultancies, wayfinding strategy consultancies, other town and district councils that have conducted similar projects, and the Highways traffic engineer for Mendip.

Wayfinding strategy

- 2.4 Wayfinding signage is directional signage for pedestrians. It can signpost functional locations (e.g. council offices, post office, library) but it can also serve to enhance the visitor experience by signposting landmarks, historic areas and other sites of interest to visitors. With regards to the wayfinding signage project, councillors are being asked to choose between Option A and Option B. The 'bottom line up front is' that Option A means paying less but relying on the council to decide on what signage it thinks the town needs. Option B means paying more but getting experts to design the strategy which will also aims at enhancing visitor experience.

2.5 *Option A* involves the town council deciding on sign locations and sign content, based on recommendations from the signage audit report commissioned in summer 2020 and its own understanding of users' needs and the town's specific wayfinding requirements. The project officer will produce a list of signs, locations and content based on the main functional sites of the town and the main arrival points and decision points (e.g. car parks, junctions, etc.). The chair of this committee and the town clerk will be asked to approve the proposal with delegated authority from this committee. An external consultant would then be asked to develop technical drawings of the signs and review the proposed sign locations and types of sign, ready for the project to be tendered out to manufacturers. Approximate costs for this service are £4K. This does not include any mapping of the town, which would need to be added to the manufacturer's costs if any monoliths, maps or interpretation are required. This type of service is usually provided by a sign manufacturing company.

Pros:

- Less costly option
- Particularly suited if primary interest is in signposting 'functional' buildings (e.g. council office, post office, library) and not interpretation

Cons:

- Signage 'strategy' (what, where and why) does not benefit from wayfinding expertise
- Mapping and design costs need to be factored in at a later stage

2.6 *Option B* involves commissioning an external consultant to develop the wayfinding strategy which would serve the dual purpose of signposting functional locations as well as enhancing the visitor experience by signposting landmarks and offering interpretation information. The consultant would ask the town council for local knowledge but ultimately would make their own recommendations. This service would include design proposals for a family of signs (monolith, fingerpost, wall mounted, etc.) with technical drawings and content for each sign, ready for tender. This service would also include mapping of the town and the map would be copyrighted to the town council so could be used on our website and other materials as desired. The consultants would require input from town council or local history groups for information about landmarks, etc. (the Shepton Mallet History Society and Darshill and Bowlish Conservation Society are already working with the town council on this type of content for the heritage trail project). A quotation for £9.5K has been provided by a wayfinding consultant whose work can be seen in Appendix A. This is an independent consultant not tied to one particular manufacturing company.

Pros:

- Signage strategy based on wayfinding expertise

- Sign designs can be bespoke rather than 'off the shelf'
- Aims at increasing footfall to the town and improving visitor experience by showcasing landmarks and heritage as well

Cons:

- More costly option
- Does not include cost of ground surveys (would need to be carried out by manufacturer)

Boundary signs

- 2.7 Boundary signs or gateway signs are the signs located at the entrance to the town. These signs are managed by the Highways Authority and are subject to certain regulations imposed by this authority. The details of these regulations can be found in Appendix B. There are three options of sign which could be used in this instance, items 81, 82 and 83.
- 2.8 For this project, it is possible to work directly with the Highways Authority for the design, manufacture and installation of the signs. To note that the Highways Authority are generally busier over the winter period and may currently be involved with vaccination / testing centres which could impact their availability to progress this project.
- 2.9 Councillors are being asked to consider the following proposal for the sign design to replace the existing boundary signs:
- A white sign with black writing similar to Item 81 Schedule 11, Part 2 on p.219 of <https://tsrgd.co.uk/pdf/tsrgd/tsrgd2016.pdf>
 - The graphic elements of the new town council logo to feature in colour at the top of the sign (
 - The words 'Welcome to Shepton Mallet Historic Market Town'
 - The words 'Twinned with' and the names of the twin towns
 - No other words or elements to the sign
- 2.10 If councillors wish to make an alternative proposal, for them to come to the committee meeting on 23 February with those proposals ready for the committee to consider.
- 2.11 Councillors are being asked to delegate authority to the chair of this committee and the town clerk to authorise the final design with the Highways Authority.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A budget of £40K has previously been approved for the wayfinding signage project. However, if Option A is the preferred option, an additional £5K is being requested for the project to cover the additional costs. If Option B is the

preferred option, an additional £10K is being requested for the project to cover the additional costs.

- 3.2 A budget cost of £10K was provided by the Highways Authority for the manufacture and installation of new boundary signs.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Efforts will be made to recycle current signage where possible and the environmental credentials of any new signage will be considered as part of the overall design exercise.

5.0 TOWN PLAN REFERENCE

Place-making

Ensure the town centre is attractive and welcoming	Invest in improvements in the Market Place, in partnerships with others Support the retention of the Library in the centre of town and its development into a wider Community Hub Improve the signage, information boards and street furniture to make the town more welcoming
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6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 For councillors to decide whether, with regards to the wayfinding signage project they wish to proceed with Option A or Option B.
- 6.2 For councillors to delegate authority to the town clerk and chair of this committee to approve the choice of consultant and subsequently, the wayfinding signage locations, content and design (whether Option A or B).
- 6.3 For councillors to consider and agree to an additional budget of either £5K or £10K, depending on which option is agreed.
- 6.4 For councillors to consider and agree, with regards to the boundary signs, the proposal set out in this report, or propose another.
- 6.5 For councillors to delegate authority to the town clerk and chair of this committee to approve the final design for the boundary sign with the Highways Authority (based on the proposal approved by the committee today).