

SHEPTON MALLET TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting	Place Making & Protection, Item PMP01.13
Date	13 October 2020
Author	Project officer
Subject	Town signage project update

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Councillors on the status of the town signage project.
- 1.2 For councillors to note the wayfaring signage report prepared by People & Places (Appendix A).
- 1.3 For councillors to consider and agree that a budget be allocated for the wayfaring and information signage system, such that the project can be advanced without delay. To note that the implication of this is the potential impact on the budget remaining for the gateway signs.
- 1.4 For councillors to agree to the formation of a working party, with delegated authority to work with the project officer to agree the designs of the gateway and wayfaring signs, and to commission a 'sense of place' artwork where a budget for this is agreed.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The project officer received the signage report from People & Places which recommends a complete renewal of the wayfaring and information signage. In particular, it advises the use of 'heads up' maps on monoliths in the place of existing maps, finger posts and wayfaring signs. These are considered to be the best practice and can be found in many modern signage systems including Bath, Bristol and London. See images 1 and 2 at the end of this report for examples. Such maps can include amplified designs for key landmarks such as the market cross, Charlton viaduct, St Peter and St Paul's church, etc. as well as highlight cycle paths and heritage trails. Councillors are being asked to agree to the 'heads up' mapping approach and modern monolith system. The project officer has contacted a number of signage companies specialising in monoliths and mapping for the purpose of budgetary costings. The budget costs received to date come in around £35K for the design, manufacture and installation of a new wayfaring signage system (exclusive of licencing or permissions).
- 2.2 In addition, the report recommends that the council consider the installation of 'sense of place' artwork at the two ends of the high-street: north end of Town Street and roundabout by Townsend. See image 3 at the end of this report for an example. While this is not within scope of the project as defined currently, councillors are asked to consider it as part of the overall regeneration of the town centre. In the instance of an underspend on the current £65K budget,

councillors are asked to agree that a sense of place artwork be commissioned for both ends of the high-street.

- 2.3 As part of the review of the existing wayfaring and information signage system, all existing signage will be removed (including maps in Great Ostry and Commercial road car parks, on Town Street against the library, outside the former TIC building, and two on Petticoat Lane). Included in this review are the black metal finger post signs located on Market Place, by Regal Rd car park (outside 'Leanne's Roots') and outside the former TIC. These fingerpost signs are not – to the project officer's awareness – the traditional Somerset County Council fingerpost signs which are subject to conservation efforts today. Notwithstanding, they may present a 'traditional' appearance to the town which may be desirable to some residents. Councillors are asked to consider and agree to the removal of some or all of the fingerposts.
- 2.4 With regards to the town welcome signs, the Traffic Engineer at Somerset County Council has advised that a budget of £10K should be sufficient to cover the cost of designing, manufacturing and installing new welcome signs (7 in number) around Shepton Mallet. However, a realistic timeframe to see the signs installed would be June 2021 as the Highways workforce is redeployed over the winter months and priority is given to emergency works. This is also dependent on the council's ability to agree to a design in good time. An alternative would be to employ an external contractor for these works however the cost will be considerably more. One quote received from an external contractor came in around £25K.
- 2.5 Councillors are asked to agree to the formation of a working party with the delegated authority to work with the project officer to agree the design for the gateway sign, for which there are a number of permitted variations including colour, choice of wording, mentioning of twinned towns, etc. Also, with the delegated authority to finalise the design for the wayfaring and information signage system. Also with the delegated authority to agree a commission for a sense of place artwork at the entrance to the high-street and the entrance to Town Street where an underspend allows this.
- 2.7 Councillors are being asked to consider that a budget of £40K be allocated to the wayfaring signage system, so that the procurement process may begin without delay. The alternative being to wait until the gateway signs have been designed and ordered, or even installed, to be sure of the final cost of these. The implication of allocating this budget is the potential financial impact on the funds available for the gateway signs where these exceed £10K in cost.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are currently two ear marked reserves available for this project: EMR313 Town Improvements and EMR325 Town Signage with together approx. £65K in funds available.
- 3.2 A budget of £10K is forecast for the welcome signs.

- 3.3 A budget of £40K within the overall £65k is being requested for the wayfaring and information signage system.
- 3.4 A budget of £10K within the overall £65k is being requested for a sense of place artwork at either end of the town.

4.0 TOWN PLAN REFERENCE

Place-making

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

Advance Culture, the Arts, and Education	Capitalise on the rich culture and heritage that the town has to offer and advance it through self-promotion to locals and visitors alike
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5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 For councillors to consider and agree that a budget of £40K be allocated for the wayfaring and information signage system (across EMR 313 and 325).
- 5.2 For councillors to consider and agree that where an underspend exists on the total £65K budget, a 'sense of place' artwork be commissioned for the south of the high-street (by the roundabout on Townsend) and for the north of Town Street (at entrance by Waterloo Road) either adding to or replacing the existing archway.
- 5.3 For councillors to agree to the formation of a working party with:
- delegated authority to agree a design for the town boundary sign, in line with The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.
 - delegated authority to authorise the design for the wayfaring and information signage system proposed by the project officer (in light of a confidential report) including location of new signs, removal of old signs and content of new signs.
 - delegated authority to agree a commission for a sense of place artwork at the entrance to the high-street and the entrance to Town Street, where an underspend allows this upon completion of the gateway and wayfaring signage project.
- In sum, with delegated authority to make decisions wherever needed to progress the project without delay. All progress will of course be reported back to the committee at each meeting.

Image 1



Image 2



Image 3

