

Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise & Employment)

21st October 2013

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Business Enterprise & Employment) - Councillor Kelly

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director, Place

Ward(s) affected:

St Michael's

Title:

Response to Petition - Signage for Public Conveniences

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

A petition with 34 signatures has been presented requesting that more signage indicating the locations of public conveniences in the city centre be provided along with the opening times.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member (Business, Enterprise and Employment) is recommended to:

- 1) Accept the principle that additional physical signage, identifying the locations of the public conveniences would be beneficial.
- 2) Endorse that due to current financial constraints additional signage is regrettably not a financial priority and therefore cannot be delivered by the Council at this time.
- 3) Approve that Officers contact and encourage property owners / destinations and attractions which already have signs indicating their location in the city centre and have toilet facilities which are available to the public to add at their expense the toilet symbol to their current finger post sign.

List of Appendices included:

None

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Response to Petition Signage for Public Conveniences

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 A petition has been received from the Coventry & Warwickshire Accessible Transport Committee seeking more signage indicating the locations of public conveniences (Pool Meadow, Central Library, West Orchards, Market Way, Herbert Art Gallery, Coventry Transport Museum, Cathedral) and their opening times.
- 1.2 Currently the 'way finding' signage, assisting in the navigation around the city centre, is primarily achieved by the location of 'finger' posts indicating the direction to various locations, attractions and facilities.
- 1.3 Within the city centre (which for these purposes also includes the immediate area outside the railway station) there are 38 locations at which directional 'finger post' signs are sited. Of these 14 indicate the general direction to toilets maintained at the public expense, located in Central Library, Pool Meadow Bus Station and Belgrade Plaza multi storey car park.
- 1.4 Of the 14 directional toilet signs, 4 have the specific destination/location indicated with the signs just indicating the general direction towards toilet facilities.
- 1.5 With the exception of the 3 publically maintained facilities there are 17 additional publically accessible toilet facilities identified in the city centre. These are located within private / commercial developments where the public, customers, patrons are invited to use the facilities provided. The Council is not in control of these facilities; when they are open or if there are charges levied for their use. Although a number of these attractions/locations may have a directional sign, the availability of the toilet facilities are currently not indicated on them.
- 1.6 The last review of the directional 'finger' signs took place in April 2011 resulting in no changes as an emerging 'signage strategy' was to consider the finger posts in conjunction with the public realm improvements.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Clear, legible, signed routes across the city centre to aid residents and visitors to the city, helping to support the visitor experience and economic vibrancy of the city centre is the aim of the Council.
- 2.2 A recent sample review of the signs indicated that of the 14 signs directing people towards public conveniences across the city centre, the only named destination was the Central Library.
- 2.3 It is recognised that to aid clarity it would be beneficial for all signs directing people to toilet facilities to also specify the specific building/ development within which the facilities are located.
- 2.4 Following initial conversations with the sign manufacture, budget costs for replacing / adding additional information to each sign is anticipated to cost approximately £150 per 'finger' and for providing a new 'finger' sign with agreed wording at a cost of approximately £350 each.

- 2.5 On the basis that there are already numerous signs indicating the direction in which toilets can be found across the city centre, however recognising their limitations and the scope for improvement, it is suggested that at present based on the Councils reducing capital budgets means that replacing / improving city centre signs is not a priority.
- 2.6 As the city centre continues to evolve and change, especially with plans for City Centre South development, there will be an opportunity to reconsider the signage through the city centre and an appropriate time to improve the current signs.
- 2.7 In the meantime it may be beneficial to engage with the owners of the shopping centres and visitor attractions to enquire if they wish to promote the availability of their toilet facilities by the addition of the toilet facility symbols (including disabled facilities as appropriate) to their existing 'finger' signs. They may see this as a way of driving additional footfall to their destination and be prepared to cover the cost of any additional signage. If deliverable this would increase the visual availability of public conveniences around the city centre.
- 2.8 Due to the size of each of the individual 'finger' signs only limited information can be displayed on it. As such the detailed information requested by the petition to provide the opening times for the public conveniences would not be possible to incorporate on the 'finger' signs. This option is therefore not recommended. It is suggested that a more appropriate method of supplying this information to the public would be via the general marketing information produced by each location / attraction which today will also be available electronically via the company / organisations web site.
- 2.9 The recommended options are therefore:-
 - To not make changes to the existing toilet signs currently.
 - To encourage other properties owners who already have their location identified by way of a finger to fund the additional symbols indicating the availability of toilet facilities at their cost.
 - Encourage that the signage be reviewed as part of any significant future proposal to physically alter the city centre.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 In responding to the petition no specific consultation as to the need to provide more signage has been undertaken.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 If the recommendations are accepted as drafted, those locations which are already signposted and have toilet facilities available will be contacted within a month asking if they wish to have their facilities identified and arranged to be amended.

5. Comments from the Executive Director, Resources

- 5.1 Financial implications
The recommendations do not identify any financial capital contribution from the Council.
- 5.2 Legal implications
None.

6. Other implications

None

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The improvement of toilet provision signage in the city centre would overall only indirectly help to deliver a small improvement in usability of the city centre and is therefore not a key objective or key objective.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

Not applicable in this case

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

No equality impact assessment has been carried out as the recommendations do not constitute a change in policy or service.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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