

**STRATEGY FOR RURAL SIGNAGE, SIGNAGE IN TOWNS AND OBSTRUCTIONS ON FOOTWAYS**

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**1. SUMMARY**

Over recent months, Elected Members have raised concern over a number of unauthorised signs along road corridors, on pavements and attached to street furniture in both our towns and rural areas. Members have also questioned current Council policy / protocol when dealing with them and have sought that a proportionate approach be adopted in each scenario. Specific signs have been the subject of debate at recent Bute and Cowal and Oban, Lorn and the Isles Business Days.

In response, officers propose a new strategy for dealing with rural signage, signage in towns and obstructions on footpaths to ensure a consistent approach is adopted.

**2. CONTEXT**

We fully understand our local businesses are operating in difficult economic circumstances and we are keen to support their on-going trade. We seek to deliver a strategy that balances business needs along with obligations of the Council to ensure pedestrian / traffic safety and to protect the visual appearance of our area.

Whilst it is appreciated that signs, especially in rural areas, are necessary for businesses to operate, the Council cannot accept signs appearing without consent and those which are of an unsuitable scale, location or design. Likewise, banners, A-Boards and merchandise which encroaches on public footways (pavements) or attached to street furniture in our towns also have potential to cause trip hazards to the public or damage property, as well as their intended purpose of advertising. Provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA), Town & Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 and The Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 all must be given weighting by the Council in drawing up this new strategy.

There are a number of different organisations that shall form the partnership to deliver this new strategy including Planning, Roads Department, Transport Scotland, Economic Development, Visit Scotland and the Local Chambers of Commerce.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members

- i) Note the content of the report;
- ii) Endorse that a partnership be set up including Planning Department, Roads Department, Transport Scotland, Economic Development, Visit Scotland and the

Local Chambers of Commerce to develop new strategy and guidance note for dealing with rural signs, signage in towns and footpath obstructions

- iii) To dovetail the production of this new strategy with the emerging local development plan for future adoption as Supplementary Guidance.

### 3. IMPLICATIONS

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| 3.1 | Policy                       | No Policy issues as this is an informative report. Seek to set new strategy for signage that will become policy through future Local Development Plan.   |
| 3.2 | Financial                    | Financial implications limited to Officer resource in pulling together partnership and developing strategy. Once strategy in place it may result in new applications for signage (fee associated) and less officer time dealing on reactive basis with signage issues. |
| 3.3 | Personnel                    | Officer resource in pulling together partnership and developing strategy   |
| 3.4 | Equalities Impact Assessment | Strategy seeks to bring signage strategy in line with Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) especially when dealing with 'pavement clutter'   |
| 3.5 | Legal                        | Strategy seeks to address Council liability if trip hazard or impact on safety from unauthorised obstruction or sign.  |

**Author of Report:** Ross McLaughlin

**Date:** 6th Sept 2012

**Reviewing Officer:** Richard Kerr

**Date:** 6th Sept 2012

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