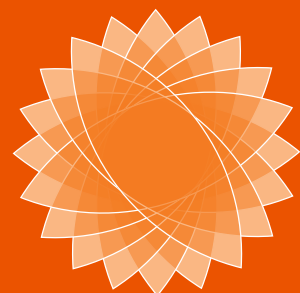




Signage Strategy for Sleaford

March 2018



districtnk

North Kesteven District Council

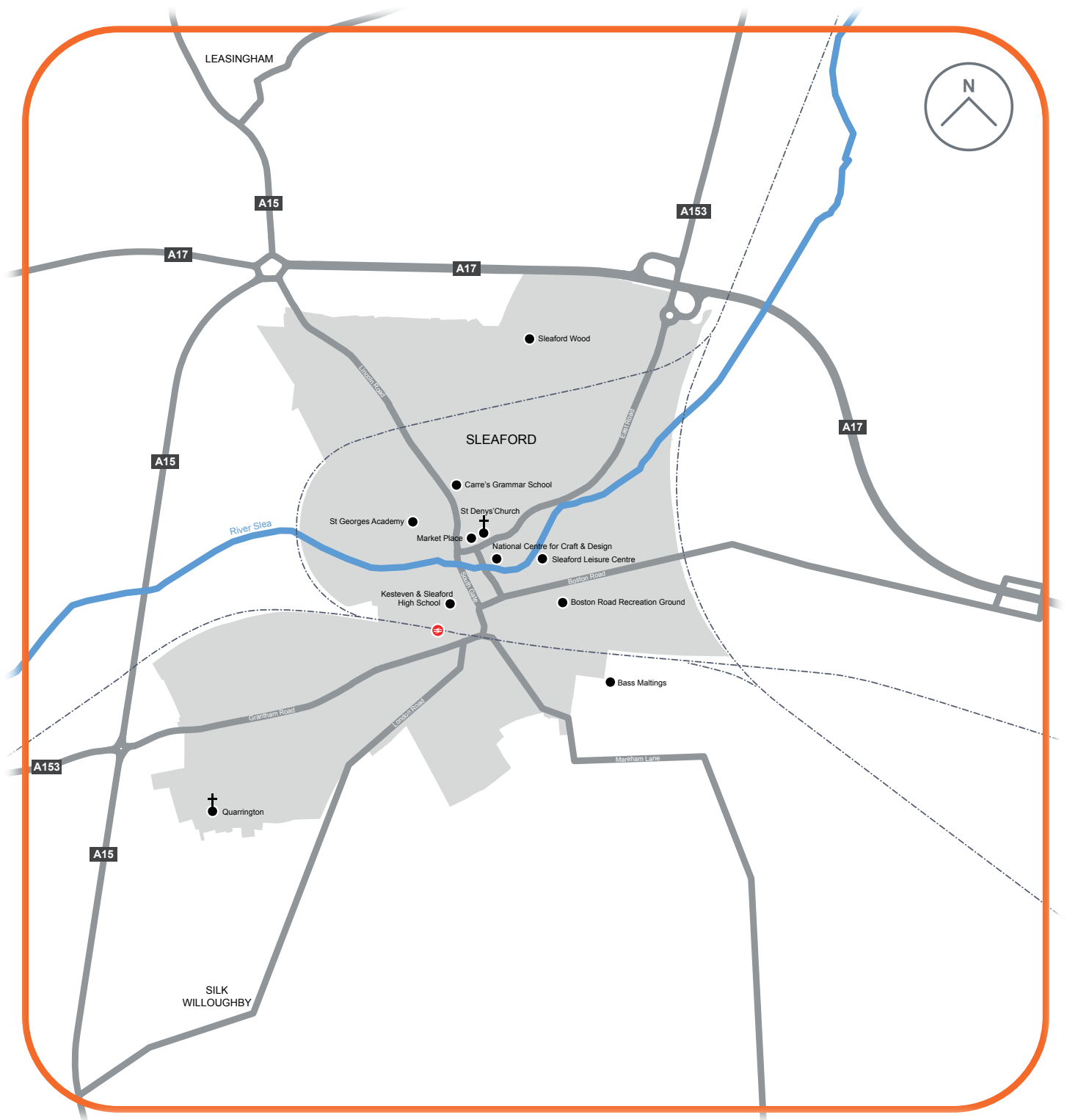
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and in alternative languages upon request.

Introduction

Signage has a crucial role to play in making any place accessible and visitor and user friendly. A recent review of existing signage in Sleaford has identified that the town could have a more consistent and uniform approach to signage which would mean that directional signs within the town could be more informative and coherent. This document therefore sets out a future framework for the delivery of signage in the town, seeking to achieve a standard format for all existing and future signage in the town.



Vision

For Signage to be clear, simple and relevant to a modern town and which supports as a thriving service centre, for its residents, businesses and visitors.

Objective

The objective is to deliver a clear set of guidelines and implementation for delivery of existing and future signs within the town that all relevant organisations can follow to achieve the above vision.

Why signage is important

Signage, in all its formats, is an important element in guiding residents, businesses and visitors into and around a town centre, whether travelling by foot, bicycle, public transport or car. It can make a big impact upon the attractiveness and visitor experience of a place. It is important to keep wayfinding and directional signage up-to-date and relevant. Good Signage can contribute to a positive economic impact.

Why have a Signage Strategy for Sleaford

Over the years there has been a significant increase in all types of Signage in Sleaford. This Signage has been provided by a number of different organisations and, by and large, in an uncoordinated fashion. This has resulted in both a huge variety of signage styles and a clutter of unnecessary signs which are now adversely impacting on the town centre. North Kesteven District Council, Sleaford Town Council and Lincolnshire County Council recognise the current position is not satisfactory and have agreed to work together to develop a co-ordinated signage strategy for the town.

Given the proposed growth for Sleaford, it is felt to be important to agree how signage can be used to support the integration of that growth.

In addition to the above, there is also an aspiration for pedestrianisation for the town centre, which will have an impact on signage. As it is likely at this stage that the signing strategy will be agreed prior to knowing the outcome of the pedestrianisation study, it is proposed that this strategy will, where possible, be future-proofed against the possible introduction of pedestrianisation.

Relevant considerations for a Signage Strategy

The future development of Sleaford and particular town centre development opportunities is mapped out through the Sleaford Masterplan which was adopted December 2010. The Masterplan identifies a number of key principles which the Signage Strategy will need to adhere to:

- The delivery of perimeter car parks for Sleaford to reduce vehicle movement in the town centre
- Signage that supports alternative access to the town centre other than by car
- Signage should support and improve the efficiency and the movement of vehicles within the town centre
- Signage should highlight the town centre key heritage and townscape, including leisure and culture attractions
- Signage should identify key access routes into and out of and around the town centre
- The volume of traffic in the town centre is a serious impediment to the future health and prosperity of the town as an attractive and vibrant shopping centre

How will the Signage Strategy be delivered?

The strategy will be delivered in a number of different ways;

- A consultation will be undertaken on this draft strategy
- An audit of Highway signage to support the audit already undertaken of the wayfinding signage
- A reduction, where possible of the number of sign types in Sleaford
- Replacement of out of date or duplicated signs where necessary
- Incorporating the Sleaford brand into future signage
- Refusal of future applications for signs that do not meet the guidelines of the strategy
- The creation of a panel to oversee applications and enforcement issues in relation to signage with representation from LCC, NKDC and STC

Strategy Categories

The Signage Strategy has various categories for consideration and areas to drive for improvement, including perceived areas of responsibility/ownership, will be:-

Category		Ownership
1	Car Park signage	LCC (on highway) District/Town (off highway)
2	Standard Highway Direction Signs (black /white)	LCC
3	Routes for heavy goods vehicles & height restrictions	LCC
4	Information Boards and Wayfinder signs	District/Town/third parties
5	Heath facilities and neighbourhood centre	LCC (on highway) District/Town (off highway/wayfinder)
6	Tourism Signs	LCC (on highway) District/Town (wayfinder)
7	Sports and Leisure	LCC (on highway) District/Town (off highway/wayfinder)
8	Temporary Signs and Event Management	LCC/NKDC
9	Advertising and promotional signs	District/Town
10	Educational Facilities and Religious destinations	LCC
11	Retail venues (Information Board/Wayfinder signs)	District/Town
12	Local government destinations (Wayfinder Signs)	District/Town/LCC
13	Transport Hubs	LCC (on highway) District/Town (off highway/wayfinder)
14	Roundabouts	LCC (highway signs) District/LCC (sponsorship signs)
15	Use of route numbers	LCC
16	Cycle routes	LCC (highway signs) District/Town(Information Boards/Cycle parking infrastructure and signs)
17	Design principle and branding for off highway signs, information boards and Wayfinder.	District/Town
18	Upkeep and maintenance of signage	All stakeholders
19	Mandatory Signs	LCC
20	Design Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Signs • Wayfinder/Information • Upkeep and maintenance 	LCC, District and Town

1. Car parking signage

Highway Signs

Car parks will not be included on highway direction signs from either of the bypasses.

A separate 'parking strategy' is being worked on. It is proposed that, going forward, this will be adopted and therefore the signage strategy will support perimeter car parking.

District Council Signs

Wayfinder Signs for the perimeter car parks will direct visitors back to their car park. Visitors may not be familiar with the area so it can be helpful to include a descriptive name of the car park on these signs. Thought should be given to creating a theme for naming car parks whether this is by use of an adjacent street/area or allocating each car park a colour. Such signs can make reference to pedestrian distance and time to town centre; however for a town the size of Sleaford this is probably unnecessary and including additional legend would make signs much larger. We should focus on what information a visitor needs when heading back to the car park their vehicle is located in, and as most car parks are located no more than 5 minutes from the town centre the provision of pedestrian distance and time is considered to be superfluous.

Actions for implementations

- a) All existing short term car parking signage should be removed.
- b) All existing private car parking signs will be removed and applications for future private car park signage will be refused.
- c) Car parking signs should only be installed and maintained for Long Stay perimeter car parks; the strategy to sign only long stay car parks has been adopted by other towns within Lincolnshire on the basis that short stay car parks are generally known and used by local drivers.

2. Standard highway directional signage

When the strategy is adopted it is proposed that a full audit of all existing highway directional signage is undertaken with a view to removing all non-essential directional signage.

Future audits will be considered every five years; however these shouldn't be necessary providing the Delivery of the Strategy (see page 1) is adhered to. Future audits may only be necessary if changes are made to the Strategy.

Traffic coming to the town from the bypasses should be routed in a way that minimises traffic through the town centre.

Traffic leaving the town should be routed in a way that minimises traffic through the town centre.

Signs are required to ensure that there is minimal impact on the town centre. An example would be when leaving the town via Grantham Road all routes should be signed towards the bypass, avoiding the town centre.

Business parks should be clearly signed from the bypass by the most direct route to avoid HGVs within the town centre.

Actions for implementations

- d) Full audit of all existing highway directional signage

3. Routes for heavy goods vehicles & height restrictions

The only known height restriction is on Boston Road; signing should be provided in accordance with Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) and guidance contained in The Traffic Signs Manual (TSM).

Actions for implementations

- e) Any weight restriction signage should be limited to the confines of the restriction. Additional 'advisory' signage would only be considered by the overseeing group.

4. Information boards & wayfinding signage

As part of the Signage Strategy a full audit will be undertaken and all non-essential wayfinding/ finger post signs will be removed. It is proposed that the audit forms a terms of reference for a dedicated piece of work that will deliver a signage plan for the town centre. This plans to identify those venues that need to be signed, where those signs should be placed and what their design should be. These wayfinding signs should reinforce the branding identity for the town.

As part of the Signage Strategy a full audit will be undertaken of Information boards; these are valuable for visitors to the town centre and residents, guiding them to attractions and essential services. However, the current boards are out of date and have no corporate identity. Information boards should be installed into all perimeter car parks and where possible this should include private car parks. These information boards should reinforce the branding identity for the town.

It is acknowledged that, where appropriate, tenant directory boards may be requested and these signs will need to adhere to planning, highway and branding guidelines.

It is acknowledged that third parties will always have aspirations to sign their particular activity. However this means that a town can end up with a myriad of styles, sizes and types of information signs which can lead to giving the appearance of clutter and a lack of coordination. Any proposals by third parties for new signage should be put forward to the Overseeing Group for its consideration and these signs should adhere to this strategy, planning, highway Policy, design and branding guidelines where appropriate.

Signing within Business Parks can be considered for a branding exercise which would be facilitated by the District Council, usual practise is for signing to be of modular design which allows for changes to be made when businesses leave and new ones arrive. Signing should be paid for by the applicant and ideally erected in private land (with DC planning approval). If such signs are located in the highway they can be considered for approval by LCC following the process for 'structures in the highway' which involves a licencing agreement and indemnifying the County Council.

Branded modular type signing would result in improvements in the enforcement of A Board advertising.

Actions for implementations

- f) Full audit will be undertaken and all non-essential information boards/wayfinding/ finger post signs will be removed
- g) New essential information boards/wayfinding/finger post signs to be installed
- h) Set up Overseeing Group

5. Health facilities & neighbourhood centre

Neighbourhood centres are for local needs only and therefore should not need highway road signage - any applications should be refused on these grounds. That said, it may be appropriate for there to be an information board at the centre; this should refer to section 17 of the Signage Strategy – design principle & branding. If direction signs are considered necessary for these venues, it should be in the form of pedestrian Wayfinder.

Currently, the medical practice is within the town centre and has pedestrian signage; the requirement for these should be reviewed with the prospect of removing. The medical practice is generally known and used by local residents only. Future developments for medical practice provision in Sleaford will need to be assessed as part of the strategy and thought should be given to the use of temporary directional signage for the first 12 months of operation to support the relocation; but budget allocated to a new facility should also be taken into account as it may not be practicable for new signs to be funded once a project associated with building/relocation works have been completed.

NKDC confirmed that a planning application has been approved for a Private Hospital on Sleaford Enterprise Park, where all appointments will be pre-booked. It is normally not appropriate for facilities which have a prior booking system in place to have highway direction signs, as this system means good directional information is provided with the appointment letter. Highway signs will only be considered in the latter stages of the journey and only if a venue is genuinely difficult to find.

It may be appropriate for wayfinder signs to be considered for pedestrians arriving via Transport Hub(s).

Actions for implementations

- i) Full audit of all Health facilities & neighbourhood centre signs

6. Tourism signs

All signed tourism venues must be considered in accordance with LCC's Tourism Policy. It should be noted that there is an initial vetting process, and every signed venue is subject to a re-vetting process (currently every five years). Whilst LCC can facilitate the use of Brown Tourism Signs in the Highway, all costs involved in the vetting, design, provision and future maintenance of signs are recovered from the applicant.

From the bypass, tourism signs currently exist only for the National Centre for Craft & Design (NCCD). As part of the audit, tourism signs from the bypasses should be reviewed to consider the inclusion of other key attractions.

Key attractions are currently considered as;

- NCCD
- Cogglesford Mill
- Navigation House
- St Deny's Church
- Sleaford Castle

Of the above, currently only the NCCD & Cogglesford Mill carry brown signs; as part of the audit the additional key attractions should be reviewed and considered for signing in accordance with LCC Tourism Policy.

It should be noted that where multiple venues exist in an area it may be more appropriate to use signs which generically represent the type of facilities on offer with the use of nationally recognised symbols (which are listed in The Traffic Sign Regulations TSRGD)

Wayfinder-style signs may also be appropriate for signing pedestrians to tourism venues, particularly from car parks and transport hubs. Such signs should only be used where the Highway Authority (LCC) confirms that the venue meets the Tourism Policy criteria and has been successfully vetted. When signing tourism venues with Wayfinder signs they will adopt the colour, style and branding developed and maintained by the District/Town Councils.

Actions for implementations

- j) Full audit of Tourism signs

7. Sports & leisure signs

Direction signs should be provided from the nearest through route only, on traffic management grounds, to help drivers find the venue in the latter stages of their journey and only then if the venue is genuinely difficult to locate and has car parking. Direction signing should not be considered from the bypasses as venues are expected to provide clear visitor information on promotional material.

Standard highway signs will not be permitted to private leisure facilities as members will know where to find them and visitors will have directional information available to them in the form of promotional material on websites etc.

Clubs are not considered appropriate for highway signage, for the same reason as private leisure facilities i.e. their members will know where to find them and visiting clubs will be expected to have been provided with directional information. However, the venue/sportsground can be considered for highway signs, recognising that many clubs may meet at the same venue. The applicant would be expected to meet all the costs involved for the design, installation and future maintenance of the signs. Advertising/Sponsorship is not permitted on these signs.

Actions for implementations

- k) All existing/historical signs that may exist in the town which reference private clubs should be removed.

8. Temporary signs & event management

Temporary signs for events and housing developments are permitted for use in the highway. Specialist companies are usually commissioned to carry out such signing on behalf of the event/developer. Applications are submitted for consideration to The Highway Authority (LCC) where it is considered and if appropriate agreed with conditions applied. The local area highway divisions are consulted on this process and a small processing fee is applied.

Currently, yellow temporary signs are used for key events within the town; this works well for promoting the events, however, consistency should be looked at in the provision of these signs and the direct route should be followed.

As new housing developments come on board in Sleaford it is acknowledged that there will be the need for temporary house/developer signs. Amongst other things, LCC guidelines state that:-

- Developments must have a minimum 30 bedrooms
- Temporary signs will be considered from the nearest main road access to a site – main roads are defined as A and B Class roads and unclassified distributor roads, signing will not be permitted along these roads back to junctions with other roads.
- Signs will be removed should a developer erect their own advertising or non-approved signs.
- Signs should be taken down within 3 months of the sale of 80% of the properties

Temporary banners of any nature are welcomed within the town centre for promotion of specific town events; these should where appropriate utilise the adopted branding for the town (see section 17).

Whilst flag pole type signs are accepted, each application for a temporary use of a flag pole sign should adhere to planning and branding guidelines.

Routine enforcement action will be undertaken to ensure compliance particularly in relations to persistent offenders

9. Advertising and promotional signs

A-board signs are used as a way to promote businesses; however, they can also be an obstruction to the highway and therefore any A-boards within a public highway will not be allowed. A-boards on private land should be at the discretion of the landlord and subject to any planning requirements. To support the town vision for branding, where possible A-boards should consider incorporating the Sleaford brand and keep to a uniform design.

LCC has a Policy on the use of 'Best Kept village' signs which supports a County awards process. If Sleaford is awarded the best kept town award the Policy should be consulted and if possible a highway sign should be erected to promote this at the entrance into the town where existing Sleaford name signs are located. If the Policy does not cover the use of a highway sign then a decorative sign can be considered (with agreement by LCC as a structure in the highway). This sign may only be retained for a period of time agreed by the overseeing group. This same strategy may be considered as appropriate for other types of legend deemed as non-prescribed for use on highway signs – such as 'A Fair Trade Town'.

10. Educational facilities and religious destinations

These venues are expected to include visitor information on publicity and promotional material and therefore should be signposted from the nearest through route only, on traffic management grounds, to help drivers find the venue in the later stages of their journey and only if a venue is genuinely regarded as being difficult to find.

The above venues are sign posted on the grounds that they are expected to be used for more than provision of associated activities during normal hours of operation. It is recognised that these venues can be used for evening meetings and events during weekends and for schools, out of term time, which is why direction signs will be considered only from the nearest through route or main road.

A venue will be expected to evidence that car parking is available at all times; if car parking is not available 'pedestrian' style signs will be considered instead.

It is acknowledged that sign posting has been provided to these venues in the past, however, under future sign audit processes these should be rationalised wherever possible.

The applicant is expected to meet all the costs involved to design, supply and maintain this type of sign.

11. Retail venues

It is not permissible to signpost retail premises with highway signage. Given that most retail venues are located within the town centre, it is considered that a precedent should not be set by agreeing other types of signage and any applications should be refused on these grounds. That said, it may be appropriate for there to be an information board in the town centre and this should refer to section 17 of the Signage Strategy – design principle & branding. It may also be appropriate to consider including retail ‘areas’ on wayfinder signs as this will be the basis to refuse requests for signage to individual businesses.

All retail signage applications should refer to The Signage Shop Front manual for guidelines which is available via NKDC planning portal.

12. Local government establishments

At the point of the strategy being agreed, there was no highway signage for local government establishments. It is proposed that there is no need for new highway signage, however, there is an expectation that information will be included on pedestrian wayfinder signs provided within car parks and the town centre.

13. Transport hubs

As part of the audit review consideration should be given to signposting Sleaford Railway Station from the bypass and into the town via Grantham Road roundabout.

All information boards and where applicable wayfinding signs will include directional information to the railway station and station road bus stop and taxi ranks.

Actions for implementation

- l) Sleaford railway station should also be signposted via local direction signs within Sleaford.
- m) All information boards and where applicable wayfinding signs will include directional information to the railway station and station road bus stop and taxi ranks.

14. Roundabouts

Labelling should be used on all roundabouts and major junctions as this is seen as a useful tool to help drivers navigate around the town. New roundabouts will generally be labelled to reflect their location, for example:-

- Holdingham Roundabout (A17/A15)

Roundabouts within the town should be considered for sponsorship signage; this should be controlled and administered by NKDC with a nod towards existing LCC Policy on this type of sponsorship signing. Actions for implementation

- n) As part of the audit the roundabouts at Pride Parkway, Grantham Road and Holdingham Village should be considered for labelling.

15. Uses of route numbers

Standard practice is to use these only on direction signs relating to A and B Class roads. Use of generic legends such as 'through route' and 'all main routes' should be considered as an alternative to listing many destinations.

16. Cycle routes

The 2017 Cycling Strategy should be acknowledged as part of the signage review

Actions for implementation

- o) Audit review of all signage associated with cycle routes on main arterial routes into the town.
- p) The information boards should show location of cycle locker, stand and routes within the town. Cycle lockers and stands require signage which should meet the design standard's section.

17. Design principles & branding for off-highway signage, Information Boards and Wayfinder

Actions for implementation

- q) To support this strategy a separate design and guidance manual covering all off-highway signage and information boards outlined in this strategy will be prepared. This manual will outline size, font and branding guidelines. (See appendices attached to this strategy)

18. Upkeep & maintenance of signage

Third Party (applicants) for highway signs will be issued with terms of agreement which they will sign/return to LCC at the same time as making payment. This states, amongst other things, that the signs belong to LCC but that all future maintenance costs fall to the applicant. If at any point an applicant fails to meet the costs involved to maintain a sign in the highway, all signs relating to that venue will potentially be removed as the conclusion will be drawn that the applicant no longer has the financial means (or desire) to maintain any of the signs to that venue.

All other categories of sign will remain under ownership of the stakeholder (LCC, District, and Town) and will be maintained in line with prevailing Policies followed by those authorities.

Should a sign get damaged beyond repair or stolen, before it is replaced as standard it should be considered by the authority deemed to have ownership/responsibility (see table on page 2 of this document) for suitability of replacement.

19. Mandatory Signs

It should be recognised that most signing can be kept to a minimum providing there is a desire by all parties involved (LCC/NKDC/Town Council) to create a strategy and adhere to it going forward. However, there are some types of signage which cannot be removed or tampered with. 'Mandatory Signs' describes signage associated with a legal Order, where failure to comply with the legalities contained in that Order could result in enforcement. Depending on the severity of the offence committed it can result in a fine, penalty points or even a prison sentence. It is therefore of great importance that Orders are signed correctly in accordance with TSRGD and guidance contained in the Traffic Signs Manual. If there is a strong desire for mandatory signs to be removed, the order must firstly be considered for removal/revocation.

20. Design standards

Highway Signs

All highway signs must conform to the prevailing issue of Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD), guidance contained in Traffic Signs Manual and other associated documentation including LCC Policy where applicable.

Wayfinder signs/ Information Boards

It is advisable for the District/Town Council to decide on a consistent design of Wayfinder signs. These signs are predominately located off highway but it is recognised that there are places where they should be considered for use in the highway. The design of Wayfinder signs should remain consistent regardless of where they are placed. If erected in the Highway they can be authorised for use by the highway authority as a 'structure in the highway' and the highway authority (LCC) would issue documentation to permit the structure to be placed in the highway; this usually includes insurance indemnity and an agreement that the sign remains in ownership of the applicant in terms of future maintenance or if the sign/structure needs to be temporarily moved/replaced due to future highway or utility works.

Specification and installation

Highway Signs – The signs, mounting methods, construction materials etc. must all comply with TSRGD, British Standards and Highway Authority (LCC) Policy and standards. Because these are highway signs, and there is a Highway Term Contract in place, LCC's current term contractor must install the signs. Costs can be recharged against third party 'customers'.

Wayfinder Signs/Information Boards – There is some relaxation for these installations, however, for consistency it is suggested that design/branding is adopted and, if permitted, a procurement route is developed through a chosen manufacturer. Modular assemblies should be considered as this would mean that 'spares' would be easier to obtain should requests from new venues be accepted, or when inevitable changes happen to venues (such as name changes or re-location).

Actions for implementation

- r) Explore options to develop a procurement route for a chosen manufacturer for wayfinding signs/information boards

