

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT
CABINET MEMBER**

DECLUTTERING THE STREET SCENE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To update the Cabinet Member on the latest circular from the DfT in relation to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.
- 1.2. To consider undertaking detailed work to explore the opportunities afforded by the circular to achieve a transformation of the local Highway Street Scene.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As a highway authority, the council regularly receives circulars from the Department for Transport (DfT). These updates help the council operate effectively and in accordance with the most up to date and relevant legislation in discharging our highway authority obligations.
- 2.2 The council has recently received a circular from the DfT setting out the details of the Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD 2016) that came into force on 22 April 2016. The circular emphasises a need to reduce sign clutter, stating that *“TSRGD 2016 contains a number of changes which will cut costs, complexity and sign clutter”* and further that the *“overuse of traffic signs blights our landscape, wastes taxpayers’ money and dilutes important road safety messages”*.
- 2.3 As such, the TSRGD 2016 appears to address a number of the regulatory restrictions that have so far hindered progress by local highway authorities in taking forward the government’s deregulatory programme. The DfT have stated that they expect local highway authorities to proactively make use of TSRGD 2016 to get rid of unwanted and unnecessary signs and to design signing schemes to minimise visual clutter from the outset. It will however take some time for officers to work through the new regulations and to fully understand their implications and the potential they present to achieve a transformation of the local Highway Street Scene.

- 2.4 To maximise the opportunities towards the future transformation of the highway network, this work needs putting in hand alongside a transformational shift to exploring opportunities to rethink our policy approach to highway design, learning from existing examples (including busy streets in major city locations) of streets where vehicles and pedestrians co-exist without the need for significant street “clutter” in the form of excessive signage, traffic signals and barriers. In these cases, the theory is that motorists and pedestrians take a greater degree of personal responsibility for their own safety. If successful, this could in turn lead to greater assets/space utilisation for all users, more attractive and welcoming streetscapes and result in future reductions in maintenance spending.
- 2.5 The work required will influence existing key documents such as the highway development guide and planning style guides, leading to developers understanding clearly the transformational highway changes the community expects to see achieved in the future.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The recommendation is that officers undertake a review of the recently published Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 with a view exploring the opportunities these present to achieve a future transformation of the Highway Street Scene.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The council has a duty to assess the new regulations. However, undertaking this review alongside the broader change agenda around shared space should lead to wider transformational changes than if the regulations were reviewed in isolation.
- 4.2 It is estimated that to review the regulations alongside considering the shared space agenda will take at least one experienced traffic officer around six months to complete. The intended outcome is to develop a new Highway Street Scene Policy for adoption by the council.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 **Finance** – The service has no choice other than to progress this work in relation to the regulations. As such, although there is no direct cost this will inevitably impact on traffic officer capacity in relation to other workloads.
- 5.2 **Staffing** – The service will need to identify how to bring together the skill sets required to maximise the potential for transformation through reviewing the regulations. It is proposed to deal with the capacity shortfall through a graduate placement within the traffic team for a similar period of time.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 The production of a new Highway Street Scene Policy will require consultation with relevant interested parties prior to adoption.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves that officers undertake a detailed review of the recently published Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 with a view exploring the opportunities these present to achieve a future transformation of the Highway Street Scene.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- DfT Circular 01/2016 – The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016