

# Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel

## Road Signage and Markings



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## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In July 2011, the Development & Environment Panel considered a request to review road signage and markings across Kirklees following concerns raised by a local councillor about street clutter, poor maintenance of signs and markings and adherence to highway legislation and guidance.
- 1.2 Kirklees Council is the Highways Authority for all highways in Kirklees with the exception of motorways. Much of highway maintenance activity is based upon statutory powers and duties contained in legislation and precedents developed over time as a result of case law.
- 1.3 Even in the absence of specific powers and duties, Highways Authorities have a general duty of care to users and the community to maintain the highway in a condition fit for purpose as far as is reasonably practicable. This extends to road signage and markings.
- 1.4 The Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel agreed to include road signage and markings in its work programme for 2011/12. It was agreed that the use of road signage and markings in Kirklees would be reviewed by a task group, focusing in particular on the accuracy/clarity of signage and markings, reducing street clutter, and traffic calming measures.

## **2 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 2.1 The Group was tasked with undertaking a project on road signage and markings across Kirklees and it was agreed that this would include:

### Road Signage

- A review of the policy and procedures followed by the Council in relation to road signage.
- Issues relating to the maintenance of road signage.
- The approach taken by the Council to minimise street clutter.

### Road Markings

- A review of the policy and procedures followed by the Council in relation to road markings.
- Issues relating to the maintenance of road markings.
- The use of road markings for road safety.

## **3 THE PANEL AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 The Task Group comprised its membership from representatives of the Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel and from the pool of Voluntary Co-optees:

Councillor Vivien Lees-Hamilton (Chair)  
Ray Firth (Co-optee)  
Barry McErlain (Co-optee)

- 3.2 The Task Group was supported by Rebecca Morrison from the Scrutiny Office.
- 3.3 The Task Group carried out its work between November 2011 and September 2012 as detailed below:

| Date              | Witnesses   |
|-------------------|---|
| 4 November 2011   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cath Bottomley - Head of Area Working &amp; Safety, Streetscene and Housing</li> <li>• Liz Twitchett - Operational Manager, Area Working and Safety, Streetscene and Housing</li> <li>• Mark Ramsden – Section Manager, Area Working and Safety, Streetscene and Housing.</li> </ul> |
| 19 December 2011  | No witnesses.   |
| 20 January 2012   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cath Bottomley - Head of Area Working &amp; Safety, Streetscene and Housing</li> <li>• Liz Twitchett - Operational Manager, Area Working and Safety, Streetscene and Housing</li> <li>• Mark Ramsden – Section Manager, Area Working and Safety, Streetscene and Housing.</li> </ul> |
| 19 April 2012     | No witnesses.   |
| 23 August 2012    | No witnesses.   |
| 19 September 2012 | Site visit to Batley Town Centre including meeting Streetscene and Housing officers;<br>Ian Dyson, Environmental Ranger Supervisor<br>Doug Armitage, Community Ranger<br>Neil Crowther, Community Ranger  |

- 3.4 The use of task groups is an approach taken by scrutiny to complement the main work that is undertaken by the full Scrutiny Panel. It is designed to provide Panel members with an opportunity to investigate and research aspects of policy and services with the aim of getting an overview of the key issues. It is acknowledged that this approach may not allow for a detailed in depth study of the area of focus and that it may be necessary for the Council to consider commissioning further more detailed research in response to the conclusions and recommendation results from this work. The report, once completed by the Task Group, is discussed and approved by the full Scrutiny Panel.

## 4 ROAD SIGNAGE - SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE RECEIVED

### 4.1 Legislative Background




- 4.1.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 places a duty on Kirklees Council as the Highway Authority to secure convenient and safe movement of cars and

pedestrians. Sections 64 and 65 of the Act allow the Council to place prescribed or authorised traffic signs on or near any road.

- 4.1.2 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD) prescribe the design and condition of use for traffic signs placed on the highway. Signs not included in the TSRGD require special permission from the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 4.1.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) carried out a wide ranging Traffic Signs Policy Review between September 2008 and May 2011. This was the most fundamental review of the approach to traffic signing for 40 years and the key aims were to develop a traffic sign system that would meet the changing needs of road users, provide effective tools for the better management of the road network, and minimise the impact on the environment.
- 4.1.4 The Review recognised that whilst national consistency in traffic sign design was essential to ensure that road users understood the messages being conveyed, the level of prescription in the TSRGD 2002 could be a barrier to local authorities working effectively.
- 4.1.5 In October 2011 the DfT published a 'Signing the Way' policy document setting out the findings of the Traffic Signs Policy Review. This made a number of recommendations designed to reduce the level of prescription by:
- Providing more flexible regulation to enable more choice.
  - Reducing the requirements for Secretary of State approval of non prescribed signing.
  - Making TSRGD more user friendly.
  - Retaining national consistency to help ensure essential road user understanding.
- 4.1.6 Amendments to the TSRGD came into force in November 2011 (Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations and General Directions 2011) however the Department for Transport will undertake a full revision of TSRGD to implement the more substantive regulatory changes. As this is a major undertaking it is unlikely to be completed before 2014. Until this full review is completed the TSRGD 2002, with 2011 amendments will have to be complied with.

## 4.2 **New Road Signs**

- 4.2.1 The TSRGD 2002 details every traffic sign prescribed for use in the UK and compliance is mandatory. Kirklees Council as the Highway Authority has ultimate responsibility for determining which road signs are installed and receives approximately 4000 new requests for signs each year.
- 4.2.2 Traffic signs are divided into 3 categories:

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p><b>Regulatory Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs with red circles that give instruction, or tell you what you must not do.</li> </ul> |
|  | <p><b>Warning Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triangular signs that warn you that you are approaching a hazard.</li> </ul>                  |
|  | <p><b>Information Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rectangular signs such as direction signs or tourist attractions.</li> </ul>              |

- 4.2.3 The Traffic Orders Regulations 1996 require highway authorities to make a traffic order for most regulatory signs in order to make them enforceable. Highway authorities can use warning and information signs without further authorisation, ensuring compliance with the TSRGD.
- 4.2.4 To make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), the authority must consult a number of statutory authorities and publish a notice in the local area allowing 21 days for objections to be raised. The authority must consider any objections and determine whether to proceed with the TRO.
- 4.2.5 The Traffic Signs Manual 1982 (Amended 2004) provides a practical illustrative guide for highway authorities on the use of traffic signs as prescribed by TSRGD. It is a guide for Highways Engineers involved in the design or approval of signing schemes.
- 4.2.6 Each request for a new sign is considered on its own merits, by engineers/experienced officers making informed judgements based on priorities for the Council and local area.
- 4.2.7 The Council has not historically kept stocks or an inventory of road signs. The number of signs installed per year can alter dramatically and accurate figures are not readily available. In 2011 the Council purchased approximately 1000 signs, ordered specifically for identified projects, rather than pre-ordering signs that may or may not be utilised.

4.2.8 Councillors are not routinely consulted on the erection of individual road signs or minor signing, however if road signs were generated as part of a specific capital scheme then ward councillors would be consulted.

4.2.9 For signs that require a new post the Council must commission a search for any statutory undertakers' equipment at that location<sup>1</sup>. This process ensures that it is safe to dig for the post foundation and that the base of the post will not conflict with any existing or proposed underground plant. The charge for undertaking this search is currently £51.

### 4.3 **Street Clutter**

4.3.1 In March 2010, Alan Baxter & Associates LLP (a design consultancy) were commissioned by English Heritage and the Department for Transport, as part of their Traffic Signs Policy Review, to investigate ways in which the visual intrusion of traffic signs might be reduced. In *'Clutter Busting – Less is More - an investigation of and recommendations for reducing the visual intrusion of traffic signs'* (June 2010), The report explained:

*“Traffic signs were originally designed to provide information for drivers, so there was no consideration of their impact on the environment. At a time when there was little traffic and few signs, this was not a problem. However, the proliferation in both the type of signs (from 272 in 1964, to 862 in the 2002 regulations) and in their sheer quantity means that they are becoming evermore intrusive, for various reasons:*

- *there is an increasingly prevalent use of larger, brighter signs to compete for drivers' attention, which has in some ways led to signs losing their original design integrity;*
- *there has been an accumulation of different types of signs in one place, caused partly by a lack of coordination between new and existing schemes, but also by the risk averse attitude of designers and Highway Authorities, which leads to the duplication of, for example, speed limit and no entry signs;*
- *new designations, such as Home Zones, 20mph Zones and CPZs all require their own signs. Many of these designations are made in town or village centres and other historic places and, by reducing traffic or parking, should benefit the overall environment; much of this benefit, however, is being eroded by, in some cases, the resultant visual blight of signs located without regard to place-making considerations.”*

4.3.2 The Task Group originally set out to review the Council's approach to reducing street clutter in line with the policy expectation from the Government. However, without an inventory of road signs within Kirklees and no routine auditing of the number of signs, it is difficult to quantify the level of success in achieving this.

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory Undertakers – organisations licensed by the Government that have a statutory right or duty to install, inspect, maintain, repair or replace apparatus in or under the street.



4.3.3 Nevertheless, it is possible to see that a number of approaches are taken by the Council to address street clutter:

- During the surveying of new schemes, the signage around junctions is considered and any surplus signs are removed. Any signs that are due for repair /replacement will also be planned into the scheme.
- Wherever possible, existing lighting columns are used for new signs. However there are issues around the 'wind loading' of lighting columns preventing excessive numbers of signs from being displayed on them. This difficulty leads to more sign columns being erected.
- If a concern is raised by a member of the public.

4.3.4 New initiatives, such as 'Twenty's Plenty', will lead to increased sign clutter. The introduction of a 20mph zone on a residential street, for example, will increase the number of signs by a minimum of 8. This is likely to impact on Kirklees by 2014.



4.3.5 It is clear that the measures above are going some way to reducing sign clutter, however it remains a concern that the Council does not have detailed intelligence about the number or siting of its road signs. Increased intelligence would assist the Council in developing an accurate picture of the scale of street clutter in the district.

#### 4.4 **Temporary Signs and their Removal**

4.4.1 The issue of street clutter is exacerbated by the use of temporary signs.

4.4.2 There are two distinct types of temporary signs:

- 1.) Those controlled by the Council i.e. red/white signs, which are in respect of road works or notifying of a new road layout for example.
- 2.) Those controlled by the Automobile Association (AA), i.e. yellow signs, who have delegated authority to act as the Highway Authority in respect of new housing developments for example. The AA is guided by rules and regulations and is responsible for erecting, maintaining and taking down these signs.

4.4.3 For the signs controlled by the Council, orders are placed within the Council for both the erecting and taking down of signs (this may be by the Council or contractors). When the signs relate to road works, they are generally taken down promptly as the job concludes. This is also the case for utility companies for example, who take down their signs at the end of a job and move onto the next one.

4.4.4 However, it is recognised that when the signs are expected to be in place for several months, for example new road layouts, they are frequently overlooked. Although the same process applies in that orders are placed for the erection and taking down of signs, the passage of time seems to have an impact.

4.4.5 The Streetscene & Housing Service acknowledge that an internal mechanism is needed to remind the Council and its contractors that a sign needs to be removed, and this process is currently being reviewed. The Task Group is supportive of this review and would urge the swift introduction of a robust mechanism to ensure that temporary road signs are taken down in a timely manner. It is further proposed that the Service investigate the introduction of a penalty system for any contractors who do not remove the signs on time.

#### 4.5 **Reporting**

4.5.1 Responsibility for making sure that signs are clearly visible lies with the Council. Officers do not regularly check for signs that need maintenance e.g. (worn, damaged, obscured), as this is not considered to be an efficient use of resources.

4.5.2 There are currently notices on all traffic signal poles that give details to the public on how to report a fault to the Council. This is currently a free phone number from landlines but involves a charge from mobile phones. The Council is exploring the use of a low cost local number in order to reduce the cost of calls from mobiles and the Task Group is supportive of this. There are also identification numbers on all street lighting columns and bollards, to assist with locating the street furniture in the event of a fault.

4.5.3 The introduction of area based working in Streetscene & Housing ensures that staff are well placed to either deal with maintenance issues themselves or refer on to the appropriate team. This system was clearly working well on the task group's visit to Batley Town Centre when they met with Community Rangers to observe their work and the procedures they follow to report issues through to the Highways Team.

4.5.4 However, the Council does remain largely reliant on members of the public reporting that maintenance is needed. Enquiries from members of the public are assessed as well as utilising officer inspection to identify road signing and marking deficiencies. At the current time there is no scoring system in place to assist with prioritising requests and the introduction of such an approach may help to ensure that requests are dealt with consistently.

4.5.5 There has been no recent additional work with the public in order to raise awareness around road markings/signage, in particular how these can be reported if they are in need of repair/removal. However, previous use of the 'Kirklees Together' magazine published by the Council brought about a 15% increase in reports in that quarter. It is therefore recommended that further awareness raising work is undertaken with the public.

4.5.6 A web reporting system that uses a mapping tool to enable the online reporting of street lights is seen as an effective tool and a similar system for the reporting of signage faults and obstructions was considered desirable. Whilst a web based process is not suitable for all residents, it is considered an effective tool.



4.5.8 As a large employer the Council has the ability to communicate with thousands of people who travel throughout the district every day. The Task Group believes that it would be relatively straightforward to promote mechanisms for reporting signage and marking issues which would enhance the level of intelligence without incurring an expense.

#### 4.6 **Obscured Signs**

4.6.1 It is Streetscene & Housing's policy to site new signs away from vegetation wherever possible. However, in 2011 there were 1150 requests received by the Service in respect of overgrown vegetation which was obscuring road signs.

4.6.2 The Council's Community Rangers – a team that specialise in rapid response and proactive work in the community – will deal with overgrown vegetation which is obscuring road signs or causing other hazards on the pavement or highway.



The Assigned Task Group looking at the obscured sign (left)

A Community Ranger clearing the vegetation that obscured the sign (right)



4.6.3 Overgrown vegetation that is sited on private land but obscuring road signs presents a challenge. The Council is able to follow an enforcement procedure which involves writing to the householders or business owners requesting that they clear the obstruction. If this is not done and the Council has to clear the obstruction, then it is possible to invoice the householder/business owner.

4.6.4 It is recognised that there will be occasions when it is not possible to trace the landowner or when the circumstances of the landowner are such that invoicing would be inappropriate, for example, a vulnerable elderly person.

However, evidence gathered by the Task Group on its site visit and through discussions with the Service suggests that sometimes the Community Rangers are carrying out work rather than reporting the issue so that the enforcement procedure can be followed. The Task Group consider that it is important that the Council reinforces the approach with all staff in Streetscene & Housing to ensure that where charging is appropriate, that this is done.

#### 4.7 **Removal of Signs**

4.7.1 Where a sign is no longer required the Council has three options available to it:

- (1) It can remove the sign and pole and request YEDL (Yorkshire Electricity Distribution Ltd) to disconnect any electricity supply.
- (2) It can leave the sign and pole in situ and paint over the sign.
- (3) It can remove the sign but leave the pole in situ.

4.7.2 The first option requires consultation with the 32 statutory undertakers who charge for each request that they consider. As this can cost up to £400, the Council usually considers it more appropriate to leave the signs and/or poles in situ.

4.7.3 Consideration has been given to only removing that part of the pole above ground, but it is considered too difficult to ensure that the pole is flush with the ground to avoid a tripping hazard being created.

4.7.4 The cost to supply energy to one sign per year is approximately £10.

4.7.4 In reality, it is only if the cost of maintenance of the signpost is going to exceed the cost of removal that it will be removed completely.

### **TASK GROUP VIEWS – ROAD SIGNAGE**

#### **Street Clutter**

- Whilst it is clear that the Council is taking some measures to reduce sign clutter, it is difficult to quantify the level of success in achieving this without knowledge of the number or siting of its road signs.
- The Council will need to be mindful of the impact of new initiatives, such as 'Twenty's Plenty' as this could have a negative effect on street clutter.

#### **Temporary Signs**

- An internal mechanism is needed to remind the Council and its contractors that a sign needs to be removed, particularly when it has been in place for a number of months. The review of the current approach is welcomed.
- The impact of obsolete signage on road users is significant enough to warrant the introduction of a fine for contractors who do not remove signs in a timely manner.

#### **Reporting**

- The Council is currently exploring the use of a low cost local number in order to reduce the cost of calls from mobile phones to report faults to the Council and this is welcomed.
- The introduction of area based working in Streetscene & Housing has ensured that staff are well placed to either deal with maintenance issues themselves or refer on to the appropriate team. This system is working well.

### **TASK GROUP VIEWS – ROAD SIGNAGE (continued)**

- The Council does not currently have a clear system for prioritising requests for service relating to road signs and the introduction of a scoring system would ensure consistency around service requests.
- There has been no recent promotional activity with the public to raise awareness of how to report road markings and signage in need of repair/removal. It is known that previous publicity has seen a corresponding increase in the number of reports.
- The Council, as a large employer, could encourage its staff to report signage issues, which would enhance the level of intelligence without incurring expense.

#### **Obscured Signs**

- It is clear that on a number of occasions Community Rangers have carried out work to remove overgrown vegetation that is sited on private land, without this being recharged to the household. It is important that the Council reinforces the enforcement procedure approach with all staff to ensure that where charging is appropriate, that this is done.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Streetscene and Housing Service extend the use of existing web reporting systems to include the ability to report problems with road signage.
2. That the Streetscene & Housing Service ensure that their review of the approach to removal of temporary signs results in the introduction of a robust mechanism, to ensure that temporary road signs are taken down in a timely manner.
3. That the Council introduce a penalty system for any contractors that do not remove road signs on time.
4. That the Council introduces a scoring system to ensure consistency in the approach to prioritising requests for service in respect of road signage.
5. That the Council commissions publicity to raise awareness of how the public can report signs or markings in need of repair or removal.
6. That the Council develops ways to encourage all Council staff to report road signs and markings, which are in need of repair or removal.
7. That the Council ensures that it charges landowners for removal of overgrown vegetation that is obstructing road signs or markings, where the landowner has failed to respond to a written request to do so.
8. That the Council advises all Streetscene & Housing employees to report overgrown vegetation obscuring road signs or markings in order to ensure that the Council can follow the enforcement procedure.





## 5 ROAD MARKINGS - SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE RECEIVED

### 5.1 Legislative Background

- 5.1.1 All road markings that are placed on the highway must be either prescribed by the TSRGD or authorised by the Secretary of State for Transport. The Traffic Signs Manual gives guidance on the use of traffic signs and road markings as prescribed by the TSRGD.
- 5.1.2 Road markings can only be placed on a highway by, or with the consent of, the Highway Authority (S.132 of the Highways Act 1980). Some have legal implications, for example Give Way markings, as non compliance could constitute a traffic offence under the Road Traffic Act 1988.

### 5.2 Function of Road Markings

- 5.2.1 Road markings are fundamental to the control, warning, guidance or information of road users.
- 5.2.2 The Traffic Signs Manual suggests that road markings have two principle functions. The first is symbolic – a driver needs to have learned that these indicate an area which is not available to traffic. The second is guidance – centre lines, edge lines and lane lines help drivers to maintain their lateral position on the road. Some markings have both symbolic and guidance functions e.g. hazard lines.
- 5.2.3 There are two main types of road markings:

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b>White Lines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- To help road users by giving different types of information on lane use and directions.</li></ul>   |
|  | <p><b>Yellow Lines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Where there is a need to restrict parking, prevent obstructions on the highway and aid traffic flow. To place a new yellow line, or remove one, requires a Traffic Regulation Order.</li></ul> |

### 5.3 Contractors

- 5.3.1 The Council contracts out some of its work on the highway such as surface dressing, and the contractors are responsible for reinstating road markings affected by this.
- 5.3.2 The Council's contracts include a framework in line with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions guidance. Work must be completed to the required standard in line with this framework.

- 5.3.3 All of these type of works contracted out by the Council are checked and supervised. There are a number of different teams within the Place Directorate who are responsible for supervising contractors, depending on the type of work undertaken.
- 5.3.4 Any reinstatement found to be unsatisfactory, will lead to the contractor being asked to return and put the job right. It is inevitable that contractors will not always reinstate road markings correctly. However if a contractor persistently makes mistakes, then the Council would stop using them.
- 5.3.5 No charge is made to contractors for the final inspection of their works by the Council, and it is reasonable to assume that any attempt to do so would inevitably result in contractors charging more for work to offset this additional cost. The Council would also have to resource staff to manage this process.
- 5.36 It is the Task Group's view that the quality and accuracy of road sign and marking reinstatements could be improved with better standards of quality control and clearer contract specifications. The Task Group felt that photographic records of sites before and after works would increase the accuracy and minimise the number of site inspections.
- 5.37 However it was recognised that the storage of a large number of photos may provide unfeasible and therefore it was felt that an alternative solution should be sought by the Streetscene and Housing Service.

#### 5.4 **Statutory Undertakers**

- 5.4.1 The majority of road works are however not the result of Council activity, but of work by statutory undertakers.
- 5.4.2 Statutory undertakers are organisations licensed by the Government that have a statutory right or duty to install, inspect, maintain, repair or replace apparatus in or under the street. It includes all the utility companies – gas, electricity, water, British Telecom, and Cable Television – and there are currently 32 statutory undertakers who can work on Kirklees' roads.
- 5.4.3 Statutory undertakers are legally permitted to work on Kirklees roads as and when they think necessary. However, they must notify the Council in advance of all planned works under the Traffic Management Act 2004. The period of notice is dependent on the scale, type and location of individual schemes. An exception is made to the advance notification requirement for emergency works, when the Council must instead be notified no later than 2 hours after work has begun.
- 5.4.4 The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 require that a sample inspection of 10% of works for each individual Statutory Undertaker be taken. Importantly, this includes the reinstatement of road markings.
- 5.4.5 The inspections are funded by the statutory undertakers and categorised as:

**Category A:** Inspection whilst works are in progress (e.g. signing, lighting, guarding of works)

**Category B:** Inspection within 6 months of the completion of reinstatement

**Category C:** Inspection carried out within 3 months preceding the end of the guarantee period

5.4.5 In 2011, the results of the sample inspections in Kirklees were:

**Category A:** 725 inspections, of which 7% failed

**Category B:** 787 inspections; of which 11% failed

**Category C:** 760 inspections; of which 7% failed

5.4.6 In respect of Category A failures, the statutory undertaker must rectify the fault on site within 2 – 4 hours depending on whether the inadequacy is compromising public safety.

5.4.7 In respect of Category B and C failures, and if the failure is not urgent, then a defect notice is served on the statutory undertaker. They in return serve a remedial notice and remedial works should be carried out within 17 days of being notified, unless a longer period is agreed.

5.4.8 If a statutory undertaker fails to comply with the defect notice, it would be charged for an inspection fee and served with another defect notice. If the site was considered to be dangerous, the works would be carried out in default and charged back to the statutory undertaker.

5.4.9 If any works that have not been subject to inspection are brought to the attention of the Council within the guarantee period, and have not been completed satisfactorily then the contractor will be required to reinstate the site properly.

## 5.5 **Yorkshire Common Permit Scheme**

5.5.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004 allows the introduction of a Permit Scheme to enable better management of work activities on the highway. This provides a change from the 'notification system' of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, by requiring a company to book time on the highway through a permit. The same requirement applies to the Council for its own road works.

5.5.2 Kirklees Council and Leeds City Council have introduced the Yorkshire Common Permit Scheme for all works on roads that are reinstatement category 0, 1, 2 (essentially A and B roads) or that are traffic sensitive. It covers 25% of the Kirklees total road network.

5.5.2 The Scheme, which aims to minimise the inconvenience and disruption caused by road works to all road users, residents and businesses on the busiest roads in Kirklees, went live on 12 June 2012 for a 12 month trial period.



## 5.6 **White lining**

- 5.6.1 White lining is carried out by contractors, and contracts are negotiated on a West Yorkshire level in order to ensure competitive prices.
- 5.6.2 The Task Group has been concerned about the difficulty the Council encounters in persuading contractors to undertake small amounts of lining in isolated areas. The lack of cost effectiveness means that contractors usually wait until other works are required in the area.
- 5.6.3 The Council had carried out a small trial a number of years ago of providing an in-house white lining service. The initial outlay and vehicle maintenance overheads were found to be restrictive and the activity was very weather dependent. In poor weather, other work had to be found for staff.
- 5.6.4 However, during the course of this project, the Service has re-evaluated the potential of providing an in-house lining service on a smaller scale i.e., just for use to complete small patches of lining. As the Council already owns a vehicle capable of undertaking white lining, and existing staff can be trained to carry out this function, it is felt that the benefit for residents and road users outweighs the cost implications. The Task Group is supportive of this proposal and looks forward with interest to the evaluation of this new approach.

## 5.7 **Monitoring of Road Markings**

- 5.7.1 The Council budget does not allow for proactive monitoring of road markings.
- 5.7.2 During the planning process for new developments, decisions are made on the works that are needed to mitigate any particular issues. These can range from minor junction improvements (e.g. necessary visibility into a site) to major highway improvements, as well as a host of other aspects of planning regulations. Highway officers act in an advisory capacity and are consulted on and included in where appropriate discussions and agreements for funding (106 and 278 agreements) and if money is designated through the process it can not be used for other reasons.

## 5.8 **Road Safety**

- 5.8.1 When setting the terms of reference of the project, the Development & Environment Scrutiny Panel had felt that it was important to assess the approach taken by the Council in using road markings and signage to assist with road safety, for example: in the design of traffic schemes and traffic calming.
- 5.8.2 **Design of Traffic Schemes (including Traffic Calming)**  
All new engineers are trained to a minimum of ONC in Civil Engineering, a HNC and degree may then be undertaken. These courses include elements of traffic management. All Casualty Reduction engineers are then trained in accident prevention to Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)

standards. There is no formal training in respect of road markings and new employees learn by shadowing more experienced colleagues.

#### 5.8.3 Examples of how improvements in signage have helped to reduce accidents include:

- A635 Barnsley Road, Upper Cumberworth – between 2004-07 there were 12 crashes due to loss of control and poor hazard awareness. New warning signs, double white lines and studs were introduced and there have been no personal injury crashes since the scheme was installed.
- Hunsworth Lane, Cleckheaton – between 2005-08 there were 6 crashes mainly involving loss of control around a bend. New warning signs, double white lines and studs were installed and there has been only 1 crash in the last 3 years.
- Holt Head Road, Blackmoorfoot – between 2004-07 there were 16 crashes due to loss of control and collisions involving vehicles turning into and out of side junctions. New warning signs and road marking were installed and there have been just 6 slight crashes since the scheme was installed.

#### 5.8.4 **Naked Roads Scheme**

The 'Naked Roads' idea, which has been used in Europe with some degree of success, works on the principle of removing visible signs and markings and relies on behavioural psychology. It has also been trialled in the UK, where there was an indication that the number of accidents reduced. However, it is largely untested and does not appear to be an option for Kirklees at this time.

#### 5.8.5 **Vehicle Activated Signs**

Vehicle activated signs (that indicate an approaching hazard) are only used in areas where casualties have occurred and all other available options for remedial action have run out. Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) have been used successfully in areas to reduce speeds. However installation of them must be considered with caution as their impact is only evident for a few weeks and they are sometimes seen as a 'challenge' to some drivers.

#### 5.8.6 **Consultation**

Consultation groups are used, where necessary, to flag up the impact of planned schemes to particular groups of businesses for example. The Council also has specialist in-house staff, for example advanced driving instructors, who can be consulted on planned schemes. The Task Group welcomes the assistance of consultation groups and in-house specialists in the designing of traffic schemes.

## **TASK GROUP VIEWS – ROAD MARKINGS**

### **Contractors**

- The checking and supervision of contractors working on the highway on behalf of the Council is important, to ensure that any reinstatement of road markings affected by the works is satisfactory.
- That the quality and accuracy of road signs and marking reinstatement could be improved with better standards of quality control and clearer contract specifications.

### **White Lining**

- It is of concern that there is often a delay in contractors carrying out smaller white lining jobs as the need for cost effectiveness leads to contractors waiting for jobs to accumulate in one area.
- The provision of an in-house white lining service for small jobs would be of benefit to residents and road users.

### **Road Safety**

- The use of consultation groups and in-house specialists when designing new traffic schemes is welcomed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Streetscene and Housing Service introduces a system that will improve the standards, quality control and contract specifications for road marking and signing works on all major highway schemes (such as surface dressing, resurfacing, schemes, etc)
2. That an evaluation of the in-house lining service be undertaken following the trial period and be reported back to Scrutiny as part of the follow up of recommendations after 12 months.

## **6. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 That the Streetscene and Housing Service extend the use of existing web reporting systems to include the ability to report problems with road signage.
- 6.2 That the Streetscene & Housing Service ensure that their review of the approach to removal of temporary signs results in the introduction of a robust mechanism, to ensure that temporary road signs are taken down in a timely manner.
- 6.3 That the Council introduce a penalty system for any contractors that do not remove road signs on time.
- 6.4 That the Council introduces a scoring system to ensure consistency in the approach to prioritising requests for service in respect of road signage.
- 6.5 That the Council commissions publicity to raise awareness of how the public can report signs or markings in need of repair or removal.
- 6.6 That the Council develops ways to encourage all Council staff to report road signs and markings, which are in need of repair or removal.
- 6.7 That the Council ensures that it charges landowners for removal of overgrown vegetation that is obstructing road signs or markings, where the landowner has failed to respond to a written request to do so.
- 6.8 That the Council advises all Streetscene & Housing employees to report overgrown vegetation obscuring road signs or markings in order to ensure that the Council can follow the enforcement procedure.
- 6.9 That the Streetscene and Housing Service introduce a system that will improve the standards, quality control and contract specifications for road marking and signing works on all major highway schemes (such as surface dressing, resurfacing, schemes, etc)
- 6.10 That an evaluation of the in-house lining service be undertaken following the trial period and be reported back to Scrutiny as part of the follow up of recommendations after 12 months.

## 7.0 GLOSSARY

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ)                                | An area in which all kerbside space is controlled by either waiting or loading restrictions or by designated parking spaces.   |
| Highways Authority  | The body responsible for the administration of public roads.   |
| Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)         | A British charity which aims to promote safety. It is particular known for it's vocal campaigns on issues of road safety.  |
| Section 106 (S106)  | Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation, with a land developer over a related issue.                    |
| Statutory Undertaker  | Organisations licensed by the Government to dig holes in the roads, verges and pavements. They include all utilities electricity, gas, water, telephone, cable telephone and television and other telecommunication companies. |
| The Department of Transport                                   | The Department of Transport – is the Government department responsible for the English transport network and a limited number of transport matters in Scotland.  |
| Traffic Management Act 2004                                   | The Traffic Management Act 2004 (c.18) is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. It details the street works regulations. The Law has been implemented from 1 April 2008 across the UK.                               |
| Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)                                | A Traffic Regulation Order is the legal instrument by which traffic authorities implement most traffic management controls on their roads.   |
| Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD) | The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD) – which prescribes the design and condition of use for traffic signs placed on the highway.  |
| Yorkshire Electricity Distribution Plc (YEDL)                 | Company for the distribution of power across Yorkshire.  |

## SCRUTINY ACTION PLAN

**Project:** Road Signings and Markings

**Lead Scrutiny Officer:** Beth Hewitt (formerly Rebecca Morrison)

|     |   |  | FOR COMPLETION   |  |   |   |
|-----|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| No. | Recommendation  | Directorate/ Cabinet Member(s)/ Organisations asked to coordinate the response to the recommendation?  | Do you agree with the recommendation? If no, please explain why. | How will this be implemented?  | Who will be responsible for implementation? | What is the estimated timescale for implementation? |
| 1   | That the Streetscene and Housing Service extend the use of existing web reporting systems to include the ability to report problems with road signage.              | <p>Cllr Peter McBride and<br/>Cllr Cathy Scott<br/>Cabinet Member for Place</p> <p>Jacqui Gedman<br/>Director of Place</p> <p>Kim Brear<br/>Assistant Director<br/>Streetscene and<br/>Housing</p> | <b>Agree</b>   | <p>There is an existing web reporting system which currently emphasises 'road problems, including potholes, scabbing and road markings'.</p> <p>As part of business system and knowledge improvements the wording and descriptions on the web forms will be looked at and consideration be given to emphasising signage further.</p> | Cath Bottomley                              | End of March 2013                                   |
| 2   | That the Streetscene & Housing Service ensure that their review of the approach to removal of temporary signs results in the introduction of a robust mechanism, to | <p>Cllr Peter McBride and<br/>Cllr Cathy Scott<br/>Cabinet Member for Place</p> <p>Jacqui Gedman<br/>Director of Place</p>   | <b>Agree</b>   | <p>A new process was introduced and embedded while the scrutiny investigation was ongoing.</p> <p>This will be reiterated and monitored over the next 12 months.</p>   | Cath Bottomley                              | End of March 2013                                   |

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|   | ensure that temporary road signs are taken down in a timely manner.   | Kim Brear<br>Assistant Director<br>Streetscene and<br>Housing  |   |   |                   |                           |
| 3 | That the Council introduce a penalty system for any contractors that do not remove road signs on time.  | Cllr Peter McBride and<br>Cllr Cathy Scott<br>Cabinet Member for<br>Place<br><br>Jacqui Gedman<br>Director of Place<br><br>Kim Brear<br>Assistant Director<br>Streetscene and<br>Housing | <b>Agree</b>  | The Service does support the principles of the recommendation and will look to include this recommendation in the annual review of Fees and Charges in 2013<br><br>Signs from developments are generally on site until approx 85% of the site is occupied. It is difficult to put an actual date on this in order to remove signs or process penalty notices. Some companies re-new their authorisation every 6 months or remove their signs, but other firms do not. | Cath<br>Bottomley | End of<br>October<br>2013 |
| 4 | That the Council introduces a scoring system to ensure consistency in the approach to prioritising requests for service in respect of road signage. | Cllr Peter McBride and<br>Cllr Cathy Scott<br>Cabinet Member for<br>Place<br><br>Jacqui Gedman<br>Director of Place<br><br>Kim Brear<br>Assistant Director                               | <b>Do not agree, but existing practices in place to consider signage designs on an individual basis.</b><br><br>Each request for signage is assessed on its own merit and around specific |   |                   |                           |

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|   |  | Streetscene and Housing  | <p>circumstances raised. Road signage is introduced where it can offer community benefits, but it is extremely complex to make criterion for the varied circumstances of introducing signage.</p> <p>Requests are therefore assessed and prioritised by Highway Safety/Traffic Management staff who can apply engineering experience and judgement on a case by case basis.</p> |  |                |                   |
| 5 | That the Council commissions publicity to raise awareness of how the public can report signs or markings in need of repair or removal. | <p>Cllr Peter McBride and Cllr Cathy Scott<br/>Cabinet Member for Place</p> <p>Jacqui Gedman<br/>Director of Place</p> <p>Kim Brear<br/>Assistant Director<br/>Streetscene and Housing</p> | <b>Agree</b>  | <p>There is an existing web reporting system which currently emphasises 'road problems, including potholes, scabbing and road markings'.</p> <p>As part of business system improvements, the wording and descriptions on the web forms will be looked at and signage and road markings will be emphasised further.</p> | Cath Bottomley | End of March 2013 |
| 6 | That the Council develops ways to encourage all Council staff to report road signs   | Cllr Peter McBride and Cllr Cathy Scott<br>Cabinet Member for Place  | <b>Agree</b>  | To be embedded in the culture of Streetscene and Housing as part of the coordinated approach to  | Cath Bottomley | End of March 2013 |



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|   | and markings, which are in need of repair or removal.  | Jacqui Gedman<br>Director of Place<br><br>Kim Brear<br>Assistant Director<br>Streetscene and<br>Housing  |              | provision of quality neighbourhoods.   |                |                   |
| 7 | That the Council ensures that it charges landowners for removal of overgrown vegetation that is obstructing road signs or markings, where the landowner has failed to respond to a written request to do so. | Cllr Peter McBride and<br>Cllr Cathy Scott<br>Cabinet Member for<br>Place<br><br>Jacqui Gedman<br>Director of Place<br><br>Kim Brear<br>Assistant Director<br>Streetscene and<br>Housing | <b>Agree</b> | There is a current process that is followed.<br><br>There are times when we remove overgrown vegetation that is obstructing road signs or markings and do not charge. In the main this is where staff members have determined a landowner unable to do the work themselves (elderly or disabled) and unlikely to be able to pay for the works (low incomes). There is also the judgement around the economics of raising an invoice and chasing relatively small payments. | Cath Bottomley | End of March 2013 |
| 8 | That the Council advises all Streetscene & Housing employees to report overgrown vegetation obscuring road signs or markings in order to ensure that the Council can follow                                  | Cllr Peter McBride and<br>Cllr Cathy Scott<br>Cabinet Member for<br>Place<br><br>Jacqui Gedman<br>Director of Place<br><br>Kim Brear   | <b>Agree</b> | We will encourage staff to take a flexible approach to enforcement (linked to item 7)  | Cath Bottomley | End of March 2013 |

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|    | the enforcement procedure.   | Assistant Director Streetscene and Housing   |              |  |                |                   |
| 9  | That the Streetscene and Housing Service introduce a system that will improve the standards, quality control and contract specifications for road marking and signing works on all major highway schemes (such as surface dressing, resurfacing, schemes, etc) | <p>Cllr Peter McBride and Cllr Cathy Scott<br/>Cabinet Member for Place</p> <p>Jacqui Gedman<br/>Director of Place</p> <p>Kim Brear<br/>Assistant Director Streetscene and Housing</p> | <b>Agree</b> | <p>The Service already has several measures in place to control contractors in terms of timescales to reinstate road markings, quality, compliance and workmanship.</p> <p>The Service will consider further ways of mitigating issues around road markings going back down wrong and delays in reinstating these after resurfacing works have been undertaken.</p> <p>This will include reiterating the importance of road markings and getting them right.</p> | Cath Bottomley | End of March 2013 |
| 10 | That an evaluation of the in-house lining service be undertaken following the trial period and be reported back to Scrutiny as part of the follow up of recommendations after 12 months.   | <p>Cllr Peter McBride and Cllr Cathy Scott<br/>Cabinet Member for Place</p> <p>Jacqui Gedman<br/>Director of Place</p> <p>Kim Brear<br/>Assistant Director Streetscene and Housing</p> | <b>Agree</b> | Internal team now established for small lining works   | Cath Bottomley | Complete          |