

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 JANUARY 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	IMPLICATIONS OF DELAYS TO THE TRAFFIC SIGNS REGULATIONS AND GENERAL DIRECTIONS ON CURRENT SCHEMES		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As reported to the November meeting of the Sub-committee the government have been reviewing the current Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) following a review of signing policy culminating in 'Signing the Way', published in 2011. It is typical for the government to review the TSRGD every 10-15 years and the current 2002 version is out of date and in need of an overhaul.
- 1.2 It has been expected that the new TSRGD will be laid before Parliament in 2015 and coming into force before the end of the year. However, this has now been delayed for further consultation to which the Department of Transport is now considering all responses. The purpose of this report is to highlight the implications to us of this further delay.
- 1.3 At the start of the review process the government committed to making it more cost effective for local highway authorities to use 20mph within the urban environment. We consulted on an area wide 20mph scheme for east Reading and the expectation of the new TSRGD is that illumination of 20mph signs will no longer be required. This has significant cost implications for our scheme where currently around 80 signs require illumination.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-committee note the report.
- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee agree to go ahead with the East Reading 20mph scheme without illumination of the signs before May 2016 as set out within this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The government have been reviewing the current Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) following a review of signing policy culminating in 'Signing the Way', published in 2011. It is typical for the government to review the TSRGD every 10-15 years and the current 2002 version is out of date and in need of an overhaul.
- 3.2 The new version (which will replace the 2002 version) has been completely restructured. The purpose of the new version is to provide significant deregulation and a new approach for local authorities in delivering their traffic management and traffic signs. This review is about creating a flexible legislative framework for the future, rather than new signs. The appearance of the signs themselves to road users will not change.
- 3.3 Local Highway Authorities are bound by an Act of Parliament to use the TSRGD for signing and lining the public highway. Until the new version is laid before Parliament and comes into law we must continue to use the current 2002 version.

4. CURRENT POSITION AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 4.1 As previously reported the delay to the new TSRGD is significant to all local highway authorities as there are a number of changes expected in the new version. Most noticeably we are expecting a change to the requirement to illuminate 20mph speed limit signs. This will have an impact on the costs of delivery of 20mph (significantly within east Reading) as previously reported to the Sub-committee. However, until the new TSRGD has been laid before Parliament we are legally required to use the current 2002 version.
- 4.2 There has been no official announcement as to when the new TSRGD will come into force. However, the draft documentation has now been presented to the European Union suggesting that no further changes will be made to the current draft version.
- 4.3 Our plans to implement 20mph in east Reading have been on hold for around 18 months which means that the 2-year deadline for implementing an advertised Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is fast approaching. We are required to implement a TRO within 2-years of advertising otherwise the restriction will have to be re-advertised. This will come at an additional cost unless we implement the scheme and seal the order before May 2016. The cost of advertising the east Reading scheme was in the region of £8K. This is money that will be better spent on implementation of the scheme rather than repeating the legal process.
- 4.4 We have already considered the costs of illumination of the 20mph signs for east Reading. The current market value estimated to connect the speed limit signs to mains electricity is £180K to £200K. To use solar powered illuminated signs to cost is around half at £100k. For signs only with no illumination the cost of implementing the east Reading scheme is estimated at £35K.
- 4.5 With the revised TSRGD expected later in 2016 the recommendation is to implement the east Reading scheme without illumination at an estimated cost of £35K for the signs. The Sub-committee is asked to approve this

recommendation now to ensure that the scheme can be delivered before the 2-year time limit is reached on the advertised TRO.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and contributes to the Council's strategic aims, as set out below:

- Keeping the town clean, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 We have taken every opportunity to engage with the Department for Transport through their official consultation and workshops events since 2011. We have already consulted formally and informally on 20mph for east Reading.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 We are legally required to continue to use the 2002 version of the regulations until a new version comes into force. If the new version of the TSRGD is not available by May 2016 we will have to re-take the decision to introduce 20mph in east Reading and possibly re-advertise the restriction. Officers are recommending that the east Reading 20mph scheme is implemented before May 2016 without illumination.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 To implement new signing particularly 20 mph schemes are likely to cost significantly more under the 2002 version of the TSRGD. It is recommended that 20mph is implemented without illumination at an estimated cost of £35K. This money will be found within the LTP and LSTF contributions.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Various TMAP and TM Sub-committee reports on 20mph and east Reading 20mph.