

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

2nd August 2011

**INFORMATION SHELTERS - REQUEST TO DISCONNECT ELECTRICITY /
DEMOLISH SITES**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Brandon Clayton, Portfolio Holder Housing, Local Environment & Health
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance & Partnerships Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Key Decision - Yes	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The 5 existing tourist information areas located at key gateway sites entering the town are now in a poor state of repair, as detailed in a recent O&S report on improving the image of Redditch. They may require significant funds in the future to remain safe if they are kept – there is currently no maintenance budget. The communication boards are extremely out of date, as evidenced by the use of the old RBC logo and incorrect maps. There is no evidence that the sites are well used.
- 1.2 As part of a successful £3.5M bid to the Department of Transport for rolling out the “Choose how you Move 2” project – designed to encourage more sustainable transport in the town; money is available for the provision of six information kiosks at the Kingfisher Centre, Kingsley College, Alexandra Hospital, Redditch Civic Centre, Arrowvale Sports Centre and Redditch Train Station. This is a £62,000 investment and the capital element will be spent by end of 2012/2013.
- 1.3 Members are asked to re-consider demolishing the existing information shelters for the reasons above, but mainly from a climate change perspective. Keeping the information shelters lit could be considered a poor use of resources (costing the Council £4,690 per annum), especially as the cost of electricity continues to rise, and unnecessarily contributes to the Council’s carbon footprint.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND that:

- 1) the information shelters be demolished and the lighting system be disconnected; and**

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- 2) **the annual budget for electricity consumption from 2011/12 be diverted into the energy efficiency 'spend to save' fund.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 Based on 5 sites; annually these information shelters consume 68,174 kWh of grid electricity. This equals 35.65 tonnes of CO₂ per annum or 1.2% of our total buildings carbon footprint. Although this appears small, it is important to realise all opportunities for reducing emissions, especially at low, or no cost; to result in a larger cumulative reduction towards our targets.
- 3.2 Lighting these 4 sites costs the Authority an annual revenue cost of £4,690 per annum, which is likely to rise. We are unclear who is paying for the electricity at the fifth site; most likely WCC, so the true annual saving through demolition would be £5,863.
- 3.3. The cost of complete removal of the information shelters, disconnecting the power and re-landscaping is £5,470 (disconnection cost is £1,985).
- 3.4 Officers suggest that the remainder of the year's saving achieved once the power is disconnected goes towards the total cost. The remaining costs could come out of the Capital Landscape budget.
- 3.5 Officers request that Members consider diverting the ongoing annual budget towards the energy efficiency 'spend to save' project, so that other similar schemes to this can go ahead.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 Not applicable.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.7 Not applicable.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 There is no evidence that the sites are well used and that the money currently spent on electricity would better serve our customers in other ways.

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4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is a risk of not giving visitors tourist information when they arrive in the town if the sites are completely removed, although this is mitigated by the new information kiosks going forward. There is little risk involved in providing unlit shelters.

5. APPENDICES

There are no appendices to this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Decisions made previously in relation to this request.
- 6.2 The budget bids were considered as initial estimates for the Council's budget by the Executive on 21st February 2011. A bid for the removal of the 'tourist signs' was considered at that point. However, because it was classified as a low priority bid the proposal was not approved. This position was ratified by full Council the same evening.
- 6.3 The Overview & Scrutiny Task and Finish Group did suggest that the shelters be retained and updated but they also suggested that they no longer needed to be lit at night. The Executive Committee approved all of the Group's recommendations on 12th April 2011. However, this did not form an official recommendation but rather a proposed action in relation to improving the signage within the town in general.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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