

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Communities

Report to:	Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee
Date:	15 July 2013
Subject:	Advertising on/Sponsorship of Roundabouts in Lincolnshire

Summary:

This paper sets out a proposal by East Lindsey District Council to manage advertising on/sponsorship of roundabouts across the East Lindsey district of Lincolnshire, to provide a managed approach to maximise potential income, a share of which will be allocated to the County Council.

Recommendation(s):

Members are invited to recommend to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT that a trial of the proposal is carried out in the East Lindsey District.

Background

- 1.1 This matter was discussed at a previous meeting of the committee on 21 January 2013, where East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) were proposing a county wide scheme. The committee resolved that further work was required by East Lindsey in obtaining support from the other 6 District Councils before any recommendation could be agreed by this committee. They have not been able to gain unanimous support for their proposal and have therefore submitted a revised proposal to initiate a trial in the East Lindsey District. The results of this trial will then be used to better inform the remaining councils of the potential benefits.
- 1.2 The current policy with respect to sponsorship of roundabouts (appendix A) has been in existence for many years and has remained little changed in that time.
- 1.3 The current policy provides a framework for approval of planting schemes and small scale signing to be approved by the Highway Authority and subsequently administered by the seven "District" Councils.
- 1.4 Currently the County Council receives no income from these sponsored sites. However, the costs of maintaining them is taken on by the Districts and recovered through sponsorship charges.

1.5 By way of example, Boston Borough Council currently have nine agreements in place; with annual sponsorship costs in the range of £560 (A1121 Boardsides, Endeavour Park) £700 (A52 Tesco/B&Q) and £750 (A16 WideBargate) bringing in a total annual income of around £14,000. A copy of their agreement is included at Appendix B.

2. The Proposal

2.1 East Lindsey's proposal (Appendix C) sets out their vision for what could be achieved by working in partnership with a private company, Community Partners, by way of fully managed contracts, making advertising/sponsorship more attractive to business and thus maximise income for both East Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council.

2.2 The main changes to the existing policy, in terms of impact on the highway network and its users, is the proposed increase in the size of the signage from the current 630mm x 270mm (0.17sq.m) to 1100mm x 550mm (0.605sq.m). These issues are discussed at (3) below.

2.3 The proposal states that they would expect to achieve an income of £90 per sign per week, using their assumptions, should there be full take up throughout the year. A 3 junction roundabout would generate £14,040 per annum and a 4 junction £18,720. These are somewhat different to the sums currently being generated by the existing schemes as detailed above, however one should take into account the "improved offer" the larger signs present. Lincolnshire County Council's share of this would be approximately 20%.

2.4 In order to do some sensitivity testing of the figures quoted in the proposal we looked at what the other nearby authorities were doing in this respect. In November 2011 Norfolk County Council undertook a review of roundabout sponsorship (appendix D) looking at a similar proposal which concluded that £2000 per annum was achievable as an income from such advertisements.

Should members wish to pursue this proposal further it is clear there is more work to be done on costings contained therein.

3. Highway Network Implications

3.1 As previously identified, the proposed increase in size of sponsorship signs, and if the proposal is successful, the increased number, presents two potential issues; visibility /driver distraction and proliferation of "Street Clutter". Clearly if this proposal were to proceed then careful consideration would need to be given to the siting of these signs, each location given specific consideration to ensure that visibility would not be compromised and that the signs did not distract driver attention.

Perceived wisdom is that the signs should be set to face approaching traffic, perpendicular to the give way marking so that it is clearly visible to drivers whilst viewing the road ahead.

- 3.2** Previously, the scrutiny committee recommended the adoption of the recently revised “Streetscape Design Manual” which seeks to promote a sensitive approach to the impacts of the highway and its associated “Street furniture” on the environment. It seeks amongst other things to, where appropriate, remove unnecessary “clutter”. A proliferation of signs, particularly in rural areas or sensitive urban locations, is something that should be ordinarily avoided. However, it could be argued that sponsorship could bring about an improvement in the standard of maintenance of these roundabouts, be it by more frequent mowing or planting schemes.
- 3.3** Councillors may also wish to consider if these advertising signs could lead to an increase in unlawful signs being displayed within the highway and the subsequent additional resource required to deal with these.
- 3.4** East Lindsey's proposal is that a trial of a revised policy is undertaken within their district to establish the level of income that can realistically be achieved and to better understand the potential issues highlighted above. In order for this trial to be commercially attractive and provide a meaningful understanding of the economic benefits, it is proposed that the trial period be set at 3 years. Should the scheme prove successful and interest is shown by other districts a further decision could be made to expand the scheme during the initial trial period.

Conclusion

Councillors are invited to recommend to the Executive Councillor that a revised policy is drafted by officers for the purpose of undertaking a three year trial in the East Lindsey District.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Current policy with respect to roundabouts
Appendix B	East Lindsey's proposal
Appendix C	Norfolk County Council's review of roundabout sponsorship

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Lincolnshire Streetscape Design Manual 2012	http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/conservation-areas/every-street-matters/91118.article?tab=downloads
Highways, Transport & Technology Scrutiny Committee report 21 January 2013	http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/local-democracy/how-the-council-works/committee-records/

This report was written by Alan Aistrup, who can be contacted on 01522 782070 or alan.aistrup@lincolnshire.gov.uk.