

# Roundabout Sponsorship and Advertising Scrutiny Panel

**July 2019**

## 1. Executive Summary

The Roundabout Sponsorship and Advertising Scrutiny Panel was established in March 2018 to review the current policy dealing with the sponsorship of roundabouts, to develop the policy to enable effective management of roundabout sponsorship and advertising in Lincolnshire, and to consider the economic and commercialisation opportunities.

The Scrutiny Panel has examined the current guidance and data regarding the suitability of roundabouts in each District for sponsorship and advertising. It has approached each of the District Councils to find out what the current situation is with roundabout sponsorship across Lincolnshire. The Scrutiny Panel has discovered that currently only Boston Borough Council and City of Lincoln Council have sponsorship schemes in place.

***The Scrutiny Panel is proposing that the County Council explores a countywide sponsorship scheme to cover those areas of the county where no other council scheme exists, but provide discretion to those District Councils with a current sponsorship scheme to continue operating as they are.***

The Scrutiny Panel concluded the following as part of this review:

- Lincolnshire has 113 roundabouts suitable for sponsorship - 26 1-lane roundabouts, 86 2-lane roundabouts and one 3-lane roundabout
- The feedback from the District Councils has been varied, with some already operating roundabout sponsorship and advertising schemes, others interested in becoming involved, and some with no plans to operate a scheme at this stage.
- There are two District Councils which have successful sponsorship schemes in place, and the Scrutiny Panel does not want to disrupt these schemes.
- Consideration could be given to Lincolnshire County Council entering into its own sponsorship scheme to cover those areas of the county where no other council scheme exists.
- Feedback received through the review support the size of the signs permitted should be increased to at least 920mm x 460mm to promote the viability of sponsorship opportunities.
- Research indicates that other Local Authorities in the area use the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) advertising framework to contract a provider to manage advertising space for commercial sponsorship.
- The County Council should work to improve awareness of sponsorship opportunities with small and medium sized enterprises to stimulate and increase the opportunities for roundabout sponsorship across Lincolnshire.
- A new policy, "Policy for the Planting, Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges" has been developed and is recommended for approval.
- The new policy should be promoted to all Councils, including town and parish councils through the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC)

## Recommendations

In light of the information and feedback received, the Roundabout Sponsorship and Advertising Scrutiny Panel propose the following recommendations to the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT:

### Recommendation 1

**That the current Highways and Traffic guidance note '*Request for Sponsorship of Highway Planting*' be discontinued and the proposed "Policy for the Planting, Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges" be approved as the replacement.**

The Scrutiny Panel has agreed that the current guidance is out of date and needs replacing. The Scrutiny Panel has set out a new policy "Policy for the Planting, Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges" for approval at Appendix B to replace the current HAT guidance at Appendix A.

One clear message that has come out from the feedback received is that the size of the signage is too small to encourage businesses to sponsor or advertise on a roundabout. In addition, there is precedent for larger signs being used in Lincolnshire as City of Lincoln Council's signage is bigger than the size permitted in the current HAT guidance. The Scrutiny Panel has therefore agreed that there should be a new larger size of 920mm x 460mm permitted for signage, as set out in the new policy, but it would be down to each District Council's planning department and the Highway Authority to determine whether approval is granted.

### Recommendation 2

**That the proposed "*Policy for the Planting, Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges*" be sent to all Councils through the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils (LALC) to raise awareness and encourage promotion of the new policy to businesses, and town and parish councils.**

Another message that has come through as a result of the feedback from the District Councils is promotion of the policy. The feedback from District Councils has highlighted that there is some misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge about the current guidance. Some of the District Councils did not know that the current guidance existed and had not seen it before it was shared with them in readiness for the meetings with the Scrutiny Panel members.

The Scrutiny Panel has concluded that the new policy needs to be promoted to District Councils and businesses to increase awareness of the opportunity to sponsor roundabouts and verges. In addition, the new policy should be made available to town and parish councils, through the Lincolnshire Association of Local

Councils (LALC), to raise awareness of the opportunity to apply for a planting scheme.

### **Recommendation 3**

**That Lincolnshire County Council promotes the "*Policy for the Planting, Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges*" to businesses through the Business Lincolnshire website and the Economic Development team.**

The Scrutiny Panel has concluded that the County Council should improve awareness of the scheme with small and medium sized enterprises to stimulate and increase the opportunities for roundabout sponsorship across Lincolnshire. Sponsoring a roundabout sign can enable local businesses to promote their presence in the community whilst making a positive contribution to the area and support the local environment.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That Lincolnshire County Council considers further in depth investigation by officers into the economic and commercialisation aspects of Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts and Verges.**

The Scrutiny Panel considered information on a number of Councils which successfully operate a Roundabout Sponsorship Scheme. In Lincolnshire, it was recognised that Boston Borough Council and City of Lincoln Council both had an existing scheme, which appeared to be successful. City of Lincoln Council uses an advertising agency called Marketing Force to market and handle enquiries regarding its roundabout sponsorship scheme. The Scrutiny Panel recognised that the County Council could run a countywide sponsorship scheme, but provide discretion to those District Councils with a current sponsorship scheme to continue operating as they are and does not want to disrupt these schemes.

Peterborough City Council's scheme, discussed in October 2018, has been in existence for six years and covers its own costs whilst reducing the burden on the public purse for roundabout maintenance. Out of 88 roundabouts 60 had been sponsored with the average annual sponsorship fee being £2,500 per annum.

Research has indicated that a number of Local Authorities use the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) advertising framework to contract a provider to cover the management of advertising space for commercial sponsorship. Leicestershire County Council currently operates a county wide roundabout sponsorship scheme under the ESPO Framework awarded to Keegan Ford Sponsorship Ltd.

Feedback from market providers indicates that to establish a successful sponsorship scheme it is essential to build effective relationships with District, Borough, Town,

Parish and City Council to understand their aspirations and potential market opportunities.

## 2. Establishment of the Scrutiny Review Panel

At the meeting on 22 January 2018, the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended that support should be sought from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for a Scrutiny Review Panel to be established to examine this topic in more detail.

At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 29 March 2018 it was agreed that a review on Roundabout Sponsorship and Advertising should be undertaken. At its subsequent meeting on 30 August 2018, the Board agreed the following terms of reference for the scrutiny review which would be undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A:

*"This review will look at the current 'Sponsorship of Highway Planting' policy. The current policy dealing with the sponsorship of roundabouts (Highways and Transport 63/1/10) has been in existence since 1996. The review will consider and develop the policy to enable effective management of roundabout sponsorship and advertising in Lincolnshire.*

*The review will have the following main lines of enquiry: -*

- 1. Examine the merits of commercial roundabout advertising, including reviewing current signage standards and associated road safety implications and concerns.*
- 2. Explore whether the County Council wants to stimulate activity, and the level of sponsorship the Council would look to encourage and promote.*
- 3. Examine the current appetite amongst district councils for sponsorship of roundabouts.*
- 4. Examine whether the policy is accessible to potential sponsors and encourages businesses to sponsor roundabouts.*
- 5. Explore further promoting and developing the economic and commercialisation aspect of the policy.*
- 6. Examine whether sponsoring other verges could also be an option as part of this policy."*

For this review, Scrutiny Panel A comprised Councillors Mrs Linda Wootten (Chairman), Sarah Parkin (Vice-Chairman), Bill Aron, Mrs Alison Austin, Mrs Paula Cooper, Peter Coupland, Andrew Hagues and Nigel Pepper.

The initial meeting of Scrutiny Panel A took place on 25 July 2018, and the Scrutiny Panel met a further seven times between September 2018 and April 2019.

### 3. Background

Under the Traffic Management Act 2004, the Council is required to minimise congestion and occupation of road space, and ensure effective movement of all traffic. To enable this, traffic control, physical obstructions, and visual distractions, must be properly considered during the design of landscaping schemes.

The approval of roundabout sponsorship signage must be evaluated against the wider national impetus to reduce street clutter and over signing. This was confirmed in the Department for Transport's Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13 '[Reducing Sign Clutter](#)' (January 2013) which highlighted that reducing the impact of traffic signs on the environment was a key priority and signs should only be provided where a clear need had been identified. These principles applied in both urban and rural settings.

Consideration must also be given to The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. These regulations set out the advertisement control system in England which is part of the planning control system. In England, local planning authorities are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the advertisement control system and for deciding whether a particular advertisement should be permitted or not. The advertisement control system covers a very wide range of advertisements and signs including sponsorship signage on roundabouts.

Lincolnshire County Council's "[Streetscape Design Manual](#)" (December 2016) seeks to promote a sensitive approach to the impacts on the highway and its associated street furniture on the environment. A proliferation of signs, particularly in rural areas or sensitive urban locations, is something that should ordinarily be avoided. However, it could be argued that roundabout sponsorship could bring about an improvement in the standard of maintenance of these roundabouts, such as by more frequent mowing or planting schemes.

It is anticipated that a cost saving could be achieved by permitting the sponsorship of appropriate sites. As many roundabouts and verges are viewed as a gateway to the local area, the appearance of these can play an important part in attracting businesses and tourists to visit and stay in the area.

#### **Current Policy for Roundabout Sponsorship**

Advertising on roundabouts and verges is usually called sponsorship because the funds support the cost of maintaining these sites and fund flower displays and Britain in Bloom events. Strictly speaking, Lincolnshire County Council does not have a current policy; rather it relies on guidance notes.

The current guidance dealing with the sponsorship of roundabouts has been in existence since 1996 and is laid out in the current Highways and Traffic guidance note HAT 63/01/10. The "Request for Sponsorship of Highway Planting", attached at Appendix A, sets out the approved guidance for the provision of planting within the highway and was approved by Lincolnshire County Council's Environment Committee on 24 January 1996.

The current guidance relates to the provision of planting/grass cutting on roundabouts/reservations with the intention that planting will be confined to the main towns. The guidance only applies to requests for the provision of planting on the highway by other Councils, Community Groups and Commercial Sponsors and is designed to encourage planting in suitable locations to enhance the visual environment. This is emphasised in the current HAT guidance which states that signs must include a LINCOLNSHIRE GREEN reference.

Currently the County Council does not directly manage or operate any sponsorship deals. The current guidance provides a framework for the approval of planting schemes being licenced by the County Council as the Highway Authority. Governance arrangements, where sponsorship deals are in place, are managed by Lincolnshire's District/Borough/City Councils working with their chosen commercial providers, if any. The agreements stipulate the size of signs, which need to be noticeable without being a distraction to drivers. The recommended size of sign within the HAT Guidance Note is 630 x 270mm, although the District/Borough/Town Council can determine the design.

The Highway Authority's role is limited to approving the planting scheme on highway safety grounds and issuing the licence to use highway ground. The County Council receives no income from these sites, but the maintenance costs are borne by the applicant, thus reducing the Authority's financial commitment.

### **Roundabout assets in Lincolnshire**

The Confirm system is the asset maintenance management software used to record Lincolnshire County Council's highways assets. The Confirm system has highlighted that Lincolnshire County Council has 154 roundabouts in total. Of these, there are 57 1-lane roundabouts, 96 2-lane roundabouts, and 1 3-lane roundabout.

The standard of each roundabout has been assessed regarding whether they are maintained or grassed, or are not suitable for planters/sponsorship signage due to tarmacked paved ground.

- Out of the 57 1-lane roundabouts, 31 are not suitable for roundabout sponsorship due to the fact they are mainly painted on the carriageway or raised roundabouts made out of concrete and tarmac.
- There are only 10 out of the 96 2-lane roundabouts that are not considered suitable.

**Therefore, Lincolnshire has 113 roundabouts suitable for sponsorship - 26 1-lane roundabouts, 86 2-lane roundabouts and one 3-lane roundabout that are suitable for Roundabout Sponsorship which could include the permanent fixture of planters or advertising signage at the discretion of the Council.**

The full details of all roundabouts in Lincolnshire are attached to this report at Appendix C.

#### **4. Current Practice and Feedback from District Councils**

The Scrutiny Panel approached each of the District Councils to find out what their current practices were in terms of roundabout sponsorship and advertising; their views of the County Council's current sponsorship policy; and their level of interest in instigating or increasing roundabout sponsorship and advertising in future.

Members of the Scrutiny Panel conducted visits to East Lindsey District Council, North Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council and South Kesteven District Council and met with relevant officers and/or portfolio holders. Officers undertook a visit to City of Lincoln Council on behalf of the Scrutiny Panel and also met with relevant officers and the portfolio holder. Written feedback was received from officers at Boston Borough Council and West Lindsey District Council.

The feedback received from each District Council is set out below, along with information regarding the location of all roundabouts situated in each District.

##### **Boston Borough Council**

Boston Borough Council has had a long-established agreement in respect of roundabout sponsorship, which was developed and retained as a result of their residual services agreement with the County Council. The sponsorship scheme continues to be jointly beneficial in funding the proper and safe maintenance of roundabouts, supporting the local economy and developing income streams for the councils. The terms and conditions, which have been agreed by local highways officers from Lincolnshire County Council, covers the sponsorship of roundabouts, highway planting, public open spaces and amenity areas in the Borough of Boston. Boston's scheme is intended to maintain and enhance the visual amenity of the local environment in return for advertising the sponsor's business or interests and associate the sponsor with the local area. The sponsorship agreement is for a minimum period of twelve months and a maximum of twenty-four months.

The District Council provides the signage subject to approval by the Highway Authority and is in accordance with the County Council's adopted sponsorship guidance (attached at Appendix A) and is only provided in the style and size outlined in that guidance. All signs, posts and fixings remain in the ownership of the District Council to ensure district and county logos are protected from use on authorised land or areas, and to protect both the sponsors and the Councils' interests.

Boston Borough Council has confirmed that it would be interested in continuing to work with the County Council on this scheme or in the development of a new scheme, subject to the level of commitment required. The District Council felt the sponsorship scheme worked well but the whole design of the signs needed to be looked at. It was felt that the recommended size of the signs was too small, and as a result did not attract attention. The District Council has highlighted that people had previously been deterred from sponsorship due to the size of the signs. It was also thought that the scheme would benefit from some advertising which has never been done before.

The District Council has recommended reviewing existing local agreements with a view to agreeing amongst other matters: a standard terms and conditions document; common media and advertising; common signage policy; a commercially viable pricing structure; and agreement on maintenance options.

Further details about each roundabout and its suitability for sponsorship are set out in Appendix C.



### **City of Lincoln Council**

City of Lincoln Council uses an advertising agency called Marketing Force to market and handle enquiries regarding its roundabout sponsorship scheme. The scheme was set up in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council's highways department around the same time as the County Council's guidance was developed. Initially at the start of the scheme, roundabout sponsorship was managed in-house. However, the City Council decided that it would be more beneficial to go out to tender and let somebody with marketing expertise take it on. The City Council has found Marketing Force reliable and consistent and has therefore continued with the contract.

[Marketing Force](#) pays City of Lincoln Council a fixed sum for the contract and then sells roundabout sponsorship to a designated number of roundabouts. It was highlighted that if Marketing Force was unable to find sponsors for the roundabouts, then there was no financial loss to the City Council. City of Lincoln Council remains responsible for the maintenance of the roundabouts which is carried out by the City Council as part of the City Council's grounds maintenance contract. Currently, the scheme has a relatively low profile as the City Council restricts the number of sites, so that it does not cause upset or impose itself on the landscape.

The City Council has highlighted that income, although small, does assist greatly in off-setting costs, without which in the current climate it is likely that the flower beds would be removed. Any funds received from Marketing Force contribute to the costs of floral arrangements on roundabouts, but this is only a contribution. It was emphasised that the costs of planting and maintaining the roundabouts are much higher than the funds received from the roundabout sponsorship.

It was further highlighted by the City Council that the main reason for allowing roundabout sponsorship was to keep the city attractive which helps with tourism and that there was an expectation as a tourist city to make the roundabouts look aesthetically pleasing. The 'Lincoln in Bloom' wording on the signage ties the

sponsorship to the site and also allows a subtle change in planning conditions as the sponsors are sponsoring 'Lincoln in Bloom' rather than advertising their services. It was highlighted that City of Lincoln's planning team was generally opposed to any applications for roundabout sponsorship which did not relate directly to the site it was installed on, and that many businesses are close by to their sponsored roundabout. The City Council has had no challenge from the County Council's highways department regarding the size of the signage despite the permitted signs being 914mm x 458mm instead of the HAT guidance size of 630 x 270mm.

The City Council was satisfied with its current policy and the number of roundabouts currently sponsored. The City Council was also satisfied with the way the scheme runs currently and would not want to make the size of the signs any smaller than they already are. The City Council has emphasised that it currently has no proposals for expansion or development of the scheme in any way.



*examples of sponsored roundabouts in Lincoln.*

## **East Lindsey District Council**

In 2013, the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee considered reports regarding a trial by East Lindsey District Council to permit the erection of advertising boards. The most noticeable change in the streetscape would have been larger signs which would be required for advertising to be effective.

Following a recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee in July 2013, officers met with East Lindsey staff to establish procedures and progress with the development of a trial scheme. East Lindsey District Council proposed to work in partnership with a private company, Community Partners Ltd, by way of fully managed contracts, making advertising/sponsorship more attractive to businesses and thus maximise income for both East Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council.

Amended documents and licence applications which formed part of the policy documents were produced to enable the County Council to licence any new arrangements. The most noticeable change was the design of the new signs involving an increase to the current restrictions on the size and type of permitted signs:

Current sign size : 630mm x 270mm (0.17m<sup>2</sup>)  
Proposed sign size : 1100mm x 550mm (0.61m<sup>2</sup>)

A design for the new signs was developed which would enable the submission of planning applications for the proposed sites. Working with Community partners, four proposed roundabout sites were identified where local businesses had expressed an interest in advertising. Following concerns with regard to sign clutter and distraction of motorists, two of the proposed sites were deemed to be intrusive in terms of the Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and proximity to National Trust property, and authority was not given to proceed with these. The remaining two sites, both in Louth, were subject to applications for Planning Permission to East Lindsey District Council's Planning Committee on 21 November 2013. Both applications were refused by the Planning Committee. The reason for refusal was that the proposed signs by reason of their size, number, positioning and design, located in an area of Special Control for Advertisements, would constitute unnecessary sign clutter and detract from the character of the area. The planning refusals brought the trial to an end and no further attempts have been undertaken since.

With regards to the current guidance, East Lindsey District Council has highlighted that its views are that the guidance does not allow for advertising to be considered in isolation and is more about payment in return for a planting scheme. The District Council considers advertising as an opportunity in its own right but it does depend on the County Council's objectives in the policy.

The District Council felt that the current guidance effectively passes responsibility over to the District Councils to implement sponsorship arrangements and this is not something East Lindsey District Council has the capacity for within the current workforce, nor does it see significant benefit to the District Council from being involved.

The policy could be used as an income generation opportunity across the County but consideration needs to be given to the resource requirement to effectively manage it.

The District Council emphasised that planning consent would be required for signage on roundabouts and it is likely that each roundabout would require a separate planning application. No roundabouts in East Lindsey currently have such consent. The District Council also highlighted that it was not convinced that it needed to be involved in the roundabout sponsorship process, other than from a planning perspective.

*East Lindsey District Council has suggested that there might be an opportunity to collaborate with a private sector company that specialises in attracting advertising/sponsorship income and work on a profit share basis. The brief could be wider than roundabouts and actually look at all public sector assets.*

## **North Kesteven District Council**

North Kesteven District Council has highlighted that due to the concerns highlighted below it does not wish to take part in any roundabout sponsorship deals within the District.

It was highlighted that even if Lincolnshire County Council renewed the sponsorship policy, the District Council would not encourage or look for sponsorship. The District Council fears that big national companies, such as fast food outlets, which traditionally sit adjacent to large roundabouts could easily want to take out a sponsorship deal.

The concern here is that national multiples, with larger budgets, could take advantage of sponsorship promotion to the detriment of smaller, more local businesses who do not have the same promotional resources. Additionally, the District Council has emphasised that it knows its own businesses and would not want to be seen as favouring one business over another by entering into roundabout sponsorship deals.

North Kesteven District Council has its own Signage Strategy and promotes a clean and green philosophy. At a time when the District Council is actively looking to reduce unnecessary signage, additional signage on roundabouts could be seen as counter to that objective. There would be no desire to promote advertising boards on roundabouts even if there was a Deemed Discharge of Planning Conditions, i.e. Deemed Consent. The District Council has highlighted that this is where the County Council could set a regulation size of signs to eliminate having to apply for individual planning. However, the District Council has emphasised that it would be against any blanket approval and would want all planning applications applied for individually.

## **South Holland District Council**

South Holland District Council has highlighted that it felt that the County Council was taking the right approach with working with the District Councils from the start of a new scheme.

The District Council raised concerns over the sponsorship sign size, colour scheme, layout and working restrictions in the current policy. It was felt that these do not promote sponsorship and that the size of the sign was imperative. Colour of signs was also important so that they stood out. It was highlighted that neighbouring towns and cities offered larger sponsorship sign size, allowing company logos, telephone number of the company and directions.

South Holland District Council has emphasised that should the District Councils decide to take on a sponsorship scheme, it would be expected that the roundabouts would be passed over in an adoptable and maintained standard.

It was considered by the District Council that an administration resource cost would be necessary to start off a scheme. The District Council has suggested this should

be provided by the County Council in exchange for maintenance liability. However, should damage occur to the roundabouts, the County Council should still retain some liability in repairing the roundabout back to the appropriate standard.

It was suggested that the District Council should be solely responsible for the setting of sponsorship fees and have total ownership of any income received. The County Council should ensure that any roadworks that may affect sponsorship are communicated as early as is practicable with the District Council (such as road closures, accidents, traffic lights) as this may cause traffic flow numbers to differ from what the sponsors initially signed up for.

South Holland District Council has also suggested that

- it would be useful to have a standard contract for sponsors across the County to ensure consistency, accuracy and a firm legal position.
- the County Council confirms the Health and Safety requirements for working on the roundabouts, such as signage, traffic control etc. and what is expected. A risk assessment should be provided so that District Councils are clear and can include in the sponsorship costs.
- the saving of the two cuts (*now three since April 2019*) that the County Council currently contract out should be given to the District Councils to allow them to make the necessary set up arrangements.
- planting should not be essential as part of sponsorship. Some businesses may just require a sign and cut.

### **South Kesteven District Council**

South Kesteven District Council has highlighted that it does not have a functioning roundabout sponsorship scheme with the County Council at present. The licences that were granted to the District Council by the County Council to allow it the rights to maintain and obtain sponsorship have expired as have the majority of sponsorship agreements.

The District Council does not consider itself in a position to encourage businesses to take sponsorship at present as it does not have an existing agreement with the County Council to enable it to do so. The planning and highways implications are unclear and expensive to take forward on a roundabout specific basis. At present no budget has been identified for the resource or project work to be taken forward. The District Council has highlighted that the size of the signage allowed does not appear to be of a size that would be effective as an advert for the sponsoring business. The specification and standard for the required maintenance of the roundabouts is also unclear.

South Kesteven District Council has suggested that a clear and concise roundabout sponsorship package from Lincolnshire County Council is required to attract local businesses to the business opportunity including clear county wide:-

- specification and standard of maintenance requirements for hard and soft maintenance
- signage specification, location and number of signs
- requirement for partnership logos on signs

The County Council could continue to maintain the roundabouts with the District Councils selling the County Council's sponsorship package for a reasonable one-off fee to local businesses within their District.

Lincolnshire County Council's costs of maintenance would be covered by the sponsorship money it received directly with no resource requirement to contract manage South Kesteven District Council. This removes the need for:-

- The County Council and South Kesteven District Council to enter into a maintenance agreement.
- South Kesteven District Council to monitor and contract manage the sponsorship agreement.
- South Kesteven District Council to monitor and contract manage the County Council's maintenance agreement.

The District Council has highlighted that Permitted Development Rights are available but these are consistently tempered by Highways considerations and there seems to be no Highways consensus available on what could be an attractive standard size of sign, or location of each sign, such as 2 metres away from external edge and no higher than 0.5 metres. South Kesteven District Council has no power or available budget to resource detailed highways discussions per roundabout.

It was highlighted by the District Council that the current guidance states that Lincolnshire County Council will not seek sponsorship itself but will allow District Councils to take up Maintenance Agreements in perpetuity and seek direct sponsorship. There are at least two roundabouts in South Kesteven District Council which appear to be sponsored direct by a local business from Lincolnshire County Council – Asda and Borrowby Road. It was emphasised that if it was possible on these two roundabouts then it should be possible on all and the District Council would be able to sell a County Council sponsorship package to local businesses for a reasonable fee. However, it was highlighted that the maintenance licence appears light on the limit of the District Council's liabilities in taking a licence. The guidance states that the licences should be in perpetuity, whereas those issued were for five years.

The District Council has suggested that the current guidance could be amended to reflect what has actually happened in South Kesteven:

- Lincolnshire County Council could produce a Roundabout Sponsorship package.
- Lincolnshire County Council could obtain sponsorship direct.

- The District Councils could sell the County Council's sponsorship package to local businesses for a reasonable fee.

### **West Lindsey District Council**

West Lindsey District Council has highlighted that the current policy is not particularly clear or user friendly. The District Council emphasised that there is a need for better publication of the policies and opportunities, and benefits roundabout sponsorship provides for a business based on the principles of:

- Business promotion
- Improvement of visual amenity of an area

There is a need for the provision of a step by step guide on how to go about roundabout sponsorship, including separate guides on the process for:

- Physical signage/other permanent structures
- Planters
- Low level planting and shrubbery

It also needs to be clear and accessible with one point of contact. It would be beneficial to offer the opportunity of a 'one stop shop' and provide central coordination to make it easier for businesses to obtain sponsorship or planting opportunities.

West Lindsey District Council could promote the policy quite easily as part of the Economic Development and Place Strategy. However, the policy and associated process would need to be easy to navigate and cost effective. Promotion could be carried out through:

- Business Networking Groups
- Social Media
- Website/Leaflets

It was highlighted that it was likely that in all instances where advertisement signage is sought on a roundabout that planning permission would be required.

West Lindsey District Council has a paid pre-application service which would be available to provide advice to any businesses seeking to erect signage on a roundabout. The fee for this pre-application advice would be £90.00. A further £462 would be payable for the planning application itself.

It was emphasised that key areas to be assessed by the Local Planning Authority as part of any application for advertisement would be:

- Visual appearance of the signage and impact on the surrounding area
- Highway safety, specifically the size, shape and detail of the sign, its positioning, materials and its ability to cause distraction to motorists using the road\*

(\*As a guide, in general terms, signage should be sited to the right and no higher than the roundabout chevron signs. New signage should not obstruct existing highway signage and must be sited in line with any other existing signs to ensure that motorists looking towards potentially conflicting circulating traffic approach from the right rather than away from it.)

The District Council has highlighted that it felt that the costs and rigmarole associated with obtaining planning permission and any other statutory approvals makes roundabout sponsorship prohibitive for most businesses. As such it was suggested that the permissions for signage/planters etc. on each roundabout should be facilitated by another body such as the County Council or District Council in the first instance. The principle and permission of the signage/planters could then be established and include parameters for signage/planter size, materials and positioning. This would make the selling of rental space much easier and accessible as businesses renting this space would only need to provide their own advertisement/display. This space could then be rented out on an annual or other defined timescale and offered to businesses as and when the existing sponsorship deals come to an end.

## **5. Other Councils**

As part of the review it was agreed to explore the economic and commercialisation aspect of roundabout sponsorship and as part of this a number of other local authorities were contacted to better understand the options available.

### **Leicestershire County Council**

Leicestershire County Council currently operates a county wide roundabout sponsorship scheme under ESPO Framework Contract 3A (Advertising Solutions) awarded to Keegan Ford Sponsorship Ltd.

The Commercial & Business Manager for Highways Delivery confirmed that Leicestershire has 98 roundabouts available to sponsor in total across the County with 60 currently having sponsorship deals in place.

Any income generated from the scheme remains within the Highways Services and is used to offset costs of providing grass cutting, gully cleansing services. Savings are also made as the County Council does not have to maintain the 60 sponsored roundabouts.

As part of this contract the supplier deals with all aspects of the scheme, including the maintenance of the sponsored roundabouts and:

- Sign design (reviewed and approval given by the Highways Authority )
- Planning Applications (via District Councils)
- Maintenance of sponsored roundabouts
- Working with sponsors to agree any enhancements to the planting or landscaping of sponsored roundabouts.

## Kent County Council

Kent County Council's Commercial Services has worked with Marketing Force for five years. A countywide scheme started in 2007 and the sponsorship schemes enable local businesses to show their commitment to the local environment and community by supporting the maintenance of the areas around certain locations.



The County Council operates the scheme in all but one district area within Kent. Dover District Council operates a scheme within its area.

## Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council offer advertising opportunities through County Council channels to generate income for the authority aimed at supporting our services and achieving best value for residents.

Norfolk operate a county wide scheme and work in partnership with Marketing Force to promote sponsorship of roundabouts within the county. In return, the sponsor is allowed advertising in the form signs incorporating the sponsor details placed on the roundabout.



In Norfolk, the permitted signage size is 1219mm x 508mm

## Nottinghamshire County Council

Nottinghamshire County Council's roundabout sponsorship scheme is managed by Community Partners Limited and sponsorship is subject to planning permission.

The Scheme is marketed to local businesses looking for effective local advertising, and a socially responsible platform that helps support a number of council initiatives from highways maintenance to public amenities and services.



## 6. Commercial Opportunities

Roundabouts often serve as the gateways to cities, towns, business parks and shopping centres. Research undertaken as part of the Scrutiny review process has identified a number of commercial organisations which work with local authorities to manage sponsorship arrangements.

- Marketing Force
- Community Partners
- Keegan Ford Sponsorship

A sponsorship approach embraces commercial thinking towards cost savings, revenue generation and management of council assets. In addition to Roundabout Sponsorship there are a number of options for generating revenue from local highway authority assets such as sponsorship of welcome signs, central reservation, flowerbeds and lamp post banners, etc.

In addition, Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) provides an advertising framework, of which Lot 5 covers the management of advertising space for commercial sponsorship.

*This lot has been established for customers who wish to contract with an organisation that specialises in securing and managing the commercial sponsorship of customer owned space.*

*Sponsorship arrangements will be managed by the service provider who will source suitable sponsors to display approved signage, acknowledging their sponsorship, on the customer space. In return the sponsor will then pay a sponsorship fee to the service Provider, out of which the customer will receive an agreed income.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.espo.org/Frameworks/People-Professional-Services/3ANEW-Advertising-solutions>

Two suppliers are listed under Lot 5 which are Community Partners Ltd and Keegan Ford Sponsorship Ltd, both of which provide services to other Councils.

Examples from other Councils indicate that the sponsorship costs are often dependent on location, size of roundabout and duration of the agreement. Example prices range for each asset location offering £500 per sign through to sponsorship from £1,000 per year up to £5,000 per year.

Research has indicated there is also a National Cross Council Revenue Generation Group - a forum (online and via events) for councils to share and discuss ideas and experiences in generating revenue from asset sponsorship schemes. The current chairperson is Angela Redman, Commercial Business and Marketing Manager at West Sussex County Council.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix A	Current Policy – HAT 63/1/10 REQUEST FOR SPONSORSHIP OF HIGHWAY PLANTING
Appendix B	Proposed Policy – PLANTING, SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING ON ROUNABOUTS AND VERGES
Appendix C	Suitability of Roundabouts in Lincolnshire for Sponsorship / Advertising

## 8. Contributors

The Scrutiny Panel would like to offer its sincere thanks to all the officers and Portfolio Holders at each of the District Councils for meeting with us and/or providing written responses to the review.

In addition, the Scrutiny Panel would like to extend its gratitude to the all the following people who have contributed to this review:

- Councillor Richard Davies (Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT)
- Christopher Bennett (Confirm Support Assistant)
- Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer)
- Paul Little (Highway Asset Manager)
- Charlotte Paddock (Policy & Assurance Officer)
- Mick Phoenix (Network Management Commissioner)
- Andrew Ratcliffe (Local Highways Manager – East Lindsey)
- Vincent Van Doninck (Policy and Strategic Asset Manager)
- Nigel West (Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer)
- Emily Wilcox (Democratic Services Officer)

### Further Information

If you would like to find out more about this Scrutiny Review or Overview and Scrutiny at Lincolnshire County Council, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 01522 552164 or [scrutiny@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@lincolnshire.gov.uk).