



De-Cluttering Streets in Medway

Prepared by a Task Group of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee

June 2013

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1. FOREWORD

- 1.1 On behalf of the Regeneration, Community and Culture Committee the Task Group is pleased to present the review into de-cluttering streets in Medway, with its associated recommendations for Medway Council's Cabinet.
- 1.2 With Medway's *rich heritage and great future* its streets are not simply channels for moving people through quickly; they are also destinations in their own right. Locations where people can interact and undertake various activities. Working within the remit of this review the Task Group has explored how minimising visual clutter and obstacles, using appropriate materials and balancing the demands of community living and transport pressures can support the creation of better-balanced streets.
- 1.3 The Task Group has considered current legislation, government policy and established best practice in relation to street clutter. It has also reviewed the current picture in Medway and hosted a De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event to understand the needs of local interested parties.
- 1.4 What is clear is that street clutter builds up over time, with individual elements of street furniture and signage introduced as a result of a range of projects. The proposed way forward therefore focuses on the development of a Streetscape Manual for Medway, with supporting policy documents covering street furniture and signage. This will ensure that principles are adopted and applied that will design clutter out from the start.
- 1.5 It was appreciated that at a time of constrained budgets realistic aspirations for de-cluttering were important. The Task Group therefore proposes a systematic approach to de-cluttering public spaces, with de-cluttering undertaken in association with future maintenance work or new capital schemes.
- 1.6 The Task Group is recommending a pilot scheme in Strood Town Centre, funded by the Local Transport Plan capital programme. This pilot will be an important tool in developing the Streetscape Manual and its supporting policy documents.
- 1.7 We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all participants in the review.

De-cluttering Streets in Medway

The Task Group



Councillor Matt Bright (Chairman)



Councillor Hicks



Councillor Hubbard



Councillor Juby



Councillor Mackinlay

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

- 2.1 Street clutter is the proliferation of street furniture and signage that can be either obstructive and/or visually obtrusive. This may include bollards, pedestrian guard railing, unnecessary signage and road markings or redundant signposts.
- 2.2 In 2011 Medway Council adopted a systematic approach to identifying and prioritising topics for in-depth review work. Following consideration of a number of topics the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee selected 'De-cluttering Town Centres'. Members expressed an interest in understanding and balancing the needs of competing interests of items placed upon the public highway and to make a series of recommendations that could be practically implemented to reduce the street clutter in Medway.¹
- 2.3 The Government has also urged councils to cut unnecessary street clutter in a bid to make streets tidier and safer, with numerous government initiatives and legislative changes underway or in development.
- 2.4 Scrutiny on this issue has therefore taken place at a time of local concern and continued national coverage.

Terms of reference

- 2.5 The terms of reference for the review were as follows:
- To review legislation, government policy and established best practice in relation to street clutter
 - To consider the current picture in Medway against national guidelines and best practice elsewhere
 - Take views from relevant stakeholders
 - To bring forward recommendations to reduce street clutter in Medway by way of future design principles.

Conduct of work

- 2.6 A series of meetings took place, which culminated in a De-cluttering Stakeholder Event. This event provided an opportunity for Councillors, representatives of various user groups/bodies and Medway Council officers to come together to understand the needs of competing interests. Participants included a wide variety of organisations and community groups.

¹ Medway Council *Topics for Indepth Scrutiny Reviews – Priorities and Timetable* Report to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 September 2011
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=8401>

- 2.7 Councillors were also canvassed for details of any instances of street clutter from their respective wards and an easy read survey was developed to ascertain the views of people with a learning disability.
- 2.8 All this was supported by additional written submissions from a number of organisations/individuals within the remit of this review and further desktop research.
- 2.9 All the Task Group's meetings are outlined in section 5 of this report.
- 2.10 A Diversity Impact Assessment considering the recommendations is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.11 The review was supported by: -
- Katie Bettridge, Business Information Officer
 - Michael Edwards, Principal Transport Planner
 - Steve Hewlett, Integrated Transport Manager
 - Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer
 - Andy McGrath, Assistant Director Front Line Service
 - Phil Moore, Head of Highways and Parking Services
 - Martin Morris, Road Safety Manager
 - Bryan Shawyer, Traffic Manager.

Outcomes of the review

- 2.12 Excessive street furniture can have a severe impact on the public realm. Street clutter has been criticised for undermining the character and distinctiveness of the public realm, creating safety and accessibility issues and promoting a 'highway dominated' environment.
- 2.13 The proliferation and inappropriate location of street furniture for example can cause problems for pedestrians generally, and specifically for wheel chair users and people with mobility and visual impairments; causing a congestion and obstruction to the 'footway clear zone'; a zone that enables unhindered movement for pedestrians along the street, clear of permanent and temporary objects.² Unnecessary signage can be visually obtrusive and, of more concern, a distraction for drivers that undermines their effectiveness.
- 2.14 The Task Group considered various examples of good practice and discussed how schemes could achieve better results. Members considered the function of the street as a place and the importance of creating better streets through the removal of street furniture and signage; whilst balancing concerns for the safety of Medway's residents.
- 2.15 In line with existing national policy and guidance, recommendations are proposed that seek to remove from the streets what is either unnecessary or undesirable.

² Transport for London *Technical guidance: street furniture*
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/streetscape-guidance-2009-street-furniture-108.pdf>

- 2.16 Central to the recommendations is the development of a Streetscape Manual for Medway supported by policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings. This is recognised as a key tool in addressing street clutter by putting in place standards of control. The benefits of this approach would not just be to improved accessibility and aesthetics of the streetscape but also, by designing clutter out from the start, reduced installation and future maintenance costs.
- 2.17 Many items can be considered to be clutter. However, as every area is unique and different streets will fulfil different purposes, with different vehicle and pedestrian flows, some may serve important purposes that could out-weigh the imperative to reduce clutter in certain locations. It was recognised for example that guardrailing can be the right solution if in the right place and in the right amount (although that was where no other solution was practical). It was therefore recommended that Medway Council systematically de-clutter its public spaces on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, rather than a de-cluttering project for the whole of Medway, which would require additional council funding, the Task Group proposed that the process of de-cluttering be an integral part of ongoing maintenance or improvement programmes.
- 2.18 As some level of assessment or auditing was required before removal, proposals are also brought forward for the methodology to be used as part of the assessment in future maintenance or new capital schemes.
- 2.19 Finally, it is proposed that a pilot de-cluttering scheme is undertaken in Strood Town Centre. This will guide the development of an overarching Streetscape Manual for Medway and the supporting policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2011 Medway Council adopted a systematic approach to identifying and prioritising topics for in-depth review work by time limited Task Groups. This evaluated topics in line with potential impact, corporate priority, potential outcomes and timeliness.
- 3.2 Following consideration of a number of topics the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee selected 'De-cluttering Town Centres'. Members expressed an interest in understanding and balancing the needs of competing interests of items placed upon the public highway and to make a series of recommendations that could be practically implemented to reduce street clutter in Medway town centres; similar to refurbishments to Union Street, Chatham and Corporation Street, Rochester.¹
- 3.3 At the inaugural meeting of the Task Group on 20 February 2013 the Task Group agreed some key lines of enquiry and the group's Terms of Reference. In doing so it agreed that, as the principles arising would be applicable across Medway, the remit of this review should be beyond just the town centres.

The Street

- 3.4 During the course of this review it was noted that the streets in which we live are key to creating a pleasant, safe and healthy environment.
- 3.5 The *Manual for Streets*, jointly published by the Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2007, defines a street as:
- A highway that has important public realm functions beyond the movement of traffic. Most critically, streets should have a sense of place, which is mainly realised through local distinctiveness and sensitivity in design. They also provide direct access to the buildings and the spaces that line them. Most highways in built-up areas can therefore be considered as streets.²
- 3.6 The role of streets as a 'place' is further developed by Professor Peter Jones and Natalya Boujenko in their approach to street planning and design, which uses 'Link' and 'Place'. As a link the street is used for movement, and therefore designed to be passed through as quickly and conveniently as possible, and as a place it is a destination in its own right.³

¹ Medway Council *Topics for Indepth Scrutiny Reviews – Priorities and Timetable* Report to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee 20 September 2011
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=8401>

² Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government *Manual for Streets* 2007 p12
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3891/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

³ Jones and Boujenko 2011 *Journeys Street Planning and Design Using 'Link' and 'Place'* p7
http://www.ltaacademy.gov.sg/doc/J11May-p07Jones_LinkAndPlace.pdf

Street Furniture, Signage and Road Markings

- 3.7 In this review street furniture has been used as a collective term for a wide range of items placed in the street, including seats, bins and bollards. Street furniture therefore not only contributes to a sense of place but can also be of tremendous benefit to street users. The importance of integrating street furniture into the overall appearance of the street, as advocated by documents such as *Manual for Streets*, is therefore important⁴.
- 3.8 Traffic signs and road markings are essential for conveying information to road users, and for the enforcement of road traffic law. To be easily understood and therefore effective they needed to be simple and concise.

Street Clutter

- 3.9 This review has considered evidence as to how excessive street furniture, signs and road markings can have a severe impact on the public realm, be it either obstructive and/or visually obtrusive.



At the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event the comment was made as to the impact of street clutter on longer views and historic surroundings.

- 3.10 The Task Group has noted the benefits of de-cluttering and these are listed in part below:
- Reducing environmental impact, primarily visual aesthetics, but also the carbon footprint for electrical supplies and production of increasingly scarce materials.
 - Improve the safety and amenity of pedestrians, particularly those with impaired mobility or people who are blind and partially sighted.
 - Reduce installation and future maintenance costs.
 - Create places - bring out local character and distinctiveness of buildings and open spaces. As an illustration one participant at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event referred to how removing street furniture in Medway

⁴ Department for Transport and the Department for Communities and Local Government *Manual for Streets* 2007 p121
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3891/pdfmanforstreets.pdf

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Street, Chatham had enabled the architectural skyline to be seen, which was a real visual improvement.

- Making remaining street furniture and signs work harder and making those signs that are most important stand out.

3.11 It was within this understanding as to the nature of the streets, the potential competing priorities of those that use them and an appreciation of the benefits to be gained through de-cluttering that the Task Group undertook its review.

4. SETTING THE CONTEXT

(a) Legal framework, Council duties and obligations, accountabilities

4.1 As a local highways authority the Council is responsible for all traffic management within Medway, with the exception of the motorway. Much highways maintenance activity is based upon statutory powers and duties contained in legislation and precedents developed over time as a result of case law. For example,

- The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended) places a duty on Medway Council as a Highways Authority to secure convenient and safe movement of cars and pedestrians.
- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (as amended) prescribes the designs and conditions of use for traffic signs (including road markings) to be lawfully placed on or near the highway unless authorised by the Secretary of State for Transport (or appropriate devolved administration). Whilst other documents such as the *Traffic Signs Manual*¹ give advice to traffic authorities and their agents on the correct use of signs and road markings, the mandatory requirements are those set out in the 2002 Directions.

Since the introduction of the 2002 Directions, new signs have been developed in response to the changing needs of traffic authorities, and the requirements of other initiatives. In addition, the permitted variants for some existing signs have been expanded to allow for greater flexibility in their use.²

Signs that are neither prescribed nor authorised are unlawful and should therefore be removed. As an example the Task Group was advised that black-on-yellow temporary signs for new housing developments must be removed within 6 months of completion of the development.

- The power for the Council to provide, maintain, alter and remove guardrailing is set out within Section 66 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).
- The Highways Act also states that road markings can only be placed on a highway by, or with the consent of, the Highways Authority.

4.2 Officers advised the Task Group that when undertaking a de-cluttering process, there were often a significant number of road signs and markings that could be removed. However, there was also concern that the removal of such signs and markings would result in civil action in the event of a road

¹ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual* 2006
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual>

² Department for Transport *The Traffic Signs (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations and General Directions 2011 Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/12* February 2012
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/43517/tal-1-12.pdf

traffic accident. The Task Group were advised of the typical action that could be brought against a Local Authority, the legal precedents that have occurred and details of statutory obligations of the Authority. They were referred to comments within the Highway Risk and Liability Claims (2nd edition) published by the UK Roads Board and the Institution of Civil Engineers in 2009 as to the responsibility of individuals and the highways authority.¹

The Task Group were advised that judgements had made it clear that road users are responsible for their own safety and that they should 'take the road as they find it'. However, Traffic Authorities could be liable for creating dangers.

(b) Medway's policy framework

- 4.3 By efficiently managing and improving Medway's local highway network, balanced streets allow the council to fulfil a range of corporate objectives. For example it provides a setting that encourages public activity, makes people feel safer and are safer with clearer sight lines and enables pedestrians to move freely.
- 4.4 Recognising the role of the street as both a channel for movement and a place in its own right, this review and its recommendations for addressing street clutter become a positive thread to a number of the council's policy documents, including:
- The council's third *Local Transport Plan*², which sets out the strategic policy for sustainable transport in Medway between 2011 and 2026; embracing the wider aspirations for Medway to be a City of rich heritage and a great future at the heart of the Thames Gateway. Priorities focus on:
 - Regeneration, economic competitiveness and growth
 - The natural environment
 - Connectivity
 - Equality of opportunity
 - Safety, security and public health.
 - The *Council Plan 2013-15*³, which sets out how the council will provide the best possible services for residents. It sets out the council's main objectives and centres around four priorities:
 - Children and young people have the best start in life in Medway Council
 - Adults maintain their independence and live healthy lives
 - Safe, clean and green Medway
 - Everyone benefiting from regeneration.

¹ UK Roads Board and the Institution of Civil Engineers *Highway Risk and Liability Claims*, 2nd edition <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=3A9E12B3-EC43-4A5C-B7FCF77E38E6DB72> p19

² Medway Council *Medway Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2016 – Moving Forward Together* <http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/ltp%20FINAL.pdf>

³ Medway Council *Council Plan 2013-15* <http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Council%20Plan%20Medway.pdf>

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In addition to this, all the work the council does is led by two core values:

- Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do
 - Giving value for money.
- The *Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 - 2026*¹, which sets the long-term vision and key ambitions for Medway and the priorities to deliver that vision. It is made up of six ambitions and four key principles. This includes Medway having a safe and high quality environment and Medway being recognised as a destination for culture, heritage, sport and tourism.

4.5 In addition a number of conservation area design guides and development briefs have been adopted, which cover a variety of site-specific matters relevant to the streetscene. For example the Chatham Centre and Waterfront Development Brief, adopted in 2008, refers to:

“Carefully selected street furniture can help in creating a sense of place. Elements such as seating, tables, litter bins and lighting have a big visual impact and should be logically placed throughout the city and fit in with the character and quality envisaged for Chatham. A clean and clearly related family of street furniture can aid in visually decluttering streets and squares; thereby giving Chatham a stronger identity and making it a more vibrant place. Conversely, certain elements of street furniture, such as pedestrian barriers, bollards and vertical posts will be minimised.”²

(c) National and local picture

4.6 In August 2010, the Secretaries of State for Transport and Communities wrote to council leaders highlighting the Government’s commitment to reducing street clutter, asking them, as local leaders, to make the same commitment.

4.7 A commitment to de-cluttering was then given in 2011 within the White Paper *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen* and with the publication of *Signing the Way*³, a policy framework for ensuring that the traffic sign system in Great Britain meets the future needs of all road users, while building upon the existing and established traffic sign system.

4.8 More recently *Reducing Sign Clutter*⁴, a Traffic Advisory Leaflet, was issued in January 2013 giving practical advice on reducing sign clutter. At the same time the Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, the Secretary of State for Transport, wrote to council leaders referring to the blight that traffic signs can have on the rural and built urban environments and recommending that councils

¹ Medway Council *Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-26*
http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/sustainable_com_strategy_web.pdf

² Medway Council *Chatham Centre Waterfront Development Brief 2008* p67
http://www.medway.gov.uk/PDF/chatham_centre_and_waterfront_dev_brief.pdf

³ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Policy Paper: Signing the Way 2011*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/signing-the-way-traffic-signs-policy-review>

⁴ Department for Transport *Reducing Sign Clutter* Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13 January 2013
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-sign-clutter>

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identify, review and remove unnecessary traffic signs on a regular basis as a cost effective means of improving the environment.

4.9 Tackling Street Clutter is also advocated by a number of national bodies/organisations:

- The Local Government Association for example, within its ongoing '100 ways to help the high street' campaign has identified the removal of street clutter as one of a collection of schemes which, if implemented in the right place at the right time, can have a positive affect for town centres.¹
- English Heritage has encouraged the public to undertake street clutter audits, with a view to them being sent to their local council for action in improving the street quality.²
- Guide Dogs have a Streets Ahead campaign³ that incorporated a street clutter survey in 2012.

4.10 In addition to this David Ubaka, from David Ubaka Placemakers, advised the Task Group of a number of practical examples, such as Exhibition Road and Great Queen Street in London where new designs had removed street clutter and enabled pedestrians to enjoy the space safely.



Great Queen Street, London⁴

¹ Local Government Association *100 ways to help the high street'*

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/economy/-/journal_content/56/10171/3511217/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

² English Heritage *Street Clutter Audit* www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/planning-and-transport/streets-for-all/street-clutter-audit/

³ Guide Dogs *Streets Ahead* <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/supportus/campaigns/streets-ahead/>

⁴ Presentation provided by David Ubaka Placemakers 26 February 2013

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4.11 At a local level it was noted that Medway Council has not undertaken a specific de-cluttering project. However, a number of the principles of de-cluttering had been taken into account:

- during the development of new schemes.



Medway Street, Chatham. The Street furniture and signage at the junction has been considered and any surplus removed.

- in site specific conservation area design guides and development briefs
- during the repair and maintenance of existing street furniture and signage.

4.12 During the evidence sessions the Task Group were also advised of the work of the EU InterReg Developing Neighbourhoods Approach Project in Chatham, which has a public spaces strand for town centre improvements suggested and selected by a Residents' Panel. This Group provided a number of principal observations on de-cluttering, such as the positioning of A Boards and lampposts.

4.13 It was therefore evident that scrutiny on this issue had taken place at a time of local and national concern.

5. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

5.1 On 6 February 2012, the Task Group met to discuss the background to the review, as well as scope and determine its Terms of Reference. At this point the group also considered the methodology for the review and agreed to hold an event to bring together stakeholders, as opposed to a series of separate evidence sessions.

Terms of reference

5.2 The Task Group agreed the following terms of reference:

- To review legislation, government policy and established best practice in relation to street clutter
- To consider the current picture in Medway against national guidelines and best practice elsewhere
- Take views from relevant stakeholders
- To bring forward recommendations to reduce street clutter in Medway by way of future design principles.

5.3 The approach, methodology and programme for the review is set out below:

Date	Members in attendance	Other attendees	Purpose
6 February 2013	Councillors Bright, Hicks, Hubbard and Juby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer • Andy McGrath, Assistant Director Front Line Service, • Phil Moore, Head of Highways and Parking Services, • Martin Morris, Traffic Manager • Caroline Salisbury, Democratic Services Officer • Bryan Shawyer, Road Safety Manager • Ian Wilson, Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks 	To discuss the background to the review, the scope and determine Terms of Reference
26 February 2013	Councillors Bright, Hicks, Hubbard and Juby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Ubaka from David Ubaka Placemakers • Steve Hewlett, Integrated Transport Manager • Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer • Andy McGrath, Assistant Director Front Line Service, • Martin Morris, Traffic Manager 	<p>David Ubaka provided a presentation on de-cluttering, which included details of what had been achieved elsewhere and how.</p> <p>Using the mapping software tool Google Street View the Task</p>

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Date	Members in attendance	Other attendees	Purpose
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ian Wilson, Head of Capital Projects, Road Safety and Networks 	<p>Group, together with Officers and David Ubaka, reviewed the A2 (between the Will Adams roundabout and the junction with Watling Street) and Strood High Street.</p> <p>The Task Group also considered comments on de-cluttering that had been submitted by Councillors.</p>
26 March 2013	Councillors Bright, Hicks, Mackinlay, Hubbard and Juby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katie Bettridge, Business Information Officer • Steve Hewlett, Integrated Transport Manager • Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer • Andy McGrath, Assistant Director Front Line Service • Phil Moore, Head of Highways and Parking Services • Bryan Shawyer, Road Safety Manager 	Officers presented a de-cluttering briefing paper and the Task Group considered a series of suggested strategies under the respective street furniture and signage headings.
23 April 2013	Councillors Bright, Hicks and Juby	<p>De-cluttering Stakeholder Event</p> <p>Invitations were sent to a wide variety of organisations and community groups, including the Town Centre Forums and groups/bodies representing people with disabilities, cyclists and public transport.</p> <p>58 participants attended the event. Further details are set out below.</p>	The purpose of this event was to provide an opportunity for Councillors, representatives of various user groups/bodies and Medway Council officers to come together to understand the needs of competing interests.
23 May 2013	Councillors Bright, Hicks, Mackinlay, Hubbard and Juby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louise Browne, Principal Engineer • Michael Edwards, Principal Transport Planner • Steve Hewlett, Integrated Transport Manager • Anthony Law, Democratic 	The Task Group considered the views raised at the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event, together with further supplementary information subsequently

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Date	Members in attendance	Other attendees	Purpose
		Services Officer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andy McGrath, Assistant Director Front Line Service • Martin Morris, Traffic Manager • Bryan Shawyer, Road Safety Manager 	provided by stakeholders. Following the review of the evidence the Task Group considered and finalised the Task Group's recommendations.

5.4 In addition to the work outlined above and evidence obtained from a review of documents available electronically, the Task Group also received further evidence from the:

- Medway Disabled Residents Forum
- St Mary's Island Residents Association
- Residents Working Party of the EU InterReg Developing Neighbourhoods Approach Project in Chatham
- Guide Dogs
- The Principal Tourism Development Officer, Medway Council
- Medway Councillors (who had been invited to submit details of any instances of 'street clutter' from their respective wards).

5.5 An easy read survey was also developed and distributed in order to ascertain the views of people with a learning disability on street clutter in Medway. Copies of the survey were sent to:

- The Medway Learning Disability Partnership Board, which includes family carers, people with learning disabilities and different stakeholders
- Shout Out - a self advocacy group for adults with a learning disability
- Mid Kent College, for the students on the supported learning courses.

The results of this survey were reported to the Task Group on 23 May 2013.

5.6 De-Cluttering of Medway Streets Stakeholder Event

5.6.1 A Stakeholder Event was held on Tuesday 23 April 2013 at the St George's Centre, Chatham to consider street clutter in Medway.

5.6.2 The purpose of this event was to provide an opportunity for Councillors, representatives of various user groups/bodies and Medway Council officers to come together to understand the needs of competing interests. Invitations were sent to a wide variety of organisations and community groups, including the Town Centre Forums and groups/bodies representing people with disabilities, cyclists and public transport.



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- 5.6.3 The event was facilitated by David Ubaka from David Ubaka Placemakers and Andy McGrath Assistant Director for Front Line Services at Medway Council. 58 participants attended the event, representing:
- City of Rochester Society
 - Frindsbury Extra Parish Council
 - Guide Dogs
 - Medway's Citizens Panel
 - St Mary's Island Residents' Association
 - Watling Street Business Association
 - DNA Residents Working Party
 - Gillingham Town Centre Forum
 - Medway Council Councillors
 - Rochester City Centre Forum
 - Strood Town Centre Forum
- 5.6.4 In addition Medway Council officers representing a wide spectrum of services attended the event. This included town centre management, highways and parking services, integrated transport, capital projects road safety and networks, design and conservation, tourism and waste services.
- 5.6.5 Following initial presentations, group discussions provided attendees the opportunity to set out their views on street clutter in Medway via a number of location photographs.
- 5.6.6 The Task Group would like to thank all participants in the review and a link to the final review document will be sent to all of them, together with the decisions of the Cabinet.
- 5.6.7 The outcome of this evidence gathering is reported, in summary, within section 6 of this report.

6. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE COLLECTED

6.1 National Policy and Guidance

- 6.1.1 The Department for Transport published *Manual for Streets* in 2007. This provided guidance on the design, construction and maintenance of residential streets and was based on a detailed appraisal of operational factors and the findings of empirical research.
- 6.1.2 Local Transport Note 1/08 *Traffic Management and Streetscape* was published in 2008¹, which was designed to help consider and care for streetscape in the design of traffic management measures. It notes that traffic signs and road markings, together with other street furniture can all contribute to street clutter.
- 6.1.3 In 2009 *Manual for Streets 2 - wider application of the principles* was published as a companion guide to *Manual for Streets*. This explained how the principles of *Manual for Streets* could be applied more widely, exploring in greater detail how and where its key principles can be applied to busier streets and roads both in urban and rural locations up to, but not including, trunk roads. It aims to help everyone involved in the planning, construction and improvement of streets to deliver more contextually sensitive designs. Key messages relate to inclusive design, community engagement, professional judgement, multi disciplinary expertise and de-cluttering.²
- 6.1.4 In 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP said that the number of signs was damaging the character of towns and villages.³ Both the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and, the then, Secretary of State for Transport wrote to councils leaders highlighting the Government's commitment to reducing street clutter, asking them, as local leaders, to make the same commitment.
- 6.1.5 The White Paper *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen* in 2011 stated that:

De-cluttering is a fundamental part of providing high quality public spaces– and one where significant improvements can be achieved at relatively low cost. It involves dispensing with unnecessary signs, traffic signals, road markings and other street furniture to make streets tidier and easier to use.⁴

¹ Department for Transport Local Transport Note 1/08 *Traffic Management and Streetscape* 2008
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3810/ltn-1-08.pdf

² Department for Transport *Manual for Streets 2* 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2>

³ BBC News *Councils urged to remove unnecessary street signs* 26 August 2010
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11092590>

⁴ Department for Transport *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon - Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen* 2011 p73

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3890/making-sustainable-local-transport-happen-whitepaper.pdf

- 6.1.6 This was followed in October 2011 with the Department for Transport's *Signing the Way*¹, a policy framework for ensuring that the traffic sign system in Great Britain meets the future needs of all road users, while building upon the existing and established traffic sign system. The research and review undertaken for this policy shaped a series of wide-ranging recommendations, including the reduction of signing on the road network. Norman Baker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, cited it as:

The most far-reaching review of traffic signs in 40 years. We are cutting pointless bureaucracy, giving councils more freedoms, and updating our suite of signs for the modern era.²

- 6.1.7 One of the early deliverables from *Signing the Way* was *Reducing Sign Clutter*³, a Traffic Advisory Leaflet issued in January 2013. This leaflet gives practical advice on reducing sign clutter, emphasising the need for designers to use their engineering judgement and local knowledge to complement guidance to ensure signing solutions are effective. At the same time the Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, the Secretary of State for Transport, wrote to council leaders referring to the blight that traffic signs can have on the rural and built urban environments and recommending that councils identify, review and remove unnecessary traffic signs on a regular basis as a cost effective means of improving the environment.

- 6.1.8 It was noted that the Department for Transport had recently announced plans to radically overhaul the legislation governing traffic sign design and use, with a revised version of the law planned for March 2015 following public consultation.⁴ The Department for Transport have said that:

By prescribing less, by providing less regulation we are saying we trust in the skills and judgement of the local authority and sign designer to make appropriate decisions for their area.⁵

- 6.1.9 Tackling street clutter is also advocated by a number of national bodies/organisations. This is evidenced through a number of specific campaigns, such as those organised by English Heritage⁶ and the Local Government Association.⁷ It was also reflected in the Guide Dogs 2010 document, *Design Principles for Blind and Partially Sighted People*, which

¹ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Policy Paper: Signing the Way* 2011

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/signing-the-way-traffic-signs-policy-review>

² Department for Transport *Traffic signs updated, clutter and red tape reduced* Press release 13 October 2011 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/traffic-signs-updated-clutter-and-red-tape-reduced>

³ Department for Transport *Reducing Sign Clutter* Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13 January 2013 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-sign-clutter>

⁴ Browne Transport Network *Traffic sign legislation set for 'radical' overhaul* 16 April 2013 <http://www.transport-network.co.uk/Traffic-sign-legislation-set-for-radical-overhaul/8690>

⁵ Appleyard Transport Network *Traffex round up: All the top news from the DfT* 18 April 2013 <http://www.transport-network.co.uk/Traffex-round-up-All-the-top-news-from-the-DfT/8704>

⁶ English Heritage *Street Clutter Audit* www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/advice-by-topic/planning-and-transport/streets-for-all/street-clutter-audit/

⁷ Local Government Association *100 ways to help the high street'*

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/economy/-/journal_content/56/10171/3511217/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

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advocates, “clearly defined, obstacle free, pedestrian routes” as a key component of any inclusive, accessible street environment.¹

6.1.10 The Transport Research Laboratory in the 2010 report *Reducing Traffic Sign Clutter* identified a number of benefits to local authorities removing unnecessary traffic signing. These included:

- Reducing the required level of maintenance for sign cleaning and foliage cutting;
- Reduction in lamp changes if lit signs are removed;
- Reduction in the temporary traffic management required for undertaking maintenance work, providing both costs benefits and exposing road workers to less risk;
- Reduction in the costs associated with providing signs and lighting units arising from more efficient use;
- Improved consistency in the provision of directional signing;
- Improved public perception of the highways authority if obsolete, damaged and worn out traffic signs are removed.²

Examples of Good Practice

6.1.11 The benefits of de-cluttering have been noted above and in section 3. David Ubaka, from David Ubaka Placemakers, advised the Task Group of a number of practical examples, such as Great Queen Street and Jamaica Road in London, where street clutter had been removed to the benefit of all.



Jamaica Road, London³

¹ Guide Dogs *Inclusive Streets: Design principles for the blind and partially sighted people* 2010
http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/fileadmin/gdmain/user/What_we_do/Shared%20Surfaces/Documents/Inclusive_Streets_Design_Principles_booklet_Guide_Dogs_2010.pdf p13

² Transport Research Laboratory *Reducing traffic sign clutter* 2010
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4348/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf

p1V

³ Presentation from David Ubaka Placemakers to the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event 23 April 2013

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- 6.1.12 The Task Group and attendees at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event were also advised of practical examples where de-cluttering had been achieved in Medway, by integrating street furniture into the overall appearance of the street.



Redesigned Chatham High Street (before and after the removal of the Flyover)

- 6.1.13 In relation to improving existing streets the Task Group were advised of the staged approach that had been developed by the Transport for London Group Planning on behalf of the Mayor in his *Better Streets Strategy*¹. This five level process showed the indicative scale of improvement that was also linked to the scale of cost and time to implement.²
1. Tidy Up – removing what is unnecessary and easy to move
 2. Declutter – thoroughly review and then remove any piece of street furniture and signage that can not be justified
 3. Relocate/merge functions – making the remaining street furniture and signs work harder together
 4. Re-think traffic management options – consider how pedestrians, cars and cyclists use the area and rebalance priorities
 5. Re-create the street – totally remodel the space.³
- 6.1.14 The Task Group appreciated that at a time of constrained budgets realistic aspirations for de-cluttering were important. The Task Group therefore proposed for Medway a systematic approach to de-cluttering public spaces, with de-cluttering undertaken in association with future maintenance work or new capital and developer initiated schemes.
- 6.1.15 On 27 June 2013 the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft findings of the Task Group and sought assurances that Ward Councillors would be consulted before any de-cluttering work was carried out in their ward. This was supported and reflected within the recommendations.

¹ Mayor of London *Better Streets* 2009 <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Better%20Streets.pdf>

² *Transport for London Five Stages of Improvements*
<http://urbandesign.tfl.gov.uk/Design-Guidance/Better-Streets/BetterStreets/FiveStages.aspx>

³ Mayor of London *Better Streets* 2009 <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Better%20Streets.pdf>
p8-9

Recommendation:

That Medway Council systematically de-clutters its public spaces on a case-by-case basis and in association with future maintenance work or new capital and developer initiated schemes. That all Ward Members are consulted before the removal of any street furniture in their wards as part of the de-cluttering programme.

That an overarching Streetscape Manual, supported by policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings, would guide this process and these policies be tested as part of a pilot de-cluttering scheme in Strood Town Centre (Note: these elements are explored further below).

6.2 A Streetscape Manual for Medway

6.2.1 During the course of the evidence sessions the Task Group noted that individual elements of street furniture and signage were often introduced as a result of a range of different projects, which can lead to an incremental increase over time. This can also be the consequence of changing or new regulations and codes or practice or installed by third parties. David Ubaka advised however “Functional, well maintained and safe places are not accidents”¹.

6.2.2 Observations made at the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event in relation to items of street furniture and signage included:

“It would be great to have a cohesive policy across the whole of Medway”

“Say it once and be consistent in how you say it”.

6.2.3 *Manual Streets 2* encourages councils to develop policy documents to ensure that similar principles are adopted as a matter of course, when existing highways are maintained and improved and when new ones are designed.²

6.2.4 A streetscape manual is defined by the Local Government Association as

A statement of agreed policies and practices which can infuse some order and strategy into the complex processes by which a streetscape both evolves and is maintained.³

Therefore, in order to set the framework for the progressive reduction of street clutter, as well as ensuring a consistent and coordinated approach to the design, management and maintenance of Medway’s public spaces, the Task

¹ David Ubaka Discussion with the Task Group 26 February 2013

² Department for Transport *Manual for Streets 2* 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2> Para 12.2.5

³ Local Government Association *100 ways to help the High Street*
http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/economy/-/journal_content/56/10171/3511238/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE#contents-1

Group advocated the development, by all officers concerned with the design of the built environment, of a Medway Streetscape Manual.

- 6.2.5 A streetscape manual that reflected national guidance, such as *Manual for Streets*, *Manual for Streets 2*, would therefore provide a guide for the management and improvement of the Medway's streets; balancing the demands of community living and transport pressures. It would enable a comprehensive strategy to be developed and provide a common approach for implementation. Reflecting comments from the stakeholder event, it should however avoid a one-size-fits all approach; giving flexibility to meet local needs through context sensitive design. Importantly, however, it can prevent clutter happening in the future.
- 6.2.6 In support of this the Task Group noted a number of manuals, including those by City of London¹, Transport for London², Southwark Council³ and Lewisham Council⁴.
- 6.2.7 The manual could therefore set out principles addressing a number of issues submitted to and discussed by the Task Group, such as:
- the character of the streets in Medway
 - the different users and uses of streets, with careful attention to the width of footways and ensuring a move away from a simple acceptance that the motor vehicle must dominate.

In Guide Dogs submission *Inclusive Streets: Design Principles for Blind and Partially Sighted People* the position statement stated that

Good streets are inclusive streets, and streets that are not inclusive are simply not good enough.⁵

As a practical example Guide Dogs in their guide to visual impairment requirements in the internal and external environment cites that street furniture should have good contrasting features and at the same time not cause glare.⁶

- policies and practices for coordinating the design
- enabling street furniture, traffic signs and road markings to provide a quiet backdrop that enhances character and activities, rather than overpowering or dominating them
- management criteria

¹ City of London *City Street Scene Manual*

<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/environment-and-planning/environmental-enhancement/publications/Pages/default.aspx>

² Transport for London *Streetscape guidance 2009: A guide to better London streets*

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/businessandpartners/publications/4858.aspx>

³ Southwark Council *Southwark Streetscape Design Manual*

http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/200456/southwark_streetscape_design_manual_ssdm

⁴ Lewisham Council *London Borough of Lewisham Streetscape Guide*

<http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/LewishamStreetscapeGuide2011bookmarked.pdf>

⁵ Guide Dogs *Inclusive Streets: Design Principles for Blind and Partially Sighted People*

http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/fileadmin/gdmain/user/What_we_do/Shared%20Surfaces/Documents/InclusiveStreetsDesignPrinciplesbookletGuideDogs2010.pdf 2010 p2

⁶ Guide Dogs *A guide to visual impairment requirements in the internal and external environment* p4

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- the choice and standardization of materials to provide a consistent look and making it easier and cheaper to replace damaged items. David Ubaka in his submission to the Task Group stressed the importance of a focus on detail with materials and the officers explained how, for example, a number of different guardrails had to be sourced and maintained across Medway.

6.2.8 During the course of their review the Task Group heard evidence as to a number of specific streetscape components, such as pedestrian guardrailing and it was proposed that this would be addressed within separate policies beneath the overarching Streetscape Manual. Details of these components are set out in the following sections and have been grouped under the headings of Street Furniture and Traffic Signs and Road Markings, together with details of a proposed audit assessment process.

6.2.9 It was acknowledged that these are not likely to be the only issues addressed within the emerging policies but the Task Group has considered these issues and made recommendations where appropriate.

Recommendation:

That the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture develops a Streetscape Manual to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to the design, management and maintenance of our public spaces.

The Streetscape Manual would include policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings (which are explored further below).

6.3 Street Furniture

6.3.1 Pedestrian Guardrailing

6.3.1.1 Pedestrian guardrailing is widely used in the UK where there is either a real or perceived safety risk. This includes road junctions, pedestrian crossings, busy streets and by schools. Its main purpose, as described by the Department for Transport, is to:

improve safety by trying to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road at an inappropriate place or from straying into the road inadvertently. Guard railing can also be used to offer some protection to pedestrians at locations where the swept path of large vehicles, such as buses and heavy goods vehicles, takes the vehicles close to the footway, sometimes overhang it.¹

6.3.1.2 The power for the Council to provide, maintain, alter and remove guardrailing is set out within Section 66 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and Local



¹ Department for Transport *Pedestrian Guardrailing* Local Transport Note 2/09 April 2009 p5
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3806/ltn-2-09.pdf

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Transport Note 2/09, *Pedestrian Guardrailing*, provided advice, including:

- A description of the development of policy guidance on guardrailing
- An assessment procedure for the evaluation of the need for the installation or removal of guardrailing; and
- Encouragement for authorities to consider developing and using an audit trail, recording decisions and actions when considering guardrailing.

6.3.1.3 During the evidence sessions the Task Group considered a number of locations containing guardrailing. This included a virtual tour using the mapping software tool Google Street View of the A2 (between the Will Adams roundabout and the junction with Watling Street) and Strood High Street. Further examples were explored at the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event.

6.3.1.4 In line with the issues identified in the Transport for London *Guidance on the Assessment of Pedestrian Guardrail*, May 2012¹ and *Manual for Streets 2* the Task Group was advised as to the intrusive nature of guardrails, acting as a hindrance to kerbside activity. Specific issues included how they can restrict pedestrian movement or create an unpleasant feeling of restraint. It can also be unsightly, reduce visibility and potentially increase vehicular speeds. David Ubaka in his presentation to the Task Group² also advised how guardrailing can create a traffic dominated environment and that as part of the ongoing review of street clutter in London, Transport for London had removed 65km of such railing.

6.3.1.5 As an example of how the removal of guardrailing could impact on the sense of location and the amenity of all users the Task Group were referred to the improvements at Oxford Circus in London.



Oxford Circus in London³

6.3.1.6 The Task Group noted the maintenance liability guardrailing created and that within Medway a number of different types of guardrailing were used. Members also considered the road safety aspect and that working on a case by case basis there would likely be certain places, such as schools, where they would need to be retained. This approach would address views raised at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event concerning the need to retain pedestrian

¹ Transport for London *Guidance on the Assessment of Pedestrian Guardrail* 2012
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/guidance-assessment-pedestrian-guardrail.pdf>

² De-Cluttering Streets in Medway Task Group Meeting 26 February 2013

³ David Ubaka presentation to the De-Cluttering Task Group 23 April 2013

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protection at the bottom of Constitutional Hill within the Luton Road case study.



- 6.3.1.7 In the absence of a Medway Pedestrian Guardrail Policy, the Task Group recommended that a Pedestrian Guardrail Policy be developed and implemented and that prior to the implementation of this policy, pedestrian guardrail assessments should be undertaken in accordance with Transport for London's *Guidance on the Assessment of Pedestrian Guardrail*, May 2012.¹ It was noted that whilst this document did not seek to provide a definitive list of when to include or remove pedestrian guardrails it did provide an aid in making decisions, such as a road safety audit.

Recommendation:

A Pedestrian Guardrail Policy for Medway be developed and implemented. Prior to the implementation of this policy, pedestrian guardrail assessments should be undertaken in accordance with Transport for London's 'Guidance on the Assessment of Pedestrian Guardrail', May 2012.

The Integrated Transport team within the Regeneration, Community and Culture Directorate to lead on proposals to retain or remove pedestrian guardrail.

A record of all street furniture removed, will be recorded in CONFIRM (the Council's Asset Management System), so that collision monitoring can continue at sites where street furniture is removed.

6.3.2 Bollards

- 6.3.2.1 Bollards are often used as a way of protecting the footway from access by vehicles, although they do have many other uses. They can control access to pedestrianised areas, enforce width restrictions, protect kerbs from turning vehicles and even help guide motorists around unlit bends at night.
- 6.3.2.2 Bollards and other obstructions under sections 92 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 may include obstructions of any description. These may be either fixed or movable and may be placed so as to prevent the passage of vehicles at all times or at certain times only. The Highways Act 1980,

¹ Transport for London *Guidance on the Assessment of Pedestrian Guardrail* 2012
<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/guidance-assessment-pedestrian-guardrail.pdf>

section 66(2) further enables fixed bollards to be erected on the edge of a footway for the protection of pedestrians.

- 6.3.2.3 The Task Group were advised that the over-use of bollards could represent an obstruction or represent visual clutter¹. As an easy design solution they may be over used out of expediency. Members were advised that there was likely to be several sections of bollards and railings, which could vary in type and condition. The importance of considering where they were cited and whether of sufficient quality was stressed.
- 6.3.2.4 Comments from the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event on several of the case studies and evidence submitted by officers advocated that bollards should be avoided if possible. They should be considered as part of a coordinated street furniture design, where other essential items of street furniture are considered for use in their place.
- 6.3.2.5 As part of their consideration the Task Group reflected on the use of bollards to address the issue of parking on verges and footways. It was noted that the responsibility of the council was to keep verges safe and unobstructed and that particular incidents of verge parking, which may be considered dangerous or obstructive or cause damage, were a matter for the police.
- 6.3.2.6 The Task Group proposed that where parking restrictions existed bollards should not be required and should be removed. At locations where there was an absence of parking restrictions, the introduction of specific verge parking restrictions should be considered. Given the issues facing different locations however the Task Group supported the removal of bollards on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given as to whether vehicle control could be carried out in another way. In some settings this may be though the use of other essential items of street furniture, such as a bench.

Recommendation:

That sections of bollards and railings be removed on a case-by-case basis. Where parking restrictions exist bollards should not be required and it is recommended that they be removed. At locations where there is an absence of parking restrictions, the introduction of specific verge parking restrictions should be considered to control parking at these locations. If bollards are required at certain locations then these should be of a consistent type.

- 6.3.2.7 During the discussion on bollards the Task Group were advised of the different types of bollards and it was noted that Department for Transport approval was required before reflective and solar powered bollards can be used.

¹ Department for Transport *Manual for Streets 2* 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2> para 12.3.6

- 6.3.2.8 Within the CSS Street Lighting Project PPR383 report on *Guidance on the lighting requirements for traffic signs and bollards*¹, it was stated that approvals would normally take place in the following situations:
- Central islands/refuges when used in conjunction with a centre island column with an independently lit 'Keep Left' sign to Diagram 610.
 - Side road junctions when used in conjunction with centre island column with an independently lit 'Keep Left' sign to Diagram 610.
 - In front of traffic signals without any supplementary signage or lighting.
- 6.3.2.9 Whilst the council has approvals for its suppliers it was recommended that Department for Transport approval be obtained for all manufacturer types. This can be obtained on an authority wide basis and they can be used in any suitable location in place of a standard lit bollard.

Recommendation:

That authorisation is obtained from the Department for Transport for all manufacturer types so to be able to replace the base-lit traffic bollards with either self-righting unlit retro reflective bollards or self-righting solar powered bollards.

6.3.3 Street Lamp Columns

- 6.3.3.1 Street lighting can contribute to the public realm in a number of ways; such as in relation to road safety, discouraging crime and vandalism, public safety and protection of property. *Manual for Streets* provided advice on the design of street lighting, which was further explored in *Manual for Streets 2*.
- 6.3.3.2 The Task Group were advised that the integration of street lighting into the street layout would be considered within any de-cluttering assessment, with the assistance of a street lighting engineer. This is contained within the proposed methodology set out in section 6.5.
- 6.3.3.3 Officers also advised the Task Group as to the potential merits of changing the low-pressure sodium systems of street lighting to a more cost effective and sustainable system, which could result in a reduction of lamp columns.
- 6.3.3.4 Further evidence submitted by officers advised that at traffic signal controlled junctions, there was the ability to combine traffic signal poles and lamp columns. This could significantly reduce the amount of street clutter at these junctions whilst providing good luminance. Several participants at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event also advocated the replacement of existing posts with multi-purpose posts. The Task Group were provided with an illustrative example of a signal head on lamp column, from the *Streetscape Design Manual, Nottingham City Centre*²:

¹ Cooper and Mitchell Street Lighting Project PPR383 report on *Guidance on the lighting requirements for traffic signs and bollards* 2009
http://www.trl.co.uk/online_store/reports_publications/trl_reports/cat_traffic_engineering/report_guidance_on_the_lighting_requirements_for_traffic_signs_and_bollards.htm

² Nottingham City Council *Streetscape Design Manual* 2006 p27
<http://nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=7140&p=0>

- 6.3.3.5 It was also noted however that there were disadvantages with incorporating signal heads with lamp columns. These included the potential risk for maintenance engineers in isolating supply, weakening of lighting columns and the risk that any works required to the street lighting column would require the traffic signals to be switched off. The Task Group was of the opinion that this issue should be investigated further.

Recommendation:

That the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture investigate the potential for reducing the number of lamp columns on Medway's streets by adopting a more cost effective and sustainable lighting system, and installing traffic signals on lighting columns at certain locations.

6.3.4 'A' Boards, Tables and Chairs and Shop Front Displays

- 6.3.4.1 The Task Group received evidence from a number of stakeholders, including the Disabled Residents Forum, as to the positioning of 'A' Boards, tables and chairs, and shop front displays on the street.
- 6.3.4.2 A submission from the Residents' Working Parking of the Chatham's Developing Neighbourhoods Approach Project also identified that in Chatham there were too many A Boards that were haphazardly arranged and can obstruct wheelchairs and buggies¹. The project also advocated a Council Policy over pavement display and trading by High Street retailers; a point that was also advocated by a number of participants at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event.
- 6.3.4.3 Evidence submitted by Guide Dogs, a provider of mobility and other rehabilitation training for blind and partially sighted people, highlighted the importance of licensing, regulating and monitoring the display and use of A Boards on footways to:

maximise the advertising benefits and minimise potential hazards on footways for pedestrians especially blind and partially sighted and other disabled and vulnerable pedestrians.²

Guide Dogs recommend licensing A-Boards to ensure appropriate use along the High Street, which would control the volume, size, design, quality and location.

- 6.3.4.4 The Task Group was mindful of the need to strike a balance between the needs of businesses and residents with the public expectation of an unobstructed highway. It was therefore recommended that a policy on 'A' Boards, tables and chairs, and shop front displays be developed to govern activities in a consistent and transparent way.

¹ Chatham's Developing Neighbourhoods Approach Project Residents Working Party *De-Cluttering*

² "A" Boards: Guide Dogs Position Statement Guide Dogs 2011 p3

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Recommendation:

That a policy on 'A' Boards, tables and chairs, and shop front displays be developed, that balances the needs of businesses and the public's expectation of an unobstructed highway.

6.4 Signage and Road Markings

6.4.1 Traffic signs and road markings are essential for conveying information to road users, and for the enforcement of road traffic law. The 2004 *Traffic Signs Manual* gives advice to Councils on the correct design and use of signs and road markings.

6.4.2 Traffic signs fall within three broad categories: Regulatory Signs, Warning Signs and Information Signs. To be easily understood and therefore effective the Task Group heard at the both the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event and through the other evidence sessions how they needed to be simple and concise.

Recommendation:

That a Signage Policy for Medway be developed and implemented.

(Note this would incorporate the elements outlined below)

6.4.3 Directional Signs

6.4.3.1 Directional signs exist to guide drivers unfamiliar with their route toward their destination. It was recognised that the majority of signs serve a valuable function preventing drivers getting lost, although the increased use of satellite navigation to provide directional advice was also noted.



Hoath Way, Gillingham. Attendees at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event questioned the number of directional signs on this part of the highway network.

6.4.3.2 However, the Task Group heard how much local signing (such as to schools and surgeries) was unnecessary, as regular visitors and residents would know where local facilities are. This notion was supported at the De-cluttering

Stakeholder Event with the comments received on the Bryant Road, Strood case study, as to the provision of signage for a Youth Centre, and the sign to Chatham Town Centre within the Luton Road case study. Furthermore, officers advised that when there was a need for new information new signs were often added, as it was often cheaper to put up a new sign rather than replace existing signs with a new combined sign¹. This can lead to a proliferation of directional signing.

- 6.4.3.2 Officers suggested that local directional signage should be restricted, as much of it is unnecessary and can be distracting. It was also suggested that the destination signing that remained should be commensurate with the speed of traffic on the road that they are located. The height of signs may be larger than required and these signs could be reduced in size.

Recommendation:

That there be a review of destination signage.

6.4.4 Warning Signs

- 6.4.4.1 Warnings signs can assist road safety, the Task Group were advised that warning signs should only be used where there is a specific safety issue, where the road user needs to be especially cautious, and not a routine feature of the road.
- 6.4.4.2 Crucially, as well as the visual impact, the over provision of signs can reduce the likelihood of drivers taking notice of them. The Department of Transport warns that the “overuse of warning signs can dilute their effectiveness”.² The *Traffic Signs Manual* Chapter 4 (Warning Signs) also states:
- Appropriate warning signs can greatly assist road safety. To be most effective, however, they should be used sparingly. Their frequent use to warn of conditions which are readily apparent tends to bring them into disrepute and detracts from their effectiveness.³
- 6.4.4.3 It was therefore noted that unless there were genuine hazards that required warning signs, which would not be readily apparent to the driver without the sign, these signs should be removed⁴.
- 6.4.4.4 The Task Group were given two examples as to the use of warning signs for traffic lights. The first was on the A2, on the border of Gillingham and Rainham, where due to the nature of the road and the clear visibility of the traffic lights the warning sign was not considered necessary. On Watling Street however, on approach to Rede Court Road, the sign was on the crown

¹ Cooper, Mitchall and Bedingfeld Transport Research Laboratory *Reducing Traffic Sign Clutter* 2010 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4348/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf

² Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13 *Reducing Sign Clutter* January 2013 p3

³ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual* 2004 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/128757/traffic-signs-manual-chapter-04.pdf p5

⁴ Cooper, Mitchall and Bedingfeld Transport Research Laboratory *Reducing Traffic Sign Clutter* 2010 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4348/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf

of a hill and so was valuable in advising drivers as to the approaching traffic lights.

- 6.4.4.5 It was reported that in Medway it might be possible to remove some of these signs, as the hazard may not be sufficient enough to warrant signing, or the hazard may no longer exist. It was also possible that warning signs could be attached in some circumstances to existing street furniture, reducing the need for an individual pole. Officers further advised the Task Group that if there was a system of street lighting, there was no longer a requirement for some of these signs to be lit. This would reduce the maintenance and energy costs.

Recommendation:

The removal of warning signs unless there are genuine hazards that would not be readily apparent to the driver without the sign.

6.4.5 Regulatory Signs

- 6.4.5.1 The purpose of regulatory signs is that drivers clearly understand what restrictions or prohibitions are in force. Most regulatory signs are erected to give effect to a Traffic Regulation Order or other statutory provisions as specified in the *Traffic Signs, Regulations and General Directions 2002*.¹

- 6.4.5.2 *Reducing Sign Clutter* identifies the 'Keep left' sign as an illustration of the overuse of regulatory signs when placed upon bollards at pedestrian refuges and other islands. 'Keep Left' signs are needed at sites where drivers may travel on the wrong side however the Department for Transport guidance identifies that these may be unnecessary, particularly at traffic signals when the signal head gives warning of an island. It was noted that there were no requirements under the *Traffic Signs, Regulations and General Directions 2002* to provide these signs at refuges and islands and by restricting the use, savings could be made in both the cost of the sign and also possibly on sign lighting.²



- 6.4.5.3 To identify if any regulatory signs can be revised the Council would need to review their existing Traffic Regulation Orders. The Task Group therefore recommended that the council review existing Traffic Regulation Orders as part of any future maintenance work or new capital schemes.

Recommendation:

That there be a review of existing Traffic Regulation Orders.

¹ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual 2006* <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/traffic-signs-manual/traffic-signs-manual-chapter-03.pdf>

² *Reducing Sign Clutter* Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13 January 2013 p2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-sign-clutter>

6.4.6 Terminal Signs

- 6.4.6.1 The Task Group noted that in 2012 the Department for Transport had issued guidance¹ concerning terminal signs. For regulatory signs indicating the beginning of a restriction, requirement, prohibition or speed limit, Direction 8(3) required the placing of one terminal sign on each side of a single-carriageway road, and the placing of one terminal sign on each side of the appropriate carriageway of a dual carriageway road (i.e. on the near side and on the central reservation).
- 6.4.6.2 However, in either of the above situations, the council as highways authority now have the option to place only one terminal on either side of the road as appropriate, thereby reducing their environmental impact. The Task Group was however mindful that this would require a risk-based analysis and individual site assessments to be undertaken.

Recommendation

That a risk-based analysis and individual site assessments be undertaken when considering placing only one of the safety critical signs, such as 'No Entry' where it may still be appropriate to place two terminal signs.

6.4.7 Repeater Signs

- 6.4.7.1 Members were advised that the usual case for the overuse of signing was in the use of repeater signs. These inform of restrictions over an area, such as speed signs. It was noted that a proliferation of these signs was historical and likely to be the consequence of over zealous designers and previously available resources.
- 6.4.7.2 It was noted that the Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/12 *The Traffic Signs (Amendment) (No.2): Regulations and General Directions 2011*² amended the use of repeater signs. This clarified the requirements for repeater signs and sought to reduce street clutter by relaxing these requirements in specified circumstances.
- 6.4.7.3 The Task Group were advised that the term 'regular intervals' was being interpreted as "equal" and previously this had impeded effective enforcement of local traffic regulations. Therefore this expression had been replaced with wording requiring simply that the signs must be placed 'along the road'. In addition, a minimum of one repeater sign must be placed, beyond which it was for traffic authorities to decide on the appropriate level of repeater signing, having regard to existing guidance. Furthermore, to prevent unnecessary signing, thresholds had also been established, below which certain repeater signs were not required by the Directions, but may still be placed if considered necessary.

¹ Department for Transport *Area-wide Authorisations and Special Directions Guidance Note: Guidance Note A - Area-wide Special Directions 2012* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-wide-authorisations-and-special-directions-guidance-note>

² Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/12 *The Traffic Signs (Amendment) (No.2): Regulations and General Directions 2011* https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/43517/tal-1-12.pdf

- 6.4.7.4 The Task Group considered that any future assessments should consider the spacing of repeater signs in their relation to other repeater and terminal signs.

Recommendation:

That any assessment should consider the spacing of repeater signs in their relation to other repeater and terminal signs.

6.4.8 Speed limits and signage requirements

- 6.4.8.1 The Department for Transport Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/12 *The Traffic Signs (Amendment) (No.2): Regulations and General Directions 2011*, further clarified the placing of speed limit terminal signs on the relevant road on the approach to a T-junction or crossroads. This revision clarified the placing of speed limit terminal signs on the minor road on approach to a T-junction or crossroads, of a major road.
- 6.4.8.2 When the speed limit was higher on the “other road”, along which repeater signs were placed within 100 metres of the junction, terminal signs were not required on the relevant road in advance of the junction (direction 9(5) of the Traffic Signs, Regulations and General Directions 2002 refers). This was illustrated below from the *Traffic Signs Manual*¹:

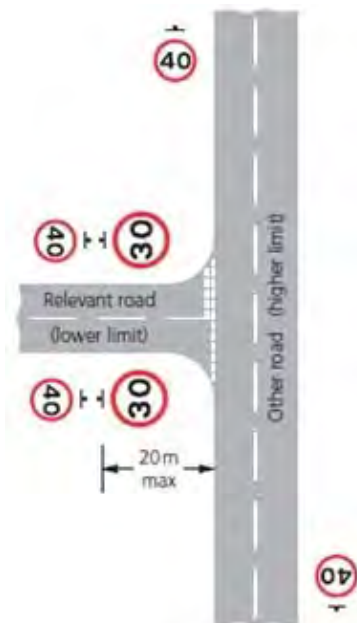


Figure 1(a): Conventional speed limit terminal layout at junction.

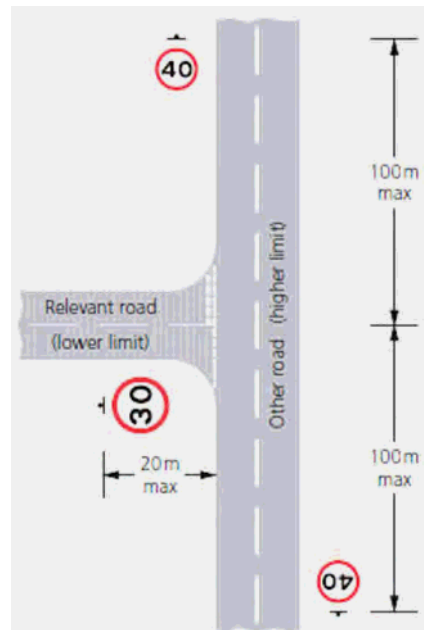


Figure 1(b): Requirements for removal of speed terminal signs.

- 6.4.8.3 It was highlighted that any reduction in terminal signs would bring an associated reduction in running and maintenance costs.

¹ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual* 2006 <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/traffic-signs-manual/traffic-signs-manual-chapter-03.pdf> p108

Recommendation:

That consideration be given to placing repeaters on 'major roads' within 100m of 'minor road' junctions that have a lower speed restriction and that the lower speed limit terminal signs on the 'minor road' be removed.

- 6.4.8.4 It was also noted that where a terminal speed restriction sign was erected on a principal road within 50m of a street lamp lit by electricity, throughout the hours of darkness it shall:
- be continuously illuminated by means of internal or external lighting and may also be illuminated by means of retro-reflective material, or
 - while the street lamp is lit, be continuously illuminated by means of external lighting and shall be illuminated by means of retro-reflective material.

However, on all other roads, speed restriction terminal signs may be lit or made of reflective material. Additionally, terminal signs on the aforementioned principal roads further than 50m from a street lamp are not required to be lit. In the current absence of principal roads in Medway it was proposed that terminal speed limit signs should not be lit.

Recommendation:

That only terminal speed limit signs on principal roads should be lit.

6.4.9 Size and mounting of signs

- 6.4.9.1 The Task Group were advised that all signs must be of a size and mounted in a way that is appropriate to traffic conditions that prevail on the road. The signs must be of sufficient size and positioning so that road users can recognise, read and comprehend all the information that is shown on the sign in sufficient time to take appropriate action.¹
- 6.4.9.2 Mounting heights are recommended within Chapter 1 of the *Traffic Signs Manual*², with guidance on the size of regulatory and warning signs in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively. The Task Group were given details of a simplified table for the size of warning signs, as set out within the Transport Research Laboratory document *Reducing traffic sign clutter* CPR727³.
- 6.4.9.3 During evidence sessions comment was made as to the large size of signs on the A2 and Hoath Way, Gillingham. It was also noted that although the

¹ Cooper, Mitchall and Bedingfeld Transport Research Laboratory *Reducing Traffic Sign Clutter* 2010 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4348/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf

² Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual* 2006 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual>

³ Cooper, Mitchall and Bedingfeld Transport Research Laboratory *Reducing traffic sign clutter* 2010 https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4348/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf p42

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council was required to take account of the advice in the *Traffic Signs Manual* in determining size, it is not unlawful to deviate from this advice¹.

Recommendation:

That the size of signs be reduced where applicable.

6.4.9.4 The Task Group noted the suggestions from the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event that signs should be mounted on the same post, so to reduce street clutter, but expressed caution as to mounting too many signs together, which can be unsightly and difficult to read.

6.4.9.5 The Task Group considered the possibility of mounting signs on walls, as footway space can be gained and visual obstructions reduced. It was noted however that consent from building owners must be obtained, using way leave agreements, and this could be a time-consuming process. This would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis where footway space was scarce.

6.4.10 Road Markings

6.4.10.1 All road markings on the highway must be either prescribed by the *Traffic Signs, Regulations and General Directions 2002* or authorised by the Secretary of State for Transport.

6.4.10.2 It was noted however that the removal of road markings in appropriate locations could reduce visual clutter. The Task Group considered for example that as part of any assessment process, worded and diagrammatical markings such as 'Keep Clear' and 'Slow' should be assessed to establish if there is a need for their retention².

Recommendation:

That worded and diagrammatical markings, such as 'Keep Clear' and 'Slow', should be assessed to establish if there is a need for their retention.

¹ Department for Transport *Manual for Streets 2* 2010

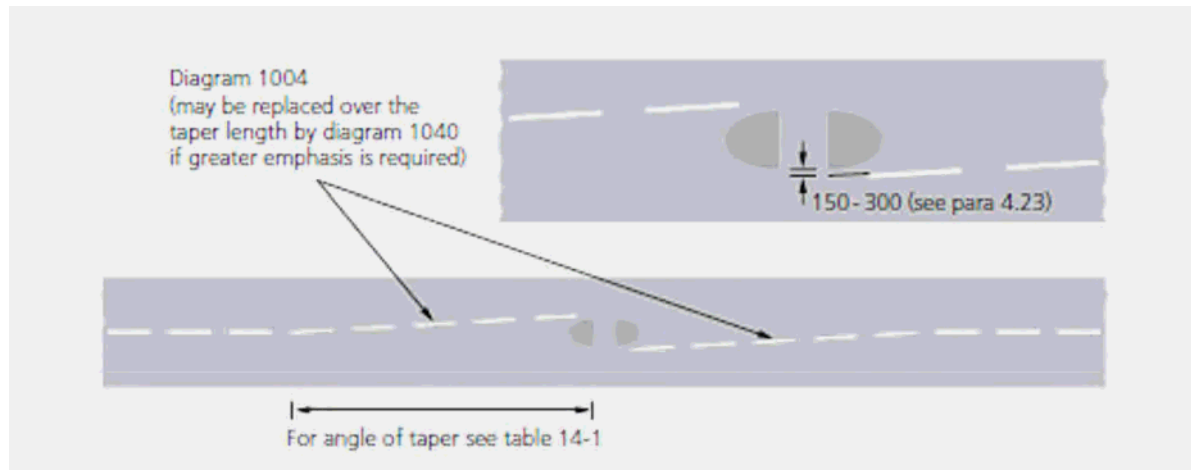
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2> para 13.2.2

² Cooper, Mitchall and Bedingfeld Transport Research Laboratory *Reducing Traffic Sign Clutter* 2010

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4348/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf

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- 6.4.10.3 The Task Group were also advised that many islands had a hatched nosing and kicker arrows preceding the hatching and that it was possible that, to improve the appearance of the street scene, this hatch markings could be removed and a single warning line installed on the entry to each island; similar to that shown below in the example provided within the *Traffic Signs Manual*¹.



Warning line approaching traffic island.

- 6.4.10.4 Mindful that in the event of kerb strike the severity of any accident was likely to be increased it was recommended that each island be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendation:

That an assessment be undertaken of hatchings for each island.

6.4.11 Parking Controls

- 6.4.11.1 Waiting restrictions are indicated by both signs and road markings. The Task Group noted that enforcement signs and lines needed to be of a certain standard and be at recognised spacing, although other street furniture could be utilised for sign attachment. Furthermore, that parking restrictions could be open to challenge due to the condition or omission of signs and the condition of the yellow lines. It was therefore necessary that the condition and legality of waiting lines be reviewed in any future assessment.
- 6.4.11.2 Yellow lines are used where there is a need to restrict parking, prevent obstructions and aid the flow of traffic and in their submission to the Task Group officers proposed that a 75mm size line be used for all routes with a speed limit of 40mph or less, which are outside the conservation areas.
- 6.4.11.3 The use of yellow line markings to No.310 (primrose) or No.353 (deep cream) with a 50mm width was suggested within conservation areas, to minimise impact. It was also noted that special authorisation was not necessary for any of these shades. As identified within the *Traffic Signs*

¹ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual* 2006 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual> Chapter 5 p17

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Manual however, different shades should not be used on adjacent lines, as in certain conditions the lighter colour may appear white when seen in direct comparison with the standard yellow.¹

- 6.4.11.4 The Task Group also noted that it was no longer necessary to have the accompanying “no waiting at any time plate” to double yellow lines, unless there were loading restrictions. In the context of removing unnecessary street signs it was therefore recommended that they be removed on a case-by-case basis.

Recommendations:

That a review of the condition and legality of waiting lines be undertaken.

That a 75mm size line be used for all routes with a speed limit of 40mph or less, which are outside the conservation areas

That the use of yellow line markings to No.310 (primrose) or No.353 (deep cream) with a 50mm width should be considered in all conservation areas, to minimise impact.

That “At Any Time” plates be removed on a case-by-case basis.

6.4.12 Street Name Plates

- 6.4.12.1 The Task Group was advised that the effective design and installation of street name plates was essential for the efficient functioning of the postal and emergency services as well as for the convenience and safety of the general public. It was also noted that street nameplates were commonly viewed from an angle and therefore it was important that legible lettering was used.

- 6.4.12.2 On undertaking a review of guidance with respect to street name plates within Transport for London, Streetscape Guidance, Section 9 *Technical Guidance: street furniture by third parties* it was recommended that that initial capital letters and lower case lettering should be used for the majority of street name plates. It was further recommended that a minimum “x” height of 75mm and a maximum of 90mm be used.²

Recommendation

That the “x” height for all street nameplates for junctions off the Primary Routes should be 90mm in height. Otherwise for all the other routes within a study area that an “x” height of 75mm be adopted.

¹ Department for Transport *Traffic Signs Manual* 2006 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-manual> p144

² Transport for London, Streetscape Guidance, Section 9 *Technical Guidance: street furniture by third parties* <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/streetscape-guidance-2009-street-furniture-by-third-parties-109.pdf>

6.4.13 Tourist Signs

- 6.4.13.1 White on Brown tourist signs are part of the family of directional signs. TA 93/04¹ and TA 94/04², published by the Department for Transport amended previous legislation relating to tourist signs. It sought to provide clearer advice on tourist signing appropriate to meet the needs of the tourism industry and road users in general, and which is consistent with safe and efficient traffic management and with minimal impact on the environment. This allowed a wider range of tourist attractions, amenities and facilities to apply for signs. This circular however made it clear that eligibility for signing does not mean automatic entitlement to signs, but that this depends upon a decision by the Council.
- 6.4.13.2 Special circumstances apply to requests for signs on motorways and trunk roads, as laid out in TD 52/04³. These will be subject to consideration by the Highways Agency.
- 6.4.13.3 The Task Group were advised that tourism signs were not intended to provide advertisements for individual tourist establishments nor were they part of the council's promotion of the tourist industry in general. Their intention was to enable visitors find a pre-selected destination along the most appropriate route at the latter stages of their journey, particularly where destinations are difficult to find.
- 6.4.13.4 It was noted that the council had a criteria for tourism signs, dated 2002. This was linked to national criteria and included details of what constituted a tourist attraction and when brown tourism signs would be installed.
- 6.4.13.5 Whilst considering de-cluttering of signs the Task Group was mindful of the historical and natural tourist destinations within Medway that, allied with special events organised to celebrate them, were of national and indeed international significance. The level of tourism generated, was of major importance to the economy of Medway and its immediate area. Therefore, the provision of appropriate signing was important.
- 6.4.13.6 The Task Group heard evidence from officers and at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event as to:
- instances where tourism signing had been provided where a destination had not met the required criteria and that in those instances they should be replaced with black on white destination signing, if appropriate.

¹ *Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England: Guidance for Tourist Signing- General Introduction* Department for Transport and the Highways Agency 2004

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmrb/vol8/section2/ta9304.pdf>

² *Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England: Guidance for Tourist Signing- Local Roads* Department for Transport and the Highways Agency 2004

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmrb/vol8/section2/ta9404.pdf>

³ *Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England: Tourist Signing – Trunk Roads* Department for Transport and the Highways Agency 2004

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/ha/standards/dmrb/vol8/section2/td5204.pdf>

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- the use of 'gateway signs' directing drivers to areas having multiple tourism destinations, commercial and non-commercial.
- the Local Authorities (Transport Charges) Regulations 1998, which provide a means for a council to recover its costs, including administrative ones for tourism signing.
- The use by many visitors of satellite navigation systems or equivalent and therefore less emphasis on the need for destination signing.
- The need for a consistent approach on tourism/historic signs.

6.4.13.7 It was also noted that Medway Council officers were planning to update the tourism signage policy in the future and were waiting for the outcome of the bid for World Heritage Status for the dockyard and its defences, as this would itself necessitate major changes in signage. This review would continue to reflect both national guidance and the council's commitment as a destination of culture, heritage, tourism and sport; providing a manageable strategy for providing traffic signs which meets the needs and requirements of the operators of quality tourist establishments in Medway and the tourists themselves. Decisions should therefore be made after consultation with tourism destinations within Medway.

Recommendation:

That a Tourism Signing Policy be developed based on TA 93/04 'Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England: Guidance for Tourist Signing – General Introduction', that is mindful of Medway Council's bid for World Heritage Status for Chatham dockyard and its defences. Decisions to be made after consultation with tourism destinations within Medway.

6.5 Quality Assessment Process

6.5.1 Quality Audit is a process whereby a series of discrete evaluations are collected and given due consideration¹.

6.5.2 Throughout the evidence considered by the Task Group was the need for a clear assessment procedure that captured decision-making. This would start with an audit to provide a detailed framework of the existing situation, recording street furniture type, location and condition. This would then enable problems to be identified in a systematic manner and identify if an item was redundant, poorly located or designed².

6.5.3 In response to concerns raised at the De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event assurances could therefore be given that any concerns regarding road safety and the proper functioning of the street had been addressed.

¹ Department for Transport *Manual for Streets 2* 2010
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets-2>

² Transport for London *Street Clutter Reduction Guidance* April 2010
http://www.tfl.gov.uk/microsites/legible-london/downloads/Street_Clutter_Reduction_Guidance.pdf

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6.5.4 The Task Group considered and supported a proposed assessment procedure for reducing street furniture and signage. This would enable, as part of maintenance and new projects, the more fundamental question to be asked; of whether particular items of street furniture and signage was needed at all. This methodology would enable officers to start to review the street from the perspective of a blank sheet and facilitate potential removal and hence tidy up of street furniture and signage.

Recommendation:

That experienced officers from traffic/road safety and highways maintenance, together with an officer with a design background walk roads in any study recording and commenting on:

- **All forms of road signing including road markings.**
- **The feasibility of rationalising signs thereby reducing sign numbers.**
- **The appropriateness of existing signs and whether they supported the existing traffic regulation orders on site.**
- **The material of the existing signs.**
- **The condition and size of existing signs.**
- **The location of each item of street furniture or marking.**
- **Whether there would be any safety implications if the street furniture or markings were removed.**
- **Whether additional furniture or signs are appropriate.**
- **The requirements for existing guardrail.**
- **Whether street lighting could be reduced and improved, with the assistance of a street lighting engineer.**

Additionally, when items at crossing locations have been identified for removal that discussion should be undertaken with relevant groups representing the visually and mobility impaired.

The study should also include:

- **Litter bins: condition, location and need.**
- **Bus shelters: location and condition.**
- **Bollards and other similar street furniture.**
- **Traffic Islands, condition and comments on the crossing locations.**

All information be recorded on data sheets, including a decision / recommendation for each individual item of street furniture. The results of the on-site surveys can then be collated and formalised with relevant photographs inserted to provide a readable spread sheet, which identified each item of street furniture, material, location, condition and whether the sign was required or could be reduced in size.

6.6 Applying Streetscape design principles in Medway

6.6.1 The Task Group discussed the possibility of a pilot scheme, which would assist in the development of a Medway Streetscape Manual and supporting policies by enabling the streetscape design principles covered by this review to be applied. Officers advised that the capital programme for Medway's third Local Transport Plan contained a £50,000 budget for a pilot de-cluttering pilot.

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- 6.6.2 The Task Group noted that consideration would need to be given as to how much could be achieved within this budget but were also mindful of the five level process to improving existing streets set out within *Better Streets Strategy*¹ (as set out in paragraphs 6.1.11). This staged approach to delivering better streets presented an indicative scale of improvement that was linked to the scale of cost and time to implement.² Substantial improvements could therefore be achieved through stages one-to-four in the course of routine maintenance or such small scale improvements.
- 6.6.3 The Task Group considered that Strood High Street represented an interesting location that would enable a review of a number of the design principles. The selection of the town centre for a pilot was supported by evidence presented by officers and also from the comments received at the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event:

Case Study from Stakeholder Event: Strood High Street



Stakeholder Comments related generally to the number and location of signs and the volume of pedestrian guardrailing. Other comments ranged from the lack of soft landscaping and the positioning of A Boards, to the need to widen the footways through combining the use of poles and a review traffic routes and traffic management.

- 6.6.4 Recognising that the quality of the streetscene was not solely within the purview of the Council, and specifically in response to a comment made at the De-cluttering Stakeholder Event as to the implications of shop fronts and advertising on the visual amenity of the street, it was recommended that local businesses within the pilot area be advised of the de-cluttering pilot and encouraged to review their shop fronts and advertising during the course of this process.

¹ Mayor of London *Better Streets* 2009 <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Better%20Streets.pdf>

² *Transport for London Five Stages of Improvements*

<http://urbandesign.tfl.gov.uk/Design-Guidance/Better-Streets/BetterStreets/FiveStages.aspx>

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Recommendations:

Prior to the final approval of the Streetscape Manual, Pedestrian Guardrail Policy, Signage Policy and Street Furniture Policy that a pilot scheme, funded via the Local Transport Plan, be undertaken in Strood High Street from Gun Lane to Station Road. This pilot will be used to inform the final manual and policies.

Recognising that the quality of the streetscene was not solely within the purview of the Council that local businesses within the pilot area be advised of the de-cluttering pilot and encouraged to review their shop fronts and advertising during the course of this process.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Streets are not simply channels for moving people through quickly; they are also destinations in their own right and places where people interact and undertake activities.
- 7.2 Excessive street furniture can have a severe impact on the public realm. Clutter has been criticised locally and nationally for undermining the character and distinctiveness of the public realm, creating safety and accessibility issues and promoting a 'highway dominated' environment.
- 7.2 The Task Group has explored minimising visual clutter and obstacles and balancing the demands of community living and transport pressures to support creating better-balanced streets. Consideration has been given to current legislation, government policy and established best practice in relation to street clutter. The Task Group has also reviewed the current picture in Medway and hosted a De-Cluttering Stakeholder Event to understand the needs of local interested parties.
- 7.3 It was noted that routine maintenance represented a major opportunity for local authorities to improve streets. Rather than simply replacing damaged signs or bollards, the more fundamental question of whether they were needed at all should be considered with a view to facilitating their potential removal. The adoption of good practice in relation to de-cluttering could therefore make significant improvements to the quality of the public realm in Medway, with an associated impact on future maintenance costs.
- 7.4 It was proposed that Medway Council systematically de-clutters its public spaces on a case-by-case basis and in association with future maintenance work and new capital schemes. This approach, rather than a de-cluttering project for the whole of Medway that would require additional council funding, has the advantage of enabling the uniqueness of different streets, with different purposes and vehicle and pedestrian flows, to be explored.
- 7.5 What has been clear was that street clutter builds up over time, with street furniture and signage introduced as a result of a range of projects and requests from various groups and individuals. In response, and to proactively manage the street design, a central recommendation was the development of a Streetscape Manual for Medway and supporting policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings. This was recognised as a key tool in addressing street clutter by putting in place standards of control. The approach would improve the accessibility and aesthetics of the streetscape and by designing clutter out from the start, reduce installation and future maintenance costs.

- 7.6 As some level of assessment or auditing was required before removal, proposals were also brought forward for the methodology to be used as part of the assessment in future maintenance or new capital schemes. Simply put this process would review what street furniture/signing was required and look to place it into a defined zone; justifying its inclusion, rationalising its location and making it work harder.
- 7.7 It was noted that many authorities were looking to improve the aesthetics of the street scene by reducing and rationalising street furniture. Invariably, they were also concerned regarding any possible litigation claims that may be brought against them, for removal of street furniture or not providing street furniture. As detailed in Section 4, this has been tested in court.
- 7.8 To help develop the Streetscape Manual and its supporting policy documents a pilot scheme was recommended in Strood Town Centre.
- 7.9 In line with existing national policy and guidance, recommendations were proposed that seek to remove from the streets what is either unnecessary or undesirable. The specific recommendations are as follows:

1. That Medway Council systematically de-clutters its public spaces on a case-by-case basis and in association with future maintenance work or new capital and developer initiated schemes. That all Ward Members are consulted before the removal of any street furniture in their wards as part of the de-cluttering programme.

That an overarching Streetscape Manual, supported by policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings, would guide this process and these policies be tested as part of a pilot de-cluttering scheme in Strood Town Centre.

Streetscape Manual

2. That the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture develops a Streetscape Manual to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to the design, management and maintenance of our public spaces. The Streetscape Manual would include policies relating to street furniture, traffic signs and road markings.

Street furniture

3. That a Pedestrian Guardrail Policy for Medway be developed and implemented. Prior to the implementation of this policy, pedestrian guardrail assessments should be undertaken in

accordance with Transport for London's 'Guidance on the Assessment of Pedestrian Guardrail', May 2012.

The Integrated Transport team within the Regeneration, Community and Culture Directorate to lead on proposals to retain or remove pedestrian guardrail.

A record of all street furniture removed, will be recorded in CONFIRM (the Council's Asset Management System), so that collision monitoring can continue at sites where street furniture is removed.

4. That sections of bollards and railings be removed on a case-by-case basis. Where parking restrictions exist bollards should not be required and it is recommended that they be removed. At locations where there is an absence of parking restrictions, the introduction of specific verge parking restrictions should be considered to control parking at these locations. If bollards are required at certain locations then these should be of a consistent type.
5. That authorisation is obtained from the Department for Transport for all manufacturer types so to be able to replace the base-lit traffic bollards with either self-righting unlit retro reflective bollards or self-righting solar powered bollards.
6. That the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture investigate the potential for reducing the number of lamp columns on Medway's streets by adopting a more cost effective and sustainable lighting system, and installing traffic signals on lighting columns at certain locations.
7. That a policy on 'A' Boards, tables and chairs, and shop front displays be developed, that balances the needs of businesses and the public's expectation of an unobstructed highway.

Signage and Road Markings

8. A Signage Policy for Medway be developed and implemented, incorporating:
 - a) a review of destination signage;
 - b) the removal of warning signs unless there are genuine hazards that would not be readily apparent to the driver without the sign;
 - c) a review of existing Traffic Regulation Orders;
 - d) a risk-based analysis and individual site assessment undertaken when considering placing only one of the safety critical signs, such as 'No Entry' where it may still be appropriate to place two terminal signs;

- e) consideration of the spacing of repeater signs in their relation to other repeater and terminal signs;
 - f) consideration be given to placing repeaters on 'major roads' within 100m of 'minor road' junctions that have a lower speed restriction and that the lower speed limit terminal signs on the 'minor road' be removed.
 - g) only terminal speed limit signs on principal roads should be lit;
 - h) that the size of signs be reduced where applicable
 - i) worded and diagrammatical markings, such as 'Keep Clear' and 'Slow', should be assessed to establish if there is a need for their retention;
 - j) an assessment of hatchings for each island;
 - k) A review of the condition and legality of waiting lines;
 - l) The use of yellow line markings to No.310 (primrose) or No.353 (deep cream) with a 50mm width should be considered in all conservation areas to minimise impact.
 - m) a 75mm size line be used for all routes with a speed limit of 40mph or less, which are outside the conservation areas.
 - n) 'At Any Time' plates be removed on a case-by-case basis as they no longer require restriction plates unless there are loading restrictions
 - o) the "x" height for all street nameplates for junctions off the Primary Routes should be 90mm in height. Otherwise for all the other routes within a study area that an "x" height of 75mm be adopted.
9. A tourist signing policy be developed based on TA 93/04 'Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England: Guidance for Tourist Signing - General Introduction', that is mindful of Medway Council's bid for World Heritage Status for Chatham dockyard and its defences. Decisions to be made after consultation with tourism destinations within Medway.

Quality Assessment Process

10. The following methodology be used as part of the assessment on any maintenance work or new capital scheme:

That experienced officers from traffic/road safety and highways maintenance, together with an officer with a design background walk roads in any study recording and commenting on:

- All forms of road signing including road markings.
- The feasibility of rationalising signs thereby reducing sign numbers.
- The appropriateness of existing signs and whether they supported the existing traffic regulation orders on site.
- The material of the existing signs.

De-cluttering Medway's Streets

- The condition and size of existing signs.
- The location of each item of street furniture or marking.
- Whether there would be any safety implications if the street furniture or markings were removed.
- Whether additional furniture or signs are appropriate.
- The requirements for existing guardrail.
- Whether street lighting could be reduced and improved, with the assistance of a street lighting engineer.

Additionally, when items at crossing locations have been identified for removal that discussion should be undertaken with relevant groups representing the visually and mobility impaired.

The study should also include:

- Litter bins; condition, location and need.
- Bus shelters; location and condition.
- Bollards and other similar street furniture.
- Traffic Islands, condition and comments on the crossing locations.

All information be recorded on data sheets, including a decision / recommendation for each individual item of street furniture. The results of the on-site surveys can then be collated and formalised with relevant photographs inserted to provide a readable spread sheet, which identified each item of street furniture, material, location, condition and whether the sign was required or could be reduced in size.

Pilot Scheme

11. Prior to the final approval of the Streetscape Manual, Pedestrian Guardrail Policy, Signage Policy and Street Furniture Policy that a pilot scheme, funded via the Local Transport Plan, be undertaken in Strood High Street from Gun Lane to Station Road. This pilot will be used to inform the final manual and policies.
12. Recognising that the quality of the streetscene was not solely within the purview of the Council that local businesses within the pilot area be advised of the de-cluttering pilot and encouraged to review their shop fronts and advertising during the course of this process.

Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate	Name of Function or Policy or Major Service Change Task Group on De-Cluttering Streets in Medway		
Officer responsible for assessment Andy McGrath, Assistant Director Front Line Services Anthony Law, Democratic Services Officer	Date of assessment June 2013	New or existing? New	
Defining what is being assessed			
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	<p>The Task Group on De-Cluttering Streets in Medway has held a number of meetings and a Stakeholder Event to take evidence from individual and organisations with an interest in this area.</p> <p>The Task Group has considered current legislation, government policy and established best practice in relation to street clutter.</p> <p>The Task Group has come up with a number of recommendations. These propose a systematic approach to de-cluttering public spaces, with de-cluttering undertaken in association with future maintenance work or new capital schemes. It is also proposed that a Streetscape Manual for Medway is developed, with supporting policy documents covering street furniture and signage.</p> <p>This assessment focuses primarily on the recommendations for Council services to be undertaken by officers. In taking these forward officers will be asked to ensure that they comply with equalities obligations in line with good practice and legislation.</p>		
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	<p>Residents of Medway and visitors to Medway.</p> <p>With Medway's <i>rich heritage and great future</i> its streets are not simply channels for moving people through quickly; they are also destinations in their own right. Locations where people can interact and undertake various activities. Working within the remit of this review the Task Group has explored how minimising visual clutter and obstacles, using sustainable materials and balancing the demands of community living and transport pressures can support the creation of better-balanced streets.</p>		
3. What outcomes are wanted?	<p>The Task Group's terms of reference were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review legislation, government policy and 		

	<p>established best practice in relation to street clutter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider the current picture in Medway against national guidelines and best practice elsewhere • Take views from relevant stakeholders • To bring forward recommendations to reduce street clutter in Medway by way of future design principles. <p>Recommendations seek better-balanced streets through a systematic approach to de-cluttering public spaces. This in turn can result in fair and accessible streets and efficiency savings.</p>	
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	<p>Contribute</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate Member and officer support for the recommendations • Funds 	<p>Detract</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of action and resources to implement the recommendations
5. Who are the main stakeholders?	Local residents, Medway Council and community organisations.	
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	Medway Council as local highways authority	
Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial/ethnic groups</i>?	NO	The Task Group did not receive any specific information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact due to racial/ethnic groups. The recommendations are applicable to all and officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities in line with the council's equality commitment.
What evidence exists for this?		

<p>8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The Task Group received information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact due to disability, although the impact recorded was on the impact of not addressing street clutter. The recommendations seek to address concerns raised to the Task Group by people with impaired mobility or people who are blind and partially sighted. Officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>	<p>As part of the evidence base for this review views were obtained from the Medway Disabled Residents Forum and Guide Dogs. An easy read survey was also developed to ascertain the views of people with a learning disability</p>	
<p>9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The impact of the recommendations is intended to meet the needs of both women and men.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		
<p>10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The Task Group did not receive any specific information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact due to sexual orientation. In line with the council's equality commitment the recommendations are applicable to all and officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		
<p>11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The Task Group did not receive any specific information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact due to religion or belief. The recommendations are applicable to all and officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities in line with the council's equality commitment.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		

<p>12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's age?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The impact of the recommendations is intended to benefit all age groups, as appropriate within Medway's community.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		
<p>13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i>?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The Task Group did not receive any specific information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact due to transgender. The recommendations are applicable to all and officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities in line with the council's equality commitment.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		
<p>14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. speakers of other languages; people with caring responsibilities or dependants; those with an offending past; or people living in rural areas)?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The Task Group did not receive any specific information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact to any other group. The recommendations are applicable to all and officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		
<p>15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability <u>and</u> age)?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>The Task Group received limited information in its evidence sessions concerning a potential differential impact due to multiple. The recommendations are applicable to all and officers taking forward any recommendations would need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities.</p>
<p>What evidence exists for this?</p>		

<p>Conclusions & recommendation</p>		
<p>16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>Officers when taking forward the recommendations will need to ensure that any revisions to services are accessible to all communities.</p>
<p>17. Can the adverse impact be justified on the grounds</p>		<p>Proposals for a streetscape manual and policies relating to street furniture and</p>

of promoting equality of opportunity for one group? Or another reason?	NO	signage are intended to make improvements to the highway for the benefit of all communities.
Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	
NO, BUT ...	What is required to ensure this complies with the requirements of the legislation? (see DIA Guidance Notes)?	The development of the Streetscape manual and supporting documents relating to signage and road markings will need to be mindful of the council's quality commitment.
YES	Give details of key person responsible and target date for carrying out full impact assessment (see DIA Guidance Notes)	

Action plan to make Minor modifications		
Outcome	Actions (with date of completion)	Officer responsible

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review		
Date of next review	No further review planned.	
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)	N/A	
Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?	N/A	
Signed (completing officer/service manager)	Date	
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)	Date	