

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO PLACE  
SELECT COMMITTEE**

**18 JANUARY 2017**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC  
GROWTH AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

**PROPOSED CEREMONIAL BOUNDARY SIGNING SCHEME**

**SUMMARY**

This report updates Place Select Committee on the current position on the Borough Boundary Signs Review.

Approval is being sought for a scheme to mark the North Yorkshire / County Durham ceremonial boundary following a scrutiny review undertaken by Place Select Committee at four locations crossing the River Tees.

Appropriate legislation is now in place to introduce these signs following the introduction of the 2016 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and it was agreed to consult with the Committee prior to the signs being installed.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Committee consider and provide comments on 18 January as part of the consultation prior to the introduction of ceremonial boundary signs.

**DETAIL**

**Background**

**Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016**

1. Signing policy must comply with National regulations and guidance issued by DfT as prescribed in TSRGD, which includes guidance for boundary signs. DfT had previously insisted that only an individual County/Borough/District/village/town name could be signed.
2. Following consultation on draft proposals, the DfT encourage greater flexibility in their design to enable authorities to foster a better sense of place by including historic and geographic references. To enable this, the new TSRGD includes the ability to sign historic county boundaries, designated geographical areas and designs incorporating photographic images.
3. The new Regulations prescribe that boundary signs allow a place name to be preceded by 'County of' / 'ceremonial county of' / 'historic county of'. The place name may be followed by the appropriate authority for the administrative area with a phrase similar to 'County Council' or 'County Council welcomes you'.

**Existing Borough boundary signs (Appendix 1)**

4. Information about existing boundary signs was presented in the June 2014 Technical Note which also presented the views of the Council in response to the DfT consultation.

5. The Borough has ceremonial boundaries with County Durham and Yorkshire (North Riding). Stockton was anciently located in County Durham but the Borough boundary extended south of the river into Yorkshire. The River Tees still marks that historic boundary.
6. **Appendix 1** indicates the highway boundaries with neighbouring Authority areas that have signs identifying the Stockton Borough boundary.
7. Following the recommendations of Place Select Committee and due to site constraints, ceremonial boundary signs are not proposed at A1032 Tees Newport Bridge Approach Road and A178 at the Transporter Bridge, along with the Strategic Road Network on A66 at Surtees Bridge and A19 Tees Flyover.

#### **Proposed measures (see Appendix 2)**

8. It is proposed to mark the ceremonial boundary by installing signs on both sides at 4 locations crossing the Tees; Council of Europe Boulevard in Teesdale, A1130 Bridge Road at Victoria Bridge, Queen Elizabeth Way and A67 at Yarm Bridge / Yarm High Street. 8 new signs would be installed at 1.50m high on 2 new posts per sign. The specific position of the signs would be subject to further consideration particularly given their proximity to bridge structures and where there are already a number of directional/information signs.
9. Ceremonial boundary sign designs are at **Appendix 3**. It is considered that North Riding of Yorkshire is more specific to the boundary and can be represented by the initials "N.R".

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Funding the installation of new boundary signs would be required via the Capital Programme. Estimates have not been obtained.

#### **POLICY CONTENT**

The proposals are consistent with DfT Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

#### **CONSULTATION**

Affected Ward Members and Town/Parish Councils would be informed of the scheme in due course. Place Select Committee previously considered the matter with appropriate recommendations at **Appendix 4**. As part of the scrutiny review, a Borough wide public consultation was publicised in November – December 2015.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Central Government is keen that local people are encouraged take pride in their local identities. Stockton on Tees is the only Council area in England or Wales to be split between two ceremonial counties. Historic county boundaries references are permitted under the new signing regulations. The new TSRGD acknowledges that Councils are best placed to know what signing is suitable for their roads.

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## Environmental Implications

Reducing sign clutter was one of the key recommendations from a previous DfT review. Over proliferation of road signs can have a detrimental impact on the environment and can dilute important messages and contribute to driver distraction.

## Background Papers

Technical Note – Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2015 consultation response (June 2014).

DfT consultation on the revised Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2015.

DfT policy paper Signing the Way October 2011.

Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

Place Select Committee Report (05/10/2015)

Consultation November-December 2015