



AGENDA ITEM: 8(a)

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
30 September 2010**

Report of: Council Secretary and Solicitor

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Owens

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**SUBJECT: CALL IN ITEM – SPONSORSHIP OF ROUNDABOUTS AND OTHER
PARTS OF THE HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE**

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the reason for the call in of the decision on the above item, as set out in Minute No. 50 of the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 September 2010.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee determines whether it wishes to ask for a different decision.

2.2 That if the Committee does wish to ask for a different decision, the Committee indicates which of the options set out at paragraph 5.1 below, it wishes to pursue.

3.0 DETAILS RELATING TO THE CALL IN

3.1 The report attached as an Appendix to this report was considered at Cabinet held on 14 September 2010.

3.2 The following decision of Cabinet is contained at Minute No. 50:

“50. SPONSORSHIP OF ROUNDABOUTS AND OTHER PARTS OF THE HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Councillor Owens introduced the report of the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates which provided details of an existing Lancashire County Council (LCC) scheme for businesses to sponsor traffic islands and the potential for opportunities for businesses in West Lancashire to sponsor other parts of the highway infrastructure and sought authorisation to enter into a partnership agreement with LCC. In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the LCC scheme for the sponsorship of roundabouts and other highway infrastructure and the opportunity to secure enhanced landscaping maintenance and other environmental improvements on such sites be noted.
 - B. That it be noted that LCC is to submit applications for advertisement consent on the 12 roundabouts listed in Appendix A.
 - C. That subject to Planning Committee approval at B above, and in the event of local companies agreeing to sponsor the roundabouts referred to, the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates be authorised to:
 - (i) Enter into a partnership agreement with LCC to use sponsorship income to provide enhanced maintenance/improvements on the sites, the details of which would be determined by the income generated by each scheme.
 - (ii) Request LCC to secure additional sponsorship deals for other parts of the highway infrastructure in the Borough, notably gateway sites and subways, under a similar partnership agreement.
 - (ii) Approach the Highways Agency and major companies in the Pimbo and Gillibrands Employment Areas to consider the sponsorship of subways under the M58 motorway and the long term maintenance of the approved works and progress discussions with Lathom and Our Lady Queen of Peace R.C. High Schools regarding the subway that leads to the two schools.
 - D. That delegated authority be given to the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to enter into all necessary agreements and to take forward individual schemes.”

3.3 The following reason for call was given in the requisition:

“The report does not cover the possible unintended consequences of the proposed scheme in sufficient detail.”

3.4 The requisition also provided an alternative decision which was:

“That the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates provide a further report covering the following possible unintended consequences and providing recommendations as appropriate:

- The possible low take-up of the sponsorship opportunities, as witnessed in other towns where similar schemes have been attempted, and the consequent detraction to visual amenity without compensating gain;*
- The relationship between this scheme and recent views expressed by government that ‘street furniture’ should be kept to a minimum (both for visual amenity and safety reasons), with the consequent danger that the scheme might run counter to government policy and need to be terminated early.*
- The possible negative impact on roundabouts where there is already a ‘charitable’ designation (e.g. Hope Island) and on roundabouts in which there has been significant investment in public art, and regarding which public consultation is desirable.*
- The possible negative impact on roundabout maintenance in the event that contracts with sponsors are insufficiently developed to ensure the maintenance of standards.”*

3.5 The following Members of the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee signed the requisition for call-in in accordance with the provisions of Overview & Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 15:

Councillor B Nolan
Councillor I Moran
Councillor C Mawdsley
Councillor N Furey
Councillor R A Pendleton

4.0 COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE MANAGER REGENERATION AND ESTATES

4.1 West Lancashire Borough Council’s (WLBC) engagement in this scheme is the basis of this report. The Highway Sponsorship scheme will be delivered and implemented (subject to planning committee approvals) by Lancashire County Council (LCC) whether or not WLBC are involved. WLBC officers are wishing to

engage with LCC and Market Force to try to help the scheme be a success and to help support the local economy.

4.2 As mentioned, LCC will deliver and implement the scheme without WLBC's involvement therefore a further report would only result in delaying our input into the scheme. The following comments are therefore provided and are hoped to help alleviate any concerns raised.

- Market Force has received 11 expressions of interest from local companies, ranging from nursery schools to taxi companies to leisure organisations. One company has been particularly keen to advertise on a prominent site in Skelmersdale for some time.

Once knowledge of the scheme is more widespread, it is expected that there will be considerable interest from other local companies. WLBC officers engage with many businesses across the Borough on a regular basis and by using our contacts and networks it is hoped that we will be able to assist with the success of the scheme.

- The thrust of the comments made by Eric Pickles MP related to clutter being caused by unnecessary street furniture, such as traffic signs, railings etc.

When considering proposals for advertisement consent, local planning authorities should consider whether signs will create unacceptable clutter. The Planning Committee will have the opportunity to consider each scheme on its merits, including the particular location of the site and the presence of any other advertisements nearby.

- Market Force originally proposed to submit proposals for Hope Island, but was advised not to proceed with the scheme by WLBC officers as the siting of commercial signage on this site would detract from the artwork and the association of the roundabout with Marie Curie Cancer Care.

With regard to other roundabouts, which have benefited from investment in public art, involvement in the scheme will enable WLBC officers to liaise directly with LCC and Market Force to safeguard the benefits of such investment. Clearly, we would not wish to undermine the benefits of providing attractive public artwork.

In addition, the affect of advertisement signs on the visual amenity of a site (which could include the affect on artwork) is a material consideration in the processing of applications for advertisement consent.

- LCC has legal agreements with Market Force regarding the standard of maintenance for the signs. The maintenance of the landscaping will be a matter for WLBC Street Scene, using the funding provided from the companies that sponsor each roundabout. The extent of any additional maintenance will be limited to the funds received for each site.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Following consideration of the decision of Cabinet, the requisition for call in and the comments of the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates, the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee can decide if it wishes to ask for a different decision. If the Committee does not wish to ask for a different decision then the decision of Cabinet takes immediate effect. If the Committee does wish to ask for a different decision, it may:
- a. refer the decision back to Cabinet (as the decision making body) for reconsideration, setting out the different decision; or
 - b. refer the matter to Council. If the matter is referred to Council and Council does not object, then the decision of Cabinet will take effect immediately from that Council meeting date. If the Council does object, then the decision and the objection will be referred back to Cabinet (as the decision making body) for reconsideration.
- 5.2 The Secretary of State in his Guidance recommends that Overview & Scrutiny Committees should only use the power to refer matters to the full Council if they consider that the decision is contrary to the policy framework or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Report of the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates.