KENT COUNTY COUNCIL - RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TAKEN BY Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member Environment Highways and Waste	DECISION NO. 11/01652

If decision is likely to disclose exempt information please specify the relevant paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

Subject:

Changes to the policy, Management of Obstructions on the Highway.

Decision: To implement a streamlined arrangement for the administration of advertising boards, by removing the formal application process, charging and licensing arrangement. To ensure guidance is adhered to by anyone placing an A-board on the highway, supported by a publicity and awareness campaign.

Any Interest Declared when the Decision was Taken

None

Reason(s) for decision, including alternatives considered and any additional information Background Documents:

Advertising boards, commonly referred to as A-boards, must be placed in accordance with KCC's requirements as set out in the guidance so the public can move freely and safely along the highway

A survey of 581 premises has reported that across Kent the majority of businesses (74%) are complying with existing guidance. It is therefore considered that a formal application process, charging and licensing arrangement is unnecessary and should be removed from the policy. KCC has recently consulted with Town Centre Management Groups, Districts, City, Borough and Parishes Councils to seek assistance and support that will encourage even higher levels of compliance and promote alternative methods of advertising.

KCC will adopt a number of approaches to providing clear guidance on A Boards. Front line personnel and partner organisations who engage with local businesses will
- undertake a direct awareness campaign with businesses to highlight the need to consider all highway users, their customers and the requirements for placing A-boards
- deliver an awareness campaign for businesses to consider and adopt other methods of advertising off the highway to reduce the number of boards placed
- work with partner organisations to improve compliance using KCC Highway Stewards to increase awareness. KHS will have the ultimate sanction to take enforcement action in accordance with legislation set out in the Highways Act 1980 and with KCC'S new guidelines
- provide direct advice, and follow through on businesses that do not comply with face to face contact and communication
- measure compliance after 6 months to review the effectiveness of this approach

Discussion and demonstration of the practical difficulties experienced by visually impaired users has

helped KHS staff to identify best practice regarding A Board placement and type.

These proposals simplify the process for the management of A-boards by delicately balancing control and safety, without the need to formally regulate local businesses. It is recognised that time will be saved by not having to process licences, but self enforcement will be needed from businesses with the support of Town Centre Management groups and local Councils. Highways Officers will begin to issue advice in accordance with the new guidelines and raise awareness of the dangers that inappropriate use of A boards can cause. Work will also be undertaken with local planning authorities to encourage more considered advertising methods.

Officers will have the ultimate sanction to take enforcement action in accordance with legislation set out in the Highways Act 1980 and with KCC's new guidelines. Kent Highway Services will not hesitate to use enforcement powers if businesses wilfully ignore advice given. Compliance will be measured after 6 months to monitor the effectiveness of this proposal.

signed _(signature)_   date: _5th May 2011_

FOR LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES USE ONLY

Decision Referred to Cabinet Scrutiny			Cabinet Scrutiny Decision to Refer Back for Reconsideration			Reconsideration Record Sheet Issued			Reconsideration of Decision Published
YES		NO		YES		NO		YES		NO		