The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee - 10 September 2015

Agenda Item	21
Report No	CIA/54/15

Inverness City Centre - Proposed Wayfinding Project

Report by Inverness City Area Manager

Summary

This report summarises the outcome of a recent review and analysis of wayfinding in Inverness city centre and explains how people's understanding of the city could be could be improved by adopting a Legible City approach. It sets out initial steps to develop this approach, including consultation with relevant stakeholders to produce a prototype map. Members are asked to approve the appointment of a consultant to undertake this preparatory work.

1.   Background

1.1   Wayfinding is the term used for signs, maps and other devices that convey information about location and directions to visitors and residents. In the context of Inverness city centre, it is the information needed to know where you are, your choice of destinations and how to get there from your present location.

1.2   In 2014 the Integrated Transport Manager commissioned a review and analysis of wayfinding in Inverness city centre. The purpose of this study was to look at the current provision of pedestrian wayfinding information, assess its effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

1.3   The study concluded it is difficult for visitors and many residents to plan journeys in advance and to fully appreciate all that Inverness has to offer when navigating the streetscape. Shortcomings in the range and quality of information available include:
- Signage that is often difficult to read due to inappropriate text sizes, unsuitable typographic formats and information overload;
- An unhelpful profusion of sign types and sizes, contributing to a strong sense of visual clutter;
- No evidence of an easily-recognisable city-wide signage style/presentation and little evidence of city branding;
- Lack of alignment between pre-visit planning information (e.g. printed maps and on-line guidance) and wayfinding information on the ground;
- Absence of a free-to-use mapping system that could assist visitors when navigating through the cityscape.

1.4   There is a strong case for taking action to upgrade wayfinding information in Inverness city centre in anticipation of forthcoming improvements to Inverness Rail Station, regeneration activity on Academy Street and potential changes at

the Castle and surroundings. Wayfinding is also relevant to "The Trail" that will map and signpost the river physically and digitally, as part of the RNFAS Public Art Project. These developments may contribute to or enable the Council to access grant funding towards the cost of improving wayfinding and orientation for visitors and residents.

2. A Legible City

2.1 The 2014 study recommended a series of steps to improve the wayfinding experience in the city centre based on a "Legible City" approach. A Legible City connects people, movement and places effectively by co-ordinating all relevant information - online, wayfinding, mapping, signage and municipal - to work seamlessly together. Often this includes the development of a network of directional signs, street information panels with maps, printed maps, and plaques. Usually these physical systems are combined with digital mapping to facilitate use of smart technology.

2.2 UK cities that are using this approach include Glasgow, London, Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Sunderland and Southampton. Appendix A illustrates examples of panels and signs used in Glasgow.

2.3 The Legible City approach focusses on improving people's understanding of a city to make it more engaging, welcoming, accessible and easily understood. It can have the added benefit of de-cluttering streetscape and showcasing an easily recognisable city brand.

3. Preparatory work

3.1 Adopting a Legible City approach involves two important initial steps:

a) **Harness support from the wide range of individuals and organisations with an interest in wayfinding and signage issues in the city centre**
Getting buy-in to the Legible City approach involves targeted consultation to demonstrate the potential benefits of improved mapping and signage in the city and secure feedback on relevant priorities. Relevant stakeholders include Council Services, Inverness Access Panel, High Life Highland, Inverness BID, Old Town Traders, Eastgate Shopping Centre, Abellio Scotrail, HIE and Inverness College UHI.

b) **Develop a prototype map, using current "legible city" best practice, for a sample area of the city centre**
The information content of this map, both images and text, derives from the consultation exercise. A draft map is circulated to consultees before finalising the prototype.

3.2 Appendix B lists the typical content of a prototype map and monolith sign displaying map and wayfinding information. It also illustrates what a typical monolith sign might look like. (It is not envisaged that monolith design will form part of the preparatory work.)

3.3   Members are asked to approve the appointment of the consultant who undertook the 2014 review and analysis of wayfinding in the city centre to carry out this preparatory work.

4.   Next Steps

4.1   The Inverness City Arts Working Group considered the Legible City approach to improving wayfinding in the city centre at their meeting on the 6 August 2015. The Working Group agreed to recommend to the City of Inverness Area Committee the appointment of a Consultant to engage with and secure buy-in from relevant stakeholders and to develop a prototype map which would be funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund up to a maximum of £5,000.

5   Implications

5.1   Resource
The consultant's fee for the work described in this report will be less than £5000. There are sums available within the Inverness Common Good Fund City Promotions Budget for this preparatory work.

5.2   Equality
Equality of access is a cornerstone of the Legible City approach to wayfinding.

The Council will ensure that its equality obligations are met throughout the process of consulting on and developing the prototype map.

5.3   Gaelic
The Council will ensure that its dual language obligations are met in developing the prototype map.

5.4   Climate Change/Carbon Clever
A legible city approach improves the pedestrian experience in the city centre and helps to promote active travel, which can contribute to reducing car dependency.

5.5   Rural, Legal and Risk Implications
There are no known direct implications with respect to these issues arising from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1) NOTE the proposal to develop a new wayfinding system in Inverness City Centre, based on a "Legible City" approach; and

2) AGREE to the appointment of a consultant to engage with and secure buy-in from relevant stakeholders, and develop a prototype map, funded by the Inverness Common Good Fund up to a maximum of £5,000.

Designation: David Haas, City Area Manager
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Date: 28 August 2015

Wayfinding equipment in Glasgow city centre

Finger signs

Monolith

Prototype Map

Suggested contents of a prototype map for a sample area of Inverness City Centre, using current "legible city" best practice:

• street names and road names
• location names
• river
• public art projects
• green spaces
• railway
• primary building footprints
• 2d drawings of landmark buildings
• transport entry points
• bus stops, taxi points
• underpasses and steps
• public amenities
• 5 minute walking time circle
• you are here mark
• off map destination pointers
• other information as identified through consultation with city centre stakeholders

Prototype monolith sign
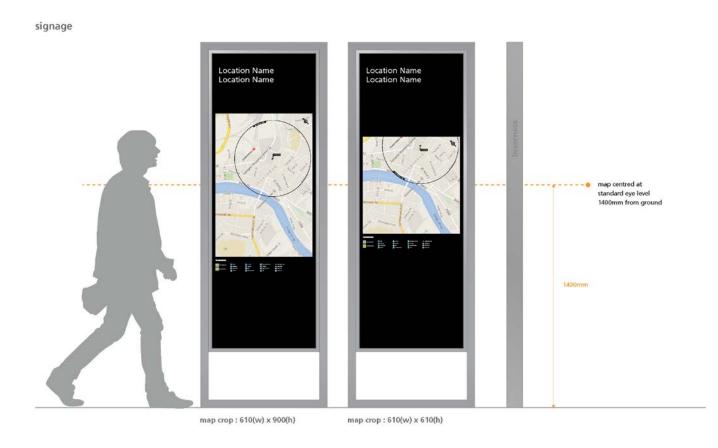
Suggested contents for a prototype monolith sign:

• Location information
• City centre map (as above), orientated to suit direction of view
• Heads-up representation of streetscape ahead, with annotations
• Wayfinding directions
• Orientated city overview diagram diagram to show location of city centre map, city zones and key transport interchanges
• City branding

NOTE:
Graphic layout, text sizes and typographic styles to be selected to conform to best practice in respect of viewing heights, viewing distances, colours and contrast values.

Dual language (English / Gaelic) to be used as required by current Highland Council guidelines.

APPENDIX B (con'd)
Sketch proposal for typical monolith

signage

Location Name
Location Name

Location Name
Location Name

map centred at
standard eye level
1400mm from ground

1400mm

map crop : 610(w) x 900(h)   map crop : 610(w) x 610(h)