

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 26th January 2012

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Enhancement of Variable Message Signs System

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report requests the Sub-Committee's agreement to the award of a contract for the supply, installation and commissioning of 3 Variable Message Signs to enhance the existing system. The report identifies significant benefits arising from operating systems that are compatible with neighbouring authorities. Procurement is therefore proposed to be restricted to one supplier and the waiving of standing orders is sought.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.7 be waived to obtain equipment that uses the same communication systems as our existing signs to ensure compatibility; and**
- 2) The quotation from Siemens Traffic Controls for the supply, installation and commissioning of 3 Variable Message Signs for £47,501.00 be accepted.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 On 16 November 2006, the Executive Board Sub-Committee approved a report for the provision of Variable Message Signs (VMS) on the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, to provide information on traffic conditions and proposed works. Ten signs have now been installed and are operational, and we are generally receiving good feedback regarding the information supplied. However, a number of requests have been received to provide information, particularly in advance of Knowsley Expressway, so that drivers can take an alternative route to avoid any problems on the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

3.2 The provision of better information to the travelling public will become more important with the proposed construction of the Mersey Gateway. Works will impact on traffic flows, particularly on the approaches to Ditton Roundabout and Bridgewater Interchange. The proposed additional signs will help in providing better information.

3.3 It is proposed to install additional signs at the following locations, subject to the approval of this report:

- A561 Speke Boulevard (outside former Metal Box Factory) (Liverpool City Council have agreed to a sign at this location)
- A5300 Knowsley Expressway (subject to identifying a suitable power supply) (Knowsley Council have agreed to a sign at this location)
- B5419 Kingsway, Widnes (near Simms Cross School)

3.4 The existing signs are controlled via a computer in Rutland House and arrangements have been made for the signs to be activated outside of office hours by the staff within the 24/7 Team at the Contact Centre. The Contact Centre staff have a library of pre-determined legends, which they can set when requested by the Police or the Highways On Call staff. For planned events the system is programmed in advance to switch the signs on/off. The system is continuing to be developed to improve the information provided to the travelling public and the information is now available on the Council's website <http://www3.halton.gov.uk/doitonline/localtrafficreportmaps/>

3.5 In the previous report it was agreed to develop the provision of journey time data for journeys across the Silver Jubilee Bridge via the website. The initial system using our Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras is now operational. It is still planned to expand the system utilising data from the Cheshire Police ANPR system to provide additional data on traffic flows within the Borough which mainly covers the routes across the Silver Jubilee Bridge, however the implementation has been delayed due to reduced resources within the Police and ourselves.

3.6 The proposed system developments are further steps to ensuring that the Council can comply with the Traffic Management Act that requires local highway authorities to provide improved information to drivers on traffic conditions and to monitor traffic flows. It is likely that the system will need to be expanded further, if funding is available.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Under the Traffic Management Act there is a requirement to provide information to drivers on traffic conditions and to monitor traffic flows. The provision of information using VMS assists in fulfilling this duty.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resource Implications

5.1.1 Funding for the installation costs of the three signs will be provided through the Risk Management Capital Budget. If one sign is

purchased then the cost is £20,933.00, hence it is more economical to purchase three signs at the cost of £47,501.00. There will also be some costs for the provision of electricity supplies and traffic management for the installation of the signs; this should be about £3,000.00 in total.

- 5.1.2 Operational costs will be met through the Intelligent Traffic Systems Revenue Budget. Each sign costs about £310.00 pa (power £210.00 and communications £100.00) to operate. In addition, the annual sign maintenance contract is about £1,000.00 per sign after the guarantee period ends. It is proposed to pay for any repairs as required rather than have a maintenance contract, although when the Traffic Signal Maintenance Contract is due for renewal the option of including the maintenance of the signs will be investigated.

5.2 Social Inclusion Implications

- 5.2.1 None

5.3 Sustainability Checklist

- 5.3.1 Under the Traffic Management Act there is a requirement to provide information to drivers on traffic conditions and monitor traffic flows. Providing better information to the travelling public helps reduce congestion and delays, which results in reduced pollution and frustration to motorists.

5.4 Value for Money

- 5.4.1 The use of tried and tested systems, which are already in use by neighbouring authorities and ourselves, provides good value for money.

5.5 Legal Implications

- 5.5.1 None

5.6 Crime and Disorder Issues

- 5.6.1 None

5.7 Human Rights Act Implications

- 5.7.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The avoidance of unnecessary delays and queuing of traffic can reduce air pollution.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Safer Halton' priority

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal' priority

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no risks associated with this report and therefore a risk assessment is not required. Road traffic signs that present warnings and advice to road users at critical decision making points on the network, need to be readily understood by the majority of drivers and this practice is in accordance with the legislation for road traffic signs.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising as a result of the proposed action.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Report to Executive Board Sub Committee 16 Nov 2006 Variable Message Signs & Journey Time Monitoring System	Internet	N/A