

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	26 November 2020
By	Communications & Engagement Manager
Title of Report (Note)	Entry Signage Phase II: Progress update

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- I. Note the progress on delivering the Entry Signage Phase II project.

I Introduction

- I.1 A priority for our communications and engagement work has been, and remains, to raise the profile of the National Park among residents, visitors and within wider regional, national and international arenas.
- I.2 It was a conscious decision not to create entry signs until the SDNPA was fully established and had developed its own identity, track record and distinctive policies. This has all now been achieved.
- I.3 The Entry Signage is about much more than physical signs. It is about creating a sense of place and positively impacting on people's understanding of the value of the National Park in the busiest region of the UK and in the wider national and international context. The agreed goals for the entry signage project were to:
 - raise awareness/profile of the National Park as a place of national and international importance;
 - create a strong and positive sense of arrival;
 - support the duty of the SDNPA to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park;
 - enhance the 'sense' of place' and understanding of the National Park and its special qualities;
 - to encourage positive attitudes towards the National Park;
 - influence expectations and behaviour; and to
 - underpin our income generation work.
- I.4 With over 600km of border and around 2,000 entry and exit points, it was agreed that it was neither practical nor of benefit to signpost every route. Instead, Members agreed a set of location and design principles that guided the delivery of the Pilot Phase and continues to guide the work during Phase II.
- I.5 Signs were installed at 19 locations in the Pilot Phase and a further 32 are planned for Phase II.
- I.6 See **Appendix I** for the combined (51) locations of Phase I (Pilot) and Phase II. See **Appendix 2** for the (19) locations for Phase I (Pilot). See **Appendix 3** for the (32) locations for Phase II.

2 Background

- 2.1 In November 2016, following a recommendation by the P&R Committee, the National Park Authority (NPA) agreed to proceed with a pilot entry signage programme of up to 20 signs. Nineteen signs were subsequently installed, with one being withdrawn due to issues raised by the relevant parish.
- 2.2 In June 2019 a lessons learned paper was brought to the P&R Committee and the learning from this paper fed into the development of Phase II.
- 2.3 In July 2019, the National Park Authority (NPA) approved work and expenditure on Phase II of the Entry Signage project.

3 Assessing the Pilot

- 3.1 After the Pilot Phase had been completed and 19 signs were installed, we carried out a review of the project to gather lessons learned that would feed into a recommendation as to whether to proceed with a further phase of entry signs. This was approved in July 2019
- 3.2 The lessons learned paper assessed the Pilot Phase against three key questions: Did it achieve the goals agreed by Members?; Did it meet quality, cost and time?; and what lessons learned could be taken forward to any phase II. It was agreed that we could answer positively yes to all of these questions.
- 3.3 Another important part of assessing the success of the Pilot Phase was to get feedback from the public. After the first batch of signs were installed in early Spring 2019, we issued a press release and also went out proactively on social media and asked people “What do you think of our new bespoke entry signs?”. We had a large response with over 1450 liking the post and well over 100 comments, all positive. The majority of the comments received have been extremely positive comments on the design, their appropriateness for this important landscape and quite a few comments referring to it being ‘about time’.
- 3.4 We have been approached by a number of parishes excited by the project wishing to have an entry sign or a parish sign for their community. A separate project “Communities of the South Downs”, working with parishes and communities, is now underway.
- 3.5 The final step in assessing the Pilot has been to do a visual inspection of the 19 signs installed. This visual inspection has now been completed and a number of small issues have been identified including dripping from the lettering and some shifting of the wood on a small number of the hybrid signs. These findings have been fed into the new project, leading to tweaking of the designs to overcome any issues identified.

4 Phase II

- 4.1 Using the location and design principles agreed by Members, 32 sites were identified for Phase II. A full application for advertising consent was made to the Authority’s planning committee and consent was given in November 2019.

5 Procurement and safety checks

- 5.1 Building on lessons learned in the pilot phase, the decision was made to separate the procurement into two separate contracts, one for manufacture and another for installation. The Invitations to Tender were sent out in November 2019. Tara Signs, based in Lancing, won the manufacturing contract and A J Wells, based in the Isle of Wight, won the installation contract.
- 5.2 As with the Pilot Phase, all passive safety, windloading, structural safety and road safety checks were carried out.

6 Project timing

- 6.1 The original timeline was to have all of the Phase II signs manufactured and installed by the end of the financial year 2020/21.
- 6.2 Covid 19 and the first lockdown had an immediate effect on the project, shutting down the Tara Signs Factory for the duration of the lockdown, it also meant a redeployment of our communications and engagement resources on public facing comms and engagement. With the easing of the first lockdown, the factory reopened and work once more began on the project. So far, the factory has been able to remain open during the second lockdown. However, there has been an understandable knock-on effect on the project timeline. We

are now on track to sign off prototypes by the end of November, with all manufacturing completed by February. We estimate that at least half of the signs will be in place by the end of March 2021, with the remainder being installed by the end of Q1. This is dependent on no further impacts of Covid on the factory or installation, and on the successful and timely securing of licenses from the relevant highways authorities.

7 Budget

- 7.1 A full invitation to tender was sent out for both the manufacturing and installation contracts and both contracts have been awarded within budget. There is also room in the budget allocated to this project by members in the 2019/20 budget round to accommodate additional costs identified during installation should any arise, and to cover the maintenance issues identified in the visual check of the Pilot Phase signs.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 While there has been a delay of three months due to Covid 19 restrictions, Entry Signage Phase II is now back on track for delivery.
- 8.2 Phase II and the maintenance work identified during the Pilot Phase review, both come within budget.

9 Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No. No further signs are proposed at this time.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No. The project is within budget.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	A full review of the Pilot Phase was carried out. A competitive and full Invitation to Tender was issued and contractors were appointed after a shortlisting process.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	No
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes. The introduction of signage is not considered to have any equalities implications. The design and siting of the signs is such that they do not impact on access or visibility.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:	None

10 Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

10.1 While there are no risks directly associated with the paper, there is an ongoing risk that further Covid spikes may impact on the project timeline.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Further Covid restrictions impact on the project timeline	Medium	High	Close contact is being maintained with the signage manufacturer and a revised phased timetable for installation is being worked on with the installation company.

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Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Map combined locations of Phase I and Phase II2. Locations for Phase I (Pilot)3. Locations for Phase II
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager, Head of Fundraising and Marketing; Chair of P&R Committee, Deputy Chair of P&R Committee
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/NPA_2019July2-Agenda-Item-17.pdf

Appendix 1: Entry Signage Phases I (Green) and II (Red)



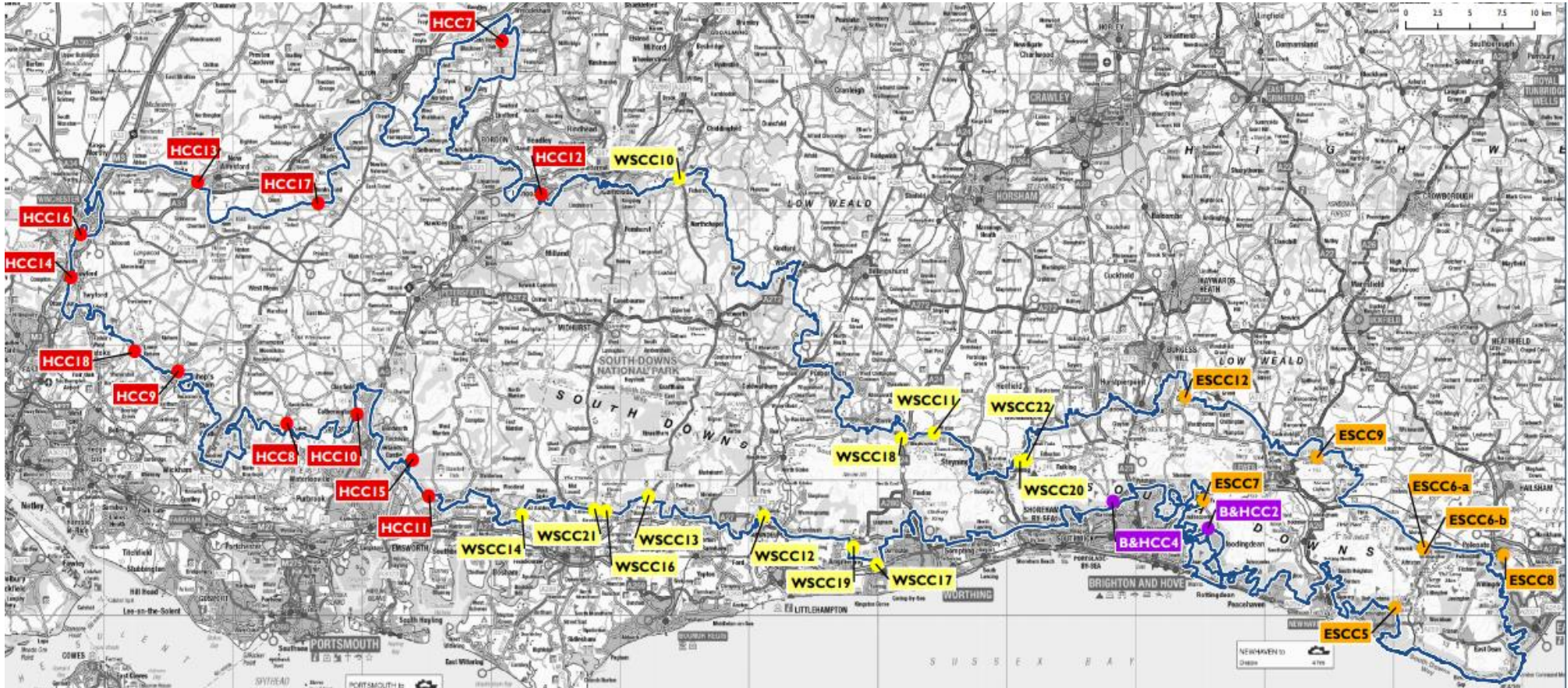
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Appendix 2: Entry Signage Phase I



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Appendix 3: Entry Signage Phase II



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