Pedestrian Wayfinding In The City Centre And The Demarcation Of The World Heritage Site Boundary

Planning Committee
4 October 2012

1 Purpose of report

1.1 To respond to the Motion by Councillor Mowat dated 22 December 2012 regarding the demarcation of the World Heritage Site and its status.

2 Summary

2.1 At its meeting of 22 December 2011 the City of Edinburgh Council approved a Motion by Councillor Mowat calling for a report that examined how the Council could both delineate the boundary of the World Heritage Site (WHS) and promote its status as such within those boundaries. This report considers these and other related matters and describes arrangements that have been put in place to secure the provision of a new pedestrian wayfinding system in the city centre and the demarcation and promotion of the WHS. A copy of the motion is attached as Appendix 1. The report has been discussed with Councillor Mowat.

3 Main report

Background

The World Heritage Site (WHS)

3.1 The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site was inscribed on the World Heritage List by the United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1995. UNESCO requires all World Heritage Sites to have in place a management plan to ensure that the special qualities that make it important are protected and enhanced. In addition, the Scottish Government requires all World Heritage Sites in Scotland to develop management plans in order to provide a framework for their protection, promotion and enhancement
and that plans are updated every 5 years. The first management plan for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh was published in 2005. The second was approved by the Committee at its meeting in May 2011 and provides a framework for the management of the Site until 2016.

3.2 An objective of the current management plan is to raise awareness of the World Heritage Site through interpretation, guidance and promotional activities. How this is to be achieved is described in a World Heritage Site Action Plan, which was approved by the Committee in March earlier this year. Key actions of the Plan in this respect include:

- **Action 1.2** – encourage greater exploration of the World Heritage Site through:
  - the use and display of information on pedestrian wayfinding systems (to be developed and delivered through the Council’s Active Travel Action Plan);
  - develop an approach to the demarcation of the World Heritage Site boundary.

- **Actions 1.6** – in collaboration with key partners, develop and launch an Edinburgh World Heritage City smart phone application.

Pedestrian wayfinding

3.4 The development of an appropriate pedestrian wayfinding system for the city centre is presently being discussed with relevant services within the Council and key partner organisations, including Historic Scotland, Edinburgh World Heritage, Essential Edinburgh and Marketing Edinburgh. These discussions are part of a wider review of the provision of street furniture for the City as a whole and which the Council may seek to secure through new contracts with outdoor advertisers as and when the opportunity arises. The wider review is being taken forward by a cross-departmental working group.

3.5 The review has been informed by a study prepared by Edinburgh World Heritage (which is available as a background paper to this report). This has examined a variety of navigator systems in use in towns and cities in the UK and abroad. The study provides a useful starting point in the development of proposals for the city and in particular within the WHS. There is a consensus among those involved in this exercise that the system should:

- be map based;
- be easily translated to other formats e.g. print, internet and smart phone applications;
- comprise a family of objects e.g. interpretation boards and signs;
- give confidence to pedestrians;
- promote a connected city.
3.6 Also of interest to this exercise is the success of the ‘Legible London’ initiative developed by the Mayor of London’s office and Transport for London as part of its Strategic Walk Network. The initiative has delivered a consistent and distinctive signage system that not only provides wayfinding information to tourist attractions and public buildings but also contains realistic walk times to places within a five and fifteen minute time range. The initiative is briefly referred to in the ‘Wayfinding Study’ prepared by Edinburgh World Heritage, available as a background paper to this report, and in Appendix 2.

3.7 The Council’s current advertising and street furniture contracts will come to an end in autumn 2014. The cross-departmental working group referred to above is working towards the preparation of draft replacement contracts by the end of this year and to issue tender documents to potential bidders in August 2013. The City’s requirements for wayfinding signage and the demarcation of the WHS boundary will form part of these contracts. A report on this matter will be presented to a relevant committee of the Council by the end of this year.

Demarcation of the WHS boundary (see Appendix 3)

3.8 UNESCO’s operational guidelines state that:

- the delineation of boundaries is an essential requirement in the establishment of effective protection of nominated properties [Sites]. Boundaries should be drawn to ensure the full expression of the Outstanding Universal Value and the integrity and/or authenticity of the property (Article 99); and,

- … boundaries should be drawn to include all those areas and attributes which are direct tangible expressions of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property [Site]… (Article 100).

3.9 The demarcation of the WHS boundary can be considered in two ways; firstly as a tool to orientate the visitor geographically, placing the Site as a whole in its wider context, and secondly as a means of physical navigation through the use of features that inform and educate the visitor. This is typically achieved through the use of highway and gateway signs, including brown heritage signs and finger posts, brass plates or paving on the ground to delineate boundaries and interpretation panels.

3.10 All installations and features used to promote a WHS, including the use of the WHS emblem, are required to comply with UNESCO’s operational guidelines. The guidelines require measures to be put in place to prevent the emblem being used for purposes not explicitly recognised by the World Heritage Committee i.e. those that are inaccurate, inappropriate or used for unauthorised commercial or other purposes. The Committee notes that the emblem has fund-raising
potential that can be used to enhance the marketing value of products with which it is associated. In Edinburgh the WHS emblem can be found inscribed into a slab of Caithness stone at the Mound (see Appendix 4). It is expected that following the review of street furniture provision the emblem will become a more widely used and prominent feature in wayfinding within, and in the demarcation of, the WHS, for example through its use on street name plates, other signs and public buildings.

3.11 In addition to traditional methods of navigation and interpretation new technology is providing opportunities to develop smarter and more immediate methods of engagement to guide and inform visitors. Solutions in use or in development throughout the UK and elsewhere include the creation of smart phone applications, the use of Quick Read (QR) codes, digital navigation panels located in key locations and locational and information services delivered via devices that employ GPS technology (Global Positioning System). A number of examples of systems in use in the UK and abroad are provided in Appendix 2.

Active Travel Action Plan (ATAP)

3.12 The work being undertaken in respect of pedestrian wayfinding and the demarcation of the WHS boundary will meet two headline ‘walking’ actions set out in the ATAP, namely a commitment to review pedestrian signage and wayfinding by the end of 2012, taking full advantage of both traditional and new technology, and to increase the promotion of walking as a means of transport as part of an active travel communications strategy.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no immediate financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

5 Equalities Impact

5.1 There is no relationship between the matters described in this report and the public sector general equality duty. There is no direct equalities impact arising from this report. A full Equalities Rights Impact Assessment will be undertaken on the new advertising and street furniture proposals.

6 Environmental Impact

6.1 There are no adverse impacts on the environment associated with this report. The demarcation of the WHS in an appropriate manner will raise awareness of the World Heritage Site.
7 Conclusions

7.1 The review of the Council’s advertising and street furniture contracts provides an opportunity to review pedestrian wayfinding signage in the city centre and consider the installation of a new system of navigation for pedestrians and cyclists. As part of this exercise, consideration is also being given to how best to delineate the boundaries of the World Heritage Site and promote the city’s status as such. A cross-departmental working group has been established within the Council to co-ordinate this review, to collaborate with the Council’s key partners and other interests as the project develops, and to identify in broad terms the form and type of street furniture for possible inclusion within new contracts and an appropriate means of delineating the WHS boundary. The review is being informed by an assessment of navigation systems in place elsewhere in the UK and abroad and methods of demarcation of WHS boundaries at other Sites.

8 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

a) notes that arrangements have been put in place to co-ordinate a review of pedestrian wayfinding signage in the city centre and the consideration of appropriate methods of World Heritage Site boundary demarcation and promotion; and

b) discharge the Motion by Councillor Mowat approved by the City of Edinburgh Council on 22 December 2012.

Mark Turley
Director of Services for Communities

Appendices

1. Motion by Councillor Mowat dated 22 December 2011;
2. Pedestrian wayfinding systems and examples of demarcation signage at other World Heritage Sites;
3. The World Heritage Site boundary;
4. The World Heritage Site Emblem, The Mound;

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Wards affected
City Centre, South Side/Newington, Meadows/Morningside, Inverleith, Corstorphine/Murrayfield.
Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs, and opportunities for all. Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.

2. The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Action Plan;

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Appendix 1

Motion proposed by Councillor Mowat and decision of the City of Edinburgh Council at its meeting of 22 December 2011

Item 23

Edinburgh World Heritage Site – Motion by Councillor Mowat

The following motion by Councillor Mowat was submitted in terms of Standing Order 28:

"Council recognises the importance of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site in terms of its contribution to the city’s economy and quality of life and agrees to bring forward a report in 2 cycles examining how the city could both delineate the site’s boundaries and promote the World Heritage status within those boundaries in an appropriate manner."

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Mowat.
Appendix 2

Pedestrian wayfinding systems and examples of how other World Heritage Sites mark their boundaries.

Legible London

Legible London is a pedestrian wayfinding system that has been developed by the Mayor of London’s Office and Transport for London (TfL) in collaboration with a number of London Boroughs. The initiative seeks to promote walking through the use of consistent and distinctive signage and accurate information on distances/walk times between areas. The system presents information in a variety of ways, including maps and signs, to help people find their way. The system is integrated with other transport modes so that when people are leaving the Underground system, for example, they can quickly identify a route to their destination.

Legible London is working successfully in parts of London, including much of the West End, South Bank and Richmond and Twickenham, and user feedback shows support for an expansion of the system throughout the Capital. TfL is now working with borough councils, Business Improvement Districts and other organisations to expand the system further.

Pilot: South Bank and Bankside

The area, running alongside the River Thames, includes a number of visitor attractions and attracts approximately 20 million visitors every year. Many people coming to the area travel into Waterloo, a major transport hub with links for local transport connections. The pilot covered a section of the Thames Path and Jubilee Walkway, part of TfL’s Strategic Walk Network. Key aims of the pilot included:

• signposting a group of major attractions, including the London Eye, National Theatre and Tate Modern
• further developing the system to show a complex urban environment, including bridges, multi-level walkways and the river;
• helping people change between transport modes in the area more easily, including bus, tube, train and river services around Waterloo.

Developing the scheme further

TfL is working with London boroughs, developers and other organisations to introduce Legible London in more areas of the Capital and developing ways of using maps in a range of formats, including:

• printed walking maps;
• bus stop maps;
• tube station maps;
• guidebooks; and
• on-line maps.
Bordeaux

Bordeaux, Port of the Moon WHS, provides a good example of how QR codes can be used in the navigation and interpretation of a World Heritage site. The Bordeaux City Council has developed an initiative called Digital City Project that has seen the installation of QR codes on a variety of items of street furniture, including bus shelters and parking meters, at key points of access the WHS. The system allows visitors to access WHS based information on significant buildings, monuments and streets at any time via their smart phones. The system is regarded as a success and is being further developed.

Bath

The City of Bath as a whole is inscribed as a WHS. As such the city council is able to utilise gateway signs to both welcome visitors and promote its WHS status.
Stonehenge & Blaavon

Entry to the World Heritage Sites at Avebury (Stonehenge) and Blaavon is marked by a series of roadside signs at key locations. Interpretation panels to orientate the visitor physically is contained within each visitor centre.

The ‘Jurassic Coast’, East Devon & Dorset

The ‘Jurassic Coast’ extends for 95 miles from East Devon to Dorset. The challenge has been to provide signage and interpretation features that are consistent and complementary along the entire WHS boundary and at key locations. The approach has been to install WHS information/interpretation panels at railway stations/public buildings located within or close to the WHS and to install signs at key ‘gateway’ towns and major settlements.
Appendix 4

World Heritage Site Emblem at the Mound