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The purpose of this report is to confirm or otherwise change the policy adopted by the Council in July 1998 and to clarify the actions of staff in undertaking enforcement of the policy.

The Mayor has written to the High Street Medical Centre stating he understands the frustration of that business, situated on the 1st Floor of the AXA Centre 248 High Street, in not being able to place a signboard in Hereford Street outside the Arcade entrance. In the letter he states he will be asking the Environment Committee to revisit the topic.

In addition it is understood Councillors have been approached by Goldfields Collectables in the Shades Hereford Arcade re a sign in Hereford Street and Lotto signs from an outlet in the AXA Arcade.

These matters have arisen from enforcement action from staff of the Environmental Services Unit in accordance with the Council's policy.

The current policy was adopted by the Council in 1998 after considerable discussion and after seeking the views of the Inner City Promotion Team and Community Boards. The matter of businesses without a street frontage, particularly in Arcades, was taken into account in the process, hence the provision in the policy of the following:

(d) Shops in Arcades fronting, or alley ways opening, onto Malls (ground floor and upstairs) may have one mobile multi-signboard placed by the entrance way to each arcade.

In the case of areas of the Central Business District the policy states:

- (a) Signboards shall not protrude more than 200mm into the public place parallel to the premises frontage.*
- (b) As an alternative to (a) one only free standing signboard may be placed on the kerbside per business, outside that business.*
- (c) Upstairs shop(s) with a street entrance, may have one free standing signboard (multi advertising if necessary) per building placed on the kerbside outside the entrance to that business.*

In the cases of Goldfields Collectables, the High Street Medical Centre, and the Lotto Shop in the AXA Arcade, I understand the problem also relates to signboards being placed at the Hereford Street entrances to the Arcades. Hereford Street has, compared with the City Mall areas, a standard footpath width that is available for pedestrians. The 1997 NZIV Pedestrian Count was 1,207 along Hereford Street by the AXA Arcade, compared to 1189 in the AXA Arcade, and a count of 2449 close to the Shades Arcade Hereford. Signboards, even single boards, in these areas would restrict pedestrian space to a degree, particularly if placed at right angles to the buildings. It should be noted that there is the ability to place signboards parallel to the footpath outside businesses which, provided they do not extend more than 200mm out from the building frontage, would not significantly impede pedestrian traffic.

The problem with signboards associated with Arcades is that of the large number of business premises without street entrances. In the case of the AXA Arcade, for example, there are about 23 potential separate businesses each of which could have a signboard. They could, of course, place these in the entrance apron to the Arcade off the roadway (and in some cases this has been done), but of course space is generally limited there also. It has been suggested that the policy could allow one multi-signboard for every eight businesses, for example, but this would increase the amount of street space taken and, because of the necessary height, could be seen as a reducing the visible amenity of the open space area, particularly in the City Mall. In the case of Hereford Street, as pointed out above there is only a normal footpath width to place signboards and a multi-signboard would be a significant intrusion into that space.

When the Environmental Committee considered the adoption of the policy at its meeting in June 1998 the report stated:

The Council must then accept that the policy will be enforced. It is considered by the officers responsible for enforcement that clear backing by all Councillors, and senior officers, of the policy and the enforcement provisions, is needed otherwise the policy will again fail to be complied with. In such a case it is not useful to undertake the introduction of the policy.

The Council, if it wishes, may reconsider the policy, but it must be appreciated that permitting each business within an Arcade to have an individual signboard on the footpath or in the Mall could create considerable congestion. Where an Arcade has entrances on two streets there could be an expectation that signboards would be able to be placed on footpaths on both streets. In the Central Business District problems have been experienced at the Shades Arcade, the AXA Centre, the Triangle Centre, the Gloucester Arcade, and previously at Cashfields. In some of these Arcades at present there are a significant number of empty shops, but the potential for a large number of signs to be placed on the road is real.

Recommendation:

1. That the policy on signboards on malls not be reviewed at this time and the Council support the enforcement action set out in the policy.
2. That an investigation be carried out for alternative ways to solve this problem, working with Arcade tenants to produce a multi-signboard at the beginning of each of the Arcades.