

# Tourist Signing Policy

---

## 1. DEFINITION

- 1.1 A “tourist destination” is defined as a permanently established attraction which attracts or is used by visitors to an area and is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.

## 2. GENERAL POLICY

- 2.1 To ensure that tourist confidence is upheld in the white on brown system of direction signing to tourist attractions and facilities it is essential that a minimum level of quality is maintained and that the provision of tourist signing does not lead to a proliferation of direction signing to the detriment of road safety and the environment.
- 2.2 For these reasons the provision of tourist signing will only be considered:
- to permanently established sites which are open to visitors without prior booking for a minimum of 4 hours a day, 150 days per year
  - to sites whose primary purpose is to provide an attraction or facility for tourists-tourist signing will not be permitted at locations where other directional signing (including private signing) exists, or is to be provided
  - where their provision is considered essential to direct visitors to an attraction or facility-signs will not be approved at locations where their provision would be mainly for promotional or advertisement reasons
  - for sites where other eligible establishments in the vicinity would not be compromised by their provision
  - at locations where the effectiveness of existing traffic signs will not be adversely effected
  - in areas where their provision will not detract from the visual environment.

## 3. TOURIST ATTRACTION REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 Tourist attractions will generally include places of interest open to the public which attract visitors to the area and offer recreational, educational or historical interest. These include, for example, theme parks, historic houses, museums, zoos and leisure complexes.

3.2 In addition to the general conditions stated in paragraph 2.2, tourist attractions must also comply with all of the following conditions to qualify for the provision of tourist signing:

- The owners or management of the attraction must provide confirmation that they have registered with the English Tourist Board (ETB) and have agreed to abide by its Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions (for reasons of their national interest English Heritage and National Trust properties are exempted from this requirement)
- The applicant must provide evidence that appropriate steps have been taken to publicise the attraction and to inform potential visitors of suitable approach routes
- There must be adequate on-site facilities for visitors, including parking, appropriate to the size of the site and the number of visitors which it is likely to attract.
- Where off-site parking is provided it must be within a safe reasonable walking distance of the attraction.
- If the off-site car park is not owned by the operator of the attraction, written confirmation that such use is permitted must be provided.

3.3 Attractions will only be signed from the nearest A or B Class road or the nearest signed settlement. Those with direct access to such a road will not need signing if the entrance is visible and identifiable from a sufficient distance to enable safe vehicular movement at the access.

Signing from motorways and trunk roads will be considered in accordance with the Highways Agency's own criteria, and will be subject to their approval. Where an attraction meets these criteria, consideration should be given to signing from the nearest of these roads.

Signing to attractions in urban areas should be considered in conjunction with any signing to tourist facilities and should form part of a comprehensive scheme developed in conjunction with the local Council, Tourist Officer, business associations and other local representative bodies. Priority should be given to directing tourists to appropriate public car parks and to providing Tourist Information Centres (TICs) or Tourist Information Points (TIPs) within the car parks. Signing to attractions could then take the form of pedestrian signing.

Subject to road safety and traffic management considerations outlined in Section 7, as a general rule no more than six destinations (less on high speed roads), of which not more than four should be tourist destinations, should be included in any sign structure. It may be necessary to prioritise tourist destinations with primary and other local destinations, and where necessary, tourist destinations may be prioritised on the basis of visitor numbers or closeness to the initial signing.

Directional signing to the attraction must satisfy the environmental requirements listed in Section 6. To reduce environmental impact, where an attraction requires signing through more than two junctions, consideration should be given to providing signs of the “For X, follow Y” type, utilizing where possible existing signing legends rather than providing additional continuity signing.

#### **4. ASSESSMENT OF TOURIST FACILITIES**

- 4.1 The provision of signing to tourist facilities will only be considered where it can be shown that they will be of benefit to tourists who require serviced accommodation, refreshment, shopping, leisure facilities etc. The numbers and level of provision of tourist facilities vary across the County and between urban and rural locations. Clearly, it would be impracticable to sign every facility.
- 4.2 To avoid a proliferation of signing, basic conditions have been developed which apply to all facilities and more specific conditions for each type of facility.

##### **Basic conditions**

- 4.3 In addition to the general conditions stated in paragraph 2.2 tourist facilities must also comply with all of the following basic conditions to qualify for the provision of tourist signing:
- The owners or management of the facility must provide confirmation that they have been operating for at least 12 months.
  - The facility must meet the standards required by professional or regulatory organisations appropriate to the facility and its conduct of business and operation
  - The applicant must provide evidence that appropriate steps have been taken to publicise the facility and to inform potential visitors of suitable approach routes.
  - There must be adequate on-site facilities for visitors, including parking, appropriate to the size of the site and the number of visitors which it is likely to attract. Where off-site parking is provided it must be within a safe reasonable walking distance of the facility. If the off-site car park is not owned by the operator of the facility, written confirmation that such use is acceptable must be provided.

In addition to these basic conditions establishments will also need to satisfy the more specific conditions for the various types of facility listed below.

## **Accommodation**

- 4.5 The provision of tourist facility signing for the following types of accommodation will be restricted in both rural and urban areas to premises whose primary function is providing accommodation.
- 4.6 Hotels and Bed and Breakfast establishments must be members of a quality assurance scheme which requires independent inspection of all member premises and which are more than just marketing schemes. Those operated by the ETB, AA or the RAC are suitable.
- 4.7 Camping and Caravan sites retain their eligibility for tourist signing from the 1991 regulations. To qualify for signs a site must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act 1936 and have a minimum of 20 pitches for casual overnight use. They should also be members of the British Graded Holiday Parks Scheme ("Q" scheme) or alternatively be registered with the ETB.
- 4.8 Youth Hostels also retain their eligibility for tourist signing under the 1991 regulations and all Hostels managed by the Youth Hostels Association may be provided with tourist signing.
- 4.9 Self-catering accommodation tends to be pre-booked, with visitors receiving directions to the premises. In this situation it should not be necessary to consider such facilities for tourist signing. If evidence can be produced that self-catering accommodation is available without pre-booking and the ETB quality standard for this type of accommodation is met then the provision of tourist signing could be considered.

## **Refreshment**

- 4.10 Tourist facility signing will only be considered for establishments whose primary function is to provide refreshments for visitors to the area. This group of facilities will include restaurants, cafes and public houses, which provide food but will exclude premises whose primary function is the sale of alcoholic drinks.
- 4.11 Many premises provide refreshments and it would clearly be unacceptable to provide tourist signing to all such facilities. To do so would lead to a proliferation of signs which in many cases would be directing visitors away from equally suitable establishments. For these reasons only isolated or remote refreshment establishments and those which are promoted as tourist attractions will be considered for signing.
- 4.12 Similarly, it is proposed that there should be no tourist signing of refreshment facilities in urban areas. In these areas it is recommended that there should be greater use and signing of TICs and TIPs. In the market towns TIPs should be located in the town centre public car parks and should contain information on the attractions and facilities available. The information displayed will be a matter for the District Authorities to agree with the appropriate bodies representing the various tourist facilities and attractions involved.

4.13 In rural areas tourist signing to refreshment facilities will only be considered where:

- The facility is not located on an Class A or B Road or on a main thoroughfare. Establishments in bypassed communities will be considered under the special conditions which relate to this situation and are described in paragraph 5.2
- There are no similar facilities within one mile
- The facility must comply with all relevant Environmental Health, Planning and other legislation
- The facility must have a minimum of 20 seats available for dining and should serve hot meals at lunch times and in the evening without pre-booking.

### **Shopping**

4.14 Conventional local direction signing is already available for directing visitors to town centres, superstores etc. and this should continue to be used. Only shops which have special features specifically for tourists will be considered for signing in urban areas. The use of TICs and TIPs is considered to be most appropriate for this type of signing.

4.15 In remote areas the signing of village stores will be permissible but only in locations where their presence would not otherwise be apparent.

4.16 Garden centres which are able to demonstrate that they promote themselves to the tourist market may be considered for signing.

4.17 Generally, shopping facilities will be signed by their generic names i.e. village store, craft centre, garden centre etc. Individual naming of facilities will only be considered to prevent possible confusion between similar facilities.

### **Leisure**

4.18 Leisure facilities will include recreational facilities, sports venues, cinemas and leisure centres etc. Tourist signing will be considered if the following requirements are met:

- Theatres, cinemas and music venues must have a minimum of 50 seats
- Sporting venues must demonstrate a regional or national significance, holding regular fixtures with suitable visitor facilities.

### **Implementation Guidelines**

4.19 Facilities will only be signed from the nearest A or B Class road. Those with direct access to such a road will not need signing if the entrance is visible and identifiable from a sufficient distance to enable safe vehicular movement at the site.

- 4.20 Signing from motorways and trunk roads will be considered in accordance with the Highways Agency's own criteria, and will be subject to their approval. Where a facility meets the criteria, consideration should be given to signing from the nearest of these roads.
- 4.21 Signing to facilities in urban areas should be considered in conjunction with any signing to tourist attractions and should form part of a comprehensive scheme developed in conjunction with the local Council, Tourist Officer, business associations and other local representative bodies. Priority should be given to directing tourists to appropriate public car parks and to providing TICs or TIPs within the car parks. Signing to facilities could then take the form of pedestrian signing.
- 4.22 Subject to the road safety and traffic management considerations outlined in Section 7, as a general rule no more than six destinations (less on high speed roads), of which not more than four should be tourist destinations, should be included in any sign structure. It may be necessary to prioritise tourist destinations with primary and other local destinations, and where necessary, tourist destinations may be prioritised on the basis of visitor numbers or closeness to the initial signing.
- 4.23 Directional signing to the facility must satisfy the environmental requirements listed in Section 6.
- 4.24 To reduce environmental impact, where a facility requires signing through more than two junctions, consideration should be given to providing signs of the "For X, follow Y" type, utilising where possible existing signing legends rather than providing additional continuity signing.
- 4.25 The general requirement to admit the public without prior booking will preclude the signing of facilities that are primarily membership organisations (e.g. golf clubs).
- 4.26 Where there are two or more facilities of the same type either in an area, or along a particular route, then generic legends rather than individual ones should be used.

## **5. POLICY FOR BYPASSED COMMUNITIES**

- 5.1 The presence of "local services" in by-passed villages or small towns can now be signed using the "white on brown" tourist signs. The sign can include a short descriptive phrase, such as "Historic market town". Generic names and/or symbols can be used to indicate the facilities/attractions available (i.e. Hotels/bed symbol; restaurants/knife and fork symbol, etc).

It is reasonable to expect larger towns to provide the full range of visitor facilities and therefore, it is proposed that only settlements of 10,000 population or less which are also within 3 miles of a main road will be considered for this type of signing.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Many tourist attractions and facilities are located in environmentally sensitive

areas such as Conservation Areas. In many instances the appeal of these areas to tourists is the quality of the surroundings. A proliferation of signing in these areas would be counter-productive to the very reason for tourists visiting the area.

- 6.2 Details of tourist facilities should be provided at TICs and TIPs for which signing using the “T” symbol will be permitted.
- 6.3 In conservation areas tourist attractions may be signed but signing to tourist facilities will not be permitted. A boundary sign may be allowed at the edge of the village or town to identify the available tourist facilities. Within conservation areas signing to tourist attractions will be considered but will be subject to the approval of the Director of Environment and Regulation and the appropriate District Council Planning Officer.

## **7. ROAD SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 7.1 Signs will be provided in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 and all subsequent amendments and shall be manufactured in accordance with BS 873.
- 7.2 The number and size of signs required will depend on the road system and traffic flows and speeds. Sign design will be in accordance with good traffic management practice and will be to the satisfaction of the Director of Highways and Access.
- 7.3 If tourist signing is refused on road safety grounds, the applicant will be clearly informed of the dangers which necessitated refusal.

## **8. APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND PAYMENT FOR SIGNS**

- 8.1 All tourist signing costs should be borne by the applicant. This includes design, administration, manufacture, installation and ultimately maintenance.
- 8.2 On receipt of an initial enquiry applicants will be supplied with a self-assessment form (see below) and an application form. These will facilitate an initial self-assessment of their eligibility for tourism signing and if this appears favourable to make a full application. The form will also state the conditions relating to the provision and costs of signing and when completed and returned to the Highways and Access Directorate, with the completed application form and initial administration fee will instigate the detailed assessment of eligibility and entitlement.
- 8.3 The following costs will be borne by the applicant:
  - i. Administration and site feasibility fee -if the applicant decides to make a formal application for tourist signing he/she will be asked to provide a nonreturnable fee of £200.00 and to sign a form of agreement which sets out the pricing mechanism and their legal obligation. The fee will cover the administration time in checking eligibility, assessing entitlement, copying applications for consultation, staff time and travelling costs in carrying out the assessment of sign locations and all associated correspondence.

- ii. Design and post erection inspection fee -the full cost of these works will be charged.
- 8.4 The applicant will be expected to pay all fees in advance. The signs will be procured under the third party funding policy for highway features with the applicant meeting all works costs and a commuted sum for the maintenance of the signs during their design life. The cost of replacing signs as a result of damage vandalism or theft or at the end of their design life must be met by the applicant.
- 8.5 The County Council reserves the right to remove signs, should an attraction or facility cease to meet the relevant criteria, and to charge the operator of the attraction for the cost of this work. It may also prove necessary to relocate signs for road safety or traffic management reasons but such works would be carried out at the County Council's expense.
- 8.6 Where there is more than one destination on any sign the cost of that sign will be borne equally by the applicants.

## **9. ELIGIBILITY**

- 9.1 To be eligible for consideration for the provision of tourist signing operators must be able to answer "yes" to all of the questions below.

### **ELIGIBILITY AND CONDITIONS SELF ASSESSMENT FORM**

- 1 Does your business benefit from tourism?
- 2 Has it been operating from a permanent site for 12 months?
- 3 Is it open to visitors without prior booking for a minimum of 4 hours per day, 150 days per year?
- 4 Does it fulfil an identified tourist need?
- 5 Do visitors need directions other than normal road signs to find your establishment?
- 6 Is it open to the public without prior booking?
- 7 Are you prepared to pay all reasonable costs for signing if your application is successful?
- 8 Do you accept that any agreed signing can be removed at your cost if your facilities fail to maintain relevant criteria or move location?
- 9 If your application is successful will you remove any off site advertisement signing which you may have on or adjacent to the public highway?

#### **Notes**

- i. The administration and site visit fee is £200.00, payable at the time of application.
- ii. There are additional costs for design fees, safety audit of sign schemes designed by other than Cambridgeshire County Council, construction and erection.

- iii. Traffic management, road safety, local amenity, quality of attraction and standard of service all have to be taken into account and could, without prejudice, form the basis for rejection of your application.
- iv. The design, maximum number and locations of signs are determined by Cambridgeshire County Council and may be altered upon review of traffic management, safety or amenity needs.
- v. Applicants should not expect signing from all possible directions.
- vi. All signs become and remain the property of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Updated January 2015