

## **INTRODUCTION**

Guidance on the provision of tourist traffic signs is provided under Circular Roads 3/95. The definition within the circular is "A Tourist Attraction is now broadly defined for signing purposes as a permanently established destination or facility that attracts or is used by visitors to an area and which is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours."

Any underlying principle that influences a decision to refuse an application should be referred to in the policy.

The Authority is responsible for determining such applications.

## **PRINCIPLES OF TRAFFIC SIGNING**

Signing should direct different road users via the appropriate routes to their destinations, safely, efficiently and with due regard to the environment. Overall, there is a need to provide a high quality product while seeking to reduce sign clutter.

Direction signs will continue to be of a size, clarity and be positioned so that they can be read from moving vehicles at an appropriate time.

Sign clutter will be reduced so that essential signs have impact, are consistent and give visitor and residents alike confidence to follow the information provided. The number of supporting poles will be kept to a minimum to avoid causing difficulties with people with disabilities.

The number of destinations on the direction signs must be limited to enable drivers to take in the information provided in safety whilst driving a vehicle. No driver should be faced by signing to more than four destinations in an area with speed limits of 50 mph or more, or more than six destinations in an area with a lower speed limit.

## **TOURIST TRAFFIC SIGNING**

Local Authorities are responsible for determining applications. Eligibility under the criteria does not imply entitlement to signing, there is no right of appeal against the decision of the Highway Authority.

An application for brown and white signs should normally be approved or refused within six weeks. Consultees, e.g. Planning and Tourism Officers, should be given a response deadline of 14 days.

A non-returnable application fee of £50 will be charged as a contribution to administrative costs. Written advice for applications explaining the Authority's policy and practices on Tourist Traffic signing will be supplied before an application fee is taken. Applications forms and advice should cover:-

- (a) Any quality standards required;
- (b) Details of any relevant planning permissions;
- (c) Parking provisions;
- (d) Toilets;
- (e) Visitor numbers

Additional, charges to successful applicants will cover design and installation costs and include an element for maintenance. Applicants should sign an agreement with the Authority and payment should be made in advance.

Applications to be determined by officers but a mechanism by which appeal can be made to elected Members is recommended.

Signs are to remain the property of the Highway Authority who will reserve the right to remove or re-site the signs in the future.

On Motorways and Trunk Roads, the home Highway Authority will liaise with the Highways Agency, but the applicant will require a separate agreement with the Highways Agency.

Applicants erecting their own signs with the agreement of the Authority will need to indemnify the Authority for any claims arising and a maintenance agreement will also be required.

### **LOCAL CRITERIA**

1. Establishment must show that a significant number (at least 40%) of its visits are from outside the area (more than ten miles away), that there is a need for signs to enable visitors to find it and that it is of significant value to the local tourist market. In cases where doubt exists as to whether these conditions are met, the owners of establishment must carry out an independent survey of users at their own expense, to determine what proportion of visitors are coming from outside the ten mile area and what problems are encountered in finding it.
2. There must be sufficient on-site parking space to accommodate the numbers of visitors anticipated. Establishment must be open to people making impulse visits with normal opening hours and not just to those who have prior bookings. In the case of sports facilities, there should be minimal restrictions on visitor use.
3. Customer facilities must be adequate for the size, location and type of operation and a public toilet must be available. The establishment must be open at least 150 days of the year and at least four hours of the day.
4. The business must have planning permission and be licensed where appropriate.
5. The establishment must comply with prevailing Tourist Board standards such as the National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions.
6. In order to avoid duplications, signs will not be agreed where the establishment has already erected off-site advertisement signs (with or without planning permission) other than at entrances to the establishment. The applicant must also agree not to erect any such signs in the future. If this happens the Authority reserves the right to remove the tourist signs.
7. Hotels must be classified by an appropriate body, i.e. English Tourist Board.
8. Self catering accommodation, e.g. cottages/holiday flats, must have a minimum of ten units on site.
9. Caravanning/camping sites must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 or the Public Health Act 1936. In addition, they must have a minimum of 20 pitches available for casual overnight use.
10. Public Houses that do not serve meals will not be eligible for tourist signs. Those which do serve meals must be registered with the Council under the Food Safety Act 1990, serve meals both at lunchtimes and in the evenings without the need to pre-book, allow families with children to use the facilities, serve no or low alcoholic drinks and conform with the criterion concerning visitors from outside of the area and the need for signs.

11. Restaurants and cafes must be registered with the Council again under the Food Safety Act 1990, be open to diners without the need to pre-book. Licensed premises must also offer non or low alcoholic drinks and show compliance with visitors from outside of the area and the need for signs.
12. Mobile snack bar type establishments are not eligible for tourist signs.
13. Premises attached to petrol filling stations do not qualify for tourist signs but may be eligible, together with the petrol filling station for "services" signs. In such cases motorists must be allowed to use the public toilet without the need to purchase anything.
14. Public Houses, hotels, cafes and restaurants situated on classified roads will not normally be signed. This type of establishment, when located in the town centre will only be signed in very exceptional circumstances as there will be too many such establishments to be signed individually.
15. Long names on signs can be difficult for motorists to read. The establishment name, therefore, must not be more than three words long with only one tourist symbol permitted per facility.
16. Parish Councils will be kept informed and given the opportunity to comment on applications made by attractions located within their parish.
17. It may be necessary to turn down a request for a sign at a given location due to siting difficulties or where the number of destinations signed at a junction would be excessive.
18. More restrictive criteria may have to be applied in Town Centres, Urban areas conservation areas and other areas of special interest.

There are two tourist attraction signing categories:-

#### ***CATEGORY A REGIONAL DESTINATIONS WITH THE WEST MIDLANDS***

Establishments eligible for signing from motorway junctions across District boundaries include:-

Birmingham Airport\*  
 International Convention centre/National Indoor Arena  
 Coventry Historic City  
 NEC\*

\* = Attractions considered eligible for brown and white signing but probably better signed as destinations within the general traffic signing strategy.

#### ***CATEGORY B LOCAL ATTRACTIONS***

Historic and heritage properties including historic churches/villages establishments  
 Park/gardens  
 Monuments  
 Museums/Art galleries  
 Leisure complexes/Art centres, Zoos  
 Tourist Information Centres  
 Leisure Drives  
 Picnic Sites, Camping and Caravan Sites  
 Theatres  
 Youth Hostels  
 Major Sports Venues  
 Arboreta

There are special circumstances within and close to town centres which will require signing to the 'Town Centre' rather than the individual attraction. Pedestrian signing to particular areas and specific attractions will provide an important supplementary service within town centres.

There will be a presumption that brown and white tourist signs to individual attractions will not be allowed at locations where over-proliferations of signs is considered likely. In some special cases "area definitions" might be appropriate. Locations likely to attract a significant number of visitors and which might otherwise be difficult for visitors to find or where a lack of signing might have an adverse road safety implication, may also be considered as special cases.