



DERBYSHIRE
County Council
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Tourist Signing Policy and Procedures



| Table of Amendments | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------|--|---|
| No | Approval Date | Section | Paragraph | Details |
| 0 | 3/10/1996 | All | All | First Issue. |
| 1 | N/A 2004 | 1 | 2 & 5 | Circular Roads 3/95 superseded by TA93/04, TA94/04 and TD52/04. |
| 2 | N/A 2009 | 2. & 3. | 2. 1 st bullet 3. 1 st paragraph. Appendix 1 | VisitEngland replaces English Tourism Council. VisitEngland National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions supersedes English Tourism Council National Code of Practice. |

1. Introduction

This document sets out procedures and standards to be adopted for dealing with individual applications for tourist signing received from tourist attraction and facility operators in Derbyshire. It should also be used for determining the extent and nature of signing promoted for the management of tourist traffic.

The need for local tourist signing policies for local roads was defined in Circular Roads 3/95¹, “Traffic Signs for Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England”, which required the Local Highways Authorities to develop procedures and standards appropriate to local needs taking account of tourist development objectives within a broad national framework.

The range of attractions which might qualify for signs is extremely broad and the policy is designed to ensure that proposals and requests are dealt with in a consistent manner across the County and that signing provided does not conflict with tourist development objectives or road safety, traffic management and environmental requirements. Most of the standards set out apply to all locations but in urban areas; main tourist areas; and areas of high amenity alternative strategies are identified.

Guidance makes it clear that eligibility for signing does not mean automatic entitlement to signs. This policy is designed to assist highway officers to make such decisions in light of the needs of tourist industry, traffic management, road safety, and environmental issues.

All applications should be made to the Local Highway Authority who will consult as necessary with neighbouring authorities or in the case of Trunk Roads with the Highways Agency – see TD52/04 Tourist Signing – Trunk Roads.

¹ Superseded by TA93/04 Guidance for Tourist Signing General Introduction and TA94/04 Guidance for Tourist Signing Local Roads.

2. Basic Standards Applicable to Tourist Destinations

Motorists who follow tourist signs expect a high standard of facility to be provided at the destination and the following requirements are to ensure that these standards are maintained. Therefore to qualify for signs a destination must:-

- Meet the standards set out in VisitEngland National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions² (copy appended)
- Have a minimum opening period of 150 days per annum and for 4 hours per day.
- Be available for use by the public during opening hours without the need for pre-booking or membership.
- Attract visitors from outside the local area.
- Demonstrate that the destination is publicised through the tourist industry such as in tourist publications. Newspaper advertisements will not normally be sufficient evidence of this.
- Comply with all appropriate statutory requirements (e.g. planning and environmental health consents).

In addition to the above the following standards will be applied to ensure that individual types of destination meet minimum quality thresholds.

² Amendment: English Tourist Board's Visitor Charter, superseded by Visit England National Code of Practice.

3. Accommodation

Hotels/ Guest Houses/ Bed and Breakfast Facilities

All establishments requesting signing must be members of quality assurance schemes which require independent inspection of members premises. Acceptable schemes are those run by VisitEngland³, the AA and RAC. (Proof of current accreditation must be provided annually).

Self catering Accommodation

Self catering accommodation will not normally qualify for signing under the new regulations as a high element of pre-booking is involved. There may however be traffic management grounds for signing large self catering sites.

Caravan and Camping Sites

All sites must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act 1936 and have at least 20 pitches for casual overnight use. Static sites may qualify where they are available without pre-booking but the use of the caravan symbol will not be permitted as this may be confusing to touring caravanners who are seeking an overnight pitch.

Youth Hostels

Youth Hostel Association Hostels will qualify for signing. Hostels under other management which are open to the public without pre booking will also be eligible for signs but may not use the Youth Hostel Symbol.

³ Amendment: Visit England replaced the English Tourist Board.

4. Other Facilities

Restaurants/ Cafes/ Pubs

These are considered as establishments which provide meals. There will be a presumption against providing signs in built up areas where tourists would expect to find such facilities. Individual requests will however be considered where locational difficulties can be demonstrated. The following conditions must be met:-

- Food should be served at lunchtime and in the evenings.
- Facilities should be provided inside to allow children to accompany parents.

Cinemas/ Theatres

In built up areas information at Tourist Information Centres and points should be sufficient but signing may be provided where locational difficulties can be demonstrated.

Retail Premises

To be considered for signing, shops should have facilities which are specifically aimed at the tourist industry (e.g. craft centres, where craft skills or product manufacture are demonstrated). There will be a presumption against signing in built up areas where tourists would expect to find such facilities. Individual requests will however be considered where locational difficulties can be demonstrated.

5. Traffic Management and Road Safety Standards

Highway Authorities have a duty to ensure safe and effective traffic management. This is of particular significance to tourists because those motorists are unlikely to be familiar with the area. The following standards will apply for destinations to qualify for signing:-

Parking

On-site parking should be available to accommodate the volume and type of vehicles which might be expected to be attracted by any signs provided. Alternatively where there are public parking facilities nearby and the owner agrees, vehicle signing to the attraction may be provided to the public car park and pedestrian signing from the car park to the destination may be considered.

Approach Routes

Signing will only be provided to destinations where the Highway Authority are satisfied that the routes are adequate to cope with the volume and type of vehicles which might be expected if the signs are provided. Normally only one route to any tourist destination will be signed.

Extent of Signing

This will be largely dependent upon the location and size of the attraction or facility.

The general principle will be that for attractions, signing will be provided from the nearest settlement or A and B class road. For facilities signing will normally only be provided in the immediate vicinity of the facility.

Sign Clutter

Current research indicates that motorists travelling at normal speeds are unable to take in information which exceeds certain levels. When these levels are exceeded it can lead to motorists braking suddenly or stopping in inappropriate locations to read or react to signs. The following standards will apply to minimise these difficulties:-

All Single Carriageway Roads and Dual Carriageway Roads with Speed Limits below 50mph

No more than 6 worded destinations including primary, non-primary and tourist destinations will normally be signed at any single sign location within the route.

Dual Carriageway Roads with Speed Limits above 50mph and Motorways

No more than 4 worded destinations including primary, non-primary and tourism destinations will be signed at any sign location within the route.

Where sign overload is approached tourist destinations will have less priority than other primary and non-primary destinations. Where there are requests for more tourist destinations than can be safely accommodated, those chosen will be based on the highest visitor number for attractions or grading for facilities.

If this gives no clear priority the destinations closest to the junction will be chosen. Attractions will normally have priority over facilities. Existing attraction signing will remain and will normally have higher priority than requests for new tourist signing.

Sign Design and Siting

All tourist signs will be designed and sited in accordance with current legislation including Local Transport Note 1/94 and Traffic Signs Manual Chapters 1, 2 and 7⁴.

⁴ Supersedes Local Transport Note 2/94

6. Environmental Issues

The use and amount of tourist signing provided in conservation areas, the Peak District National Park and other areas of outstanding natural beauty, will be limited. In some cases vehicular signing will not be appropriate. In some areas alternative post colours and designs may be required to minimise intrusion. Signs will be designed to the minimum appropriate standard based on road type and traffic speed and sited in a manner which is sympathetic to the surrounding townscape/ countryside. In some conservation areas it may not be appropriate to provide any tourist signs.

Bypassed Villages and Towns

Where villages and towns are located close to main tourist routes, signing for the attractions and facilities located in those towns and villages may be provided from the nearby main route.

The signs provided will include the village or town name, a phrase with a maximum of 3 or 4 words, together with symbols indicating the facilities and attractions available. No more than 6 symbols may be shown on any sign.

Signs of this type will only be provided following consultation and agreement with the appropriate Town and Parish Council. Examples of the sign types referred to are appended.

Drivers following bypassed community signs will normally be routed to a parking area in the town or village and be routed back to the main route from that car park. Examples of the types of signs referred to are appended.

Tourist Signage Strategy

Throughout the County comprehensive tourist signing strategies will be developed to accord with the needs of individual areas. This will involve detailed consultation with the Peak District National Park; District; Town; and Parish Councils together with the Tourist Industry. Until these strategies are in place there may be some delays in determining and/ or implementing individual requests for signs.

7. Financial Arrangements and Estimated Timescales for Processing Applications

All tourist signing provision will be at no costs to the Highway Authority. A basic charge of £145.92 per application will be required. Estimates of further design costs together with an estimated cost of providing and erecting signs will be provided as part of the basic charge.

It is essential that the process of receiving and evaluating applications occurs quickly in order that applicants may receive either a positive response with a quotation or the cost involved in the scheme or detailed reasons for the proposal being declined within a short period of time. The target turn round time for this activity will be 4 weeks. The processing of applications and schemes will be split into stages as detailed in Table 1.

Maintenance of Signs

Tourist operators will be expected to pay a commuted sum of £40/ sign to cover routine maintenance and minor repairs to signs. This will also cover the removal of signs to establishments which cease to qualify for signing or are permanently closed.

In the event of major damage or theft the operator will be liable to replace the signs.

Table 1

| STAGE | ACTIVITY | ESTIMATED TIMESCALE | CHARGE |
|--------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | <p>a) Receive application containing appropriate detail and application fee.</p> <p>b) Check against tourism criteria including consultation with District Tourism Officers, where appropriate.</p> <p>c) Check against traffic management and safety standards.</p> <p>d) Identify special design features (e.g. for conservation areas).</p> <p>e) For comprehensive schemes in urban areas, bypassed village/ town signing, consultation with Parish/ Town/ District Councils and Trade Associations, as appropriate.</p> <p>f) Either:- Identify outline scheme, prepare quotation and forward agreement for signature by applicant, and inform Parish Council (where appropriate).</p> <p>Or:- Respond to applicant indicating detailed reasons why signing cannot be provided.</p> | Total for Stage 1 – 4 weeks | Total for Stage 1 - £145.92 |
| 2 | <p>g) Receive signed agreement and full payment for design.</p> <p>h) Design of signing scheme and preparation of Contract documents in accordance with County Council standards.</p> | 4 weeks | Depends on types of roads and individual locations where signs are required. Costs will be apportioned between operators where more than one destination is shown on a sign. |
| 3 | <p>i) Supply and installation of signs in accordance with standards and specifications administered by the County Council. (The County Council's Term Contracts will normally be used, in order to keep costs to a minimum).</p> | 8 weeks | Depends on types of roads and individual locations where signs are requested. |
| 4 | <p>Future maintenance of signs and posts to cover cleaning and minor repairs. (Replacement of signs following accident damage or theft will be liability of applicant).</p> | | Lump Sum £40/ sign or destination. |

The owner and management undertake:

1. To provide in promotional materials, an accurate description of the amenities, facilities and services of the Attraction.
2. To indicate on all such promotional materials any requirements for pre-booking, and any significant restrictions on entry.
3. To welcome all visitors courteously and without discrimination in relation to gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief. To respect the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 by making 'reasonable' adjustments to improve service for disabled people and make available an Access Statement describing the accessibility aspects of a visit to the Attraction.
4. To describe accurately and display clearly:
 - a) Any charges for entry including service charges and taxes where applicable and any additional charges for individual attractions or special exhibitions
 - b) Dates and hours of operation, both opening and closing.
5. To provide in promotional materials for visitor enquiries; a postal address, an e-mail address, a telephone number and a website address from which the detailed information specified in 1, 2, 3 and 4 can be obtained.
6. To hold a current public liability insurance policy or comparable Government indemnity, and to comply with all applicable planning, health, safety, fire and other statutory requirements and regulations.
7. To provide signage and orientation information as appropriate to the Attraction, to assist visitors in understanding and enjoying the Attraction.
8. To consider the needs of visitors for whom English is not their first language and as appropriate to the Attraction, to make arrangements that enable them to be adequately informed to enjoy their visit.
9. To manage the Attraction in such a way as to ensure visitor safety, comfort and service, by sustaining a high standard of maintenance, customer care, courtesy and cleanliness.
10. To ensure that all staff who meet visitors can provide information and guidance about the Attraction, and are readily distinguishable as staff, whether employees or volunteers.

11. To have regard to the need to manage and operate the Attraction in a sustainable way.
12. To provide, as appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the Attraction; coach, car, motor-cycle and bicycle parking, adequate toilets, and catering facilities. If any of these requirements cannot be made available on site, to provide information at appropriate points on where they can be found locally.
13. To deal promptly and courteously with all enquiries, requests, reservations, correspondence and comments from visitors and try to resolve any complaints on site at the time of the visit.
14. To provide a facility on site for comments to be recorded and to advise clearly the name and contact details (address, telephone and e-mail) of the person to whom comments by visitors should be addressed.
15. To display prominently the National Code of Practice Certificate.

Further explanation of the points of the National Code of Practice can be found on the VisitEngland website under Business Development.

All visitor attractions are encouraged to fully utilise the VAQAS business support tool. The Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme is managed by VisitEngland and provides an annual visit by an independent assessor followed by a detailed report. Information on how to join the VAQAS scheme can be found on the VisitEngland website under Business Development.

Current participants of VAQAS need not apply for the National Code of Practice as VAQAS provides automatic sign up to the Code.