

DRAFT HEREFORDSHIRE TOURIST SIGNING GUIDANCE NOTES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Brown on white tourist signs play a key role in supporting rural tourism based businesses and enabling visitors to the county to move around the road network efficiently and safely by providing clear directional information. At the same time this document has by necessity been guided by a desire to not see the county littered with excessive signs and current statutory guidelines which provide a framework for all signage within the country. It is also important to recognise that there is a cost to administering, installing and removing redundant tourist signs and that these costs are fair and reasonable to all parties.
- 1.2 The intention of this policy is set out clearly how Herefordshire Council will administer and authorise the installation of tourist signs which provides clarity to those wishing to install signs
- 1.3 The provision of tourist signing on the motorway and trunk road network is dealt with by the Highways Agency. Within Herefordshire, this applies to the A49 and M50 The Highways Agency publication "We're just off the Main Road" provides advice on traffic signs for tourist businesses in England.
- 1.4 Government guidance on the provision of tourist signing is contained in the following three documents:
 - TA93/04 – Guidance for Tourist Signposting – General Introduction
 - TD52/04P – Tourist Signing – Trunk Roads
 - TA94/04P – Tourist Signing – Local Roads

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The objective of this guidance is to provide clear advice on the provision of tourist signing that meets the needs of the road user and the tourist industry, whilst being consistent with the safe and efficient management of traffic, and minimising the impact of signing on the environment.
- 2.2 Tourist signing should not be used purely as a marketing or advertising tool, and requests for signing that are made simply to promote a tourist destination will not be approved. A clear road safety and / or environmental benefit will need to be demonstrated before signing requests will be accepted.
- 2.4 All signs installed on the highway network will need to be fully compliant with The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) and associated guidance. (Ref. Statutory Instruments 2002 No. 3113 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002). TSRGD sets out the design principles for road signs including tourist signing, specifying

criteria on sign dimensions, size of lettering, and siting. The Council's Traffic Management Team will be able to advise applicants on any updated TSRGD guidance.

- 2.5 In general five destinations is regarded as the maximum that drivers can absorb at a single junction, or four on all purpose dual carriageway roads with speeds in excess of 50 mph.
- 2.6 From the initial tourist sign, it is essential that there is clear and consistent signing along the entire route to the tourist destination being signposted. The need for continuity will involve signing at junctions along the route, particularly where a change of road is involved. Along longer sections of a route, reminder signs may be required to reassure drivers that they have not missed a turn. Such signs should be at minimum intervals of one mile and maximum intervals of five miles.
- 2.7 It is recognised that road signs have an impact on the local environment, and therefore it is intended that the provision of tourist signing should be carefully designed so as to minimise the impact on the very environment that attracts tourists to Herefordshire in the first place. Accordingly, tourist signing should complement rather than duplicate existing signing, and where possible should be incorporated into existing signs rather than require the installation of new signs. For rural businesses, tourist based or otherwise, who wish to produce their own bespoke directional signs, there is separate guidance entitled Business signs in the countryside available. However it is important to note that there is a presumption for tourist based businesses to apply for brown signs and that an organisation cannot have both types of signs.
- 2.8 In particular, to minimise the impact of new signs on the environment, there will be a general presumption against white on brown signs to tourist facilities that a visitor would normally expect to find within an urban area, in particular shops, cinemas, accommodation, restaurants, cafés, etc.
- 2.9 Herefordshire Council funds the provision and maintenance of general road signing on the highway network in its capacity as Local Highway Authority. However, tourist signing will only be provided where it is requested by a specific tourist destination, where it is considered to meet the criteria outlined within this guidance, and where that tourist destination funds the manufacturing, installation and maintenance costs associated with that signing. Tourist signs will remain in the ownership of the Authority, but in the event of them being stolen, damaged or destroyed, the applicant will be expected to pay the cost of subsequent repair or replacement. When the signs require replacement through age the applicant will be required to pay the cost of replacement.
- 2.10 The full cost for the supply and erection of the proposed tourism signs will be borne in full by the applicant, and Herefordshire Council will only

arrange for the signs to be manufactured and erected on receipt of this amount. This amount will also include costs for sign removal should the attraction close down, cease trading, or no longer meet the required standards as set out in this policy.

- 2.11 Generic signing schemes or use of symbols instead of words to groups of attractions or facilities, will be actively. Similarly on approach to towns, an Historic Towns type sign may be considered more appropriate than individual establishment signing. These signs will then incorporate appropriate symbols to be followed within the town. With respect to such signs there will need to be a lead applicant who will need to coordinate facilities and funds

3. DEFINITION OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS

- 3.1 A **tourist destination** is defined as a permanently established attraction or facility which:

- (a) Attracts or is used by visitors to an area; and
- (b) Is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.

- 3.2 **Tourist attractions** include

- Visitor centres,
- Theme parks,
- Historic buildings,
- Museums,
- Zoos and Safari Parks,
- Parks and gardens,
- Natural attractions (such as nature reserves and viewpoints),
- Areas of special interest,
- Country tours and routes,
- Sports centres,
- Concert venues,
- Theatres and,
- Cinemas.

- 3.3 **Tourist facilities** include

- Hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and other serviced accommodation,
- Public houses,
- Restaurants,
- Holiday, touring and camping parks,
- Picnic sites and,
- Tourist Information Centres.

To be eligible for the provision of tourist signing, facilities offering accommodation will need to be accredited in an identified local or national quality assurance scheme. Similarly, holiday, touring or camping parks will need to have a reasonable number of pitches available for casual and overnight use, and be accredited.

- 3.4 Retail centres, garden centres and exhibition centres are specifically excluded from classification as tourist destinations, and where signing is considered appropriate for such facilities this should be done using normal directional signing.

4. CRITERIA FOR THE PROVISION OF TOURIST SIGNING

- 4.1 The identification of a particular tourist destination as a tourist attraction or facility under the definitions listed above does not automatically mean that the provision of tourist signing will be accepted for that destination. This section of the policy sets out the specific criteria that need to be met before the provision of tourist signing will be approved.
- 4.2 Eligible tourist destinations should have adequate parking, toilets, and publicity material, which should be of good quality

Parking

- 4.3 Parking provision could either be on site or close by, and should include disabled, cycle and coach parking where appropriate. Where it is close by rather than at the destination, the tourist signing should direct visitors to the parking rather than the destination itself. Pedestrian signing should then be provided on the safest route linking the parking facility to the destination, and should ensure continuous signing of the route in both directions (i.e. from car park to destination and back again).

Toilet Facilities

- 4.4 The destination should have adequate toilets on site or close by, including facilities for disabled people.

Publicity

- 4.5 Publicity material produced for the destination should have clear and accurate information including directions of how to reach the destination by road and, where appropriate, by public transport, walking and cycling. Such material may include leaflets, information contained within guidebooks, web sites, and at Tourist Information Centres. Where possible, directions should include reference to destinations that are already well sign-posted, such as settlement names, and to road numbers. Local names for roads or junctions should be avoided unless well signposted, as visitors will generally not be aware of such names.

Quality

- 4.6 Destinations will be expected to be of generally good quality, well maintained and to adhere to the appropriate accessibility standards, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requirements. Membership of a recognised national or regional scheme for maintaining quality standards, will be generally required for a tourist destination to be considered for tourist signing provision. Evidence of such membership will be required from the applicant.

Existing Signs

- 4.7 The provision of tourist signing will be conditional on the permanent removal of any advertisement signs relating to that destination from private land adjacent to the highway or within the highway boundary. This shall be done prior to the installation of the tourist signing. This is to ensure that the provision of the tourist signing does not add to signing clutter and results in the consolidation of signing rather than proliferation.

Tourist Information Centres / Points

- 4.8 Signing to Tourist Information Centres (TIC) will only be provided where those centres are networked. Signing to Tourist Information Points (TIPs) will only be provided where the relevant authority enters into a Service Level Agreement to commit to ensuring that the TIP is properly maintained with visitor information.

Bypassed Communities

- 4.9 Bypassed community signs will only be provided for settlements with a population less than 10,000 and where adequate direction signing to that settlement does not already exist.

Local Communities

- 4.10 The impact of tourism signing is most significant at the local level and Herefordshire Council are keen to ensure local communities are fully engaged in the process. Applicants will therefore need to gain the support of their local Town or Parish Council before submitting an application for signing.

Other Criteria

- 4.11 Tourist signing for tourist facilities will not be provided where those facilities are located on or adjacent to an "A" or "B" road, where they are located within a settlement that already has directional signing in place, or where the facility does not meet the criteria relating to quality etc. outlined above. It is the responsibility of the owner of the

facility to ensure that their publicity contains clear instructions to visitors on how to reach their establishment, and tourist signing will only be provided where it is necessary to provide additional information to drivers on road safety grounds. This will generally only be the case where tourist facilities are located in relatively isolated locations that are more difficult to find.

- 4.12 Tourist signing for tourist attractions will only be provided where those attractions meet the criteria outlined above, where they attract at least 40,000 visitors per year (or where visitor numbers in the busiest month exceeds 20% of this figure), where they are nationally recognised attractions (e.g. they are in the care of English Heritage or The National Trust), or where they are of regional importance (e.g. Country Parks, Cathedrals / Historic Churches). Within towns and cities, tourist signing will only be provided to direct drivers to the most appropriate car park for each tourist destination by the most appropriate route.
- 4.13 In general tourist signing will be provided from the most appropriate location(s) upon the “A” or “B” road network. Signing will then guide motorists from that location to the tourist destination by the most appropriate route. It is for the Highway Authority to decide what forms the most appropriate route.
- 4.14 Signing over a wider area may be considered for tourist destinations attracting larger numbers of visitors.

5. PROCEDURE

Initial discussion with officer to discuss plan and eligibility

Applicant to submit formal application to HC containing the following:

- Fee
- Completed form
- Evidence of consultation with Parish Council and Local member*
- Evidence of consultation with other stakeholders*

* In order to ensure that local communities and other stakeholders are fully engaged in this process, applicants will need to seek approval of the parish or town council and the local member. The applicant will also need to gauge the views of other stakeholders such as other local businesses, neighbours etc.

Local Councils will be asked to consider :

- Whether signs are required / benefits / threats
- The visual impact / Clutter

- Design and locations
- Opportunity to amalgamate with other signs and businesses
- Impact on aspects such as traffic movement
- Criteria set out by Herefordshire Council.

An applicant must have the support of the Local Council and Local Member before an application is submitted.

Once the application is submitted, officers will add their views which will concentrate on location, highway safety and compliance with statutory guidance. A final report will then be submitted to the decision maker with a copy going to the applicant. The applicant will be advised of the decision and advised either:

- The application is successful and timescale within which time the works will be completed.
- The application is unsuccessful as it stands but what could be changed to make it successful.
- The application is rejected and the reasons why.

The parish council will be advised of the final decision. There may be an opportunity for the Parish Council through the lengthsman scheme to arrange to have the signs installed which will help reduce costs. This will depend on the roads and locations and the final decision will remain with the highway authority.

5.4 If successful, the applicant will also need to bear the cost of design, manufacture, installation and future maintenance of the tourist signing. The Traffic Management Team will notify the applicant of the approximate cost when they notify the applicant of the approval of their application. If the applicant does not respond within two months of being notified of the success of their application and of the approximate costs, it will be assumed that they do not wish to proceed with the installation of the signing. Payment to cover the notified costs for administration, design, manufacture and installation would be expected prior to any works commencing.

5.5 For applications where both Highways Agency and County Council approval will be required, the application should initially be submitted to the County Council who will then arrange for the necessary discussions to be held with the Highways Agency. Similarly, where an application will involve the installation of tourist signing on the local road network within neighbouring local authority areas, the initial application should be made to the County Council who will then arrange for the discussion of the application with the appropriate authorities.

5.6 Once installed all signs will be the property of the County Council as Local Highway Authority. The Council will retain the right to remove tourist signing where these are to be incorporated in an overall signing scheme for that locality (e.g. being combined with other road signing on the network). The Council will also review road signing provision as part of other road

maintenance or improvements schemes, and retains the right to remove tourist signing where the tourist destination no longer complies with the criteria applying at that time to the provision of tourist signing. Furthermore should the signs fail to be supported by the tourist destination or the parish or town council, or the business cease to trade, then the County Council will remove the whole series of signs and make reparations to recover the costs of the works.

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