

Guidance note & criteria for tourist signing applications.

This document is intended as a guide for operators and owners of tourist attractions and facilities wishing to apply for tourist signing.

Decisions regarding eligibility for and proposals of tourist signing made prior to this latest revision should not be taken as precedent. The final decision whether to approve and offer tourist signing rests with the Local Highway Authority (LHA).

WSCC is the LHA for the County, and is therefore responsible for signing and maintenance of all public maintained roads within West Sussex, with the exception of the A27, M23, and for the A23 south of the M23 junction which fall under the jurisdiction of Highways England, formerly the Highways Agency.

Tourist signs, commonly referred to as 'brown signs' or 'information signs', are part of the family of highway directional signs. The Department for Transport controls the design and implementation of all traffic signs through the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD 2016 and subsequent updates). In addition, the LHA is required to further regulate, through policy and practice, the types of tourist attraction or facility where the provision of signs may be allowed.

The TSRGD defines a tourist destination as:

'a permanently established attraction or facility (other than a leisure facility) which—

(i) attracts or is used by visitors to an area;

(ii) is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours; and

(iii) is recognised as a tourist attraction or facility by the appropriate national promoter of tourism'.

The purpose of tourist signing is to direct road users to a predetermined destination along the most appropriate route at the latter stages of their journey. Although they will undoubtedly be considered helpful in supplementing such initiatives, signs should not be considered as a substitute for marketing and advertising. Any signing proposed should be on traffic management grounds for attractions or facilities that meet the qualifying criteria and does not indicate better service or amenities compared to a similar or nearby establishment that does not have 'brown' highway signing.

Signs required for advertising purposes or those that do not conform to the regulations (TSRGD) are governed by the Control of Advertisements regulations and require a form of planning permission. Please contact your local planning authority for information regarding this type of sign.

Attraction and facility Requirements

General:

Meeting the following criteria does not automatically entitle the applicant to signs. In addition, to be considered eligible for tourist signing, an establishment will be assessed against a range of traffic management, road safety and environmental issues relevant to the local area.

In all cases the following minimum facilities must be available, or requirements met, and these should be adequately maintained:

- All necessary permissions pertaining to the operation of the attraction or facility including, but not limited to: planning, health, safety, welfare and all certificates necessary to operate as the advertised establishment.
- Adequate location information inclusive of a map and directional information from the nearest A or B class road as well as the nearest public transport to be made available to visitors via - Published material that can be posted, Tourist Information Centres/Points, Download from the owner/operators website where in use.
- Sufficient on or off-street parking, including facilities for disabled visitors. If suitable parking is not available, pedestrian signing may be considered from a suitable public parking area and/or public transport facility if a significant number of visitors are proven to arrive this way.
- Membership of the Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme operated by VisitEngland. If requested, continued participation in a relevant inspected grading scheme specific to the attraction or facility's sector.
- Attractions/facilities shall be open for an established season such as summer, winter, or "All Year" etc. The minimum season shall be five consecutive months or where open 'All Year' the attraction shall be open for a minimum of ten months in a calendar year. Within these periods the establishment shall be open to the public for a minimum of 5 days per week unless otherwise stated.
- Adequate visitor facilities - Toilets, disabled facilities, refreshments etc.

Cost:

£116.47 - administration and policy assessment.

The County Council is not able to provide a design and installation service. Applicants will be required to commission a company to design a sign proposal that is compliant with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and Chapter 7 Traffic Signs Manual 2013. The contractor will require £10 million public liability insurance and appropriate New Roads and Street Works 1991 accreditation in order to install the equipment on the highway.

Potential costs charged by a contractor will vary depending on:-

- The size of the sign, this is determined by the size and length of text legend and symbols used.
- Number and type of posts required.

- Quantity of signs required.
- The location of the proposed sign.
- Any traffic management required by the works contractor (i.e. traffic lights, stop/go boards, lane closure).

PLEASE NOTE – All new signs should be stand alone or fixed to existing street furniture. The County Council will not accept changes/amendments to large Advance Directional Signs

Design:

- Only signs and their permitted variants as prescribed within the TSRGD will be used for all signs that are proposed.
- Attractions/facilities will be signed via a worded legend and appropriate symbol on the sign furthest from the attraction. Each subsequent sign will show the symbol only unless another similar attraction/facility is in close proximity or is situated within the proposed route in which case a worded legend will accompany the symbol on all signs as is deemed appropriate. Sign designs should not be too complex as they will need to be understood by occupants of moving vehicles.
- A generic legend and/or symbol will be used where a number of similar attractions/facilities are situated in close proximity e.g. Hotels, Bed & Breakfasts etc. The Local Highways Authority will decide what legend is appropriate for the destination to be signed, particularly where the destination name is perceived to carry an element of advertising.
- Worded legends will comprise of a maximum 26 characters including spaces.
- Where sites are multi-functional, only the primary attraction/facility shall be signed. This would apply to, for example cafes or restaurants within a larger complex or facility.
- The number of destinations, attractions and/or facilities shown on any one sign at any one location should not exceed six.

Quantity:

- The number of signs required will vary and is dependent upon the location of the attraction/facility.
- The highway authority will be responsible for determining the number of signs required in order to maintain continuity between the point at which the attraction/facility is first signed and the attraction/facility itself.
- The minimum number of signs will be used and will need to have due regard for the environment and street scene.

Location:

- Tourist attractions will usually be signed no further than from the nearest A or B class road or 3 miles, whichever is the nearest. Tourist facilities within Category 4 will usually be signed only from within the settlement boundary. Signing will not usually be considered for an attraction or facility that lies alongside an A or B class road; unless the LHA decides there is a traffic management need. Determining factors may include access visibility, road layout, speed and volume of traffic.
- Signing should direct to the parking facilities of the attraction or facility.
- The minimum number of signs will be used to provide adequate directional information and to maintain continuity of signing from junction-to-junction.
- A maximum of six destinations (in total - tourist and non-tourist) will be permitted on any one signing assembly at any one location.

Environment:

- The County Council acknowledges the need to protect the environment in West Sussex whilst providing adequate directional information to destinations and local establishments throughout the county. The environmental impact of any new sign needs to be minimised, as far as is consistent with their intended purpose.
- The amount of information included should have regard for the overall size of the sign and the impact this would have on the environment.
- The cumulative effect of the proximity of all existing and proposed signs will need to be considered.

Safety:

- Street furniture that minimises the severity of injury to occupants of a vehicle colliding with them has been considered important since the 1960's. In 2000 a European Standard was published that provided a means of assessing the level of passive safety of street furniture. West Sussex County Council considers that the use of passively safe street furniture is appropriate for its network of roads. The level of passively safe support required will depend upon the proposed location of any approved sign(s).
- Where necessary the use of temporary traffic management, consisting of traffic signals, signing, fencing, lighting and coning, will be utilised to safeguard the workforce when signs are erected. All associated costs are to be borne by the applicant.

Practical Assessment:

When considering an application which may satisfy the foregoing criteria practical consideration will also need to be given to the following:-

- Road safety and/or traffic management considerations will take priority when considering the overall (tourist and non-tourist) signing at a particular location.
- The number of existing destinations signed at a particular junction will be taken into account together with the number of similar establishments or facilities in the local area.
- Where there is a possibility that other similar local establishments may apply for or become eligible to apply for signs then it is unlikely that individual establishments will be named on signs. In these cases generic signs e.g. 'Hotels' and/or 'B & B' will be used.
- It may be appropriate to remove, amend, replace or otherwise alter an existing sign assembly, including other tourist signs, in order to accommodate the provision of additional signs. The owner or operator will be expected to meet all reasonable costs in such a case.
- Where the LHA receives separate applications that relate to the same area then it is likely that a scheme combining the requests on joint signs will be recommended. This includes replacing existing tourist signs with combined signs in preference to the addition of signs to an existing assembly.
- The road layout in the general area such as one-way systems, other regulatory or physical restrictions and preferred routes will all be contributory factors in the assessment of each application.
- Categories of tourist attractions and facilities

Categorisation:

Tourist attractions and facilities are grouped into one of the following four categories. The criteria for assessment of each category and type of establishment are set out below.

*Where establishments are only open a limited number of days per week those days shall be the same days of each week.

Category 1 - Traditional tourist attractions, including historic properties and museums.

Historic Properties:

- Open at least 2 days per week* during an established season

Museums:

- Open at least 2 days per week* during an established season.

Other attractions include Nature Reserves, Theme Parks, Zoos and Wildlife Parks, National Trust and English Heritage Properties

Category 2 - Tourist facilities consisting of amenity areas (parks, etc) and historic sites.

Picnic Sites:

- Having adequate off highway parking
- Seating and recreational areas
- Visitor information or TIP on site
- Waste receptors (with regular collection)

Historic Churches:

- The building or a feature within or outside of the building shall be the major attractor regardless of religious persuasion. May qualify for private signing.

TIC & TIP (Tourist Information Centre & Point):

- Centres or points managed by district, borough or town/parish council or approved local organisation
- TIC's and points which are open for a minimum of 5 days per week, all day, all year and manned during normal opening hours may be indicated by the use of generic signing (the tourist information symbol) on A class roads up to 5 miles from the establishment.
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Other informal leisure attractions:

- Assessed appropriately in relation to the specific nature and use requirements of the site. These may include natural attractions, scenic routes and viewpoints. Please contact the signs team for further assistance.

Category 3 - Tourist accommodation facilities such as Hotels, Guest Houses, and Bed and Breakfast:

All premises must be recognised as a tourist facility by Visit England, the national promoter of tourism. Failure to retain this recognition is likely to result in the removal of any highway signing directing to that establishment.

Hotels:

- A minimum of 6 bed spaces
- Open all year

Bed and Breakfast:

- Open all year

B&Bs, Guest Houses and smaller Hotels situated within tourist reliant settlements, where there is likely to be a large number of similar establishments, are unlikely to be signed individually. As trends indicate that most accommodation is pre-booked, there is ample opportunity to provide or obtain directions either by post or electronically.

Youth Hostels:

- Member of the Youth Hostel Association (YHA)
- Open all year

Camping & Caravan Sites:

- Open for a minimum of 5 months
- Having the appropriate license
- Minimum of 20 touring pitches

Category 4 - Qualifying leisure and service facilities:

Retail Premises will only be eligible if they offer services of specific interest to tourists all year and are members of an appropriate Trade Association or local Chamber of Trade/Commerce. Farm Shops and similar retail establishments are not considered to be eligible for highway signing.

To be considered eligible for signs these establishments as well as meeting the other criteria, will need to show that a minimum of 50% of visitors come from outside of the local area (a 5 mile radius).

Evidence will need to be taken from:

- An up to date and credible customer survey recording the origin of visits and,
- Conclusive records showing that the establishment is actively promoting its services through tourist and local media and has done so for at least 12 months prior to the application.

Theatres/Cinemas:

- Minimum of 100 seats
- Open at least 2 days per week* all year

Public Leisure Complexes:

- Open at least 5 days per week* all year
- Facility for 'pay-and-play'

Sporting Venues:

- Having a regional or national significance
- Holding regular fixtures during an established season
- Facility for 'pay-and-play' without the expectation to pre-book primary facility
- Open at least 5 days per week* all year

Restaurants:

- A minimum of 25 covers
- Open all year

Public Houses:

- Open every day, through lunchtimes and evenings, throughout the year
- A selection of non-alcoholic beverages must be available
- Hot food available, on a regular basis
- Must have indoor facilities for and be willing to accept families with children
- Public Houses, and restaurants / cafes that are situated within large towns, cities or tourist reliant villages, where there is expected to be a large number of similar establishments within a concentrated area, will not normally be considered for signing. Those situated within more rural settlements will be considered for signing only from within the settlement boundary, if that settlement has adequate highway signing from the nearest A or B class road.

Conditions:

- Attractions or facilities deemed eligible for signing under national and/or regional guidance will not automatically be entitled to signing. Local circumstances will influence the decision to permit signing or otherwise.
- Tourist signing will only be considered for the purpose of directing road users at the latter stages of their journey to a predetermined destination along the most appropriate route. They will not be considered for marketing and advertising purposes.
- Where the provision of tourist signs is approved it is on the condition that all advertising and/or signs not prescribed by the TSRGD or without the relevant licence shall be permanently removed from the Public Highway. The Highway Authority reserves the right to remove any advertising and/or signs not prescribed by the TSRGD or without the relevant licence following installation of the approved tourist signs (see Unauthorised Signs).
- On satisfactory completion of the installation the signs shall come under the control of the appropriate highway authority that may move, alter or otherwise change the sign faces and/or locations as may be considered appropriate.
- All costs connected with the maintenance of any approved signs shall be borne by the operator / owner. This includes the replacement of damaged, worn or missing signs and their post assemblies, and replacement or amendment following an agreed sign legend name change.
- The operator or owner shall immediately inform the relevant highway authority should the facilities indicated on any approved signs be discontinued. The cost of any works for amendment or removal of signs shall be borne by the operator / owner.
- Should the standard or availability of facilities provided by the operator become the subject of complaints, which are not resolved to the satisfaction of the highway authority, then the

signs will be removed from the highway, at the owner or operator's expense, until such complaints are satisfactorily resolved.

Unauthorised Signs:

The Highway Authority will commence enforcement action against the operator / owner of any establishment benefitting from signs advertising and/or signs not prescribed by the TSRGD or without the relevant licence on the Public Highway. Unauthorised signs, banners or other unlicensed advertisements will be removed from the Public Highway at the operator / owners expense.

Costs:

The non-refundable fee for policy assessment and consideration for Tourist Signing is:

£311.15 administration and policy assessment

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No works on the highway are permitted unless permission is granted by West Sussex County Council. Any contractor working on behalf of a third party should contact WSCC before undertaking any works on the highway.

Further information can be found within the following publications:-

- Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England, Guidance for Tourist Signing – General Introduction. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 8, Section 2, Part 3: TA 93/04. Issued by the Department for Transport and Highways Agency, 2004
- Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England, Tourist Signing – Trunk Roads. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 8, Section 2, Part 4: TD 52/17. Issued by the Department for Transport and Highways England, 2017
- Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England: Guidance for Tourist Signing – Local Roads. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 8, Section 2, Part 5: TA 94/04. Issued by the Department for Transport and Highways England, 2004
- Traffic Signs to Retail Destinations and Exhibition Centres in England and Wales- Trunk Roads. Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Volume 8, Section 2, Part 6: TD 53/05. Issued by the Department for Transport and Highways England, 2005.