

LOCAL AMENITY SIGNS

POLICY REVIEW

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The basic qualifying criteria included in previous guidance shall remain broadly the same. Thus, any local amenity should have a minimum visitor level of 5,000 visitors per annum, be open at least 50 days per year and only be signed from the nearest A or B road or nearest town or village. Consideration will be given to signing from further afield for the larger amenities or for amenities which do not meet the criteria if there are other merits such as significant educational value, uniqueness in what they offer, exhibit or display or localised traffic management reasons.
- 1.2 A general principle running through the policy will be that all amenities will be expected to help themselves in terms of promotion, by distribution of leaflets and information, etc. It will not be deemed acceptable to rely solely on the provision of highway signs to guide visitors.
- 1.3 A general principle in the policy will be that road safety, traffic management and environmental considerations will take precedence in the event of conflict.

2. Retail Facilities

Tourist Board guidance suggests that to be signed, shops should have facilities which are aimed specifically at tourists. It might be difficult to define precisely what that means but it would rule out signing most town centre shops. Town centre factory shops may well not qualify if there are other general retail outlets in town which offer a far wider selection of similar goods unless they can demonstrate that their catchments area is significantly wider than normal.

Other forms of directional signing are already available for superstores and out of town shopping areas and the guidance relating to that type of development will continue to apply, i.e. general signing only to Retail Park, Superstore, etc. have adequate parking, location difficulties.

3. Recreational and Sports Facilities

These can be considered under the attraction or facility category. Many will be signed already with black and white signs and that may be the most appropriate means of signing since they will cater primarily for local needs. Exceptions may be considered for attractions such as ten pin bowling where there are fewer such sites in the County and which will therefore have a wider catchments area. Signs may also be considered where facilities such as golf clubs attract significant numbers of visitors from outside the area or there are location difficulties.

4. Schools and Children's Nurseries

Schools and Nurseries will only be considered for signing if there are location difficulties; the reason for limiting the signing being if all establishments within the County were signed then there would be a proliferation of signs. The signs will be black and white and kept to a minimum (not usually more than five locations).

5. Churches and Places of Worship

Churches and Places of Worship will only be considered for signing if there are location difficulties; the reason for limiting the signing is if all establishments within the County were signed then there would be a proliferation of signs. The signs will be black and white and kept to a minimum (not usually more than five locations).

6. Signing in Urban and Rural Areas

- 6.1 More restrictive criteria may apply in urban areas where there is greater scope to provide information boards, thereby obviating the need to an unsightly plethora of highway signs. In urban areas, there will often be little space available to erect additional signs or to add destinations to existing signs.
- 6.2 More restrictive criteria may apply in conservation areas and areas of special landscape significance where the amount of signing may be restricted on environmental grounds.
- 6.3 On occasions, it may be necessary to turn down a request for a sign at a particular location because of siting difficulties or where the number of destinations and signs would be excessive. The maximum number of destinations will normally be six.
- 6.4 There will be cases where improvements to local direction signing can help to solve problems and perhaps reduce the need for additional signing. Consideration will be given to that, where appropriate, and, if agreed, the owners of the establishments requesting the improvements may be asked to contribute to the highway authority's costs.

7. Application Procedure and Financial Arrangements

- 7.1 All applicants for signs will be expected to complete a comprehensive questionnaire, supply supporting information if requested, and pay a non-returnable flat fee of £104 to the traffic authority for determining the application. (A separate application is required for each site). The fee is retained whether application is successful or not in order to cover administration costs and site visits as necessary. This fee is deemed to be outside the scope of VAT.

7.2 If an application is successful, it will then be necessary to design an appropriate signing scheme. The guidelines indicate that all signing should be at the expense of the applicant so that traffic authorities incur no financial burden in allowing signs on their roads. It is therefore necessary to include an additional sum on top of any final works cost. This sum is to cover costs in designing and supervising the approved signing scheme and to cover future routine maintenance of the signs. Any signs that require replacement due to normal wear and tear or accident or vandal damage will only be replaced at the expense of the applicant. Operators will be expected to sign an Attraction Operators Agreement which sets out the conditions under which the signs are provided. The additional sum for this work is a flat charge of £100 for schemes costing up to £400 and thereafter a charge of 25% of the works cost. All costs are quoted exclusive of VAT which will need to be charged at the appropriate rate.