

REPORT TO: Eryl Williams, Lead Member

FROM: Head of Transport & Infrastructure

DATE: 11th September 2006

SUBJECT: Policy for the Provision of 'White on Brown' Directional Traffic Signs (Tourist Signs) to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in Denbighshire

1 DECISION SOUGHT

To seek members approval to the adoption of a revised policy for the provision of Tourist Signs in Denbighshire.

2 REASON FOR SEEKING DECISION

- 2.1 On 2 April 1997 the Council through its Technical Services Committee adopted a policy for the provision of traffic signs to tourist attractions and facilities in Denbighshire.
- 2.2 This policy has generally served the Authority well during the intervening period enabling the consideration and assessment of all applications for tourist signs to be carried out in a consistent manner.
- 2.3 In February 2004 2 new Advice Notes (TA 93/04 and TA 94/04) and a new Design Standard (TD 52/04) were incorporated into the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges which provided comprehensive advice and guidance for Local Authorities in respect of the provision of traffic signs to tourist attractions and facilities on both local and trunk roads.
- 2.4 It therefore became necessary to undertake a review of the existing policy in light of this new advice and guidance which in turn afforded an obvious opportunity to revisit the policy in light of the experience gained over recent years in managing it.
- 2.5 In addition to this the subject was debated at a previous Environment Scrutiny Committee earlier this year following which an officer working group was set up to input into the review process with the aim of introducing a degree more flexibility and transparency into the criteria and application process.
- 2.6 A copy of a revised policy resulting from this review is attached at Appendix 1.

3 POWER TO MAKE THE DECISION

General Delegation (f) under Article 7 of the Council's Constitution delegates to Cabinet members the determination of the content of any plan, strategy or other policy document which relates solely to the Cabinet member's portfolio.

4 COST IMPLICATIONS

No cost implications as all costs are fully rechargeable to the applicant.

5 FINANCIAL CONTROLLER STATEMENT

Any cost implications resulting from this change in policy will need to be contained within the relevant service budget.

6 CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

The policy review has been carried out in full consultation with the Corporate Director Environment and appropriate officers from other affected service areas. The report was circulated at Environment Scrutiny 23 February 2006 and Members agreed to endorse the adoption of this policy.

7 IMPLICATIONS ON OTHER POLICY AREAS INCLUDING CORPORATE

The policy provides support to the development and promotion of businesses allied to the tourist industry in Denbighshire.

8 RECOMMENDATION

To approve the revised policy for the provision of tourist signs in Denbighshire.

Appendix 1

DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL **TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Policy for the Provision of 'White on Brown' Directional Traffic Signs (Tourist Signs) to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in Denbighshire

1. Introduction
2. Definition of a Tourist Destination
3. General Criteria for All Attractions / Facilities
4. Specific Criteria for Particular Types of Attractions / Facilities
5. Sign Design Issues
6. Traffic Management / Road Safety / Environmental Issues
7. Financial Issues
8. Application Procedure

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The objective of this policy is to lay down a framework within which Denbighshire County Council as the Traffic Authority will consider all requests for the provision of tourist signs.
- 1.2 It is the aim of the Traffic Authority to consider all requests for tourist signs in a manner which is consistent with the principles of safe and efficient traffic management whilst having due regard to the local and strategic needs of the tourism industry and road users in general and the need to minimise any impact on the environment.
- 1.3 Tourist signs are primarily traffic signs and are intended to direct visitors from outside the immediate local area to destinations they were already planning to visit along the most appropriate route during the later stages of their journey, particularly where the destination may be difficult to find.
- 1.4 Whilst it is recognised that tourist signs do provide a useful marketing tool for the tourism industry it is emphasised that this is not the purpose for which they are provided. Tourist signs will only be provided where they will benefit road users as an aid to navigation and for traffic management or road safety reasons.

2.0 Definition of a Tourist Destination

- 2.1 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 contains a statutory definition of a 'tourist destination' as follows :-

A 'tourist destination' means a permanently established attraction or facility which

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

***(b) is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours ; and
(c) is recognised by the Wales Tourist Board .***

It is this definition which is adopted in this policy as the definition of a tourist attraction or facility for direction signing purposes.

3.0 General Criteria for All Tourist Destinations

3.1 In order to be considered eligible for the provision of tourist signs a tourist destination must satisfy the following general criteria :-

- (i) be a tourist destination as defined at 2.1 above
- (ii) be accredited or recognised by an appropriate national quality assurance scheme
- (iii) have produced and distributed to appropriate outlets (e.g. Tourist Information Centers etc.) a promotional leaflet which shall indicate opening times and a preferred route to the destination
- (iv) provide adequate on-site parking facilities or have in place alternative off-site parking arrangements within a reasonable walking distance of the destination.

3.2 In addition to the above there is specific guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government (TD 52/04 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) regarding the provision of tourist direction signing on the all-purpose and motorway trunk road network which in Denbighshire comprises the A55, A494 and A5. The main points contained in this guidance are summarised briefly in Appendix A.

4.0 Specific Criteria for Particular Types of Tourist Destinations

4.1 Traditional Tourist Attractions

e.g. Visitor Centers, Theme Parks, Museums, Historic Buildings, Parks and Gardens, Natural Attractions (i.e nature reserves, beaches etc.)

Where appropriate these should be accredited by the 'Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme' VAQAS or a recognised national or regional scheme of this sort.

4.2 Tourist Routes

e.g. Leisure Drives, Country Tours, Cycleways

In order to be considered for signing these shall be subject to a formal Road Safety Audit carried out by an appropriately qualified person approved by the Traffic Authority. The route should as far as possible avoid main traffic routes and unsuitable minor roads. The route must be supported by a readily available promotional leaflet which shall describe or preferably map the route and the points of interest located along it. Adequate facilities such as toilets, picnic areas and refreshments should be available at regular intervals along the route

4.3 Leisure / Entertainment Facilities

e.g. Sports Centers, Golf Courses, Concert Venues, Theatres, Cinemas

Such facilities would normally be signed with standard directional signing however the provision of tourist signs would be considered providing this policy and the appropriate criteria can be satisfied.

4.4 Tourist Facilities

e.g. Hotels, Public Houses, Guesthouses, B & B's, Restaurants, Holiday Parks, Picnic Sites, Tourist Information Centers

These should be recognised by the National Quality Assurance Scheme (Visit Britain, AA, RAC) and in the case of Holiday Parks accredited by the British Graded Holiday Parks Scheme.

There will be a presumption against signing Hotels, Public Houses, Guesthouses, B & B's and Restaurants in urban areas where tourists would expect to find such facilities and where to do so could quickly result in a proliferation of signs. The only exception to this would be where the Traffic Authority is satisfied that exceptional traffic management and/or road safety reasons exist to justify signing.

4.5 Touring Caravan and Camping Sites

These Must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and / or the Public Health Act 1936, have a minimum of 20 pitches for casual overnight use and should be accredited by an appropriate quality assurance scheme e.g. The Caravan Club or The Camping and Caravanning Club.

4.6 Retail Establishments

e.g. Retail Parks, Shopping Centers, Individual Retail Outlets and Shops, Garden Centers

Retail establishments will not be eligible for signing with tourist signs. If in the opinion of the Traffic Authority there are good traffic management and / or road safety reasons to justify signing then the option of standard directional signing may be considered.

4.7 Craft Centers / Workshops

To be eligible for signing such destinations will need to be able to demonstrate to the Traffic Authority that their function is not primarily retail.

5.0 Sign Design Issues

- 5.1 All signing provided under the scope of this policy must comply with the requirements of Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and the design guidance given in the Traffic Signs Manual

- 5.2 All signs will be provided in bilingual format with the Welsh legend appearing above the English equivalent to reflect the Council's bilingual policy.
- 5.3 Wherever the opportunity exists use will be made within the sign design of nationally recognised and approved generic symbols. This assists in keeping sign sizes to a minimum thereby reducing proliferation, clutter and environmental intrusion. Non-generic symbols (i.e. those unique to a specific attraction / facility) are considered to be not widely understood and have little if any traffic management value.

6.0 Traffic Management / Road Safety / Environmental Issues

- 6.1 The Traffic Authority will determine the route to be signed to the destination having due regard to the type and volume of traffic it is likely to generate and there will be continuity of signing from the first sign to the final destination. It will also determine in consultation with the applicant where necessary the appropriate content and level of signing.
- 6.2 Signing will generally only be appropriate within 2 or 3 miles of a tourist destination and will not be provided from any further afield than the nearest A or B Class road unless there are exceptional traffic management or road safety reasons to do so. Where the entrance to an attraction / facility junctions with an A or B Class road signing will only be provided in the immediate vicinity of that junction.
- 6.3 Where a tourist destination is clearly associated with a particular town or village visitors will be expected to follow the standard highway signing to that town or village. In this situation tourist signing will only be provided from the point where the preferred route to the tourist destination differs from that to the centre of the town or village in question.
- 6.4 The level of signing provided will take account of the need for return signing i.e. signing required to direct visitors back to the main traffic routes following their visit, and pedestrian signing e.g. signing required to direct visitors on foot from and back to an off-site car park, bus or railway station.
- 6.5 Tourist signing will not be permitted at locations where its provision would result in:-
- (i) the maximum recommended number of signed destinations at any one location being exceeded.
 - (ii) an over proliferation of signs, an excessive amount of information or any other issue which may be considered as being confusing to drivers and detrimental to road safety.
 - (iii) an excessively intrusive impact on the visual environment particularly in conservation areas and more rural locations.
- 6.6 In urban areas where there may be a significant number of attractions / facilities which qualify for tourist signing the Traffic Authority would prefer to consider comprehensive signing schemes. When progressed and developed

through a co-ordinated approach to the Traffic Authority from a single representative body or organisation this course of action will undoubtedly produce the most technically sound, efficiently designed and therefore most cost effective signing scheme to the benefit of both the local tourist industry and the Traffic Authority.

Financial Issues

- 7.1 All traffic signing permitted under the scope of this policy will be at the expense of the applicant such that the Traffic Authority incurs no financial burden in allowing tourist signing on its highway network. The Local Authorities (Transport Charges) Regulations 1998 provides the means by which a traffic authority may recover its costs incurred in (a) considering applications (including unsuccessful ones) and (b) installing and maintaining signs (including administrative fees).
- 7.2 The Traffic Authority will recover from the applicant the costs it incurs in undertaking the following work by means of a flat rate on-cost of 50% being applied to the actual cost of manufacture and erection of the signs.
- (i) Preparation of a detailed scheme design.
 - (ii) Supervision of the implementation of the scheme.
 - (iii) Future routine maintenance of the signs
 - (iv) All associated administrative costs.
- 7.3 It is accepted this flat rate on-cost method of cost recovery will result in the Traffic Authority occasionally not recovering all of the costs it incurs but this will be balanced by instances where slightly more costs may be recovered than are actually incurred. Experience shows however that this system is easily understood by applicants and is by far the simplest and least administratively onerous method to operate. Consequently it is the method which most effectively enables the Traffic Authority to keep the costs it recharges for administration to an absolute minimum.
- 7.4 Where it is necessary to make amendments to the existing standard highway signing or indeed existing tourist signing in order to adequately and safely accommodate the provision of new tourist signs the cost of these amendments will be included in the final cost quoted to the applicant.

8.0 Application Procedure

8.1 Stage 1 - Initial Assessment

Upon receipt of a written application which must include the supporting information listed in Appendix B and payment of a non refundable initial assessment fee of £100 the Traffic Authority will :-

- (i) Consider and assess the application in light of the Authority's policy and having due regard to the relevant criteria.
- (ii) Contact the Wales Tourist Board (or their approved agents) to ascertain their recognition of the attraction / facility for direction signing purposes.

- (iii) Advise the applicant in writing as to whether or not their application can progress and if so provide an outline of the content and level of signing proposed and an accurate estimate as possible at this stage as to the likely cost of the signing scheme.

8.2 Stage 2 - Detailed Design

Upon receipt of written confirmation from the applicant that the outline proposals and estimate are acceptable, payment of a detailed design fee equal to 25% of the estimated cost of the scheme and the return of a signed copy of the Conditions under which the scheme will be implemented (see Appendix C) the Traffic Authority will :-

- (i) Prepared a detailed scheme design.
- (ii) Seek all necessary approvals and authorisations to enable the scheme to be implemented.
- (iii) Consult and liaise as may be necessary with neighbouring Traffic Authorities.
- (iv) Negotiate as may be necessary with adjacent land owners for permission to erect signs in private land where such a course of action is unavoidable.
- (iii) Provide the applicant in writing with a fixed price quotation for the implementation of the scheme.

8.3 Stage 3 - Implementation of Scheme

Upon receipt of payment of the fixed price quotation in full, less the deposit already paid, the Traffic Authority will :-

- (i) Arrange for the manufacture and erection of the proposed signs at the earliest opportunity.

Appendix A - Trunk Road Criteria

1. Where a community is already signed from a Trunk Road tourist destinations within that community will not normally be signed on the trunk road network.
2. Retail Parks, Shopping Centers, Garden Centers and Exhibition Centers should not be considered for signing from trunk roads using 'white on brown' signs; instead they should be signed as necessary for traffic management or safety reasons using standard directional signing.
3. Hotels, Public Houses, Guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, restaurants, sports centers and cinemas should not normally be signed from the trunk road network. Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to sign remote establishments for traffic management purposes in sparsely populated rural areas, provided the environmental impact is minimal.
4. Minimum visitor numbers for all tourist attractions signed from trunk roads should be applied as follows :-

Dual carriageways with grade separated junctions i.e. A55
- 150,000 visitors per year

Single carriageways i.e. A494 and A5
- 40,000 visitors per year

Appendix B - Supporting Information / Fees required upon Application

- (i) A brief description of the nature of the attraction / facility.
- (ii) A description or plan detailing the precise location.
- (iii) Confirmation that the attraction / facility is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours
- (iv) Written confirmation (i.e. copy of a letter from the appropriate body) that the attraction / facility is accredited or recognised by the appropriate national quality assurance scheme.
- (v) A copy of the most recently published promotional leaflet which must indicate opening times and a preferred route to the attraction / facility and details of the various outlets to which the leaflet has been distributed.
- (vi) Details of any other means by which the attraction / facility is promoted e.g. newspaper or magazine advertisements, web sites etc.
- (vii) An indication of actual or projected annual visitor numbers.
- (viii) The number of on-site parking spaces available for visitor use or full details of alternative off site parking arrangements.
- (ix) A cheque made payable to Denbighshire County Council for £100.

Appendix C - Conditions for the Provision of Rechargeable Traffic Signs

1. Where the cost of the works quoted is an estimate only the final cost to be paid by the applicant will be based on the actual cost of the sign manufacture and erection and any necessary associated ancillary works which will be advised at the appropriate time by means of a fixed price quotation.
2. The cost of works includes a sum for design, administration, site supervision and routine maintenance etc.
3. The signs and any other works required will remain under the control of the Highway / Traffic Authority i.e. National Assembly for Wales (for trunk roads) or County Council (for other roads), who may relocate or remove the signs on a rechargeable basis as may be deemed necessary.
4. The Highway / Traffic Authority will not be responsible for the cost of replacing the signs should they become damaged beyond simple repair or require renewal due to normal wear and tear. You may therefore wish to consider whether your own insurance covers you for such a loss.
5. The Highway / Traffic Authority will be responsible for health and safety matters regarding the design, erection and maintenance of the signs and you will be deemed to have appointed the Authority as your "Client Agent" under The Construction, Design and Management Regulations 1994 where appropriate you agree to the works.

SIGNED

DATE

(Owner / Operator)