

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	4th May 2023
Lead Member	Lead Member for Local Development and Planning, Councillor Wyn Mullen-James.
Head of Service	Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services, Emlyn Jones
Report author	Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager, Mike Jones
Title	Draft Tourism Signage Plan for Denbighshire

1. What is the report about?

1.1. To provide Committee with an update on the Draft Tourism Signage Plan. (This was previously referred to as the Tourism Signage Strategy).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide the Committee with an update on progress in regard to brown tourist direction sign projects within Denbighshire.

2.2. To seek the views of Committee on the proposed Tourism Signage Plan.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (in Appendix A) as part of its consideration.

3.2 That Committee considers the content of the report and attached appendices, and provides observations on the proposed Tourism Signage Plan.

4. Report details

Background

- 4.1. Brown tourist direction signs are provided to assist visitors to find tourist attractions and facilities, where significant numbers of visitors are likely.
- 4.2. Denbighshire County Council is the local highway authority for all non-trunk roads in Denbighshire. The Welsh Government is the highway authority for all trunk roads within Denbighshire, namely the A55, the A494 and the A5.
- 4.3. Tourist direction signs are usually funded by the operator of the tourist attraction or facility.
- 4.4. A report was taken to Communities Scrutiny Committee in March 2020 regarding the development of Denbighshire County Council's Tourism Signage Strategy. The Strategy was an action within the Council's Tourism Strategy. A copy of the March 2020 report is contained within Appendix B.
- 4.5. The Tourism signage strategy contained actions to develop signage schemes on the A55 for the Vale of Clwyd, for Rhyl and for Prestatyn. It also included actions to review tourist direction signage in Ruthin and the Dee Valley; to develop scenic tourist routes; and to provide suitable "follow-on" signs for visitors once they reach tourist destinations.

Update on actions contained within Tourism Signage Strategy

- 4.6. The tourist direction brown signage scheme for the Vale of Clwyd has recently been completed. Our Tourism, Marketing and Events team have been working to promote the Vale of Clwyd to complement the provision of the brown signs. This includes a new brochure for 2023, *Discover Denbighshire by Trails*, which includes a section that promotes the Vale of Clwyd Trail. Copies of the new brochure can be found on-line at:
<https://www.northeastwales.wales/booklets/discover-denbighshire-by-trails/>
(Please go to page 16 of the brochure to see this content)
- 4.7. Funding has also been secured to replace the Rhyl key brown sign on the A55 westbound carriageway in advance of Junction 27 (the Talardy Junction), and to provide a similar sign on the eastbound carriageway in advance of Junction 23a (the Pensarn Interchange). An image of the existing Rhyl key brown sign on the A55 westbound carriageway is provided in Appendix C. Work can commence on this now that the Vale of Clwyd scheme has been completed.

- 4.8. Initial design work has been undertaken on the provision of a Prestatyn key brown sign on the A55 eastbound carriageway in advance of Junction 24 (the Faenol Interchange). However, existing signage and the close proximity of Junction 24 to Junction 23a, means that the sign would be significantly more expensive than normal, owing to the need to relocate several other signs.
- 4.9. Work to develop follow-on signage for visitors arriving at tourist destinations has been completed by the Tourism, Marketing and Events team. This includes providing information signs within car parks and at other key locations, providing Tourist Information Points throughout the county and funding Tourist Information Centres in Rhyl and Llangollen. Eight Town Trail maps are currently available and were updated in the first quarter of 2023.
- 4.10. Workload pressures from other projects has, unfortunately, meant that no progress has been made to review brown tourist signs on the A494 in Ruthin.
- 4.11. Some initial design work has been undertaken to review tourist direction signs within, and on the approaches to Llangollen.
- 4.12. The development of signage to complement “The Wales Way”, has not been progressed owing to competing workload pressures.

Proposed Tourism Signage Plan

- 4.13. In the three years that have passed since the Tourism Signage Strategy was last considered by Communities Scrutiny Committee; we have been through a pandemic and have seen numerous changes to our everyday lives. There has been an increased use of technology, such as, for holding video meetings or through increased use of contactless payment such as through smartphones.
- 4.14. There is increasing use of satellite navigation using smartphone apps, in particular. Such apps have the advantage of being able to provide re-routing of traffic in real-time by responding to changing traffic conditions, for example.
- 4.15. Significant increases in the costs of construction materials and fuel costs are significantly increasing the cost of traffic signage schemes.
- 4.16. There also continues to be an increasing desire amongst campaign groups to reduce the amount of street furniture to reduce the visual impact on the

environment. Less signage also reduces the number of physical assets we have to maintain as a highway authority.

4.17. For the above reasons, it is proposed that adopt a new, streamlined Tourism Signage Plan that reflects the work done to date, and the changes to the ways in which people navigate to tourist attractions.

4.18. The proposed actions for the new Tourism Signage Plan are as follows:

- Implement A55 key brown tourist signs for Rhyl on the eastbound and westbound carriageways at junctions 23a and 27 respectively.
- Further develop a proposal for a key brown sign for Prestatyn on the A55 eastbound carriageway at junction 24.
- Further develop the review of the brown tourist signs on the approaches to, and within Llangollen.
- Review existing trunk road signage for Ruthin and Corwen

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. Improved brown tourist signage for key destinations will contribute towards the below themes within the Corporate Plan by enhancing signage to key tourist destinations, and helping with the management of visitor traffic in the process.

- A prosperous Denbighshire
- A better connected Denbighshire

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. The majority of funding is in place for the provision of A55 signs for Rhyl although this will need to be reviewed in light of increased construction costs due to inflation, particularly increases in steel and fuel costs.

6.2. Work to develop and review signage for Prestatyn, Ruthin and Llangollen as described will be dependent upon usage of some of the Traffic Block Capital annual allocation of capital funding. Where privately-run tourist attractions are included on signs, the operator would be expected to contribute to the costs where new signage was required.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. The Wellbeing Impact Assessment (WIA) concludes that the Plan will have a positive impact. The WIA is provided in Appendix A.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. A report was presented to Communities Scrutiny Committee in March 2020. A copy of the report is provided in Appendix B.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. It is important that services keep within their budget during this period of financial constraint. Future years allocations for all expenditure are currently under review for 24/25 and beyond.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. A failure to replace the existing Rhyl brown sign could eventually result in the current sign failing structurally due to its age. The sign's existing condition is poor visually which doesn't give a good impression to visitors.

10.2. Failure to develop and implement the further actions identified within the proposed Tourism Signage Plan would be a case of failing to help the key attractions reach their full potential.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

11.2. Section 7.4 of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's powers on relation to this matter.