

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROVIDING TRAFFIC SIGNS TO TOURIST DESTINATIONS

CODE OF PRACTICE AND POLICY

CONTACT

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May 2010

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the policies and procedures adopted by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to deal with applications for traffic signing to all tourist attractions and services in the Borough area following the guidance set out in TA 93/04 Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England – Guidance for Tourist Signing – General Introduction and TA94/04 Traffic Signs to Tourist Attractions and Facilities in England – Guidance for Tourist Signing – Local Roads.

This policy is intended to be a manageable strategy for providing traffic signs which meets the needs and requirements of the Tourism Partnerships, the operators of quality tourist establishments in the Borough and the tourists themselves. It is also intended to help operators of tourist facilities to quickly decide for themselves whether their establishment might qualify for tourist signing before any costs are incurred.

2. PURPOSE OF TOURIST SIGNS

White on Brown tourist signs are part of the family of directional signs. Their purpose is to guide visitors to a pre-selected destination along the most appropriate route at the latter stages of their journey, particularly where destinations are difficult to find. Like any form of Traffic Signing, Tourist signs are only an aid to safe and efficient navigation, which complement, but cannot replace, pre-planning material such as maps and atlases. The signs are **not** intended to provide advertisements for individual tourist establishments nor are they part of the Council's promotion of the tourist industry in general.

3. APPLYING FOR TOURIST SIGNS

Applications for tourist signs on non Trunk and non Motorway Roads in Rotherham are made to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. The procedure is very straightforward. Applicants will be asked to answer a few questions about their tourist establishment and assessed for eligibility using the current criteria contained in this policy document. When the assessment is complete, the Council will write to the applicant to confirm whether their application has been successful or unsuccessful. Replies to unsuccessful applicants will give reasons for the decision whilst successful applicants will be given details about how to further their application.

NOTE:

Applications for tourist signs on **motorways and trunk roads** must be made to:-

Highway Agency

Lateral

8 City Walk

Leeds

LS11 9AT

4. DEFINITION OF A TOURIST DESTINATION

A tourist destination means a permanently established attraction or facility which attracts or is used by visitors to an area and is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours. There are two types of tourist establishment which may be eligible for tourist signing.

- **TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

These include for example visitor centres, theme parks, historic buildings, museums, zoo's, parks and gardens, natural attractions (such as nature reserves, beaches and view points) areas of special interest, country tours or tourist routes, sports centres, concert venues, theatres and cinemas.

- **TOURIST FACILITIES**

These include for example hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, public houses, restaurants, holiday parks, touring and camping parks, picnic sites and tourist information centres.

The above is not an exhaustive list of the types of establishments in each category.

5. ELIGIBILITY FOR TOURISM SIGNING

GENERAL CRITERIA

To be eligible for tourist signing an establishment must:-

- Be open for at least 150 days per year or host ten eligible events per year – an example of an eligible event is a horse racing meeting at a racecourse.
- Be something you would not reasonably expect to find in that location.
- Show evidence of promoting to the tourism market and promoting the attraction or facility beyond the local area – this could include promotional brochures, details of where they have been distributed, advertisements published in tourist guides, the media or T.V. and radio advertising.
- Meet all statutory requirements e.g. planning permission, fire, health and hygiene.
- Provide adequate off-street parking for visitors either on site or in appropriate car parks nearby with the written permission of the owner.
- Be recognised by the Tourism Partnerships or the Local Authority as a tourist destination or establishment and take part in the approved Quality Assurance schemes, such as Visitor Attraction Quality Accreditation Scheme (VAQAS), Accommodation Establishments must undertake the Quality Assessment annually.

- Further guidance on recommended requirements needed to support an application is provided in Appendix 'A'.
- Further guidance on Quality Assurance schemes and representative bodies is provided in Appendix 'B'.

NOTE:

Eligibility does **not** confer automatic entitlement to tourist signs. Decisions on signing individual establishments will depend on local circumstances, including the number of other similar establishments in the area.

6. CRITERIA FOR IMPLEMENTING TOURIST SIGNING

To avoid the unnecessary provision of traffic signs (or 'sign clutter') which can detract from other more important road signs, the Council has adopted the following criteria for implementing tourist signing on roads in the Borough of Rotherham.

- Tourist signing will only be provided where the highway authority (the Council) is satisfied that the local road network to and from the establishment is capable of safely accommodating the level of traffic and the type of vehicle that the establishment may generate.
- A tourist establishment will only be signed from the nearest 'A' or 'B' classified road unless there is good reason to do otherwise on traffic flow or road safety grounds. As an example, an establishment on an unclassified road adjoining the A630 would only be signed from the 'A' road. If an establishment is accessible from more than one direction, each route may be signed if it is useful on traffic management grounds. Where an establishment is signed from a motorway or trunk road, continuity signing to the establishment will be provided on the local road network.
- A tourist attraction in a village will be signed from the most appropriate classified roads if the existing village direction signs do not adequately direct traffic to it or, if it is difficult to find.
- Town and Village boundary signs which allow the inclusion of a brown panel displaying tourist symbols may be used at the main entry points into a village in association with the village name. The maximum number of tourist symbols is three. Wherever possible these signs will be used in preference to signing individual 'facilities' but will be supported by continuity signing within the community (which may be pedestrian signing from a car park). However, it is recommended that road users should be directed to a tourist information point or a tourist information centre.
- By-passed community signs are usually associated with a break during a journey rather than being a final destination sought by a driver and are intended to provide information about local tourist attractions and the availability of tourist information, bypassed community signs and local service signs, should only be used to direct road users to small towns or villages with a population of less than 10,000, this is because larger towns and cities can be expected to provide a full range of facilities and existing direction signs are already likely to have been provided.

- In the interest of road safety and to avoid excessive environmental intrusion the total number of destinations located on a sign should be no more than 6, however for Tourist signs the maximum number of destinations at one location should be no more than 3 - 4 dependent on the individual signing locations and speed of the road. Tourist destinations frequently consist of two or more words and additional information such as symbols, as such the information has to be seen, read, understood and acted upon in a short period of time and so has to be reduced. Where there are more than 3 applications received for signing at a particular location, priority will be given to signing the establishments which attract the most tourists. The maximum number of tourist destinations may be reduced if tourist signs accommodate additional information and non tourist signs will always take priority, where signing at an individual location needs to be reduced for environmental or road safety reasons. .
- For 'attractions' in urban areas such as town centres, pedestrian signing from bus and train stations is more appropriate than vehicle signing, particularly where car or coach access to the attraction is discouraged for environmental or safety reasons. Signs other than generic signs to tourist 'facilities' in urban areas are unnecessary and will not usually be provided.
- In conservation areas or areas of outstanding beauty the environmental impact of traffic signs can be significant. In these areas it is important that the environmental impact of new signs is minimised, as far as is consistent with their intended purpose.

7. TOURIST SIGN APPLICATION PROCESS AND COSTS

PROCESSING AN APPLICATION

Applicants are liable for all costs relating to tourist signs. (It is strongly recommended that an application for tourist signing is not made until the criteria guidelines and requirements in this document have been met). The cost of determining an application is £125.00 + VAT and takes around 4 weeks to complete. This fee is payable in advance and will not be reimbursed if the application is unsuccessful. Where applications are refused, a written explanation will be given detailing the reasons for refusal. Processing an application includes:-

ASSESSMENT AND SIGN INSTALLATION TIMETABLE

STAGE	ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED TIMESCALE PER STAGE
1	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment</p> Application assessed against criteria If approved notify Client and proceed to detailed design otherwise advise Client that request refused stating reasons why.	4 weeks
2.	<p style="text-align: center;">Detailed Design</p> Carryout detailed design, obtain price for works and then submit scheme to Client for approval. On receipt of the signed Confirmation Of Acceptance Agreement and funds to cover the cost of the scheme proceed to Construction, otherwise abandon scheme.	6 weeks
3	<p style="text-align: center;">Construction</p> Scheme issued to Streetpride for construction.	16 weeks
4	<p style="text-align: center;">Completion</p> When scheme complete and all snagging issues resolved, issue invoice to Client for payment.	4 weeks
	Total Time	29 weeks

A timetable showing the main stages in processing an application is shown below. The applicant should note the following;

- They will be expected to pay a non-refundable fee of £125 for assessment of their application.
- Detailed design initial fee - £400 payable at the start of stage 2 before detailed design commences, this cost is non-refundable.
- They will be expected to pay full costs of both the design and works required in providing the signs*, which will be provided to the applicant before stage 3 commences.
- The Council reserves the right at any time, to remove, reposition or alter the design of the signs if it considers it necessary in the interests of road safety, traffic management or to accommodate other traffic signs.
- They are liable for all costs resulting from damage or theft to the signs and their repositioning if required by the Highway Authority.
- A commuted sum will be included in the price to cover the removal of signs should the establishment cease to qualify for signing or is permanently closed.

*It should be noted that the Council will deduct the initial detailed design fee payment of £400 from the outstanding final scheme cost.

RENEWAL OF EXISTING CONSENTS AFTER TEN YEARS

The signs will be under a ten year review period. Any alteration or removal of signs caused by the closure or relocation of an attraction within this period would be covered by the initial payments. At the end of the ten year period the cycle would repeat itself. Renewal of consent will be charged to the current operator of a tourist establishment at the prevailing rate charged for processing an application.

Assessment of Quality Standards in the Visitor Quality Assurance Scheme and Accommodation Quality Assessment Schemes either AA, QIT, Camping and Caravan Club.

POINTS TO NOTE

Where an establishment qualifies for tourist signing any existing approved signs on the highway directing traffic or pedestrians to it will be removed by the Council. Similarly all advertising or non-approved direction signs on the highway should be removed by the applicant. The erection of advertising or other non-approved material on the highway where tourism signing has been provided shall render the establishment ineligible and the tourist signing will be removed.

Where additions to composite signs (signs showing more than one tourist destination) are needed or signing to a tourist establishment is included on general direction signing, an applicant will be required to pay for the provision of a complete new sign assembly.

8. APPENDIX 'A' RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS FOR TOURIST ESTABLISHMENTS

ESTABLISHMENT

RECOMMENDED REQUIREMENTS

Hotels, Serviced Accommodation

Only assessed, graded and serviced accommodation will be considered for tourism signs. Examples of grading schemes are given in Appendix B. Applicants will need to provide written confirmation of their grading and a copy of their current annual assessment certificate.

Chalets, Caravan and Camp Sites

Sites should have at least 20 services pitches for casual overnight use. Only licensed, inspected and graded sites will be considered for tourism signs. Examples of grading schemes are given in Appendix B. Applicants will need to provide written confirmation of their grading and a copy of their current membership certificate. YHA Youth Hostels will be granted tourism signing.

Public Houses

Hot and cold meals and not just bar snacks must be served at least at lunchtime and evenings in a dedicated dining area. A childrens' certificate is required to allow children to accompany their parents. Where overnight accommodation is provided only assessed, graded and serviced accommodation will be considered for tourism signs. Applicants will need to provide written confirmation of their grading and a copy of their current annual assessment certificate.

Restaurants and Cafes

Should be open when tourists are most likely to be visiting the area and customers should be able to obtain a meal without pre-booking.

Leisure and Sports Facilities

Must be open to the public and not fully dependant on prior booking and be open for at least 6 hours every day. Establishments holding more than ten major events per annum may also be considered for tourism signs.

Theatres and Cinemas

Open to the public and not fully dependant on prior booking.

Retail

Need to provide amenities or features specifically aimed at tourists (e.g. craft centres where craft skills or product manufacture are demonstrated). Exceptions may be made in rural areas in recognition of tourism's importance to the rural economy.

Tourist Trails, Leisure Drives and Cycle Routes

Need to be free of charge with access available at all times.

Note: This list is not exhaustive and is only intended to give guidance on the standards expected of Tourist establishments.

Where appropriate there should be access, washing, toilet and other arrangements for families with children and for the disabled to ensure these people can make full use of the establishment. Appropriate arrangements are to provide an access statement identifying access facilities including some of the following if available

Wheelchair access ramps	Lifts
Toilets (including toilets for the disabled)	Internal signs
Telephones	Baby changing rooms
Rest Rooms/areas	Baby feeding areas
Washing and hand drying	Aids for blind and deaf people
Hand rails	Disabled parking*

- usually 5% of total on site parking spaces (minimum of 2 spaces for smaller establishments)

If you require information on the National Accessible Scheme and the Council's Access Guide for tourism facilities please contact the Tourism Service:-

Rotherham visitor centre
40 Bridgegate
Rotherham
S60 1PO

Where suitable arrangements are not provided, reasons must be given.

Where signs are provided, consideration will be given to removing them if the establishment fails to meet any of the recommended requirements or is no longer part of a Quality Assessment scheme.

DIFFICULT TO FIND DESTINATIONS

For many tourist 'facilities' in urban areas it must also be demonstrated that there is a need for signing due to particular difficulty finding its location or that the building has some historic or other significance attached to it. The general assumption is against providing signs (other than generic signs e.g. 'hotels') in built up urban areas, especially where tourists would reasonably expect to find particular services. An exception to this is any signing implemented by the Council as part of a comprehensive strategy in pursuance of its Public Realm Strategy Design Code/Local Development Framework.

GENERAL CRITERIA

- Lack of clear signing in the general area in which the establishment is located.
- Presence of complex junctions which have to be negotiated to reach the establishment.
- Lack of visibility of the establishment from any distance.
- Presence of any other factors which would tend to mislead or confuse those seeking the establishment.

9. APPENDIX 'B'

EXAMPLES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEMES AND REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

FACILITY/ATTRACTION

EXAMPLE Q.A. SCHEME OR REPRESENTATIVE BODY

Theme Park	International Theme Park Association.
Historic Properties and Castles	National Trust, English Heritage.
Parks and Gardens	Royal Horticultural Society.
Museums and Ancient Monuments	Museum Council, English Heritage.
Historic Churches	Quality in Tourism. Heritage Inspired South Yorkshire
Areas of Special Interest	English Nature, Civic Society.
Picnic Area and View Points	Tidy Britain Awards.
Hotels, Serviced Accommodation, Public Houses, Restaurants, Cafes	QIT, AA, grading schemes, Brewers Licensed Retailers Association, Tied Pub Owners, Regional Tourist Board Welcome Host Initiative. Inclusion in recognised food guide.
Chalets, Caravans and Camp Sites	QIT Standards for Self Catering. Accommodation, Graded Holiday Parks, Camping and Caravan Club.
Leisure and Sports Facilities	Sports Council Membership.
Theatres and Cinemas	Arts Council Membership.
Retail	Chamber of Commerce
Tourist Trails, Leisure Drives, and Cycle Routes	Enjoy England, Visit England, Trans Pennine trail, Sustrans.

Note: This list is not exhaustive and is intended to give guidance on the standards expected of Tourist facilities and attractions. It is not a comprehensive list of acceptable Q.A. Schemes and representative bodies. Further information about appropriate Quality Assurance schemes can be obtained by contacting:-

Accommodation & Spas	Visitor Attractions	Visitor Attractions Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS)
Quality in Tourism, Security House Alexandra Way Ashchurch, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire GL20 8NB Tel: 0845 300 6996 Email: qualityintourism@gslglobal.com Web:www.qualityintourism.com	VisitBritain Thames Tower Blacks Road London W6 9EL Tel: 020 8846 9000 Email:visitbritain.org Web:www.enjoyengl and.com	VAQAS VisitBritain Thames Tower Blacks Road London W6 9EL Tel: 020 8846 9000 Email: vaqas@eetb.org.uk Web: http://www.tourismtrade.org.uk/quality/assessmentstandards/VAQAS/default.asp

10. APPENDIX 'C'

PLANNING AND REGENERATION SERVICE
BAILEY HOUSE
RAWMARSH ROAD
ROTHERHAM S60 1TD

PAUL WOODCOCK – DIRECTOR OF SERVICE

APPLICATION FORM FOR TRAFFIC SIGNING TO TOURIST ESTABLISHMENTS

DETAILS OF OPERATOR

Name and address of operator:

Contact name and telephone number:tel:

DETAILS OF TOURIST ESTABLISHMENT

(If different to above)

Name and address of tourist establishment:

Contact name and telephone number: tel:

With regard to the destination to be signed please indicate the text you wish to be considered for the sign(s) and a description of what activities take place at the destination.

.....
.....
.....
.....

What is the main purpose of the tourist establishment? (Please provide copies of any promotional information).

.....
.....
.....

Opening times.

Number of days open per year

Opening hours

Is pre-booking required YES/NO

I hereby declare that the above information is correct and understand that any false information will disqualify my application.

Print name

Signed

Date

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM, CHEQUE AND ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO:

**Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Transportation Unit
Bailey House
Rawmarsh Road
Rotherham S60 1TD**

Note: all applications must be accompanied by a cheque for £125 payable to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council any applications not including this fee will be returned. The application fee will not prejudice decisions and unsuccessful applications will not receive a refund.

11. APPENDIX 'D'

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROVISION OF TOURIST DIRECTION SIGNS

CONFIRMATION ACCEPTANCE TO DEVELOP SCHEME TO DETAILED DESIGN

Signs to:- _____

I accept the proposal that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council have initially developed and I agree to pay £400, which allows the detailed design of the scheme to be completed to assist in the final scheme cost.

Please note that payment will be required before the design is commenced.

To be completed by the applicant

I am in agreement with the condition stated above.

Signed _____ Date _____

Name (Please print) _____

An Authorised Signatory of _____

Address _____

Signed _____ Date _____

On behalf of:- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Please return to:-

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Transportation Unit
Bailey House
Rotherham, S60 1TD

12. APPENDIX 'E'

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROVISION OF TOURIST DIRECTION SIGNS

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE

Signs to:- _____

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is prepared to authorise and thereafter to erect traffic signs indicating the direction to _____ at the location(s) shown on the attached plans.

I agree with the estimated cost of £ _____ which includes design, manufacture, erection, minor maintenance, commuted sum and administration costs.

The signs will remain the property of RMBC as Highway Authority, and the Council has and reserves the right to remove, reposition or alter the design of the signs if it considers this necessary in the interest of road safety, traffic management or to accommodate other traffic signs at or in the vicinity of those locations. If the destination ceases to meet the criteria under which the signs were justified then I understand the signs will be removed.

Please note that payment will be required before work is commenced.

To be completed by the applicant	
I am in agreement with the condition stated above.	
Signed _____	Date _____
Name (Please print) _____	
An Authorised Signatory of _____	
Address _____	

Signed _____ Date _____	
On behalf of:- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	

POINTS TO NOTE

If the signs require replacement or repositioning during or after their expected life of ten years owing to theft, deterioration, or accident damage, then I will be responsible for the full cost of replacement if I wish the signs to remain. Should the replacement not be financed, all of the signing will be subject to removal.

Please return to:-
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Transportation Unit
Bailey House
Rotherham, S60 1TD