

## ANGUS COUNCIL

ROADS COMMITTEE	17 OCTOBER 1996
PLANNING & TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE	17 OCTOBER 1996
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE	24 OCTOBER 1996

### TOURISM SIGNPOSTING POLICY

JOINT REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ROADS AND DIRECTOR OF PLANNING,  
TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### ABSTRACT

This report outlines a tourism signing policy which has been prepared in conjunction with the Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise Tayside and The Scottish Tourist Board in light of a revised Scottish Office Circular on tourism signposting.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee approves the attached policy as the basis for determining applications for signing to tourist attractions and facilities.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Scottish Office have recently revised the regulations regarding tourist signposting in Scotland through the publication of SODD Circular 27/1995. The revised regulations generally permit a wider range of tourist services and tourist attractions to be signed and permit local authorities more freedom to take decisions locally. The Government argue that the changes will reduce the unnecessary restrictions on businesses involved in tourism and, provide an opportunity to take a fresh look at tourist signposting and develop local policies which enable signing to be dealt with in a logical and planned fashion. The Circular also acknowledges the risk of creating visual clutter through the proliferation of signs.

#### SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO TOURISM SIGNPOSTING

The Circular details changes to the arrangements for signposting tourist attractions and facilities on all roads in Scotland other than Trunk roads and motorways where the previous Circular (3/92) still applies. All decisions regarding the erection of signs become a matter for Roads Authorities.

A "tourist attraction" becomes more broadly defined for signing purposes as *a permanently established destination or facility that attracts or is used by visitors to an area, and which is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours*. Determining whether a tourist attraction falls within this definition and is eligible for signposting becomes a matter for the tourist agencies (The Scottish Tourist Board represented as appropriate by Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board in the local context) to decide through inspection of the applicants' establishment and their participation in a Scottish tourist Board Quality Assurance Scheme where such a scheme exists.

The Circular indicates that approved establishments now include the following: historic properties and castles; parks and gardens; leisure complexes and sports venues; beaches and viewpoints; areas of special geographical interest; restaurants and cafes; ancient monuments and museums; historic churches, abbeys and cathedrals; cinemas, theatres and concert venues; nature reserves, zoos and safari parks; water sports; hotels and bed and breakfasts; tourist and youth hostels; retail establishments with displays for tourists; Tourist Information Centres; camping and caravan sites; picnic sites; tourist and leisure drives and cycle routes. The most significant changes relate to the removal of restrictions on signing of tourist accommodation, refreshment facilities and retail premises. Clearly this may cause problems in urban areas where there are a large number of such establishments.

Other notable changes are: the permitted use of full commercial names on tourist attraction signs; comprehensive tourist signs for pedestrians in urban areas; new signs at village gateways to show available services; new signs to communities bypassed by through routes; relaxation of the controls on tourist routes and trails; and new signs for way marked footpaths.

In addition all signs erected under the new guidelines will display the new "*Scotland the Brand*" thistle symbol

#### PROPOSED TOURIST SIGNPOSTING POLICY

Signposting of visitor attractions and services is potentially a controversial issue due to the conflict between the desire of all businesses to advertise and the need to prevent visual clutter from signs. Road safety is also an issue as the vehicle driver may be distracted by the number of signs competing for his/ her attention. Many of the changes introduced by the Circular will be welcomed by the tourism industry and could bring considerable economic benefits to the industry through enhanced promotion but there is a risk of proliferation of signs if a local policy is not carefully constructed and followed in practice. Future controversy and complaint will be directed at the Council and not the Scottish Office as a consequence of the devolution of decision making to local authorities and the Area Tourist Boards.

The attached policy has therefore been developed in partnership with Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board, Scottish Enterprise Tayside and Scottish Tourist Board as

representatives of the local and national tourist industry to ensure that it is consistent with national objectives whilst relevant locally.

The Policy seeks to develop the framework of the Circular and to clarify those areas of signposting which have not been clearly defined or where there is scope for local interpretation. In particular the Policy:

- a) Establishes the criteria for advance signposting of rural accommodation, refreshment and retail establishments and other visitor attractions.
- b) Establishes the criteria for advance signposting of services of bypassed or rural settlements.

#### IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSED TOURISM SIGNPOSTING POLICY

Both the circular and the policy make it clear that the design and manufacture of the signs must be to a standard approved by the Roads Authority and that all costs relating to the design, manufacture, erection and maintenance will be borne by the applicant.

Clearly, in the majority of cases, costs will be met by individual tourist facility/attraction operators. The Policy does however encourage the use of composite signs for groups of attractions and this would allow sharing of costs although such an approach can cause difficulties when an attraction closes or a new attraction requires to be signed.

Such an approach also creates opportunities for the Council to produce composite signs promoting their own attractions and to take a proactive approach in encouraging the private sector to rationalise their signing.

Rationalisation of signing should include the removal of signs which may now be considered unnecessary which were erected previously with or without prior consent from the Planning Authority and Roads Authority. It will be a condition of the erection of Tourism Signing that all unofficial signing will be removed by the applicant.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to the Council in the adoption of this policy.

It should be noted however that the Scottish Tourist Board require all existing tourism signing to be altered to white lettering on a brown background incorporating the new *Scotland the Brand* symbol. This must be achieved by December 1997 and includes Council attractions such as country parks and leisure facilities. It is anticipated that these alterations will require to be accommodated within the revenue budgets of the appropriate departments.

## CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration, Director of Finance, Chief Constable have been consulted in the preparation of this Report.

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DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## NOTE

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report:-

Scottish Office Circular 27/1995.

REPORTS/tourism  
October 7, 1996  
NJ/JSG

## Tourist / Strategic Signposting Proposed Policy

### 1 Signposting of Accommodation Establishments

- (a) Hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast homes and touring caravan/camping sites which are located outwith important settlements (see schedule of "important settlements" below) and are not accessed directly from (ie have frontage to or private access) from an important road (see schedule of "important roads" below) will be eligible for signposting.
- (b) Establishments which are accessed directly from an important road may (at the discretion of the Director of Roads and primarily on road safety grounds only) qualify for advance signs advising road users of the close proximity of the establishment.
- (c) All signs will be located at the nearest and/or most logical points on important road(s). Signs may be double-sided if the location or road safety requirements dictate. Advance signs will again be permitted only on the grounds of road safety at the discretion of the Director of Roads.
- (d) Normally, an establishment may have signs on only one important road, though this may be increased to two if the establishment is located between important roads.
- (e) Signs on important roads will only be permitted for establishments within 6 miles of such roads. Establishments in The Glens which fall outwith this limit, will be permitted to have signs on the nearest and/or most logical non-important road(s), as if such road(s) were important.
- (f) If the route to the establishment necessitates one or more additional turns on to other roads, additional confirmatory signs (double-sided if required) will be permitted. These signs will generally be smaller than those on the important road.
- (g) Signs will be worded with the name of the establishment and/or a generic title (eg "B & B") and the distance in miles/yards thereto. No other wording will be permitted. The name of the establishment will be restricted to its trading name only, though differentiation between parts of the business trading under separate names would be permitted eg "Arbirlot Hotel and Arbirlot Caravan Park" would be permitted but "Arbirlot Hotel and Lounge Bar" would not.

- (h) Establishments in proximity to each other are encouraged to apply for composite signs featuring several establishments, thereby reducing costs and sign clutter.

2 Signposting of Eating Establishments

- (a) Establishments offering meals and/or refreshments as their primary activity (but not providing accommodation) which are located outwith important settlements and are not accessed directly from (ie have frontage to or private access from) an important road will be eligible for signposting.

(b)-(h) As for "Accommodation Establishments" above.

3 Signposting of Retail Establishments

- (a) Establishments which have retailing as their principal function but which are deemed also to hold interest of a non-retailing nature for visitors and which are located outwith important settlements and which are not accessed directly from (ie have frontage to or private access from) an important road, will be eligible for signposting "Interest of a non-retailing nature". This could mean for example that the building is of particular historic interest, contained a local heritage display, or offered regular crafts demonstrations. This function of the establishment could be eligible for "Thistle" signposting; if such signs were obtained the retail element would not be eligible for separate retail signs. Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board will have absolute and final discretion when assessing which establishments hold non-retailing interest for visitors.

(b)-(h) As for "Accommodation Establishments" above.

4 Signposting of Visitor Attractions ("Thistle" Signs)

- (a) All establishments defined as "tourist attractions" within the Regulations will be eligible for "Thistle" signs. This definition includes sporting, theatrical and geographical venues.

(b) All "tourist attractions" will also be eligible for advance signs advising travellers of the proximity of the attraction.

(c)-(h) As for "Accommodation Establishments" above, except that the distance limit in (d) shall be 12 miles.

(i) There will be no minimum number of visitors required before an attraction becomes eligible for signposting.

## 5 Signposting of other Services

- (a) Settlements bypassed by, or within 2 miles of, an important road, will be eligible for signs which contain (i) an objective and descriptive phrase of up to four words (eg "Glamis - Historic Village"); (ii) up to six symbols denoting the services available within the settlement.
- (b) Signs will be located at the nearest and/or most logical points on important roads.

## 6 Signposting within "Important Settlements"

- (a) The signing of all accommodation, eating and retail establishments within the urban framework is considered impractical, on the grounds of safety and visual amenity. Signs will be approved only in the most exceptional circumstances to avoid excessive and dangerous clutter.
- (b) Each "important settlement" has individual and unique characteristics as a tourist destination.

Consequently each application received from an establishment within an urban area will be treated on its own merits taking into consideration such factors as location, the number of similar establishments (signed or unsigned), the possibility of directing visitors to car parks and having pedestrian-only signs therefrom; etc. In addition, factors such as whether or not the facility or the signs lie within a conservation area will have a significant bearing on whether or not approval is granted

Where granted, combined signs will be of particular importance within such settlements.

## 7 Signposting from Trunk Roads

On trunk roads, Scottish Office policy on signposting rather than this Policy, will apply. There is one trunk road, the A90, in Angus.

On trunk routes it will be necessary for the applicants to deal with the Scottish Office rather than Angus Council, in conjunction with the Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board. It may be worthwhile that Angus Council and the Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board make representations to the Scottish Office with a view to encouraging them to adopt the regulations contained in SODD Circular 27/1995 for trunk roads as well as local roads. This will ensure a consistency in approach for all roads with respect to tourist/strategic signposting.

## 8 General Points

- (a) The Regulations as approved by Parliament form the framework within which this Policy sits and cannot be over-ruled. This Policy exists only to clarify those areas of signposting policy which have not been clearly defined within the Regulations.
- (b) It will be a condition of permission for signposting that establishments join, and remain in membership of, a Scottish Tourist Board Quality Assurance Scheme where such a Scheme exists. At present, Schemes exist for all types of accommodation (other than hostels) and for visitor attractions, with future Schemes planned to cover the transport and food sectors. Where schemes do not exist, it will be a condition of permission for signposting that the establishment is in current membership of the Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board.
- (c) Angus Council will have the absolute and final discretion to grant consent for, remove or temporarily cover signs which it considers are no longer satisfactory for any reason. In taking such decisions, the Council may take advice from the Scottish Tourist Board and/or Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board and/or Scottish Office.

## 9 Costs

The costs of design, manufacture, erection and maintenance of signs will be borne in full by the business concerned.

## 10 Technical Specifications

The Director of Roads will determine such matters as exact dimensions of signs, their design, materials used in their manufacture and their exact location (in which respect such aspects as road safety will be considered).

## 11 How to Apply

Applications should be made to:

Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board  
Market Place  
Arbroath  
Angus  
DD11 1HR

12 Schedule of "Important Settlements"

For the purpose of this Signposting Policy, "Important Settlements" are:-

Arbroath, Brechin, Carnoustie, Forfar, Kirriemuir, Monifieth, Montrose

13 Schedule of "Important Roads"

For the purposes of this Signposting Policy, "Important Roads" are:-

(a) All "A" Class roads excepting the A90 (which is a trunk road) and

(b) The B9128.

