

**ANGUS COUNCIL****DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE****10 APRIL 1997****SUBJECT: ADVERTISING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE  
REVIEW OF POLICY****REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Abstract: Following adoption of the Tourist Signposting Policy, the Council's planning policies towards signing/advertising in the countryside are in need of review. This report presents a revised policy.**

**1 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Committee adopts the revised policies as presented in Section 4 of this report and that they be incorporated in a re-printed Advice Note 7.

**2 INTRODUCTION**

2.1 In November 1996, the Council adopted new procedures for the signing of tourist related facilities. This was as a result of a relaxation offered to Roads Authorities by the Scottish Office, which now permits for a wide-range of tourist facilities to utilise white on brown formal road signs.

2.2 In accepting the tourism signposting policy, the Planning and Transport Policy Committee and the Development Control Committee considered a further report indicating the implications for the Council's planning policies on rural signing as laid down in Advice Note 7. Although the majority of rural signs will now be covered by the tourism signposting policy, a small number of enterprises would be excluded thus necessitating the retention of Advice Note 7 but in a much revised form. It was agreed that a revision of Advice Note 7 be the subject of a further report.

**3 BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS**

3.1 In adopting the tourism signposting policy, the Council also accepted a number of other recommendations from the officials which help to provide a framework for a revised Advice Note 7.

3.2 It was agreed that all tourist related facilities eligible for formal tourist signs should in future be obliged to apply for and provide those signs. This means that Advice Note 7 and indeed the Development Control Committee itself, will not be involved in defining criteria for tourist related directional signs as in future no such signs will be granted consent through the planning system. Existing signs will be permitted to remain in place for five years but any new or replacement signs must be of the new formal variety.

- 3.3 This means planning policies for signing in the countryside will only relate to non-tourist activities e.g. shops and other commercial businesses.
- 3.4 The current policies as contained in Advice Note 7 have, with only two exceptions, generally operated without problems. One of the cases related to a weekend market operator in Forfar who wished to erect an advertising sign on every road entering the town. Although the operator attracted some sympathetic press at the time, this was clearly a totally unacceptable precedent for the District Council to sanction.
- 3.5 The second case concerned signs erected without consent on two entry points into Newtyle village and again were the recipients of sympathetic press coverage. One was a tourist facility readily seen from the main road for whom alternative signing possibilities were and still are available (now under the new policy perhaps). In response to the perceived needs of the second (a carpet shop), the policy was amended to provide a signing opportunity but due to resistance from land/property owners, the proprietor was unable to avail himself of this opportunity. The signs on the entry to the village were removed following refusal on appeal to the Secretary of State and such signs are in any case opposed by the Director of Roads and Police on road safety grounds.
- 3.6 Nevertheless it did seem appropriate to again reconsider the policy in respect of village shops away from main roads in the context of this review of Advice Note 7.

#### 4 REVISED POLICY NOTE

- 4.1 Due to the numerous circumstances under which signs can be erected in the countryside, it is not possible to devise a simple, short policy document i.e. different rules are required for signs within the curtilage; for directional signs outwith the curtilage; on A class roads; on minor roads; in villages; relating to the type of facility; and now the distinction between tourist and other signs. Nevertheless the Advice Note will be presented in as readable a form as possible, including diagrams and an introduction which will briefly highlight the objectives of the policy.
- 4.2 The recommended policies, based largely on the current Advice Note, follow.
- 4.3 **Signs within Curtilage**

This section applies to both tourist and non-tourist related signs in the countryside.

- (a) Institutions of a recreational, medical, hotel, club, hostel use, etc. do not require approval up to 1.2 square metres for purposes of identification.

**POLICY - Signs larger than 1.2 square metres may be permitted if in the opinion of the Planning Authority the scale of the operation in terms of buildings, etc. could absorb a larger sign with little adverse environmental impact, in which case up to 2.5 square metres may be acceptable with an absolute maximum size of 4.5 square metres for major tourist attractions.**

(b) Farm produce or sales signs do not have any specific exemption.

**POLICY - Signs up to 0.9 square metres for a temporary period only and of a professional appearance will be acceptable. Larger signs will be considered on their merit with due attention being made to their environmental impact.**

(c) Other signs on business premises, if attached to the face of a building, are deemed to have consent if they occupy no more than one-twelfth of the area of that face, are no higher than 3.6 metres and letter size does not exceed 0.3 metres. Within the forecourt of such premises a single sign not exceeding 4.5 square metres is permitted.

**POLICY - Normally no larger than the permitted size will be allowed unless the Planning Authority is satisfied that a larger sign can be absorbed with little adverse environmental impact. This is likely to be very rare in the countryside.**

**Number of Signs: The above policies refer to each road onto which a building or business has a frontage, i.e. two road frontages permits one sign on each. Additional signs may be granted consent:-**

- (I) where the business concerned is involved in two or more activities, e.g. petrol station and cafe, restaurant and craft shop, etc. Two signs may be permitted or a single, larger sign may be justified;
- (II) where an access may represent a potential safety hazard, a second and if deemed necessary, a third advance/warning sign (maximum 1.5 square metre) may be permitted; and
- (III) where smaller signs are necessary for information or internal direction purposes e.g. the various bars, lounges, etc. of a public house or hotel, however, such signs should be kept to a minimum and size will be strictly controlled. Signs advertising commercial products will be discouraged and only where they can be fully substantiated as being necessary for the successful operation of the undertaking will they be allowed. This will also apply to supplementary plates (e.g. Access, Barclaycard etc.)

#### 4.4 **Signs outwith Curtilage**

##### Tourist Related Facilities

All tourist related facilities are now eligible for formal white on brown signs for directional purposes. This provides a new opportunity for eligible businesses to erect high quality signs that will become nationally recognised. The scheme is operated by the Angus and City of Dundee Tourist Board and Angus Council's Director of Roads **(from whom full details can be obtained from the latter)** and not by the Planning Department.

Eligibility for these signs is broad and includes, in addition to the more obvious tourist attractions; hotels, bed and breakfasts; restaurants; cafes; water sports; camping and caravan sites; retail establishments with significant displays for tourists etc.

A condition for receiving permission for this type of signposting is membership of the local Tourist Board and any Scottish Tourist Board Quality Assurance Scheme (these should soon cover most if not all eligible tourist facilities).

**With the adoption of the above scheme, the Council's planning policies for tourist related facilities covered by the scheme will be as follows:-**

- (a) businesses eligible for signs under the Tourist Signposting Policy will not be granted consent to erect any other type of sign outwith the curtilage of the business;**
- (b) existing signs will be permitted to remain in place (as long as they are of an acceptable standard and condition) until 2001;**
- (c) replacements for existing signs must be of the formal variety. Planning Consent will not be granted for any other type of replacement sign.**

#### **4.5 Non-Tourist Related Facilities**

The Tourist Signposting Policy should eventually result in more signs being erected in the countryside but as they will be of a consistent appearance and constructed to a high standard, should hopefully avoid the cluttered, untidy appearance that can result from the provision of numerous assorted often poorly made and sited individual signs.

**Accordingly, it is not intended to defeat these laudable objectives by permitting a free-for-all for non-tourist related businesses. Accordingly, as a general rule directional signing for such enterprises will only be sympathetically considered where an ever changing clientele or passing trade is involved or where premises are particularly difficult to find.**

There are no examples of deemed consent for signs erected outwith the curtilage of premises, therefore any such sign (usually for directional purposes) will require Planning Consent. The policy to be applied to such applications will be as follows:-

**PREMISES ON 'A' CLASS ROADS: As such premises are readily seen and can be identified by signing within the curtilage, consent for signs outwith the curtilage will generally not be forthcoming. An exception may be made for advance warning for what in the opinion of the Planning Authority could be a potentially dangerous access point. Maximum size will rarely exceed 1.5 square metres, should be of horizontal proportions and with a maximum height (top of sign) of 2.5 metres.**

Where a trunk road is involved, any proposal must be acceptable to the Scottish Office. Accordingly the above criteria may vary in respect of the A90.

**PREMISES ON OTHER ROADS:** Discrete advance signing along/from a main road indicating the presence of a business, etc. some distance away may receive consent if in the opinion of the Planning Authority that business justifies such signing e.g. heavily dependant on passing trade. Normally a single sign at an appropriate road end (junction with an A or B class road) will be permissible but where a business is particularly tortuously located, further (smaller) repeater signs may be acceptable. The premises must be located outwith a village and be no more than four miles from the first or only sign. The advance sign should be no larger than one square metre, repeater signs a maximum of 0.2 square metres, height to top of sign shall not exceed 2.5 metres and content of sign should be minimal (name, service, direction/distance).

**SIGNS IN VILLAGES:** Non-tourist related businesses in villages may be permitted a single directional sign where the following criteria are met:-

- (a) premises must appeal to passing visitor trade;
- (b) must be located off the main village road or roads and be easily missed;
- (c) business must not be operated from predominantly residential premises;
- (d) siting of the sign must be to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority - usually a finger post at the road end will suffice; and
- (e) size of sign not to exceed 0.3 square metres and to display minimal essential information.

These signs will require the consent of the site owner and it is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain that consent. Under no circumstances will the erection of signs at village entry points be permitted.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The only financial implications is the small revenue cost involved in printing copies of the revised Advice Note.

## 6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration and Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

### NOTE

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

Advice Note 7 - Advertising in the Countryside.

Tourism Signing Policy (Angus Council/Angus and Dundee Tourist Board).

AA/JJ/KW  
2 April 1997

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