



# Signing Policy

## Tourist and Leisure destinations

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**Lancashire**

County  
Council



# Tourist and Leisure destination Signing

## Policy Overview

Lancashire County Council as a local highway authority has a statutory duty to ensure that road users can travel on the highway safely and expeditiously so far as is reasonably practicable. The county council has a number of tools available to help it fulfil this duty, one of which is traffic signing. National signing regulations provide the facility for tourist and leisure destination signing (white on brown signs) to be introduced to aid road users to locate tourism and leisure destinations.

The county council will conform to the principles set out by the Department for Transport which are that:

- Tourist and leisure signs, as with any other traffic sign, must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) in force at the time of application, currently the TSRGD 2016<sup>1</sup>. The Traffic Signs Manual also provides important design guidance that must be adhered to as part of the design process.
- Their main purpose is to guide visitors to tourist or leisure destinations along the most appropriate route at the appropriate stages of their journey, generally from where they leave the A and B class road network and particularly where the destination may be hard to find.
- Tourist and leisure signs are not provided as a marketing tool for businesses, their primary role is to aid in the expeditious movement of traffic on the highway network.
- Tourist and leisure signs should only be used where they will benefit road users (i.e. as an aid to navigation and for safety or traffic management reasons)
- Tourist and leisure signs should only be approved where existing directional signs are not sufficient for visitors to be able to find the destination.

This policy sets out the requirements and process that a tourist or leisure location can undertake to secure (if eligible) tourist or leisure signs for their destination in Lancashire. The policy will apply to the entire administrative area of the county council.

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<sup>1</sup> The TSRGD is a Statutory Instrument setting out the regulations which prescribe the design and conditions of use of traffic signs on or near roads in England, Scotland and Wales.

## Tourist and Leisure Destinations

The county council will meet the legislative requirements that are set out in the TSRGD2016 which define a tourist destination as:

- (a) *a Tourist Information Centre or Point*
- (b) *a permanently established attraction or facility (other than a leisure facility) which—*
  - i. attracts or is used by visitors to an area;*
  - ii. is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours; and*
  - iii. is recognised as a tourist attraction or facility by the appropriate national promoter of tourism;*
- (c) *a village, town or city that is of particular interest to tourists;*
- (d) *a route that is of particular interest to tourists*

A clear distinction between a tourist destination and a leisure destination is required to allow the above legislative requirement to be applied. VisitEngland, the national promoter of tourism in England states that a recognised tourist attraction is

*“a permanently established excursion destination, a primary purpose of which is to allow public access for entertainment, interest or education and can include a place of worship, rather than being primarily a retail outlet or a venue for sporting, theatrical or film performances. It must be open to the public for published periods of the year, and should be capable of attracting day visitors or tourists, as well as local residents.”*

Only destinations that meet this legislative requirement and the other criteria set out in this policy will be considered for the introduction of tourist signing.

Sites that do not fit into the definition of a tourist destination will only be eligible for a white on brown sign if they meet the requirements for a leisure destination as set out in this policy.

The criteria for tourism destinations is more onerous than that of a leisure destination due to the legislative requirement to be recognised by VisitEngland. Leisure facility destinations, by virtue of their use, will be considered for signs if there is deemed to be a location specific traffic management need. The leisure destinations fall under three broad categories:

- Public amenity – for example, picnic areas, woodland walks, viewpoints,
- Sporting/Entertainment – for example, football, rugby, cricket ground, cinemas, theatres,
- Commercial amenity – for example, hotels, restaurants, camping/caravan site.

### ***Public amenity sites***

These are locations that are provided for use by the public at no charge (excluding possible car park charges). These sites are not classed as businesses and are provided for public use. The sites will have limited exposure in terms of advertising or web presence.

### ***Sporting/Entertainment sites***

These locations can create large volumes of traffic on the network at specific times (e.g. football matches) or have regular volumes of visitors (cinemas, theatres) which could impact on network traffic levels and active management of these locations may be required. As destinations they will have a good web presence and are likely to be in easy to reach and find locations.

### ***Commercial amenity sites***

These are those sites, mainly businesses, which provide a public function (normally at a cost) but do not fall under sporting or entertainment sites. In comparison to sporting/entertainment venues the volume of users will be generally lower. The destinations are expected to have a web presence and advertise locally. Swimming pools/leisure centres would be considered as a commercial amenity site as they are used by the public rather than the public attending to observe a sport.

Once an application has been filtered into one of these three categories of leisure destination then the relevant criteria will be used to consider the application.

## Treatment of Existing Signs

This document replaces guidance that has been in use since 2004.

Any signs that have been authorised prior to this policy coming into force will be permitted to remain even if they do not meet the new policy requirements. If the operating arrangements of a destination requires the removal or replacement (apart from 'wear and tear') any new or amended signing for the altered destination would be required to meet the new policy guidelines.

## Policy Impact

The policy will apply to signing on vehicular highways for which the county council is the highway authority.

The policy will seek to support applicants by setting out a clear approach to signing requirements that is aligned to government guidance and assuring that all applicants are dealt with in an equitable manner.

Any circumstances that result in an unsuccessful application will be clearly reasoned and evidenced in the process.

Where an application is unsuccessful, and it is deemed that alternative signing will benefit the highway network then conventional direction signing may be considered by the county council.

Approval of an application for tourist or leisure signing is not an endorsement of the destination by Lancashire County Council and it should not be publicised as such on any promotional material published by the business.

## Tourist and Leisure facility destinations symbols

Based on the criteria set out in the TSRGD2016 and the VisitEngland requirements for recognition, there is a schedule of symbols that the county council can use for tourist destinations and are for leisure facilities.

An illustration of some of the symbols is provided in the appendix to this policy. The difference between tourist destinations (requiring VisitEngland recognition) and leisure destinations is prescribed by the TSRGD2016.

## Qualifying Criteria – Tourist destinations

For a tourist destination to be eligible for tourist signing the following criteria will need to be met:

- It is a permanently established attraction or facility which attracts or is used by visitors to an area<sup>2</sup>
- It is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours;
  - 'Normal opening hours' will be taken to mean at least 6 hours a day for a minimum of 180 days per calendar year, unless it can be demonstrated that shorter hours are well publicised and understood.
- It is recognised by VisitEngland;
- All relevant consents must be in place from other authorities, where these are applicable. Such consents include appropriate planning permission, possession of a Fire Certificate and Certificates of Health and Hygiene for staff involved in food preparation. A Food Hygiene Rating should also be available where applicable.
- The destination should have adequate and safely accessible parking, either on site or close by, which is designed to meet the requirements of visitors in terms of capacity and should include disabled, cycle and coach parking where appropriate.
  - In most cases, on-street parking will not be considered an acceptable replacement for off-road parking. Where parking is close by rather than at the destination, the signing should direct visitors to the parking rather than the destination itself. Pedestrian signing should then be provided on a safe route linking the parking facility to the destination, and should ensure continuous signing of the route in both directions (i.e. from car park to destination and back again).
- Appropriate welfare or washroom facilities should be available either at the destination or close by. These should include facilities for disabled people.
- Evidence of adequate publicity material is required which should include a clear and accurate map and/or directions.
  - The directions should include public transport where available and a suitable postcode for satellite navigation use. Where possible, directions should include reference to destinations that are already well sign-posted, such as settlement names, and road numbers. Local names for roads or junctions should be avoided unless well signposted, as visitors may generally not be aware of such names.
- Evidence must be provided that the establishment is publicised as a tourist destination in local or national publications, information centres and other appropriate locations, and, ideally, the destination should have an identifiable web presence.
- The destination should be well maintained and adhere to the accessibility standards suitable for its use. Further details of the legislation relating to disabled access are contained within the Equality Act 2010.

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<sup>2</sup> We're just off the Main Road, advice on traffic signs for tourist businesses in England (Department for Transport) 2005.

## Qualifying Criteria – Leisure facility destinations

For a leisure destination to be eligible for tourism signing the following criteria will need to be met:

### ***Public Amenity sites***

- It is a permanently established attraction or facility which attracts or is used by visitors to an area
- All relevant consents must be in place from other authorities, where these are applicable. Such consents include appropriate planning permission, possession of a Fire Certificate and Certificates of Health and Hygiene for staff involved in food preparation. A Food Hygiene Rating should also be available where applicable.
- The destination should have adequate and safely accessible parking, either on site or close by, which is designed to meet the requirements of visitors in terms of capacity and should include disabled, cycle and coach parking where appropriate.
  - In most cases, on-street parking will not be considered an acceptable replacement for off-road parking. Where parking is close by rather than at the destination, the tourist signing should direct visitors to the parking rather than the destination itself. Pedestrian signing should then be provided on a safe route linking the parking facility to the destination, and should ensure continuous signing of the route in both directions (i.e. from car park to destination and back again).
- Evidence that the destination is included in publicity material is required, this may not be specifically for the destination. (I.e. the location could be referenced in general tourism literature for Lancashire).
- The destination should be well maintained and adhere to the accessibility standards suitable for its use. Further details of the legislation relating to disabled access are contained within the Equality Act 2010.

### ***Sporting/Entertainment sites***

The qualifying criteria for Tourist destination must be met with the following exemptions:

- Normal opening hours can reflect the nature of the venue, for example a football ground may only open to the public when a match occurs.
- The requirement to be recognised by VisitEngland does not apply.

## **Commercial amenity sites**

The qualifying criteria for Tourist destination must be met with the following exemptions:

- Prior booking may be required and is recognised as part of the service offer of some locations (for example camp sites)
- The requirement to be recognised by VisitEngland does not apply.
- Publicity material is required but does not have to brand the location as a tourist destination.

## **Restrictions on Sign provision**

If a destination meets the criteria set out in this document the following restrictions will be considered when setting out a signing plan:

- Tourist and leisure signing will only be approved where the road network to and from the destination is capable of safely accommodating the level and type of traffic that the attraction is likely to generate.
- Avoiding sign clutter will be considered at all points on the network
- On roads with a speed limit of less than 50mph, up to 4 tourist destinations can be signed at any one location
- On roads with speed limit of 50mph or higher, a maximum of 3 destinations may be signed at any one location.
- These limits refer to destinations not individual signs and therefore includes tourism symbols or text that is part of another directional sign.
- In situations where more than the maximum number of destinations at a particular junction would be reached by the addition of tourist and leisure signing, non-tourist direction signing will take priority, followed by the destinations with the greatest visitor numbers.
- New ventures would not normally be considered as a priority for permanent tourist or leisure signing on the basis of projected footfall figures but it would be reasonable for such sites to apply for temporary signs until the site's long term future and reliable visitor numbers can be established Tourist and leisure signing will not be provided to destinations which are accessed directly from 'A' or 'B' Classified Roads, unless there is an overriding safety case to do so.
- Tourist and leisure signing will not necessarily be appropriate on every possible access route to a tourist destination.
- The information on tourist and leisure signs will be kept to a minimum. Where possible, without compromising the usefulness of the sign, symbols alone will be used. As well as the appropriate symbol, succinct naming of a destination is generally acceptable although descriptive words and phrases will not be permitted, i.e. the name of the business may appear, but not a description of it. Once a symbol has been identified it will be reasonable to use the symbol only, for the remainder of the route unless similar destination types are signed and identification is required as the routes diverge.

## Applying for Signing

Web based applications are encouraged through a simple self-assessment process that will enable a business to establish its eligibility for signing and generate an estimate of signing costs. Support for this process will be available by telephone through the Lancashire highways service.

The application process will be published on the council's website and also within relevant literature.

The currently permitted symbols that indicate types of tourist destinations are contained with the TSRGD 2016.

## Erection of Road Signs

Lancashire County Council as the local highway authority is the only organisation that permits permanent road signs to be placed on the highway network. Other organisations are not permitted to erect such signs on highway land. Before any application for the provision of tourist and leisure destination signing to a particular location can be considered any unauthorised directional signs to that destination which are located within the highway will need to be removed. This will include any longstanding signs that have been erected whether by the present proprietor or previous owners. It will not be acceptable to retain unauthorised signs whilst an application is considered.

Once approved signing is in place, the erection of unauthorised signs whether direction or advertising within the highway could result in the withdrawal of the consent and removal of the previously approved signing.

## Maintenance of Signing

In order to ensure that tourist and leisure signing is an integral part of road directional signing, once installed, any such signing provided will become the property of the county council and will be covered against any third party insurance claims. However, signs will not be insured against theft, vehicle damage or general wear and tear. Any future costs to repair or replace signs for these reasons will be expected to be met by the relevant attraction. Where more than one tourist destination is indicated on a sign, then the cost of repairs or replacement will be shared equally among all the attractions. Where the sign is integrated into a larger general highway sign a contribution may be sought from the attraction if the addition of the tourist/leisure destination creates an increased cost in the replacement sign.

The county council also reserves the right to remove, reposition or alter any signs which may be installed, if this is thought necessary in the interests of road safety, traffic management or to accommodate other traffic signs in the vicinity. No charge will be made for such changes.

Tourism signing is likely to be relied upon by visitors and as such must be up to date. It is important that attractions keep the county council informed of any changes that may affect the signing in place. The charges for signing will include an element to cover removal of signing if an attraction no longer requires or is no longer eligible for signing.

Where existing legitimately established signs are no longer serviceable due to wear and tear then a new application for tourism and leisure signs will have to be submitted. Under this situation the existing signs will be permitted to remain in place, as long as they do not pose a hazard to highway users, until the new application is fully considered. Where it is deemed that the site still qualifies for signing new signs will be agreed in line with this policy. The application will be subject to cost relating to the application and the provision of the replacement signs in line with that of a new application. If the site is no longer considered as meeting the criteria laid down in this policy then the signs will be removed.

## Charges for Tourist and Leisure destination Signs

Highway Authorities may recover the costs incurred in providing tourist signing.

An estimate of the costs likely to be incurred will be made available before an application needs to be made and a fixed price quotation will be supplied before any charges beyond the initial application fee become due. We will work with applicants to progress an application in the most mutually cost effective way possible.

Charges will be levied at two stages. An initial application fee will be charged to cover the costs of assessing the application and the preparation of a quotation for the design and provision of the signing. Only when this fixed price quotation has been agreed will any further fees become due. This second charge will cover the detailed design of the scheme, the procurement of the signs and their installation, this charge will also cover the cost for the removal of the signing in the future.

The charges will be explained within the application literature and will be dependent on the number of signs required. The charges may vary over time and so reference should always be made to the website where the current charges will be available. The application process allows for businesses to make their own estimate of likely costs before any formal application is made.

Where tourist and leisure destination signing already exists at a particular location and further signing is requested, the applicant will be required to pay for the removal of the existing signing and its replacement with new signing bearing the details of existing and new tourist and leisure destinations. Any existing signs, if they are still serviceable and were supplied and fitted by the county council under a previous agreement would remain in place until the new agreement was completed and the replacement signs erected. This would apply to signs that do not meet the present criteria but were agreed earlier when different legislation and policies were in place.

## Appendix

Symbols are identified in the TSRGD 2016 as to whether the symbol is for a tourist destination or a leisure facility. The symbols available for signs set out in this policy are contained in Schedule 12, Parts 14, 15 and 16. Below is a sample extract from Schedule 12 illustrating some typical destinations

Sign table — Schedule 12, Part 16

(1) Item	(2) Description	(3) Symbol	(4) Permitted variants	(1) Item	(2) Description	(3) Symbol	(4) Permitted variants
1	T 201 Tourist destination recognised by the national promoter of tourism for England	 13.4		2	T 202 Property in the care of English Heritage(a)	 14	
3	T 203 Museum or art gallery	 14		4	T 204 Sports centre (Leisure facility)	 14	
5	T 205 National Nature Reserve designated by Natural England	 14		6	T 206 Forestry Commission England property	 16	

(a) Registered as a charity in England and Wales (number 1140351).