

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 JANUARY 2006

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE REVISED TOURIST SIGNPOSTING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Report by the Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to inform the Committee of the Scottish Executive's draft Tourist Signposting Policy and Guidance which has been issued for consultation. The Policy and Guidance relates to Scottish trunk roads and Motorways only.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Scottish Executive intends to update its existing Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy, which was published in 1998, to take account of issues that have arisen over the intervening years and changes due to the updating of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions in 2002.
- 2.2** The objective of the draft policy is to provide guidance on tourist signposting which is appropriate to meet the strategic needs of the tourism industry and road users in general. It is also intended to provide signage which is consistent with safe and efficient traffic management and which has minimal impact on the environment. The document is intended to be read in conjunction with the relevant local authority tourist signposting policy.
- 2.3** East Ayrshire's current policy on tourist signposting is set out in the "Tourist Signposting Policy – Local Policy Guidelines" jointly produced in 1996 and revised in 2004 by East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and Ayrshire & Arran Tourist Board. This local policy is consistent with the Scottish Executive's existing tourist signposting policy for Trunk Road and Motorways.
- 2.4** The Council has been invited to comment on the final consultation draft of the new policy document by 30th January 2006.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CURRENT POLICY

- 3.1** The key changes to the current Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy include—
- 3.1.1** The inclusion of golf courses (including championship golf courses) within the list of tourist attractions and facilities that qualify for tourist signposting from trunk roads.
- 3.1.2** Tourist signs to retail establishments to be permitted on motorways where the establishment is an accredited "Tourist Shop" and meets the rest of the policy requirements;
- 3.1.3** The requirement for visitor number criteria on motorways have been relaxed to achieve a balance between the needs of tourists, tourism operators and the safety and environmental factors associated with signing on motorways.

3.1.4 the provision of a “one-stop shop” for tourism operators by the introduction of the “Home Traffic Authority” concept whereby the roads authority providing direct access to the tourist facility will co-ordinate any application for tourist signposting rather than have the applicant deal with a number of different roads authorities.

3.2 In addition to these key changes, the proposed Policy and Guidance document provides revised guidance on the design and use of tourist signs and symbols and contains Standard Application Forms, Model Letters and Agreements.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

4.1 The proposed changes to the Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy are unlikely to have a significant effect on the provision of tourist signs within East Ayrshire.

Home Traffic Authorities

4.2 The revised policy and guidance document introduces the concept of a seamless “one-stop shop” approach to the process of applying for tourist signposting, with all applications being made to the “Home Traffic Authority” who will co-ordinate the design and approvals process and to liaise with all other relevant authorities (including Trunk Road Operators and VisitScotland). The document envisages the Home Traffic Authority as being the traffic authority for the road which provides the main direct access to a tourist destination and so for destinations accessed directly from a trunk road the Home Traffic Authority would be the trunk road authority and they (or their operator) would liaise with East Ayrshire Council officers regarding the design, siting and provision of the relevant signs.

4.3 The Home Traffic Authority will not decide what is signed in other traffic authorities’ areas nor does it provide the signs. The purpose of the Home Traffic Authority is to provide a seamless process for the applicant and it will require the agreement of the other relevant traffic authorities before signs can be erected in their areas.

4.4 Should the Council in future chose to adopt the role of Home Traffic Authority in line with the Scottish Executive’s revised policy, then where a tourist establishment is directly accessed from a local road within East Ayrshire, it is possible that additional staff time may be required in liaising with other authorities. In practice, the sort of cross boundary co-operation envisaged in the revised policy and guidance has been operating informally for many years.

Tourist Shops

4.4 The revised Policy proposes that establishments which are primarily retail outlets (including retail parks, shopping centres and garden centres) should be eligible for tourist signs only if the destination is recognised by VisitScotland as a “Tourist Shop” through its visitor attraction quality assurance scheme.

4.5 As with all requests for tourist signposting, eligibility does not confer automatic entitlement to tourist signs and the final decision for the provision of signs on the Trunk Road and Motorway network will rest with the Scottish Executive.

4.6 The current joint Ayrshire tourist signposting policy grants eligibility only to those retail outlets that provide exhibitions or demonstrations for visitors. If the proposed Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy is adopted it will be necessary to consider the revision of the local policy so that a consistent approach is maintained.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Other than the occasional additional staff time that may be required if the Council chooses to adopt the role of Home Traffic Authority, no additional costs are anticipated.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The draft revised Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy updates the Scottish Executive's existing policy to take account of recent changes to signing regulations and other issues that have arisen since the publication of the current policy.

6.2 There will be little change to current tourist signposting arrangements in East Ayrshire if the revised Policy is adopted.

6.3 If the proposed Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy is adopted by the Scottish Executive in due course then, in due course, the joint Ayrshire local tourist signposting policy should be revised to be consistent with the trunk road policy.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee: -

- (a) Notes the content of this report;
- (b) Endorses the Scottish Executive's revised policy and guidance for tourist signposting on Scottish Trunk Roads and Motorways; and
- (c) Agrees that the Head of Roads and Transportation will liaise with representatives of North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council and Ayrshire & Arran Tourist Board to consider any revisions to the joint local policy for tourist signposting that may be necessary, particularly in respect of the "Home Traffic Authority" concept and the definition of "tourist shop" contained in the Scottish Executive's revised policy and guidance.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services

AJD
6 December 2005

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Tourism Signposting Policy – Local policy Guidelines, East Ayrshire Council, North Ayrshire Council, South Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire & Arran Tourist Board, October 1996 (revised January 2004)

Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy, The Scottish Office Development Department, May 1998

Scottish Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy and Guidance – A Consultation Paper, Scottish Executive, November 2005

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