



Falkirk Council  
*Development Services*

## Tourist Signs Policy

Falkirk Council – Development Services  
Roads and Development Unit

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Falkirk Council recognises the importance of supporting the sustainable development of the tourism industry.
- 1.2 Traffic signs have a key role in providing visitors direction to their chosen tourist destination. Clear and consistent signing can make a positive contribution to enhancing a visitor's experience of a tourist attraction or facility. To ensure that visitors are directed to tourist attractions and facilities that offer a quality experience, VisitScotland and other organisations such as the AA operate quality assurance schemes.
- 1.3 Tourist attractions and facilities may obtain tourist destination signs only if they participate in a relevant quality assurance scheme, if available, and are recognised for tourist signing, through accreditation, by VisitScotland.
- 1.4 This document contains guidance on the provision of tourist destination signs on roads maintained by Falkirk Council, as local roads authority. This policy has been established in consultation with VisitScotland.
- 1.5 Applications for tourist destination signs on trunk roads and motorways will be assessed by the trunk roads authority. Coordination of applications involving a number of roads authorities is the responsibility of the Home Traffic Authority, the HTA. The HTA is the roads authority, either local or trunk, responsible for the road which provides the main direct access to a tourist destination.
- 1.6 Tourist destination signs alone are not a substitute for effective marketing and should not be used as a form of advertising. Establishments that seek to obtain tourist destination signing should also use marketing techniques such as promotional print and the internet, to give clear direction to their establishment.
- 1.7 As resources allow all existing tourist signing will be amended to comply with this policy.

### Definitions

- 1.8 Various terms are used throughout this policy document. To aid understanding, these are defined below:
  - Main Settlement Generally refers to larger towns in the Falkirk Council area. These are listed in appendix A.
  - Settlement Any town or village not listed in appendix A.
  - Main Through Route Generally the main traffic routes, excluding trunk roads and motorways in the Falkirk Council area. These routes are strategic or semi-strategic in nature and are listed in appendix A.
  - Main Thoroughfare The 'main street' of a main settlement. Occasionally there may be more than one street of identical importance to the settlement.

- Trunk roads and Motorways

Roads that are the responsibility of Transport Scotland and that are managed and maintained by a trunk road operating company. These routes are listed in appendix A.

## 2 Tourist Attractions and Facilities

2.1 Tourist destination signs are prescribed under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, 2002. These Regulations define a tourist destination as a permanently established attraction or facility which –

- a) attracts or is used by visitors to an area;
- b) is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours;
- c) if located in Scotland, is recognised by VisitScotland.

2.2 A tourist destination must meet these definitions in order for it to receive tourist destination signs. Tourist destination signs incorporate the ‘thistle’ logo. For further information on VisitScotland quality assurance schemes and gaining accreditation for tourist destination signs visit [www.visitscotland.org](http://www.visitscotland.org).

Some examples of tourist attractions as defined by VisitScotland are:

- Theme Parks
- Historic Properties and Castles
- Ancient Monuments and Museums
- Nature Reserves, Zoos and Safari Parks
- Parks and Gardens
- Natural attractions such as nature reserves, beaches and viewpoints
- Tourist Shops
- Sports Centres and Golf Courses
- Tourist Information Centres

Tourist facilities include:

- Hotels
- Guesthouses
- Bed & Breakfast Establishments
- Restaurants and Cafes
- Touring Caravan and Camping Parks
- Picnic Sites
- Youth Hostels

These lists are not exhaustive but serve to give an indication of the types of establishment in each category. A tourist attraction or facility will obtain tourist destination signs only if they are members of a relevant quality assurance scheme, if available, and are recognised by VisitScotland.

2.3 Establishments which are primarily retail outlets, including retail parks, shopping centres, garden centres and farm shops will only be eligible for tourist destination signs if the destination is recognised by VisitScotland as a tourist shop. Applications will still need to meet all relevant criteria set out in this policy.

## **Eligibility**

- 2.4 Tourist destination signs have a distinctive appearance. They have white letters on a brown background. Signs to establishments recognised by VisitScotland incorporate the 'thistle' logo. The use of this logo is restricted to those attractions and facilities that have achieved an award under a relevant quality assurance scheme, if available, and is recognised for tourist destination signs by VisitScotland.
- 2.5 Tourist destination signs will not be erected to premises where its primary function is to sell alcohol to visitors, such as pubs and bars. Although restaurants and hotels are very likely to be licensed, this in itself will not preclude tourist destination signs being erected to direct visitors to these facilities if located outwith settlements.
- 2.6 Conference centres are not eligible for tourist signs. Churches are not eligible unless they are of historic interest and have been awarded visitor attraction accreditation.
- 2.7 For National Trust for Scotland, Historic Scotland and Forestry Commission properties the thistle symbol is supplemented with the appropriate symbol for the property.
- 2.8 On signs for a castle or a stately house of historic or architectural interest, the thistle symbol may be supplemented with the appropriate symbol for the property.
- 2.9 Signs for accredited tourist information centres will incorporate the "i" symbol in place of the thistle logo. A tourist information centre is defined in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, 2002 as a staffed information service centre recognised and supported by VisitScotland. Signs for tourist information points incorporating the "i" symbol may be provided with the legend "Tourist Information" where the roads authority considers this necessary. The "i" symbol will not be used for information points located in laybys or car parks.
- 2.10 Adequate parking for cars, and coaches if appropriate, will be required at the attraction or adequate public parking should be available in the vicinity.

## **Tourist Accommodation and Eating Establishments**

- 2.11 Tourist accommodation and eating establishments located within settlements will not normally be considered for tourist destination signs. These establishments individually are unlikely to generate the numbers of vehicles that will require an active management role. Where the facility is not on a main route and has a demonstrable traffic management requirement tourist signs may be provided where the roads authority considers this necessary.
- 2.12 Outwith settlements, accommodation and eating establishments will be provided with tourist signs if the roads authority considers this would not compromise road safety.
- 2.13 Generally, self-catering establishments will not be eligible for tourist destination signs, except where they have a reception area on site and have on spec accommodation available to let on a nightly basis. However, in circumstances where the roads authority confirms that, on the grounds of road safety or for traffic management reasons, tourist destination signs are required, VisitScotland will issue a Letter of Accreditation.



### **3 Tourist Destination Signing**

#### **Sign Location**

- 3.1 Tourist attractions, facilities and shops will be eligible for tourist destination signs if they participate in a relevant quality assurance scheme, if available, have obtained a Letter of Accreditation from Visit Scotland and:-
- a) have a direct frontage or private access located on a main through route or main thoroughfare and this frontage or access is not clearly obvious to approaching traffic. In this case tourist signs will only be provided immediately adjacent to or opposite that frontage or access, or
  - b) have no direct frontage or private access located on a main through route or main thoroughfare. In this case they will be eligible for an arrangement of tourist signing commencing at or opposite the junction of the relevant side road and single most appropriate main through route.
- 3.2 The positioning of any signs will be determined in accordance with relevant standards and guidance and will be at the sole discretion of the roads authority.
- 3.3 It will be a condition of provision of tourist destination signs that there will be no private directional or advertisement signs relating to the establishment, with the exception of those within the curtilage of the establishment concerned. All unauthorised signs will be removed, at the owner's expense.
- 3.4 When required on grounds of road safety, advanced direction signs may also be provided. To establish whether advanced direction signs are required, the roads authority will consider matters such as a visibility, road layout and vehicle speeds. An assessment will be made for each approach to the access or junction.
- 3.5 Sufficient continuity of signing must be provided to direct drivers from the first sign to the ultimate destination. The road onto which traffic is being directed must be the most suitable. The roads authority will retain full discretion when determining which route is most appropriate, bearing in mind such issues as road safety, road hierarchy and traffic congestion. Signs located outwith main settlements will incorporate a distance to the destination. If the distance from the first sign to the destination is over 2 miles, a distance in miles will be incorporated on the first and, where the road layout requires, all subsequent signs. If there are more than 6 miles between subsequent signs, a confirmatory sign, incorporating a distance if appropriate, may be considered.
- 3.6 Within and, occasionally, outwith main settlements, there are likely to be roadside factors that will prevent tourist destination signs being provided. These factors include a lack of space to locate a sign by the side of the road or the presence of existing road signs. These issues relate to road safety and the environmental impact additional signs may have. Where continuity of signing cannot be provided, then an application for tourist signs will be refused.
- 3.7 When establishing whether a tourist attraction or facility is within a settlement or otherwise, the boundary of the urban area will be determined by the location of the speed limit signs. If

a settlement nameplate or gateway sign is located outwith the speed limit signs, it will be taken as the limit of the main settlement.

### **Sign Design**

- 3.8 The exact dimensions of signs, their design and materials used in their manufacture will be determined in accordance with relevant standards and guidance and will be at the sole discretion of the roads authority. The design element will include the determination of the legend. Where possible the legend will comprise the commercial name of the establishment, as registered with VisitScotland, provided this is no more than five words long. Otherwise an abbreviated name of up to five words will be used.
- 3.9 A maximum of 4 destinations may be included on any one sign. This may be increased to 5 subject to a maximum of 8 lines of legend.

### **Maintenance**

- 3.10 If the tourist attraction or facility is available only at certain times of the year, any tourist destination signs provided for that facility will be covered over or removed during the closed season.
- 3.11 Tourist signs erected within the local road boundary become the property of Falkirk Council as roads authority. No tourist signs shall be amended, covered or removed without prior approval from the roads authority. No additional signs will be added to authorised signs or otherwise placed within the road boundary. Such alterations or additions may jeopardise the continued provision of the authorised tourist signs.
- 3.12 It is a condition of permission for tourist destination signing that the establishment must join and remain in membership of a relevant quality assurance scheme. Failure to comply with this condition will result in the removal of any tourist signs provided for that facility. Falkirk Council, as roads authority, will be liable for any third party claims associated with the approved signs.

## **4 Signing from Trunk Roads or Motorways**

- 4.1 Trunk roads and motorways do not fall within the responsibility of Falkirk Council, as local roads authority. The trunk road and motorway network is the responsibility of Transport Scotland with the management and maintenance of these routes being undertaken by a number of trunk road operating companies. An operating company considers applications for tourist signing in accordance with Transport Scotland's tourist signing policy entitled "Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy and Guidance". It should be noted that Transport Scotland requires tourist attractions to receive a minimum number of visitors before tourist signing is provided on a motorway. Information on the relevant operating company within the Falkirk area can be found on [www.transportscotland.gov.uk](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk).
- 4.2 It is anticipated that Falkirk Council will act as HTA for most applications within the Falkirk area and therefore be the point of contact for most applications.

## **5 Temporary Signing**

- 5.1 Temporary signing showing suitable routes for special events, festivals or sporting venues can be erected. These signs are usually arranged through companies such as the AA. However, any signs intended to be erected within the road boundary would still require the approval of the roads authority.

## 6 Application Procedure

- 6.1 Applications for tourist destination signs should be made to the Home Traffic Authority. The HTA is responsible for liaising with all other relevant roads authorities, and for obtaining any necessary approvals from these authorities. For a destination with its access directly from a local road, the HTA will be Falkirk Council while for a destination with its access directly from a trunk road or motorway, the HTA will be the trunk road authority.
- 6.2 The HTA does not decide what signs are provided in other roads authorities areas, nor will it necessarily arrange for the signs to be erected. The principle role of the HTA is to be a single point of contact for the applicant. However, it should be noted that if an HTA rejects an application for tourist signs it is very unlikely that other roads authorities will approve an application for the same destination.
- 6.3 Falkirk Council will determine the location and design of tourist destination signs on the local road network within its area. Signs will be designed, manufactured and erected in accordance with the relevant Regulations and standards. Whilst the HTA is responsible for co-ordinating the design and approvals process, it is the responsibility of each local or trunk road authority to arrange for the erection of signs within its boundaries.
- 6.4 Applications for tourist destination signs should be made on form referenced TS1 in Appendix B. An acknowledgement letter referenced TS2 will be returned to the applicant. Applications should be accompanied with the signposting accreditation letter provided by VisitScotland and the required fee. Any applications received without either the accreditation letter or the fee will be returned to the applicant.
- 6.5 Preliminary feasibility design will be undertaken. This identifies whether signs can be provided, bearing in mind the factors discussed earlier in this document, and whether signs will be required in other roads authority's areas. If other authorities are involved, further information may be required from the applicant. A preliminary sign design and installation estimate will be provided on letter referenced TS3. The application will be put on hold until the applicant's acceptance of the estimate and confirmation to proceed with the detailed design is received.
- 6.6 A detailed design will be completed, incorporating designs from other roads authorities if relevant, and a quotation for the sign installation. A letter referenced TS4 and Declaration of Understanding, referenced TS5 will be sent to the applicant stating the quotation and enclosing sign design drawings. The design fees will be billed to the applicant shortly thereafter. The application will be put on hold until receipt of the applicants' acceptance of the quotation, confirmation to proceed with the installation and, if not already received, payment of the design fees.
- 6.7 Upon acceptance of the quotation and return of the Declaration of Understanding, the signs design package will be issued to contractors for installation. The cost for supply and installation will be billed to the applicant upon satisfactory completion of this work. It is at the sole discretion of the relevant roads authority whether the sign installation is acceptable. If signs are required in other roads authority's areas, these will be billed separately.
- 6.8 If during the detailed design stage, it is determined that signs cannot be provided a letter referenced TS6 will be sent to the applicant detailing the reasons for refusal.

6.9 The application procedure is set out in a flow chart in Appendix C.

## **7 Financial and Legal Arrangements**

- 7.1 The full life costs of signing are the responsibility of the applicant. These costs include administration, feasibility study, design and manufacture, erection, including traffic management arrangements, maintenance or replacement and removal. The full costs of replacing or adjusting any existing road signs as a result of providing new tourist signs will be borne by the applicant. Other costs associated with the provision of signs may include items such as the provision of safety barrier. The costs of replacing damaged, worn or life expired signs will also be borne by the applicant. If any costs are not met by the applicant the signs will be removed.
- 7.2 The costs for covering up or removing signs for a facility that closes at certain times of the year will be borne by the facility.
- 7.3 If any establishment has signs authorised and any such sign is located in the same place as an existing tourist sign or, in certain circumstances, a normal road sign, the applicant will bear the cost of the provision of a new composite sign. Thereafter, any maintenance and replacement costs of individual signs will be shared equally between those tourist destinations contained on the sign. Failure to meet any share of its costs will result in the removal of the establishment from the sign.

## **8 How to Apply**

- 8.1 Applications for accreditation for tourist destination signs should be made in the first instance to:

Tourist Signposting Co-ordinator  
VisitScotland  
Cowan House  
Inverness Retail & Business Park  
Inverness  
IV2 7GF

Tel: 01463 244111  
e-mail: [signposting@visitscotland.com](mailto:signposting@visitscotland.com)

Once VisitScotland approval has been obtained, Form TS1 in Appendix B should be completed and returned to:

Director of Development Services  
Falkirk Council,  
Abbotsford House,  
Falkirk.  
FK2 7YZ.



## **9 Appendix A**

### 9.1 List of Current Regulations and Guidelines

Scottish Office Development Department (SODD) Circular 27/1995  
Scottish Executive Circular, 'Clarification of SODD Circular 27/1995 (Tourist Signposting)'  
The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984  
The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, 2002  
Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 7 – The Design of Traffic Signs  
Local Transport Note 1/94 – The Design and Use of Directional Informatory Signs  
Transport Scotlands Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signposting Policy

### 9.2 List of Main Settlements

Bo'ness  
Bonnybridge  
Denny  
Falkirk  
Grangemouth  
Larbert  
Polmont  
Stenhousemuir

### 9.3 List of Main Through Routes

A88  
A801  
A803  
A872  
A883  
A9  
A904  
A905  
A993

### 9.4 List of Trunk Roads and Motorways

A80  
A876  
M80  
M876  
M9



## 10 Appendix B – Standard Letters

### 10.1 Initial Application – Form TS1

<b>Tourist Destination Information</b>			
Tourist destination	Name:		
	Address:		
	Post Code:		
	Telephone number:		
Type of tourist destination			
Visitor numbers per annum and data source			
Details of parking facilities on site or close by (within 500m)	No of spaces for	On site	Close-by (within 500m)
	Cars		
	Coaches		
	Disabled		
Is the destination in possession of a VisitScotland Accreditation Letter?	Yes/No (please enclose a copy of the Accreditation Letter where applicable)		
Please provide details of opening hours including seasonal variations			
Please provide a brief statement of reasons for requesting signs			
Please provide information on any existing signs, including advertising signs, for your destination located on private land adjacent to the public road			
Please provide contact details of applicant/agent of applicant (delete as appropriate)	Name:		
	Company:		
	Address:		
	Post Code:		
	Telephone number:	Fax number:	
	E-mail		
	Signature		



## 10.2 Acknowledgement Letter - TS2

ROADS & DESIGN

Enquiries to: *(insert Name of Officer)*  
Tel No: *(insert telephone number)*  
Fax No: 01324 504843

*(insert Address of Establishment)*

Our Ref: NS/TM5-3/*(insert initials)*  
Your Ref:

*(insert date)*

Dear *(insert Name)*

### **Application for Tourist Destination Signs – *(insert Name of Establishment)***

I acknowledge receipt of your application for tourist destination signs for the above establishment.

- \*\* I also acknowledge receipt of your application for tourist destination signs, your accreditation letter provided by VisitScotland and your fee of £40. The matter will be considered as resources permit and I will advise you of the outcome in due course.
- \*\* Your application for tourist destination signs has been returned to you because it was not accompanied with the accreditation letter required from VisitScotland and/or your fee of £40.
- \*\* Regrettably, the type of establishment in question is not eligible for tourist signs under the terms of Falkirk Councils tourist signing policy and therefore I return your fee herewith.

Yours **\*\*faithfully/sincerely**

*(insert Name of Officer)*  
Network Officer

**\*\* delete as appropriate**



### 10.3 Preliminary Estimate – TS3

ROADS & DESIGN

Enquiries to: *(insert Name of Officer)*  
Tel No: *(insert telephone number)*  
Fax No: 01324 504843

*(insert Address of Establishment)*

Our Ref: NS/TM5-3/*(insert initials)*  
Your Ref:

*(insert date)*

Dear *(insert Name)*

#### **Application for Tourist Destination Signs – *(insert Name of Establishment)***

I refer to previous correspondence in respect of the above and can advise that I am able to proceed with the detailed design of the sign(s), subject to the following conditions:-

You will be responsible paying the full costs of providing the tourist destination signs including the design, manufacture, supervision of works, posts and fittings, concrete, erection, traffic management and if required safety fencing.

The tourist destination signs will become the property of Falkirk Council and shall be maintained at your expense by Falkirk Council.

Falkirk Council reserves the right to remove, reposition, or alter the design of the tourist destination signs. This is at Falkirk Councils absolute discretion where they consider such action is required in the interests of road safety, for traffic management reasons or for the purpose of accommodating other traffic signs or where in Falkirk Councils opinion you have ceased to comply with the conditions of this offer or Falkirk Councils Tourist Signing Policy as revised from time to time, or have ceased to participate in a relevant Quality Assurance scheme

In the event of more than one tourist destination being indicated on a traffic sign your obligations hereunder will be shared equally with the other operators whose destinations are also indicated on the traffic sign.

A formal agreement must be entered into with Falkirk Council.

The preliminary cost estimated for providing the tourist destination sign(s) will be in the order of £*(insert cost)*. This includes a sum of £*(insert cost)* for design fees.

If you wish me to proceed, please complete the panel below and return one copy of this letter to the Network Coordinator, Development Services, Falkirk Council, Abbotsford House, David's Loan, Falkirk, FK2 7YZ.

Once design is complete, I will advise you of the detailed cost estimate for manufacturing and erecting the tourist destination signs. You will have a further opportunity to withdraw your application at that stage, however you should note that, by requesting design to proceed you become responsible for payment of that element of the estimate.

Yours *\*\*faithfully/sincerely*

*(insert Name of Officer)*  
Network Officer

*\*\* delete as appropriate*

Please continue with the required design. I recognise that, by commissioning this work, I become responsible for the design portion of the above estimate even if I withdraw my request at a later date.

Signed .....

Position and Company (if relevant): .....

.....



## 10.4 Detailed Estimate – TS4

### ROADS & DESIGN

Enquiries to: *(insert Name of Officer)*  
Tel No: *(insert telephone number)*  
Fax No: 01324 504843

*(insert Address of Establishment)*

Our Ref: NS/TM5-3/*(insert initials)*  
Your Ref:

*(insert date)*

Dear *(insert Name)*

### **Application for Tourist Destination Signs – *(insert Name of Establishment)***

I refer to previous correspondence in respect of the above.

Design work has now been completed and I can advise that the quotation for the acquisition and erection of the sign(s) is £*(insert cost)*. This quotation is fixed for a period of 30 days from the date of this letter. It should be noted that unforeseen circumstances may result in increased installation costs and these will borne by the applicant.

With design work complete, I will arrange for an invoice for the agreed sum of £*(insert cost)* to be sent out to you in the next few days.

On receipt of the above payment and of letter referenced TS5 duly completed, I will arrange for the sign(s) to be fabricated and erected as resources allow.

Final Payment will be requested once erection is complete.

Yours **\*\*faithfully/sincerely**

*(insert Name of Officer)*  
Network Officer

**\*\* delete as appropriate**



10.5 Tourist Signs Declaration – TS5

Director of Development Services  
Falkirk Council  
Abbotsford House  
David’s Loan  
FALKIRK  
FK2 7YZ

Dear Sir

**Tourist Destination Signs – Declaration of Understanding and Responsibility**

With reference to your offer dated (*insert date*), reference (*insert Reference*) to install the tourist signs detailed on design drawing(s) numbered (*insert drawing number(s)*), I accept without reservation all Conditions and Responsibilities set out in Falkirk Councils ‘Tourist Signs Policy’, dated (*insert date*).

I accept that the Conditions of the Tourist Signs Policy bind me to possible payments in the future and that failure to cover these payments could result in the removal, at my cost, of any affected signs. I also accept that signs provided under this agreement may be changed or removed at the discretion of the Director of Development Services pursuant to the requirements of the Policy.

It is accepted that all Conditions contained within Falkirk Councils Tourist Signs Policy shall be binding on my heirs and successors.

Yours faithfully

(*Signed*)

(*Printed*)

Company and Position (if relevant) .....

Address of Establishment .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Type of Establishment .....

Documentation Enclosed .....

.....



## 10.6 Refusal Letter – TS6

### ROADS & DESIGN

Enquiries to: *(insert Name of Officer)*  
Tel No: *(insert telephone number)*  
Fax No: 01324 504843

*(insert Address of Establishment)*

Our Ref: NS/TM5-3/*(insert initials)*  
Your Ref:

25 January 2011

Dear *(insert Name)*

### **Application for Tourist Destination Signs – *(insert Name of Establishment)***

I refer to previous correspondence in respect of the above.

Regrettably, I have to advise you that following detailed consideration it will not be possible to authorise the tourist destination signs requested. The reasons for this are as follows:

- \*\* it is not practicable for the proposed additional signing to be provided at the proposed location
- \*\* the provision of additional signs would adversely affect road safety
- \*\* the provision of additional signs would create unacceptable sign clutter
- \*\* the proposal is contrary to Falkirk Council Tourist Signing Policy (*insert reason*)

Yours \*\*faithfully/sincerely

*(insert Name of Officer)*  
Network Officer

\*\* *delete as appropriate*



# 11 Appendix C – Application Procedure Flow Chart

