

## **LOUTH LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

### **Policy on non Regulatory Road Signage**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This policy relates solely to sign/ objects/advertisements placed on Public Roads, footpaths or open spaces and which may or may not be subject to licence under section 254 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. All signage on private property will be subject to the normal planning process and, if not exempted development, must not be erected prior to the granting of planning permission.
- 1.2 Indiscriminate erection of signage in its various forms is a blight on our towns/villages and the countryside in general. This applies in particular to signage on, and along, public roads and in public places. This signage is often unnecessary, undesirable and detrimental in terms of amenity, road safety, proper planning and development and environmental grounds.
- 1.3 Louth Local Authorities have a good record in preventing and controlling the spread of indiscriminate signage. This is evident when one travels through other parts of the country where this type of signage is often rampant and appears to be subject to little control or enforcement.
- 1.4 This policy document proposes the following measures in order to maintain our good record in this area and to provide the public with a clear policy on signage.

#### **2. LOCATION OF SIGNAGE**

- 2.1 Location of signage can be categorised under two main headings:-
  - 2.1.1 Off road signage is defined as that on private property and will normally be behind the road/street boundary (hedge, fence, wall, etc.) or attached to buildings.
  - 2.1.2 Roadside signage is defined as that placed on any part of a public road or street including grass verges, footpaths, hard shoulders, lay-bys etc.

#### **3. CATEGORIES OF SIGNAGE**

- 3.1 Signage can be either defined as permanent or temporary.

**3.1.1** Permanent signage could be defined as signs intended to last in excess of one year and normally would be erected on steel (or equivalent) poles with concrete base.

Examples of these signs would be those indicating:

- Tourist attractions
- Tourist accommodation, Hotels, Guest Houses, Bed and Breakfast, Caravan/Camping Park
- Industrial and Business Premises or Estates
- Towns and Villages
- Sports Facilities
- Public buildings – Garda Siochana, Town Hall, Railway Station, Institute of Technology

**3.1.2** Temporary signage is defined as Placards, Posters or Bills on flimsy structures and made of materials with a limited life expectancy, such as paper, timber or light plastic.

Examples of these signs would be those indicating:

- House for Sale
- General Sales
- Agricultural or other shows
- Recreational or sporting fixtures
- Political and Election literature
- Circuses, Concerts, Theatre
- Meetings, Festivals, Fundraisings, Local Interest, Religious, cultural, educational or social events.
- Event Promotion.

**3.2** Roads Related signage consists of three main types of signs:

**3.2.1 Information signs** - These normally give road users information about routes and places and facilities of particular value and interest. Most information signs are rectangular but direction signs have one end pointed.

**3.2.2 Regulatory Signs, Warning Signs, Road Markings, Roadworks Signs** - This policy is not concerned with these type of signs. Regulatory traffic signs indicate the existence of road regulations or implements such regulations, or both. Warning signs give warning of a hazard ahead and are yellow in colour and diamond shaped. Road Works signs indicate to road users that road works are in progress. These signs are either diamond or rectangular in shape and are coloured orange with a black border and symbols.

**3.2.3 Sandwich Board Signs and other similar signs** - These are normally placed on footpaths, grass verges, lay-bys and generally advertise adjoining business, articles for sale, local events, etc.

**3.2.4 Placards** - These are normally temporary in nature and where they are exempted development under Article 6, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, Class 16 and 17, this policy document is not concerned with their control. Where they are not exempted under the Planning Regulations they are prohibited unless specifically exempted under Section 19 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997.

**3.2.5 Bridge Drapings** - These have occasionally appeared in particular on Motorways to promote events both social and sporting. It is the National Roads Authority policy that these should not be allowed and the Council recognises this road safety risk and will not allow same.

**3.2.6 Roadside Memorial** – For the purposes of this policy roadside memorial will be considered as signage.

The Roads Authority recognise that roadside memorial are important to the family and friends of the individuals to whom such memorial are dedicated.

There is no intention to offend such individuals or groups by way of controlling the erection of such structures.

It will be the policy of the Roads Authority to discourage the provision of roadside memorial.

#### **4. LEGISLATION**

Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 and the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 and the Planning and Development (No.2) Regulations, 2002 provide that a planning authority may grant a licence for a range of structures/items on public roads, including “advertisement structures”.

Section 71 of the Roads Act, 1993 prohibits the erection, placing or retaining of signs on public roads without “lawful authority” or the consent of the road authority.

Section 19 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 prohibits any advertisements including defacement of structures with limited exemptions unless by the landowner or with his approval.

## **5. PRINCIPLES**

The following principles will be taken into account when considering applications for licences for erecting signs on a public road.

- 5.1** Signs will only be considered where an advertising “need” is identified. In this context the term “need” relates to the requirements of the travelling public, not the desire of the commercial operators to advertise as widely as possible. Each such need should be assessed on its merits.
- 5.2** In rural areas signs will generally be only licensed where premises are located away from main traffic routes.
- 5.3** The erection of signs on National Routes shall be severely restricted.
- 5.4** In rural areas where consideration is given to the erection of fingerpost signs for local advertising they will only be permitted where they do not give rise to confusion for road users or endanger traffic safety. For each commercial operation this favourable consideration will generally only extend to one sign located at the road junctions either side of the premises.
- 5.5** The more effective location of tourist signage will be encouraged in such a way as to help the user identify tourist attractions of national or regional importance, yet does not lead to visual clutter, disamenity or traffic hazard.
- 5.6** Provision of signs will be refused where the location of such structures compete with traffic information signs, sight lines or may distract attention at a junction so as to create a potential traffic hazard.
- 5.7** Licence applications for the location of advance advertising structures along approach roads into towns and villages and along National Primary and Secondary Routes will be refused save for tourist attractions of national or regional importance.
- 5.8** If more than one industry or business is located in the same area, a general signpost indicating the direction of the industrial location may be considered. No trade name or other identification mark will be allowed.
- 5.9** So as to avoid clutter and intrusion the provision of more than five advertising signposts on any one pole will not be considered. Nor will a second signpost be considered within 250 metres of any other signpost locations. (In urban areas the 250 metres may be reduced).

- 5.10** In the case of Accommodation signs the following advertising signs will be considered in Urban Areas:-
- 5.10.1 Hotels** – One fingerpost sign at the junction nearest the premises may be permitted.
- 5.10.2 Guest Houses** - One fingerpost sign at the junction nearest the premises.
- 5.10.3 Other Accommodation** – In rural areas one fingerpost sign at the junction nearest the premises.
- 5.10.4** In rural locations where a single fingerpost sign cannot be located at or near a junction, two signs, one either side of the junction may be considered.
- 5.11** In Urban Areas (including their hinterlands) there shall be a general presumption against the approval of roads related advertising signs for individual industrial, commercial and other enterprises. Consideration may be given to erection of signs using generic symbols indicating the location (but not the name) of tourist attractions at suitable locations on National Roads. These signs would indicate directions of attractions such as Sports Centres, Parking, Public Toilets, Fuel and Accommodation, etc.

## **6. REGULATIONS, GUIDELINES AND DEPARTMENT CIRCULARS**

Various Government Regulations, Guidelines and Department Circulars have been issued over the years with the aim of controlling the proliferation of signposts and advertising structures on public property. The main effect of these on Louth Local Authorities policy on signage is as follows:-

- 6.1** A Licence under Section 254 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 is required for all fingerpost or other similar small scale signs on public roads and footpaths.
- 6.2** For a “Tourist Attraction” to qualify for signposting it must be recognised by Bord Failte as being predominantly a tourist interest rather than a retail outlet.
- 6.3** Subject to conditions, temporary signposting consisting of placards, posters or bills relating to the visit of any travelling circus, funfair, carnival, show, musicians, players or other travelling entertainment or any local event of a religious, cultural, educational, political, social, recreational or sporting character is exempt development

under Article 6, Part 2 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, Class 16 and 17.

## **7. CONDITIONS OF ERECTION**

**7.1** In the event of the local authority granting approval for the erection of a sign the following conditions will apply:

**7.1.1** All signs shall be manufactured and created in accordance with the standards in Department of Environment, Traffic Signs Manual or similar current standards specified for the construction of traffic signs.

**7.1.2** Signs and poles, as appropriate, shall be purchased by the owner of the premises and shall be erected by the roads authority at a suitable location at the expense of the owner. Signs for more than one premises may be erected on the same pole.

**7.1.3** The owner of the premises shall be responsible for the cost of routine maintenance and replacement of signs should they become damaged or need renewal in the case of normal wear and tear.

**7.1.4** The roads authority shall retain the right to remove a sign or alter its location at any time.

**7.1.5** The owner of all existing signs will, where appropriate, be required to obtain a licence under the Planning and Development Act 2000 and subsequent regulations. Where authorised signs not conforming to the proposed criteria are already in place, road authorities may allow the existing signs to remain. All new and replacement signs shall comply with the requirements of this policy.