

## POLICY ON THE PROVISION OF TOURIST AND LEISURE SIGNAGE ON NATIONAL ROADS

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# Index

Part 1: Background.....	1
Part 2: Classification of Tourist / Leisure Destinations. ....	3
2.1.1 Tourist / Leisure Attractions. ....	3
2.1.2 Tourist / Leisure Facilities.....	3
Part 3: Tourist & Leisure Signage Policy.....	4
3.1 Policy Objectives.....	4
3.2 Categorisation of National Roads. ....	4
3.3 Tourist / Leisure Destinations. ....	5
3.3.1 Motorways and Dual Carriageways. ....	6
3.3.2 Other National Primary Roads. ....	7
3.3.3 National Secondary Roads. ....	7
3.3.4 Continuity Signage for Tourist Destinations.....	8
3.4 Tourist Accommodation.....	8
3.4.1 Signage from Motorways and Dual Carriageways. ....	8
3.4.2 Signage from Other National Primary Roads. ....	8
3.4.3 Signage from National Secondary Roads.....	9
3.5 Golf Courses.....	9
3.5.1 Signage from Motorways and Dual Carriageways. ....	9
3.5.2 Signage from Other National Roads. ....	9
3.5.3 Format of Signs. ....	10
3.6 Local Facilities in Bypassed Towns and Villages.....	10
3.7 Retail Facilities.....	10
3.8 Tourist Driving Routes.....	11
3.9 Sign Design Considerations. ....	11
3.9.1 Excess Signing Demand.....	11
3.9.2 Tourist Attraction Symbols. ....	11
3.9.3 Use of Irish & English.....	11
3.9.4 Use of White-On-Brown Signs. ....	11
Part 4: Development of Tourist & Leisure Signage Schemes.....	12
4.1 Signage Scheme Development Process.....	12
4.1.1 Local Authorities.....	12
4.1.2 National Roads Authority.....	12
4.1.3 Fáilte Ireland. ....	12
4.2 Costs.....	13
Part 5 Advertising and Commercial Signage.....	14
5.1 Legislative Background.....	14
5.2 Unauthorised Signage. ....	14
5.2.1 Variable Message Signs (VMS).....	15

Appendix A - Typical Development Process for Tourist and Leisure Signage Schemes

Appendix B - Sign Provision Matrix for Selected Types of Tourist / Leisure Destinations

Appendix C - National Road Network (2010)

## ***Policy on the Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads***

### **Part 1: Background.**

- 1.1** Official strategy for the use of tourist signage is governed by the document PD 12/14, 1988, “Criteria for the Provision of Tourist Attraction and Accommodation Signs”, originally published by the Department of the Environment. Whilst the provisions of the document remain for the most part valid today, certain practices have evolved over time that do not comply with the provisions of the document, resulting in a proliferation and misuse of white-on-brown tourist signs. This, in turn, has led to diminished benefit to both road users and those tourist attractions and facilities qualifying for signage. In addition, white-on-brown signage has been incorrectly used for many non-tourist destinations.
  
- 1.2** The purpose of this document is to outline the National Roads Authority’s policy on the provision of tourist and leisure information signs on national primary and national secondary roads in Ireland. The Policy is not intended to apply to national roads in towns and other built-up areas to which speed limits of 50 km/h or less apply. The regulation of signage in such areas is a matter for the relevant planning authority. However, such signage should not interfere with or unduly distract road users or otherwise detract from the safe and efficient operation of the road.

The ongoing upgrade and maintenance of directional signage, together with the continual rationalisation of white-on-brown signage used for tourist attractions and facilities, is making a significant improvement to the quality of national road signage throughout the country, benefiting both local and tourist alike. This Policy was first published in March 2007, following a public consultation exercise and review with Fáilte Ireland. In light of experience since 2007 it was considered appropriate to review the Policy and to update it to take account of emerging issues and new standards developed in the interim. A second consultation exercise was undertaken during 2010 as part of this review, a feature of which was significant liaison with Fáilte Ireland. It is intended that the Authority will regularly review and, as necessary, update this document to reflect best practice. The current version will be downloadable from the NRA website. From time to time, the Authority will also undertake more extensive reviews, including consultation with relevant Government Departments, local authorities and other appropriate bodies and parties.

- 1.3** The tourism industry is recognised as a very important element of the Irish economy. Ireland has a wide range of unique tourism assets of varying types throughout the country, providing many attractions to both the visiting tourist and the local population. Due to the wide geographic spread of these attractions the predominant mode of visitor transport is road. The Authority recognises the necessity to facilitate ready access to the many tourist destinations around the country. In this regard the provision of clear and consistent tourist signage is an essential element in assisting the motoring tourist to locate such attractions in a safe and efficient manner.
- 1.4** The primary purpose of tourist signage is to guide visitors to their intended tourist destinations along the most appropriate route at the latter stages of their journey, particularly where destinations may be difficult to find. As with all other directional signs, tourist signs are an aid to safe and efficient navigation and are intended to complement, but not replace, pre-planning of the journey and the use of verbal instructions, maps, road atlases, route planners and satellite navigation systems.
- 1.5** White-on-brown signs for tourist and leisure destinations should supplement rather than duplicate information already provided on other direction signs erected for the guidance of all road users. Whilst recognising that additional benefit may accrue to the operator of a tourist attraction or facility through increased patronage, white-on-brown signs should only be used where there are clear benefits to the road user, e.g. for safety reasons, where locations may be hard to find or to encourage visitors to use particular routes. Tourist signage on the network of national roads is provided to aid way-finding rather than for any advertising or promotional purposes.
- 1.6** Both the Department of Transport and the National Roads Authority have recently implemented re-signing programmes on local, regional and national roads which incorporate local road numbers on directional signage. The inclusion of local road numbers provides an improved means of locating individual tourist attractions and facilities off national roads and eliminates the perceived need for much of the current signage proliferation relating to tourist attractions and facilities at such locations.
- 1.7** All tourist and leisure signage is designed and installed in accordance with the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual.
- 1.8** This Statement supersedes the Authority's previous policy document published in March, 2007.

## Part 2: Classification of Tourist / Leisure Destinations.

**2.1** A tourist or leisure destination is normally defined as a permanently established destination that attracts or is used by a significant number of visitors. Tourist / leisure destinations may be subdivided into two broad categories: tourist/leisure attractions and tourist/leisure facilities. The following lists are not exhaustive but give a broad indication of the various attractions and facilities coming within the tourist destination categories. It should be noted that the inclusion of any type of attraction or facility does not infer automatic warrants for tourist signage on a national road.

### **2.1.1 Tourist / Leisure Attractions.**

For the purposes of this document, tourist and leisure attractions are deemed to include:

- visitor and interpretative centres;
- historic buildings;
- museums;
- zoos;
- parks and visitor gardens (excludes garden centres);
- natural attractions such as nature reserves;
- beaches;
- viewpoints;
- areas of heritage or scientific interest;
- scenic routes / heritage drives;
- national parks;
- forest parks;
- walking routes;
- outdoor pursuits centres;
- golf courses (open to non-members);
- theatres and music venues;
- racecourses;
- equestrian centres;
- visitor farms;
- principal GAA, soccer and rugby grounds;
- island and river ferries;
- marinas / public slipways and boating facilities, and
- areas providing angling facilities.

### **2.1.2 Tourist / Leisure Facilities.**

Tourist and leisure facilities are deemed to include:

- tourist accommodation;
- conference centres;
- major third level education centres (e.g. universities / institutes of technology);
- holiday parks;
- caravan and camping parks;
- picnic sites, and
- tourist information centres.

## Part 3: Tourist & Leisure Signage Policy.

### 3.1 Policy Objectives.

The primary objectives of the Authority's Tourist and Leisure Signage Policy are to (a) provide a basis for a coherent system of tourist signage on national roads so as to effectively guide visitors to their intended destinations, and (b) avoid the unsightly proliferation of advertising and tourist signage, particularly for commercial related activities and tourist accommodation, on the national road network. These objectives will be pursued throughout the country in tandem with the Authority's overall network re-signing programme. The tourism signage policy will be implemented in consultation with local authorities, Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Fáilte Ireland and other tourism interests in order to ensure the provision of appropriate signage for the principal tourist destinations.

### 3.2 Categorisation of National Roads.

There is a limit to the amount of information that should be contained on any road sign in order for the driver to be able to assimilate it safely in the short space of time available. In general, the higher the prevailing speed on the particular road the bigger the text and the more limited the information on the sign needs to be if the information is to be assimilated by road users. It is necessary, therefore, to recognise that the nature and extent of signage must vary in accordance with the category of road on which it is located. The Authority has adopted the following hierarchy of national roads for the purposes of the tourism and leisure signage policy:

- A. Motorways and dual carriageways (including routes M/N 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25 and 50).
- B. Other national primary roads.
- C. National secondary roads.

In the cases of categories B and C, specific criteria will be adopted for the provision of tourism signage within urban, built-up areas.

No tourism related signage will be permitted on certain routes, such as the Cork Ring Road, the M50 (Dublin Ring Road) and the Dublin fringe national routes (up to approximately 15km from the city centre), as tourist signage cannot be safely or effectively provided on these routes due to the number of qualifying and competing attractions in their environs, the high volumes of traffic on them, the number and proximity of junctions and the directional signage requirements of the routes themselves. In addition, the provision of tourist signage at national road junctions close to and accessing other major urban centres (such as Limerick, Waterford, Galway and Sligo) or major tourist areas (such as Killarney) will of necessity be restricted due to similar considerations.



### 3.3 Tourist / Leisure Destinations.

Signage for tourist and leisure destinations may, in the first instance, be provided in accordance with the following criteria:

**Table 3.1 - Criteria for the provision of tourist / leisure signage on national roads.**

<b>Road Type</b>	<b>Minimum number of visitors per annum <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Maximum distance of attraction from national road <sup>(2)</sup></b>
<b>Motorway / Dual Carriageway</b>	50,000	30 km
<b>Other National Primary Roads</b>	15,000	20 km
<b>National Secondary Roads</b>	7,000	20 km

#### Notes:

1. Some flexibility will be exercised in respect of the visitor number thresholds if appropriate for attractions where there are good traffic management or safety reasons, depending upon the availability of space to accommodate signage. Special consideration will be given to historical or cultural attractions of national importance.
2. Tourist / leisure destinations will only be signed from a single point off the nearest national road along the preferred route to the destination. Exceptions to this may be considered by the Authority for major attractions which are located close to a national road carrying a high volume of traffic but which are accessed from a lower volume national road.
3. Any sign should not accommodate more than four attractions.
4. Tourist / leisure attractions and facilities will only be considered for inclusion on permanent tourist signage on the national road network if they are open to the general public during normal hours throughout the entire year, in order to avoid visitors being led to facilities that are closed.
5. Attractions or facilities that are predominantly retail in nature such as outlet centres, garden centres and shopping malls are not considered as tourist / leisure destinations for the purposes of this Policy and hence will not be included on tourist signage on the national road network (See also Section 3.7).
6. The generation of particular annual foot-fall numbers does not automatically infer an entitlement for inclusion on tourist / leisure signage. Establishments such as cinemas, theatres, music venues, pubs, shopping centres, community halls, amusement halls, swimming pools, etc generally found in urban areas will not normally be considered for inclusion on tourist / leisure signage on the national road network.
7. Tourist and leisure signage on the national road network is installed to supplement and complement normal directional signage. Where a conflict between the two arises, directional signage will always take precedence over tourist / leisure signage. Eligibility does not confer an automatic right to the provision of signage and it may not always be possible to accommodate even qualifying destinations on signage on the national road. The final decision as to whether any particular tourist destination may be included on national road signage will lie with the Authority in consultation with the relevant local authority taking account of (a) the number of visitors involved, (b) traffic management and safety considerations and (c) the views of Fáilte Ireland.
8. Tourist attractions with low volume visitor numbers and new tourist attractions should not be signed in order to use up a perceived quota of signs at any junction. Signing such

attractions only serves to dilute the value and effectiveness of signage for other qualifying attractions. Very often rural motorway or dual carriageway junctions will serve only one qualifying attraction. The signing of multiple attractions at every junction is not good practice and does not accord with the Policy of the Authority. Where multiple attractions are present, such as in heritage areas, a specific tourist signage strategy may be employed in the area.

9. It should be noted that the approval / provision of tourist signs under this Policy will be conditional on the removal of an operator's existing advertising signs where such signs are unauthorised or where they are considered to be redundant or a distraction to the road user.

### **3.3.1 Motorways and Dual Carriageways.**

#### **3.3.1.1 Junction Numbering.**

The Authority has implemented a junction numbering system for each of the Major Inter-Urban Routes, M1 (Dublin-Belfast), M4/M6 (Dublin-Galway), M7 (Dublin-Limerick), M8 (Dublin-Cork) and M9 (Dublin-Waterford), together with certain other motorway / dual carriageway routes, including the N2, N3, N4, N11, N18, N20, N22 N25 and M50. The junction numbering system provides an effective means for route planning on motorways and dual carriageways and, increasingly, individuals and businesses are making use of the junction numbers in referencing locations adjacent to these various routes. The junction numbering system should also be used as a primary feature in route planning for tourist related travel and the Authority encourages the use of junction numbers, wherever possible, in providing way-finding assistance and on promotional material such as brochures, advertisement and websites for tourist / leisure attractions.

#### **3.3.1.2 Signage on the Mainline.**

White-on-brown signs on the mainline of motorways and dual carriageways will be restricted to the following tourist destinations:

- Major tourist destinations (meeting annual visitor numbers thresholds set out in Table 3.1).
- Tourist facilities panels for adjacent bypassed towns or alternative routes.
- Eligible championship golf courses in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 3.5.
- County boundary signs.
- Principal rivers.
- Scenic routes / heritage drives.

On the approaches to each motorway or dual carriageway junction from which a qualifying tourist destination is to be signed, white-on-brown tourist signs will be provided, separate but complementary to, the main directional signage at the junction. In order to avoid information overload, the maximum number of tourist attractions which can be signed off at any one junction is four. The attractions being signed should each be associated with a standard tourist symbol from the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual, which can be used at subsequent junctions to provide continuity (see also paragraphs 3.3.4 and 3.9.2). White-on-brown panels embedded into mainline directional signs will not normally be permitted. They may, however, be considered for



major tourist attractions in certain circumstances subject to the agreement of the Authority, the availability of space and safety considerations.

### **3.3.1.3 Signage on Intersecting Roads.**

On exiting the mainline, continuity tourist signage for the tourist attractions signed at the particular junction will be provided at the ends of the ramps where they meet the intersecting roads. This continuity signage will be additional to the standard directional signage. Further supplementary tourist signage may also be provided at this point. The extent of signage provided will, however, be dictated by the availability of space to accommodate the signage and considerations of road safety. The tourist signage erected must not compromise the visibility and clarity of directional or other road traffic signage. As with all signage, the driver must be able to read and understand signs at normal approach speeds and not be presented with an excess of information, such that the signage could present a safety hazard.

### **3.3.2 Other National Primary Roads.**

Tourist attractions with visitor numbers complying with the criteria specified at section 3.3 will be eligible for white-on-brown signage from other national primary roads subject to space and road safety considerations and the approval of the Authority.

Tourist attractions which do not have recorded numbers of visitors may be considered for tourist signage subject to (a) the availability of signage space, (b) road safety considerations, (c) agreement between the NRA and the relevant local authority, and (d) the views of Fáilte Ireland.

On the approaches to single carriageway junctions, white-on-brown tourist signs should be provided, separate from but complementary to, the main directional signage at the junction. In order to avoid information overload, the maximum number of tourist destinations which can be signed off at any one junction is four. However, this number may need to be reduced depending on the extent of other signage at the junction. The attractions being signed should each be associated with a standard tourist symbol from the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual, which can be used at subsequent junctions or decision points to provide continuity (see also paragraph 3.9.2). Where the space available for separate follow-on signs is limited, white-on-brown panels (or just the associated symbols, as appropriate) may be embedded into the directional signs.

### **3.3.3 National Secondary Roads.**

Tourist destinations with visitor numbers complying with the criteria specified at section 3.3 will be eligible for white-on-brown signage from national secondary roads subject to space and road safety considerations and the approval of the Authority. National secondary roads typically have a greater number of tourist attractions in their vicinity than other national routes and in many cases these may not have recorded visitor numbers. Such attractions may include beaches and other natural features, marinas and other boating facilities. These attractions may be considered for tourist signage subject to (a) agreement between the NRA and the relevant local authority and (b) the views of Fáilte Ireland. The provisions of

paragraph 3.3.2 above in relation to the type and format of signage apply also to national secondary roads.

### **3.3.4 Continuity Signage for Tourist Destinations.**

It is important that there be continuity of signage from the first sign through to the destination. Therefore, operators of tourist attractions should liaise with the relevant local authorities to ensure that, where tourist attraction signage is provided on a national road directing road users onto regional or local roads, continuity of white-on-brown signage is provided between the exit from the national road and the tourist destination concerned. Continuity signage should be provided by means of a fingerpost signing scheme, whereby the signs are erected under licence from the local authority (renewable on an annual basis) and should ensure that continuous direction is provided at each decision point along the route both from the junction to the tourist destination, and then back again to the national road junction. These signs should be erected separately and away from the official directional signs so that they do not detract from other road signs or affect visibility, etc. See also section 3.9.

## **3.4 Tourist Accommodation.**

Due to the number and variety of tourist accommodation facilities, it is not possible to provide tourist signage on national roads for all such facilities. Improvements to way-finding directional signage across the local, regional and national roads networks, including the implementation of junction numbering and local road numbering, mean that patrons seeking their B&Bs, guesthouses or other facilities should be able to do so with greater ease than in the past. In addition, local authorities may be willing to allow accommodation providers to install private directional signage leading from the nearest national road junction to their premises on a licence consent basis. (See also Part 5).

White-on-brown tourist signage may be provided on the national road network for tourist accommodation facilities at the latter stages of a journey in accordance with county policy and the following criteria:

### **3.4.1 Signage from Motorways and Dual Carriageways.**

Signage of individual tourist accommodation facilities will not be provided from the mainline of motorways and dual carriageways. Signage for Fáilte Ireland approved tourist accommodation may be provided at the ends of motorway and dual carriageway off-slips where they meet with the intersecting road. However, the total number of tourist destinations that may be signposted at such locations is limited overall to four (attractions and facilities) in order to avoid a surfeit of signage, leading to information overload and possible driver confusion and safety risks.

### **3.4.2 Signage from Other National Primary Roads.**

Signage for more extensive Fáilte Ireland approved accommodation facilities, including hotels, conference centres, leisure centres and holiday parks, will be permitted at single carriageway national primary road junctions.

### **3.4.3 Signage from National Secondary Roads.**

Signage for all types of accommodation approved by Fáilte Ireland or other recognised body will be permitted on national secondary roads. Up to a maximum of four accommodation facilities may be signposted at a junction. Only one sign may be provided for each facility; no advance signage prior to the junction will be permitted.

Signage for tourist accommodation and other facilities should be of a standard format, size and colour, should be unlit and of standard retro-reflective sign-face material. Templates for such signage are included in the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual. The use of highly retro-reflective sign-face materials is not permitted on the national road network.

## **3.5 Golf Courses.**

White-on-brown tourist signage may only be provided for golf courses in accordance with the following criteria:

### **3.5.1 Signage from Motorways and Dual Carriageways.**

Only the larger, higher profile courses will be considered for signage from the motorway and dual carriageway network, specifically courses that:

- (i) Comply with and adhere to the Fáilte Ireland tourism quality assurance scheme for golf courses, and are certified as such by Fáilte Ireland.
- (ii) Have hosted at least one of the following nationally significant championship events:
  - Ryder Cup or Solheim Cup Event (or equivalent international professional tournament).
  - European Tour Event (e.g. Irish Open).
  - Seniors European Tour Event (e.g. Seniors Irish Open).
  - Ladies European Tour event, (e.g. Ladies Irish Open).
  - Irish PGA Championship.
- (iii) Are located within 10km of the national road junction.
- (iv) Are signed along one preferred route only from the national road.
- (v) Continuity signage (both to the course and back to the national road) is provided by the course operator under licence from the relevant local authority.

### **3.5.2 Signage from Other National Roads.**

Signage for qualifying golf courses may be provided at appropriate junctions on the single carriageway national primary and secondary road network in accordance with the way-finding need determined by local authorities in consultation with Fáilte Ireland. This way-finding need may in certain instances extend to the closest town and/or to the nearest national road junction within the 10km radius detailed above. The criteria which apply to such signage are:

- (i) Compliance with and adherence to the Fáilte Ireland minimum standards quality assurance scheme for golf courses.
- (ii) Be located within 10km of the national road junction.
- (iii) Is signed along one preferred route only from the national road.
- (iv) Continuity signage (both to the course and back to the national road) is provided by the course operator under licence from the relevant local authority.

### **3.5.3 Format of Signs.**

- Typically, a qualifying golf course will be signed using the shortest form of its name together with the standard golf flag symbol (any text must be displayed bilingually in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual).
- Where three or more golf courses qualify for signage at any one junction, and where all three courses seek signage, a golf flag symbol will be used instead of naming all courses individually.
- Signage for a qualifying golf course will only be provided where there is available space on the relevant signs and where road safety considerations will not be compromised. The relevant local authority and Fáilte Ireland will be consulted on whether a golf attraction ranks above other competing attractions where demand exceeds available space. However, the Authority will be the final arbiter.

### **3.6 Local Facilities in Bypassed Towns and Villages.**

In general, the Authority will provide white-on-brown tourist signs for bypassed towns and villages on the former national road network. These will be of a standard form with the name of the town or village and up to four symbols indicating the principal facilities and services available in the town or village may be included. Services which one would normally expect to find in any typical town or village, such as ATM facilities and churches, will not be included in the symbols provided. Signage bearing the name of individual premises or businesses will not be permitted.

On motorway and dual carriageway sections of the network, junctions may serve multiple bypassed towns and villages; however, the provision of separate tourist signs for each would not be appropriate. In such cases a single sign with two towns or villages may be erected or, where a number of towns / villages are bypassed by a new section of national road, an 'Alternative Route Sign' listing the names of and the distances to these towns and villages may be provided in accordance with the guidelines in the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual.

### **3.7 Retail Facilities.**

Retail facilities / centres are not considered to be tourist or leisure destinations and will not, therefore, be signed from the national road network. Way-finding to such centres should rely on the junction numbering system (as described in paragraph 3.3.1.1), supplemented by private signage for the premises which can be provided on local / regional roads under licence from the relevant local authority under the Planning & Development Act, 2000.

Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that many tourist establishments, such as craft workshops, etc., combine a retail outlet with a tourist attraction. Such establishments may be eligible for white-on-brown tourist signs provided it is demonstrated by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the Authority and local authority, in consultation with Fáilte Ireland, that the tourist interest predominates. However, individual craft facilities in urban areas will not in general be accommodated on tourist signage.

### **3.8 Tourist Driving Routes.**

Driving routes must be approved by Fáilte Ireland, the National Roads Authority and the relevant local authority before they are considered for official white-on-brown tourist signage. Such routes, which generally tend to follow national secondary roads and regional roads, must be appropriately and continuously signed and must be supported and actively marketed by Fáilte Ireland, with the assistance of the relevant local authority.

### **3.9 Sign Design Considerations.**

#### **3.9.1 Excess Signing Demand.**

For safety reasons it is important that individual signs are not overloaded with information. Only a limited quantity of information can be read by the driver, taking account of the speed of the vehicle, the size of the text on the sign and road safety considerations.

As outlined above, the maximum number of tourist destinations that will be permitted on an individual sign is four. If there are more than four eligible tourist destinations, priority for tourist signage will be given to those destinations with the greatest traffic management or road safety needs. The Authority will make the final decision as to which destinations should be signed, in conjunction with the relevant local authority and following consultation with Fáilte Ireland.

#### **3.9.2 Tourist Attraction Symbols.**

In order to avoid sign clutter and to provide easily identifiable routes for the motorist, symbols should be used wherever possible. As a general rule, an appropriate symbol should be associated with the particular attraction being signed and this symbol should be followed through from its first introduction to the end destination. Once introduced and associated with the particular tourist attraction, the symbol by itself may be used on follow-on signage to identify the route through to the attraction. This is particularly useful and appropriate in providing guidance through off-route junctions where available signage space is limited. A list of symbols for various attractions and facilities is included in the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual.

#### **3.9.3 Use of Irish & English.**

Text on tourist / leisure signage should be in both Irish and English in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual and relevant legislation.

#### **3.9.4 Use of White-On-Brown Signs.**

White-on-brown signage is intended for the signing of tourist attractions and facilities. The use of white-on-brown signage is not considered appropriate for the signage of general civic amenities, such as parks, libraries, churches, recycling centres, etc.

## Part 4: Development of Tourist & Leisure Signage Schemes.

### **4.1 Signage Scheme Development Process.**

A flowchart summarising the typical development process of tourist and leisure signage schemes is included in Appendix A. The inputs of the various organisations involved in this process are summarised below.

#### **4.1.1 Local Authorities.**

- Preparation of plans for tourist / leisure signage in their respective counties, in consultation with Fáilte Ireland and the National Roads Authority.
- Participation in the development of tourist / leisure signing strategies for the national road network which are compatible with that county's tourist / leisure signage plans.
- Ensure the provision and maintenance of continuity signage for tourist / leisure attractions both from the national road to the attraction, and from the attraction back to the national road.
- Obtain approval (as appropriate) for the erection of tourist signs on national roads from the Authority.
- Operate a consent licensing system for all authorised private signs.
- Conduct an annual review to ensure that only currently approved / authorised signs are erected on national roads.
- Remove unapproved, out of date or damaged tourist / leisure signs.

#### **4.1.2 National Roads Authority.**

- Liaise with and, as appropriate, provide approvals to local authorities for tourist signage proposals relating to national roads.
- Maintain official tourist and leisure signage as part of the Authority's sign maintenance and refurbishment programmes.
- Liaise with the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport and other relevant Government Departments, local authorities and Fáilte Ireland to ensure that the administration of the tourist and leisure signage policy is maintained up to date and responsive to the requirements of the industry.

#### **4.1.3 Fáilte Ireland.**

- Liaise with the Authority and the local authorities on the development of tourist signage schemes in accordance with Fáilte Ireland regional tourist strategies.
- Compile and maintain a register of tourist accommodation facilities in each local authority area and make these registers available to local authorities and the National Roads Authority.
- Participate in periodic meetings with the National Roads Authority and representatives of local authorities to deal with tourist signage related issues.
- Where requested, provide support to local authorities and the National Roads Authority in determining whether individual tourist attractions and facilities qualify for signage.

## **4.2 Costs.**

White-on-brown tourist and leisure signage for approved attractions will be provided and maintained by the National Roads Authority as part of scheduled re-signing programmes in respect of national roads. Where new signs (including any necessary continuity signs) are provided outside of these scheduled programmes, the costs will be borne by the developer / promoter / operator of the attraction.



## Part 5 Advertising and Commercial Signage.

### 5.1 Legislative Background.

Currently, the erection of authorised advertising structures / signage, other than road traffic signs, is regulated in Ireland by the following:

- a licence issued under section 254 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 for a structure on, under, over or along a public road;
- consent of the relevant road authority under section 71(1)(b) of the Roads Act, 1993 for structures/signage on a public road, and
- planning permission under section 34 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 which is required for signage on private property.

A draft set of guidelines for planning authorities entitled ‘Spatial Planning and National Roads’ was published by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in June 2010. These guidelines set out what is currently considered to be best practice and include a requirement to control the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads. The key points are as follows:

- Advertising signs should not be authorised for erection or maintained within the national road reserve or at locations on private land visible from the road except where a speed limit of 50km/h or less applies.
- Proliferation of roadside signage, especially outside the 50 kph speed limit areas, can reduce the effectiveness of essential signage such as direction signs, create visual clutter and reduce visibility at junctions/interchanges and bends.
- Advertising signs placed in locations where they compete with or mimic road traffic signs or traffic signals or are reflectorised can confuse drivers and should not be permitted.
- In addition, poorly erected or maintained signs can present a hazard to road users if they fall or are blown onto the carriageway.
- The practice of parking large truck trailers off national roads as a means for advertising hoardings as well as the sale of cars on the roadside should be carefully monitored by planning authorities and enforcement steps taken as necessary under the planning legislation and other legislative codes.

### 5.2 Unauthorised Signage.

The Authority subscribes to the above guidelines and, accordingly, advertising, commercial or retail signage should not be erected on the high speed national road network outside of built-up areas. In addition, those who attempt to erect such signs do so without appropriate traffic management and health and safety measures to ensure their safety and the safety of other road users.

Except in the case of an emergency or on the instructions of An Garda Síochána, it is an offence to stop or park a vehicle or to walk on any part of a motorway. It is also an offence

for an unauthorised person to erect a traffic sign visible from a public road or to interfere with an existing traffic sign.

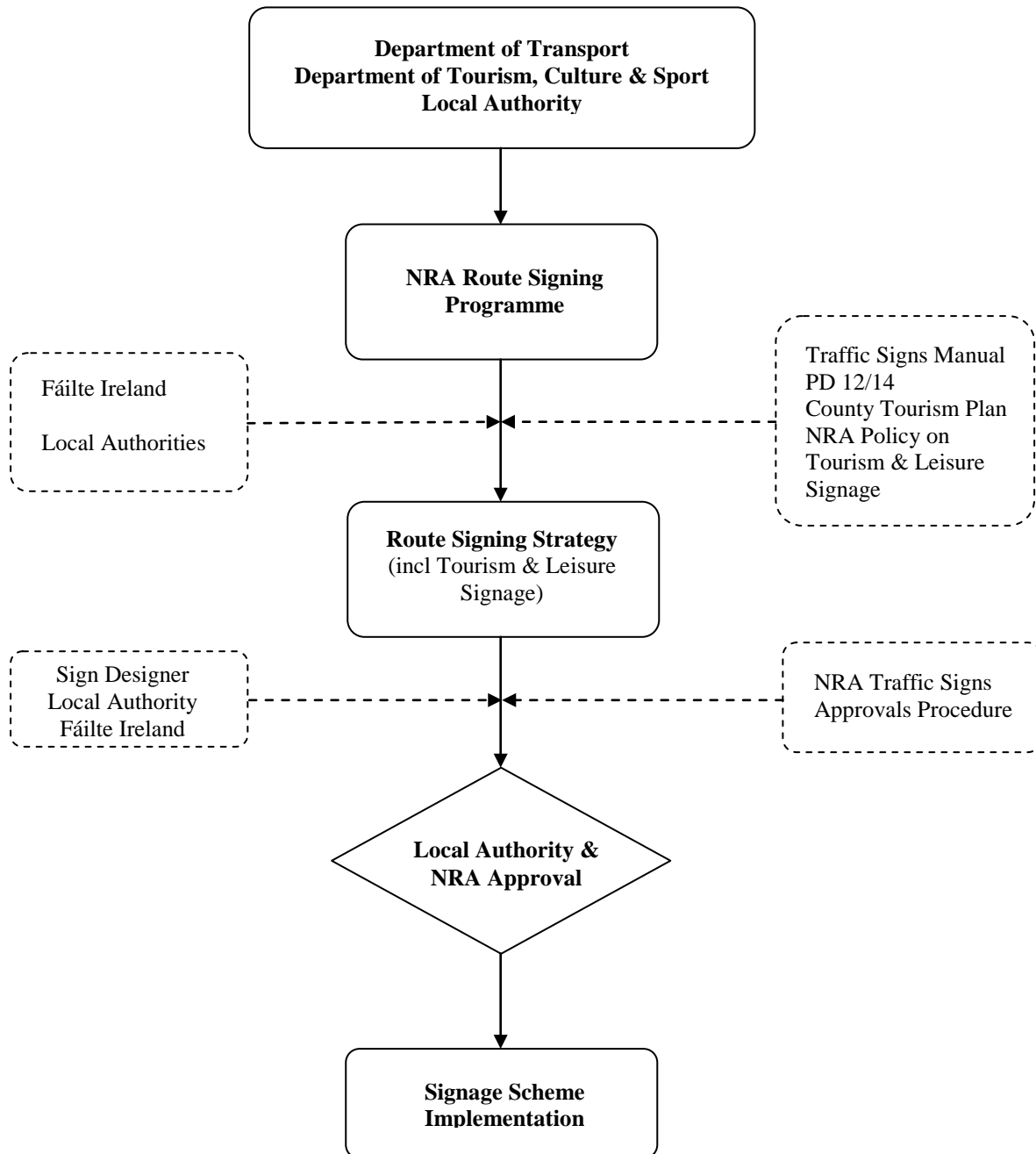
Any unauthorised advertising, commercial or retail signage erected along the route of a high speed national road will be removed by the Authority (via ongoing maintenance or signage contracts) or by the relevant road authority, and the costs incurred may be recovered from the offending party.

### **5.2.1 Variable Message Signs (VMS).**

Both the Department of Transport's Traffic Signs Manual and the NRA Guidelines for the Use of Variable Message Signs on national roads state that "VMS signs either on or near a road must not, under any circumstances, be used to display information relating to anything other than the road network. Thus, VMS shall not be used for advertising or promotion, political slogans or requests for information related to accidents or public consultation exercises".

Taking account of the foregoing, VMS signs should not be used under any circumstances to advertise businesses or events to traffic on the national road network. VMS signs may only be used by authorised persons to display important traffic management information. For further information, refer to the NRA Guidelines for the Use of Variable Message Signs on National Roads.

# Appendix A - Typical Development Process for Tourist and Leisure Signage Schemes



## Appendix B - Sign Provision Matrix for Selected Types of Tourist / Leisure Destinations

Attraction / Facility	Motorway/ Dual Carriageway	National Primary Road	National Secondary Road
<b>Qualifying Official Attraction</b> (see Table 3.1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance signs on mainline and off-ramp</li> <li>▪ Directional sign at minor road end of ramp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance sign on approach to junction</li> <li>▪ Directional sign at junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance sign on approach to junction</li> <li>▪ Directional sign at junction</li> </ul>
<b>Other Official Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local authority may decide to provide directional sign at minor road end of ramp in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local authority may decide to provide directional sign at junction in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local authority may decide to provide directional sign at junction</li> </ul>
<b>Licensed Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at minor road end of ramp in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction</li> </ul>
<b>Hotel with Conference Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at minor road end of ramp but only where way-finding need is clearly established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction but only where way-finding need is clearly established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction</li> </ul>
<b>Other Hotel / Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at minor road end of ramp in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction</li> </ul>
<b>Championship Golf Course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance signs on mainline and off-ramp</li> <li>▪ Directional sign at minor road end of ramp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance sign on approach to junction</li> <li>▪ Directional sign at junction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advance sign on approach to junction</li> <li>▪ Directional sign at junction</li> </ul>
<b>Other Golf Course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at minor road end of ramp in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction in limited circumstances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Licensed* fingerpost sign at junction</li> </ul>

### NOTES:

- \* Subject to constraints set in this document, consent of the local authority, annual renewal of licence, local authority signage policy, one junction only on the national road, only at latter end of the journey, in standard format and subject to all unauthorised and non-compliant advertising signs being removed.
- Licensed fingerpost signs should be located on a separate post away from and not interfering with the visibility of official directional or tourist/leisure signage
- Where space is not available, directional signage may be in the form of high level fingerpost signs

# Appendix C

# National Road Network



### Key

- Motorway
- National Primary
- - - National Secondary

