

REPORT FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Swale Rural Forum Meeting	Agenda Item:
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Meeting Date	Tuesday 9 th March 2010
Report Title	Tourism Signing
Portfolio Holder	Cllr. John Wright
SMT Lead	Pete Raine
Head of Service	Emma Wiggins
Lead Officer	Lyn Newton
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Forward Plan	Reference number: N/A

Recommendations	1. To note the report
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Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report responds to an external request from Minster Parish Council on how to apply for tourism signing and identifies those key agencies that control signs on motorway and trunk roads and local roads. The report also identifies criteria for businesses that might qualify as a tourist destination and a tourist attraction, identifies the process used to determine business eligibility and guidance on how to make an application.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Highways Agency is responsible for signs on motorways and trunk roads and sets out its policy on brown signs in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (www.highways.gov.uk/business/241.aspx), including full application and contact details.

- 2.2 Kent Highways Services controls signs on local roads and sets the local policy on brown signs for tourism destinations. There is a three stage process to secure tourism signing:

- Qualifying as a tourist destination
- Business eligibility
- Application

2.3 Qualifying as a tourist destination

A destination is defined as: “A permanently established attraction or facility which attracts or is used by visitors to an area and which is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.” Attractions and facilities are broadly defined

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including those places of interest offering recreation, education or historic interest or alternatively where visitors can rest, enjoy refreshments or obtain information.

2.4 Business eligibility

A range of criteria are applied in determining eligibility for signing on local roads as well as motorway and trunk routes. These include a review of the quality of the business operation determined through the National Quality Assurance Scheme (VisitBritain, AA and RAC) for accommodation and the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service for visitor attractions and visitor numbers. Businesses that do not meet the criteria may also be considered and successful applications determined if they can demonstrate a traffic or safety requirement.

2.5 Application

Application can be made to Kent County Council for £195.50 (non-refundable) with an appraisal to determine eligibility made by Visit Kent. Successful applications will be passed to Kent Highway Services who will arrange a site visit to plan signing requirements (locations, size, number of signs and environmental sensitivity) and statutory consultation. Determination of an application is at the discretion of the Kent Highway Services and there is no statutory right of appeal. A design and quotation will be made by Kent Highway Services within 14 weeks of receipt of application.

3 **Additional Information**

- 3.1 All costs associated with tourism signing are recovered from the tourism business applying.
- 3.2 Signs remain in the ownership of the local Highway Authority or the Highways Agency if on the motorway or trunk roads.
- 3.3 An application fee is charged for assessing each request. Only one attraction or facility is permitted per application.
- 3.4 Facilities and attractions with existing signing may apply for additional signage through the process as outlined.
- 3.5 Cost of the actual signs varies according to number, location, size and material.

4 **Useful Contacts**

- 4.1 Visit Kent: 08458 247 247 or email: enquiries@visitkent.co.uk or website: www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk; Kent Highways Services: 08458 247 800 or email: kenthighwayservices@kent.gov.uk; Highway Agency: 08457 50 40 30 or 0121 335 8300 or email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk or website: www.highways.gov.uk