Meeting of Dún Laoghaire Area Committee

9 June 2010

Council’s Signage Policy

Motion: Councillor N. Bhreathnach

"That this Committee invite the Manager to circulate the Council’s signage policy which came into effect on 1st June, 2009 for discussion at the Area Committee"

Report:

Background
In early 2009, Traffic Section drafted a policy on Local Information Road Signage. Due to the growing problem of proliferation of illegal signage within the County, it was necessary to create a policy to regulate the provision of such signage. Illegal signage may constitute a traffic hazard, can lead to a proliferation of such signage, and ultimately be unsightly and ineffective.

The draft policy was presented to the members of the Transportation SPC in March 2009. This policy came into effect on 1st June 2009. The Policy Document was made available for viewing on the Council’s website on 1st June 2009.

A copy of the policy document as requested is included.

Contact Persons:  Conor Geraghty, Assistant Engineer, Traffic Section.
Anne Devine, Senior Engineer, Traffic Section.

LOCAL INFORMATION ROAD SIGNAGE

POLICY DOCUMENT 2009
An Rannán Trácha,
An Rannóg Iompair.

Traffic Section,
Transportation Department.

Effective from 1st of June 2009.
1.0 Introduction

Directional signage is signage that guides road users to areas of interest e.g. Dublin or Dún Laoghaire. Local information signage is provided to aid road users to locate points of interest within these towns and cities e.g. museums and parks.

As with all signage, local information signs are an aid to safe and efficient navigation intended to complement, but not replace, pre-planning of the journey and the use of verbal instructions, maps and road atlases.

The Council receives numerous applications from private commercial companies/premises requesting local informational signage be installed on public roads and these applications have been by and large turned down on the basis that they are not warranted, may constitute a traffic hazard, would lead to a proliferation of such signage and ultimately be unsightly and ineffective.

Throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown there is a large amount of signage that has been erected without permission. The majority of these signs do not comply with the current guidelines in size colour and layout. Local information signage has been erected in areas that detract from directional and regulatory signage. These
unauthorised signs are quite often erected in areas that constitute a hazard to pedestrians and those with visual impairments.

It is the policy of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to clamp down on the erection of unauthorised signage and to remove any signage that has erected without the consent of the Council. This policy document will regularise the provision of new local information signage.
2.0 Legal Framework

Signage is authorised under Section 254(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 by way of a license.

If a sign has not been authorised by the Local Authority it is an unauthorised structure. Therefore, all applications for signage should be made in accordance with the above legislation.

A Local Authority has power to remove any signage from the public road under Section 71 of the Roads Act, 1993.

Signage of a temporary nature e.g. signs advertising a particular event require the approval of the Council’s Transportation Department otherwise they can be prosecuted under the Litter Pollution Act, 1997 by the Council’s Environment and Culture Department.
3.0 Policy Objective

It is the policy of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council:

- To facilitate the ease of navigation of road users by providing a high standard of directional signage and by supplementing this with local information signage where necessary;
- To promote a safer environment for pedestrian usage with particular reference to the mobility and visually impaired users by ensuring all signage complies with the guidelines set out in the Traffic Signs Manual;
- To have regard to National Roads Authority policy on the provision of tourist and leisure signage on national roads;
- To adopt consistent technical standards, which facilitate road user recognition and comprehension;
- To comply with the Official Languages Act 2003 to ensure that all new signage is bi-lingual;
- To comply with Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown’s Identity Guidelines to support our communications strategy and design management;
- To ensure that signage complements, rather than dominates or intrudes upon, the character and visual amenity of an area;
- To encourage the rationalisation of signage;
- To utilise existing structures for the erection of signage where possible;
- To remove unauthorised signage;
- To provide clarity for businesses/groups/individuals seeking to erect signage; and
- To process applications in accordance with the criteria set out in this policy.
4.0 Description of Local Informational Signage

4.1 Tourist Attractions/Facilities
White symbols/letters on brown background

The primary purpose of tourist signage is to guide visitors to their intended tourist destination along the most appropriate route at the latter stages of their journey, particularly where destinations may be difficult to find. As with all signage, tourist signs are an aid to safe and efficient navigation intended to complement, but not replace, pre-planning of the journey and the use of verbal instructions, maps road atlases and in particular the Dublin Street Guide for the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area.

A tourist destination is normally defined as a permanently established destination that attracts or is used by visitors.

Signage may be permitted for significant tourist attractions and facilities for the following:

- Visitor and interpretative centres
- Historic buildings
- Museums
- Parks and Gardens
- Heritage sites
- Scenic routes
- Public Golf courses
- Principal GAA, Soccer and Rugby grounds
- Theatres
- Racecourses
- Hotels and Conference Centres
- Leisure Centres
- Holiday Parks
- Caravan and Camping Parks
- Youth Hostels
- Picnic Sites
- Tourist Information Centres

The above list is not exhaustive but gives a broad indication of the attractions and facilities coming within the tourist destination categories.

4.2 Local Information/Advisory directions
Black symbols/letters on white background

A local information/advisory direction is normally defined as a permanently established destination that attracts or is used by the public and of interest to the local community particularly where destinations may be difficult to find.

This signage may be permitted for significant local attractions and facilities for the following:

- Community Centres
- Parish/Pastoral Centres
- Churches
• Burial Grounds
• Cemeteries
• Hospitals
• Blood donation clinics
• Citizen advice centres
• Commercial centres

The above list is not exhaustive but gives a broad indication of the local attractions and facilities coming within this category.

4.3 Temporary event signage

This signage may be permitted to advertise an upcoming event-taking place in the community e.g. Fund raising events, drama group performances, Sale of Work events etc. For non-profit making organisations requesting permission to erect event signage, there is no fee. Where a profit making organization requests permission to erect event signage, a fee will apply. In the case of public meetings, 20 signs may be erected so long as the name and address of the person/organisation organising the event is shown on the posters.

4.4 Children At Play – Advance Warning sign
Diamond shaped with black symbols/letters on yellow background

It is acknowledged that it is good practice to provide “Children at Play” signs as an advance warning to motorists. The Road Safety Officer will examine requests for an advance warning “Children at Play” sign to alert motorists as to the likely presence of children on public roads. Locations for consideration will include areas such as Playgrounds, Parks, Schools, Montessori schools, residential areas, etc. Cul-de-Sac roads including traffic-calmed roads are not generally considered appropriate for such signs. The Traffic Section at present bear all costs associated with this signage. Only the “Children at Play” sign as outlined in the Traffic Signs Manual – figure 6.52 “Children Crossing” (in residential areas) will be installed.
5.0 Assessment Criteria

All applications for permanent local information signage (see section 4) will be assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Signs will only be considered where a “need” can be demonstrated. In this context the term “need” relates to the requirements of the traveling public and not the desire of the applicant to advertise as widely as possible. Each such need will be assessed on its merits.

2. Fingerpost signage is the preferred type of signage. Other types of signage will be discouraged unless a “need” can be demonstrated.

3. Applications for signage will be refused where they give rise to a potential traffic hazard. In general, signage will not be permitted at roundabouts, at traffic signalised junctions, at locations where they obstruct sight lines, compete with other traffic signs, give rise to confusion for road users or endanger traffic safety.

4. Applications for signage along national routes and along approach roads to towns and villages will generally not be permitted except for tourist attractions of national or regional importance. Signage along national routes also requires the written approval of the NRA.

5. The number of signs for any one premise shall be kept to a minimum and will generally be restricted to a maximum of two in the local area. In exceptional cases this maximum may be exceeded at the discretion of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

6. The number of signs that will be permitted on any one pole will be strictly limited by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. In the event of multiple applications for advertisement structures at any particular location, priority will be given to approved applicants on a first come first served basis.

7. Applications for signage shall comply with the requirements of the “Traffic Signs Manual” published by Department of the Environment and the “Policy on the Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads” published by the National Roads Authority. All lettering, logos and symbols are subject to the approval of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
6.0 License conditions

6.1 Local Information Signage

- No sign is to be erected at any location prior to the granting of the appropriate license and payment of the fees in full.

- Applications must be accompanied by the appropriate details and fees as outlined in the application form.

- The fee is for design, supply and erection of each new sign including administration and site inspections costs. A license fee per sign per annum will be applicable thereafter. Fees must be paid in full prior to the issuing of a license.

- The applicant will be responsible for the cost of the provision and replacement of any signage approved under this application.

- Any application in respect of proposed signage on a National Primary Route will require the prior approval of the National Roads Authority.

- No claim for damages or loss of income under any heading shall be taken against the Council for suspending, canceling or varying the terms of the License. Signs shall be removed immediately if requested by the Council. The Council reserves the right to cancel, suspend or vary the terms of the license at any time.

- The Applicant when requested by officials from the Council must produce a copy of the license.

- The granting of a License does not automatically guarantee renewal.

- The Area Traffic Engineer will consider all license applications and approve the final locations of all signage having due regard for road safety.

- Whoever holds the license for the sign must indemnify Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council against all actions, suits, claims or demands by anyone who is injured or suffers damage to themselves or their property due to the sign. This includes demands by anyone arising from injury or damage to themselves or their property due to the sign being placed on the footpath.

- Whoever holds the license for the sign must have public liability insurance cover to a minimum value of €6,500,000 indemnifying the Council against third-party claims. The name of the insurance company providing this cover, together with the policy number and date of expiry must be on the license. You must submit this insurance policy to us for inspection before we issue the license.
6.2 Temporary Event Signage

- You must not erect signs more than seven days before the event.
- You must remove signs within two days of the event ending.
- Our Litter Wardens will remove any signs erected at places other than those specified and they will issue appropriate fines.
- You may put only one sign on each pole.
- You may erect a maximum of 10 directional signs in the County for any one event.
- You must not put signs for events on motorways or national routes (for example N11, N31).
- You must not put signs on bridge parapets, traffic islands or roundabouts.
- Signs must not be within 30 metres of a junction (approach and exit).
- Signs must not be bigger than 500mm x 500mm.
- You must not erect sign poles or use 'sandwich board' signs.
- Signs must not obstruct (or distract from) existing road signs.
- Signs must be between 2.1 and 3 metres above the footpath or other surface.
- Signs must be set back at least 0.3 metres from the kerb.
- Signs must be attached securely so that they are always safe for pedestrians and vehicles. The Council accepts no responsibility for any damages that may arise from the improper use or installation of event signage. The licensee is solely responsible for their event signage.
- Signs must be erected in line with any extra conditions set out by the Traffic Section if approval is given. These conditions may relate to location, size and other requirements.
7.0 Unauthorised Signage

Unauthorised signage can give rise to a potential traffic hazard and can hinder the reasonable use of the public road. In addition, such signage can intrude upon the character and visual amenity of an area and can create a nuisance.

All signage on the public road must be authorised by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council by way of a license. If an advertisement structure has not been authorised by the Council it is an unauthorised structure.

Under section 254(9) of Planning and Development Act, 2000 any person who erects a sign on the public road without having a license, otherwise than in accordance with a license or in contravention of any condition of a license shall be guilty of an offence.

Under Section 71 of the Roads Act, 1993 it is also an offence to erect a sign or other structure on a public road without the consent of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. The Council has the power to remove, store and dispose of an unauthorised structure from the public road. Owners of such structures are liable for any costs incurred.

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An Rannóg Iompair Transportation Department.