

4 Signs and Road Markings



1. Introduction

Road Signs and Road Markings on the public highway are both governed by legislation. There are two main sources of information:

- The Traffic Signs Manuals - Provide the framework of requirements for signs and lines.
- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) - The detail is published here and is used by engineers to ensure that signs and lines are correctly used and where backed by a Traffic Regulation Order are legally enforceable. It ensures that the signs and lines are consistent across the UK and have been designed to be easily understood by road users.

TSRGD was updated in April 2016 and while much of the document has not changed there has been some relaxation of some requirements which are now subject to local determination. Essex County Council is currently reviewing the revision and will set out its own policies for signage on the local network.

If signs are not described in the TSRGD then approval from the Department for Transport must be granted before they can be used on the highway network. Signs that are non-authorised within the TSRGD constitute an obstruction of the highway.

The Traffic Sign Manual provides advice to Traffic Authorities on the use of traffic signs and road markings on the highway network. It also provides authorities with some Golden Rules, especially around the overuse of traffic signs. The Department for Transport expectation is that authorities will be proactive in removing unnecessary signs, and designing schemes to minimise clutter from the outset.

Typically, most of the signs that are allowed for use on public highways can also be found in the following documents:

The Highway Code:

Is essential reading for everyone and applies to all road users: [The Highway Code](#)

Know Your Traffic Signs booklet:

This provides a useful reference to highway signs and lines used in the UK: [Know Your Traffic Signs Booklet](#)



2. Typical Problems



3. Things to Consider

The critical issue is to identify the problem.

- As a general rule of thumb, if it is not in the TSRGD then it is not allowed.
- If the legislation requires a sign to be illuminated, is there a power supply or can solar power be used?
- Would any illumination create a light nuisance for nearby properties?
- Is there somewhere to locate the sign? (They need to be located where they give good, unimpaired visibility and that they do not in themselves stop road users from seeing other hazards.)
- Is the footway wide enough to enable a sign to be installed without impeding pedestrians, including those using wheelchairs, buggies or push chairs?
- Will there be too many signs?
 - Signs should only be provided where a clear need has been identified, and should be minimal and sympathetic to their environment. These principles apply in both urban and rural settings¹
 - Junctions in particular can be over signed. This can have a detrimental impact on the safety of the motorist who may suffer from information overload and become distracted from identifying potential hazards.
- All carriageway markings and signs will have on-going maintenance requirements. The lifespan of road markings depends on the amount of traffic, the location of the lines and the condition of the road surface. Traffic Signs have an expected lifespan of about 15 years.

¹Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13, January 2013, Reducing Sign Clutter

3. Things to Consider continued

- Tourism Signs or Disabled Parking Bays are not funded through the LHP budget. Businesses or residents wanting to apply for these should apply directly via the [website](#) or the contact centre.
- Local Directional Signs
 - In 2013 the Department for Transport issued a Traffic Advisory Leaflet regarding the need to reduce sign clutter. It highlighted that; *“Much local signing is unnecessary; regular visitors and people living locally know where facilities such as schools, churches and surgeries are. Authorities should review their local direction signs and remove any that are redundant. It is often possible to consolidate existing signing, rather than adding”*.
- There are numerous requests for traffic mirrors on the highway. These do not meet the Department for Transport guidance and are actively discouraged. If the problem is related to lack of visibility other measures that might improve sight lines, include, cutting back vegetation or realigning boundary fences.
 - A mirror could increase safety risks because they:
 - Reflect light and interfere with a driver’s vision.
 - Reduce the ability to judge an oncoming vehicle’s speed.
 - Create an unreasonable dependence on the mirror.
 - Distort or restrict the view if dirty.
- LHPs may get requests for Migratory Toad Crossings. ECC has DfT countywide approval to erect signs at any sites that has been approved as a migratory toad crossing. To get approval the site must be registered with the national wildlife charity [Froglife](#).
- In many areas there is often a demand to ban HGVs. If there is no structural reason why HGVs cannot use a route then the ban would be an environmental weight limit. In these circumstances there are several things to bear in mind.
 - HGVs cannot be prevented from having legitimate access (deliveries to premises, the movement of farm vehicles, etc.).
 - A ban cannot be put in place that would stop a business from operating from its premises.
 - Restrictions should only be used to:
 - Prevent damage to buildings, roads and bridges.
 - Preserve the character, amenity and environment of an area;
 - Reduce and manage congestion on the roads; and
 - Reduce danger to pedestrians and other road users.
 - The Police and ECC are able to enforce HGV bans.

²Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/13 Reducing Sign Clutter

4. Typical Measures

In most instances signs and lines will be part of an LHP scheme and not generally a request simply for improved signage and lining. However there are some standalone signing and lining schemes that may be requested.

Requests for new signs due to the impact of a new development

Usually the appropriate signs are identified when a development is agreed and the impact of traffic on the wider network is assessed. However as the properties become occupied there will be a period of time when the traffic patterns are unusual and time is needed to allow them to settle down and for other road users to adapt.

If the issue continues to be a problem, then improvements to local signage may be something the LHP wants to consider.

If Developers' traffic is using inappropriate routes, raise the concern with the contact centre who will ensure this is brought to the attention of the developers with the request that they speak to their contractors and to provide additional signage.

Review of Town-wide Signage

In larger towns the signage is important to keep the traffic on the appropriate roads. The LHP may consider funding a revision of the Town signage if there are complaints that traffic is using inappropriate routes to get to their destinations.

Through-traffic or traffic going to industrial areas should be signed along Principal A Roads and where possible directed to avoid going through residential areas or entering the town centre.

Traffic heading for the town centre or to bus and rail interchanges should be directed along the appropriate A Roads and kept away from residential areas.

Clear signs to the appropriate car parks will stop traffic driving round the town and adding to the congestion.

HGVs

Occasionally an Environmental Weight Limit can be appropriate to help manage HGV traffic, however in the majority of cases it is almost impossible to enforce. Improvements to HGV signage may have more impact on their routes.



4. Typical Measures continued

Migratory Toad Crossings

ECC has countywide approval to erect these signs at any site that has been logged with 'FrogLife' and recorded with the DfT.



[Register a Toad Crossing](#)

The LHP can pay for a sign to be installed at an approved site. The sign can only be displayed between Jan – May and must only be used when the toads are migrating.

Tourist Signage

An eligible tourism establishment is defined as a permanently established attraction or facility of recognised quality and/or importance that attracts or is used by visitors to an area, and which is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.



There is a defined process for businesses who wish to apply for brown tourism signs. In addition to the general criteria the venue must:

- Attract a minimum of 5,000 visitors per year, unless the need can be clearly demonstrated on road safety and traffic management grounds.
- Be able to demonstrate that a substantial proportion of visitors are attracted from outside the local area.
- The majority of the opening period must be during the normal tourism season, i.e. March to October.
- Participate in VisitEngland's National Code of Practice. Larger attractions are expected to subscribe to the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS), a consumer focused quality assessment service for visitor attractions.
- Further details and registration is available via the [Visit Essex](#) website

Village/Town Gateway Signs

Gateway signs are generally requested as part of a package of measures to reduce speed and are covered in the Speed Topic Section. Occasionally, they may be requested in their own right. In these instances they still need to conform to the guidance in the Speed Topic Section.

Obscured, Damaged or Missing Signs

A sign may become obscured by hedge and tree growth. Requests can be made for the vegetation to be cut back so that the sign is more visible. Depending on the

location and height of the sign this may be an activity that can be undertaken by your Highway Ranger Service. More information about the Highways Rangers can be found in Section 14 of the Members' Guide

Signs may be damaged by passing traffic, especially HGVs and Farm Vehicles or in some instances a Road Traffic Collision. These should be reported as a maintenance issue via the Report It web page.

Occasionally, there are spates of theft of signs. This can be for a number of reasons including vandalism. In general, signs are now made of materials that do not have a high scrap value so theft for that reason is not so prevalent.

In all cases the issue should be reported via the [website](#) or via the contact centre on 03456 037 631.

Disabled Parking Bays

If a resident requests a disabled parking bay they should be directed to apply through the [website](#) or to call the contact centre on 0345 743 0430.

5. Scheme Investigation

All requests for signs and lines will need to comply with TSRGD 2016 and the Policies and Guidance adopted by Essex County Council. Scheme investigation will also consider the need to reduce sign clutter; the DfT Leaflet, [Reducing Sign Clutter](#), provides more information. It explains that the over-provision of signs can have a detrimental impact on the environment and can dilute more important messages if they result in information overload for drivers.

The ability to place signs in the correct locations can sometimes be limited by the highway land available and any utility equipment located under the highway at the required location.

6. Costs and Timescales

The Essex County Council contract with Ringway Jacobs is a target cost contract and not a fixed price contract. This type of contract was chosen as the best type of contract to deliver savings and efficiencies and also to promote partnering between ECC and Ringway Jacobs.

An explanation of the process can be found in Appendix 1.

The costs and timescales for typical schemes can be found on the following hyperlink. [04 Signs and Road Markings]

7. Glossary of Terms

AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location (similar to RTPI)
CMA	Cabinet Member Action
CMB	Cabinet Member Briefing
EA	Environment Agency
ECC	Essex County Council
EH	Essex Highways
LHP	Local Highways Panel
NEPP	North Essex Parking Partnership
PP	Parking Partnership
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
S106	Section 106 (Money provided by a Developer to County Council to implement infrastructure as an obligation of the planning permission)
S278	Section 278 (Infrastructure required to be implemented by the Developer as an obligation of the planning permission)
SERP	Safer Essex Roads Partnership
SID	Speed Indicating Device
SEPP	South Essex Parking Partnership
SLO	Speed Limit Order
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
TSRGD	Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions
VAS	Vehicle Activated Sign