



Rutland
County Council

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21 DEC 2018

Reference: Rutland Signs Guidance & Street Furniture Policy

Dear Business Owner,

I am writing to you following the adoption of Rutland County Council's Signs Guidance & Street Furniture Policy and to let you know about steps we are taking to improve the way that we manage signage, street furniture and outdoor advertising.

This new policy has been developed to help reduce sign clutter, regulate the installation and removal of signs, keep our towns attractive for visitors and residents, and to make sure the highway remains safe and free from obstructions.

In particular, the new Signs Guidance & Street Furniture Policy provides clearer information about how and where A-boards, displays of goods, pavement cafés and outdoor advertising should be used.

A-Boards

The Policy seeks to formalise and standardise the placement of A-boards, particularly in areas where pedestrian usage is highest. Large numbers of A-Boards or boards in unsuitable locations can cause obstructions and restrict pedestrian access – particularly for people with reduced mobility or disabilities. By stating clearly where A-boards should and should not be located, the new policy aims to maintain our streets as safe, useable places for everyone.

Street Furniture and Goods on Display

The Policy also introduces, for the first time, standards around street furniture and outdoor displays. This is in response to a steady rise in interest from restaurants, cafés, and bars seeking permission to place tables and chairs out in the highway. By introducing a simple application process for seating areas and displays that encroach onto footpaths and walkways, we aim to support this growth area for food and drink retailers while preventing obstructions in pedestrian areas.

Licensing

A licensing process for A-Boards, pavement seating areas and goods on display will come into effect from 1 April 2019. We will be writing to you again in the New Year to let you know how to apply for a licence, if you need one, and to help guide you through the process. Licence fees will also be set in the New Year and are needed to help recover the costs of administering this scheme.

Outdoor Advertising

As part of our efforts to provide simple, effective regulation around signage, we are also responding to a sharp increase in unauthorised advertising along our highways and at road junctions.

This notable increase in the use of roadside banners and advertising boards has prompted complaints from residents and road users who are concerned about the visual impact of excess signage.

In order to strike an appropriate balance between the promotional activities of commercial operators and the need to preserve our visual environment, we will be undertaking a more considered approach to outdoor advertising from January 2019 onwards, in-line with our new Signs Guidance Policy.

The Policy reinforces national legislation around outdoor advertising which requires advertisers to apply for planning permission unless they are exempt from doing so. As a consequence of this, we will be actively removing outdoor advertising if it does not have all of the required permissions.

Community and Charity Events

We know that local charities and community groups rely heavily on outdoor advertising to promote events and activities. This is not something we wish to disrupt and I would like to reassure you that there are specific provisions within the Signage Guidance & Street Furniture Policy that will allow this activity to continue, albeit with a requirement that promoters follow best practice when installing and removing outdoor advertising.

Further Details

Further information about Rutland's Signage Guidance & Street Furniture Policy, including links to detailed advice for outdoor advertisers, can be found online at: www.rutland.gov.uk/signage.

If you have any questions or would like to talk to us about any aspect of the new Policy, please get in touch by emailing: highways@rutland.gov.uk or calling: 01572 758 297.

Kind regards,

Neil Tomlinson | Senior Highways Manager

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