



# Orkney Islands Council Tourist Signposting Policy 2012



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orkney, with its wide and unique range of attractions, is very popular with visitors and locals alike, many of whom travel by car. Therefore, providing clear direction signs to attractions is a very important aspect of making a visit to Orkney as pleasurable and relaxing as possible.

1.2 This policy document contains guidance on the provision of tourist destination signs (white lettering on a brown background)

1.3 This document replaces the 2007 Orkney Islands Council's Tourist Signposting Policy. The Tourist signposting SODD Circular 3/1992 has also been withdrawn and was replaced by the Tourist Sign Posting SODD Circular 27/1995 which gives guidance on the provision of tourist signs in general in Scotland.

1.4 The objective of this policy is to provide guidance on signs appropriate to meet the needs of the tourism industry and road users in general, and which is consistent with safe and efficient traffic management and with minimal impact on the environment. Reference should also be made to Road Furniture in the Countryside.

### Definitions with regards to this document

1.5 The term "Roads Authority" (RA) refers to the Orkney Islands Council.

1.6 'VisitScotland' means VisitScotland or any successor organisation.

1.7 The term "Tourist Information Centre" means a manned and fully operational information service centre managed directly or by agreement with VisitScotland.

1.8 The term "Diagram xxxx" refers to the correspondingly numbered diagram in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2002.



Tourist signposting in Orkney

## 2. DEFINITION OF A TOURIST DESTINATION

2.1 A **tourist destination** as defined by “The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002”, means a permanently established attraction or facility which:

- (a) attracts or is used by visitors to an area; and
- (b) is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours; and
- (c) is recognised by VisitScotland

2.2 Tourist attractions include visitor centres, theme parks, historic buildings and properties, ancient monuments, museums, zoos, parks and gardens, natural attractions (such as nature reserves, beaches and viewpoints), tourist shops, sports centres, golf courses (including Championship courses), concert venues, theatres and cinemas.

2.3 Tourist facilities include hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, restaurants, holiday parks, touring caravan and camping parks, picnic sites, youth hostels and Tourist Information Centres.

2.4 Examples of establishments eligible for consideration for tourist signposting are given in Appendix 1

2.5 Establishments which are primarily retail outlets (including retail parks, shopping centres and garden centres) will only be eligible for white on brown tourist signs if the destination is recognised by VisitScotland as a ‘Tourist Shop’ through its visitor attraction quality assurance scheme. Applications will still need to meet all the other relevant criteria in order to be eligible for tourist signs.



**Tourist destination signposting in Orkney**

### 3. SIGNING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Orkney Islands Council, as Roads Authority, has responsibilities for the safety of the public travelling on roads in Orkney.

#### **Purpose**

3.2 The purpose of tourist signs is to provide clear and consistent directions for visitors enabling them to reach their destination safely and minimising the likelihood of drivers making dangerous manoeuvres. This is an important factor in road safety and reduces the problems that visitors may face when trying to find their way in an unfamiliar area.

3.3 It is recognised that tourist signposting can be a useful tool in traffic and visitor management. Signs can be used to direct visitors to tourist destinations and Tourist Information Centres where they can find out more about places to visit and book accommodation etc. Visitors can be directed to use particular routes or to avoid particularly sensitive locations. It must be stressed that tourist signs are not advertising signs and are not a substitute for effective marketing.

#### **Eligibility**

3.4 To be eligible for tourist signing, all tourist destinations (attractions and facilities) must be recognised by VisitScotland. In addition, the tourist destination operators must be members of the relevant VisitScotland Quality Assurance scheme, where one exists, or an equivalent scheme endorsed by VisitScotland.

3.5 Approval of tourist signs by the Roads Authority will be conditional on the removal of the tourist operator's existing advertising signs where these are considered to be a distraction to the road user.

3.6 Eligibility does not confer automatic entitlement to tourist signs. Several other considerations must be taken into account including existing sign provision; availability of space for new signs, and road safety considerations. Each application will be considered on its merits but the final decision for signs on public road network will rest with the Roads Authority.

3.7 The Roads Authority will have absolute and final discretion to grant consent for, remove or temporarily cover signs which it considers are no longer satisfactory or justified.

#### **Environmental Impact**

3.8 Consideration must be given to the environmental impact of tourist signs and the need to have regard to the character of the surrounding landscape and historic environment when considering the location of tourist signs as well as the need for signs. Sign proliferation must be avoided and guidance for Road and Planning Authorities and Statutory Undertakers can be found in Road Furniture in the Countryside.

#### **Design Standards**

3.9 White on brown tourist signs are traffic signs and must comply with TSRGD and the guidance for its use. Signs should also comply with the design guidance given in the Traffic Signs Manual and related documentation.

## 4. LOCATION OF SIGNING

### General Conditions

4.1 The maximum number of tourist attractions and facilities on a sign will normally be limited to 4 plus a local destination. However, depending on the number of lines of text, consideration may be given to increasing this number. Where there are more attractions than can be signed, VisitScotland will advise the Roads Authority which will make the final decision.

4.2 No more than one tourist attraction or facility sign will normally be permitted at a junction.

4.3 If an attraction / facility is eligible for signposting, the signposting will normally commence from the nearest main through route. The hierarchy of the local road network will however be considered in determining the most appropriate location for the sign.

4.4 The "Thistle" tourist attraction symbol referred to in paragraph 2 of SODD Circular 27/1995, as defined in drawing number W (S) 157 may be replaced by other symbols in Schedule 14 Parts 1 and 4 of The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994. The logos for Historic Scotland and National Trust for Scotland will be used for properties under their control.

4.5 Tourist signposting will comprise an advance sign showing names of attractions and facilities, logos/symbols and mileages and direction signs at the junction only displaying logos/symbols.

4.6 Where attractions are closed for part of the year, the operator will make arrangements with the Roads Authority to plate over the legend and symbol. The cost of carrying out this work will be met by the operator.

4.7 Existing advertising signs outwith the road boundary must be removed prior to the provision of new tourist signs.

4.8 All old style signs which are superseded by new brown and white signs will be removed at the expense of the operator at the same time as the new tourist signs are erected.

4.9 If a new attraction / facility is to be signed at a location where existing tourist signposting is in place, the operator of the new attraction will require to meet the full cost of replacing the entire sign. Plating and/or the erection of a supplementary sign will not be acceptable.

4.10 Wherever possible tourist signposting (brown and white signs) will be kept separate from road direction signposting (white and black signs).

4.11 Where the Roads Authority considers a proposed sign is likely to be visually or environmentally intrusive, it reserves the right to require the operator to amend the layout and wording of the sign.

4.12 The use of temporary signs for purposes other than short period events is discouraged.

4.13 The Roads Authority will determine the location of all tourist signposting within the road boundary.

4.14 All unauthorised signs, whether portable, temporary or permanent in nature, must be removed before permission for tourist signposting is granted. Any such signs, if not removed promptly will be removed by the Roads Authority and all costs incurred will be recharged to the tourist attraction operator. It is an offence under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to place an unauthorised sign, or other obstruction, within the road boundary.

### **Signposting of Visitor Attractions**

4.15 All establishments defined as “tourist attractions” within Circular 27/1995 will be eligible to apply for “Thistle” signs. This definition includes sporting, theatrical and geographical venues recognised by VisitScotland as a tourist attraction.

4.16 All “tourist attractions” will also be eligible to apply for advance signs advising travellers that they are approaching the attraction. It is unlikely that advance signs will be appropriate within towns and villages unless there are compelling road safety and traffic management reasons and this will be solely at the discretion of the Roads Authority.

4.17 There will be no minimum number of visitors required before an attraction becomes eligible to apply for signposting in accordance with the above conditions.

### **Signposting of Retail Establishments**

4.18 Establishments which have retailing as their principal function, but which are deemed also to hold interest of a non-retailing nature for visitors and which do not have direct frontage to or private access onto a main through route will be eligible to apply for signposting. VisitScotland in consultation with Orkney Islands Council have absolute and final discretion when assessing which establishments hold interest for visitors.

### **Signposting within Towns and Villages**

4.19 Accommodation, eating and retail establishments located within important settlements will, like similar establishments out with such settlements, be eligible in principle, to apply for tourist signs. However, within the urban framework, it is considered impractical, on the grounds of road safety and visual amenity, to provide signs for every qualifying establishment – it can be as

confusing for the visitor to have too many signposts as too few.

4.20 Generally tourist signs will not be permitted in the towns and villages listed in Appendix 2.

### **Signposting in Rural and Island Settlements**

4.21 Each rural or island settlement has individual and unique characteristics as a tourist destination. Some are linear settlements, others clustered and some have Conservation Areas. Some have less architectural merit and others attract many visitors annually, others fewer. This general policy cannot cover the multitude of variations which exist; therefore each area will be looked at in its own merit taking into account such factors as the volume of establishments eligible to apply for signs, their location, the possibility of directing visitors to car parks and having pedestrian-only signs. .

4.22 The rural and island settlements are listed in Appendix 2.

4.23 A schedule of main routes in Orkney is included in Appendix 3

## 5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

5.1 New tourist signs, in conjunction with other traffic signs, can have a cumulative detrimental impact on the environment. This is particularly the case in conservation and rural areas where signing can have more of a visual impact on the character of the area. Also, the effects of proposed new signs on their surroundings need to be considered whatever the location and it is important that the environmental impact of new signs is minimised as far as is consistent with their intended purpose.

5.2 In environmentally sensitive areas such as the World Heritage Site and Conservation Areas, the impact of new signing needs special consideration. Therefore, before approving tourist signs in such areas, the Roads Authority will ensure that where appropriate other relevant authorities have been consulted.

5.3 Where either a consultee or the Roads Authority considers that a proposed sign is likely to be visually or environmentally intrusive, the Roads Authority reserves the right to refuse the application or require the applicant to amend the layout and wording of the sign in order to reduce its visual and environmental impact.

5.4 Further guidance is contained in Road Furniture in the Countryside, published by Transport Scotland and available on the website [www.transportscotland.gov.uk](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk).



**Signposting in sensitive areas of Orkney**

## 6. TOURIST INFORMATION

6.1 The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 states that a 'Tourist Information Centre (TIC) means a staffed information service centre recognised and supported by VisitScotland'.

6.2 TICs will be signed with the "i" symbol to Diagram T1 in Schedule 14 of TSRGD. The symbol may be supplemented with the legend "Tourist Information Centre".

6.3 Other forms of tourist information requiring signs (e.g. Tourist Information Points (TIPs)) may use the "i" symbol with the legends "Local Information", "Tourist Information" or "Local Tourist Information" as appropriate.

6.4 The "i" symbol should not be used for TIPs in lay-bys or car parks. Here only the wording "Local Information", "Tourist Information", or "Local Tourist Information" should be used.



**Signage that may be used for Tourist Information Centres**

## 7. SYMBOLS

7.1 Although several symbols are prescribed in TSRGD for use on tourist signs in Scotland, there is general presumption in favour of using the “Thistle” symbol to Diagram T301.1 in Schedule 14 of TSRGD.

7.2 The general policy is that only those attractions which are accredited by VisitScotland through its Quality Assurance schemes should be signed with white on brown signs (see para. 3.4). With this in mind, the “Thistle”, as a symbol of quality, should be used wherever the destination is accredited through a VisitScotland QA scheme.

7.3 On signs to accredited facilities such as restaurants, light refreshment facilities, accommodation, caravan or camp sites etc. the “Thistle” symbol should be used in preference to the specific symbols shown in Diagrams T4 to T12 of Schedule 14 of TSRGD.

7.4 In the case of properties under the care of Historic Scotland (HS), the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) or the Forestry Commission (FC), the “Thistle” symbol may be supplemented with the appropriate symbol for HS, NTS or FC as defined in Diagrams T302, T303 and T304 respectively of Schedule 14 of TSRGD.

7.5 On single attraction signs for a castle or house of historic or architectural interest, the “Thistle” symbol may be supplemented or replaced with the appropriate symbol as defined in Diagrams T2 and T3 of Schedule 14 of TSRGD. On composite signs which include a castle or house of historic or architectural interest, the “Thistle” symbol may be replaced with the appropriate symbol for such properties.

7.6 On composite signs containing two or more destinations, the number of “Thistle” symbols should be minimised. In most cases, the “Thistle” symbol will relate to all

of the destination legends on a sign. In such cases, it should be possible to design the sign such that only one “Thistle” symbol is used.



Examples of tourist sign symbols



T1  
Tourist Information Point  
or Centre



T2  
Castle of historic  
or architectural interest



T3  
House of historic  
or architectural interest



T301.1  
Tourist attraction  
recognised by VisitScotland  
(The thistle symbol may be shown  
in white on a brown sign indicating  
a National Tourist Route)



T302  
Property in the care of  
Historic Scotland  
(The legend "Historic Scotland"  
may be added)



T303  
National Trust for Scotland property  
(The legend "National Trust for Scotland"  
in any style of lettering may be added  
and the symbol varied to white on a brown  
background)



T304  
Forestry Commission property

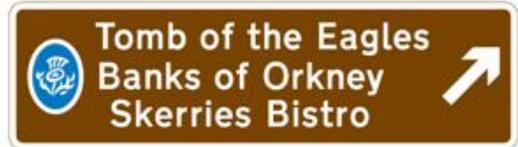
## **Symbols for use on general tourist signs in Scotland**

## 8. TOURIST ACCOMMODATION AND EATING ESTABLISHMENTS

8.1 All accommodation and eating establishments should be signed with the “Thistle” symbol to Diagram T301.1, Schedule 14 of TSRGD (see Chapter 7).

8.2 Signs to eating establishments and tourist accommodation will not normally be provided where the facility is located within a town or village. If the town or village is bypassed by the principle road then local facilities signs may be provided.

8.3 Where the facility is within a town or village but it is difficult to find or where there is a demonstrable traffic management need, signing may be provided at the discretion of the Roads Authority. Such signing should comply with the local authority’s tourist signing policy.



**Examples of accommodation and eating establishment signs in Orkney**

## 9. SIGN DESIGN GUIDANCE

### General

9.1 The primary objective of this guidance is to achieve a balance between assisting tourists, minimise environmental intrusion and maintain safety (by preventing an overload of information on a sign). The driver should be able to safely read and understand the information on the sign whilst passing at normal speed. This chapter is aimed primarily at sign designers and supplements information given in Chapter 7 of the Traffic Signs Manual.

### Destination Legends

9.2 When following the principles on the maximum number of destinations permitted on any one sign, it should be borne in mind that tourist destinations often have longer names than other destinations. This will be a constraint on the number of destinations that can sensibly be included.

9.3 Lengthy tourist destination names will require larger signs. The wording may be shortened or abbreviated at the discretion of the Roads Authority.

9.4 The maximum number of words permitted on a single destination sign will be four. The number of lines of text describing a single tourist destination is limited to two. The maximum number of lines of text on any sign is limited to eight.

### X-heights

9.5 The x-height is the measurement used to determine the height of lettering. In general Orkney Islands Council uses an x-height of 50mm for all brown and white signage.

### Composite signs

9.6 Where more than one tourist destination is signed in advance of a junction, they should be incorporated together on one set of signs. Only one tourist sign or composite sign will be permitted on any approach to a junction.

9.7 The Roads Authority will make the final decision on which destinations are to be signed in consultation with VisitScotland.

9.8 Tourist signing will generally be kept separate from road direction signing (black and white signs). Brown tourist attraction panels may only be used in exceptional circumstances where separate signing is not possible.

9.9 Only tourist destinations and tourist information centres should be included on tourist signs. Local towns and other local destinations are not permitted.

9.10 Tourist signs on roads may include the distance to the destination.

9.11 A flag type direction sign should normally be preceded by an Advance Direction Sign (ADS).

9.12 Tourist destinations with direct access from a road may not need signing if the entrance is visible and identifiable from a distance that allows vehicles to approach it safely. However, in many cases, especially on high speed roads with a speed limit of 50mph or more, ADS followed by flag-type direction signs at the entrance may be needed to guide traffic safely to the destination.

### Sign locations

9.13 The Roads Authority will determine the location of all tourist signs within the road network. Where the Roads Authority considers that a proposed tourist sign conflicts with the interests of road safety due to its size and/or location, it reserves the right to refuse the application.

### Sign protection

9.14 Signs may require additional safety fencing. Reference should be made to the current standard for road restraint systems.

## 10. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

10.1 Applications for tourist signing will be made to the Roads Authority.

10.2 The applicant will be responsible for providing evidence of VisitScotland approval. The Roads Authority will be responsible for obtaining any necessary approvals from any other relevant authorities.

10.3 The Roads Authority is the co-ordinator of the application process therefore all information required of applicants by the Roads Authority should be included within the application.

10.4 The flow chart in Appendix 4 provides guidance on the application process.

10.5 Appendix 5 gives a standard application form to be used for all applications.

10.6 If an application for the provision of tourist signs is refused by the Roads Authority in full or in part, the applicant will be given clear reasons. The Roads Authority's decision regarding signing on the public road network is final.

10.7 If a proposed sign is not prescribed by TSRGD (including permitted variants), the Roads Authority will need to consider whether an alternative design complying with TSRGD could be used instead or whether there is a case for applying to Scottish Ministers for special authorisation.



Examples of composite signs

## 11. FINANCIAL AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

11.1 The general principle is that all tourist signing is provided at the expense of the applicant and that the Roads Authority and hence the public purse should incur no financial burden in providing tourist signing on the road network.

11.2 The applicant will be responsible for the cost of providing the traffic signs including the design, manufacture, supervision of works, posts and fittings, concrete, erection, traffic management, and safety fencing (if required).

11.3 Once the signs have been installed satisfactorily, they come under the strict control of the Roads Authority. No alterations to signs can be made without the consent of the Roads Authority.

11.4 The applicant(s) will be responsible for the costs of replacement or repair of the sign.

11.5 A legal agreement must be made between the Roads Authority and the applicant prior to the installation of approved tourist signing. Where the signs are being promoted by a group of individuals or by VisitScotland or a Local Enterprise Company, a nominated person or organisation will be required to sign the agreement with the Roads Authority on behalf of the promoting group.

11.6 Signs may be modified, replaced or removed by the Roads Authority at any time for traffic management, safety or other reasons. If it becomes necessary to remove the signing within the first five years (for any reason other than the closure of the destination), the applicant will be entitled to make a claim for re-imburement of sign installation costs on a pro-rata basis for the outstanding period. After this initial five year period, no compensation will be payable.

11.7 VisitScotland will alert the Roads Authority and the Roads Authority to destinations which are no longer eligible for signs.

11.8 Signs will not normally be altered or removed by the Roads Authority without giving prior notice to the original applicant(s) and VisitScotland.

### **Manufacture and Installation**

11.9 The approved signs must be manufactured in accordance with BS 873

11.10 The signs must be installed by an approved contractor

**EXAMPLE OF ESTABLISHMENTS WHICH ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION FOR TOURIST SIGNPOSTING**

- historic properties and castle
- parks and gardens
- leisure complexes and sports venues
- beaches and viewpoints
- areas of special geographical interest
- restaurants and cafes
- ancient monuments and museums
- historic churches, abbeys and cathedrals
- nature reserves, zoos and safari parks
- water sports centres
- hotels and bed and breakfasts
- tourist and youth hostels
- retail establishment with displays for tourists
- tourist information centres
- camping, caravan and picnic sites
- tours, leisure drives and cycle routes
- cinemas, theatres and concert venues

**OTHER ACTIVITIES WHICH ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CONSIDERATION FOR TOURIST SIGNPOSTING**

- new signs at village gateways to show services available
- new signs to bypassed communities
- comprehensive tourist signs for pedestrians in urban areas
- tourist routes and trails
- new signs for way-marked footways and cycle ways

**TOWNS**

- Kirkwall
- Stromness

**Villages**

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| - Dounby             | - Orphir  |
| - St Margaret's Hope | - Evie Village  |
| - Finstown           | - Pierowall   |
| - Stenness           | - The Palace  |
| - Balfour            | - Toab  |
| - Burray Village     | - Quoyloo   |
| - St Mary's          | - Whitehall (changed to village from rural and island settlement) |

**RURAL AND ISLAND SETTLEMENT**

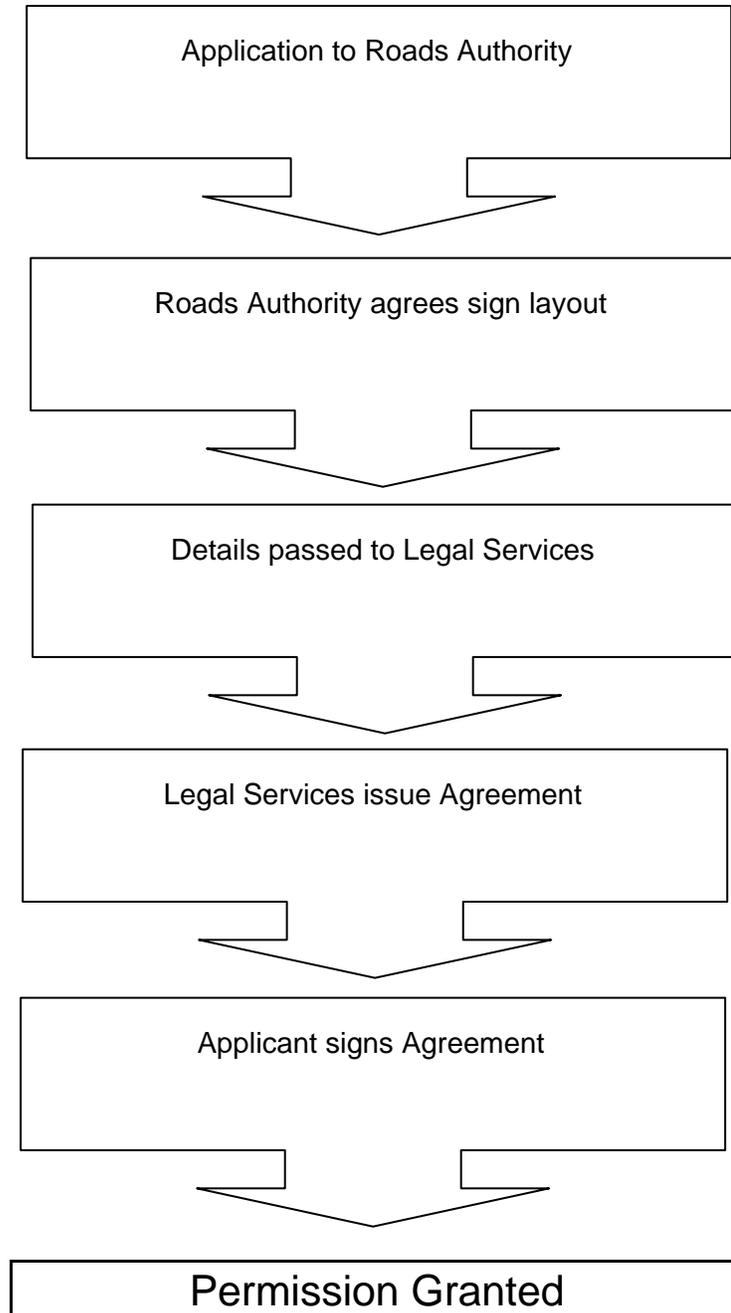
- |               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| - Tingwall    | - Scapa Brae      |
| - Longhope    | - Hillhead        |
| - Lyness      | - Burnside Harray |
| - Moaness     | - Houton          |
| - Madras      | - Hamar           |
| - Lyron       | - Lady            |
| - Evie School | - Burnside Flotta |
| - Brinyan     | - Norseman        |
| - Kettletoft  |                   |

**SCHEDULE OF MAIN THROUGH ROUTES**

- A960
- A961
- A964
- A965
- A966
- A986

Deerness	- B9050
Eday	- B9063
Flotta	- B9045, B9046
Holm/St Andrews	- B9052
Hoy	- B9047, B9048, B9049
Rousay	- B9064, B9065
Sanday	- B9068, B9069, B9070
Sandwick/Birsay	- B9056
Sandwick/Harray/Birsay/Evie	- B9057
Shapinsay	- B9058, B9059
South Ronaldsay	- B9041, B9042, B9043, B9044
St Ola	- B9053, B9148
Stenness/Sandwick	- B9055
Stronsay	- B9060, B9061, B9062
Westray	- B9066, B9067

**APPLICATION FLOW CHART**



**Orkney Islands Council**  
**Tourist Sign Posting Application Form**

<p><b><u>Tourist Destination</u></b></p> <p>Name: Address:</p> <p>Phone: Email:</p>
<p><b><u>Type of Destination:</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Does Destination have VisitScotland Approval:</u></b> Yes/No (Please provide details and written confirmation)</p>
<p><b><u>Provide Brief Reasons for requiring the proposed sign:</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Provide details of existing sign:</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Provide required information on sign:</u></b></p>