

Text of letter from Karen Buck, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport to Neil Sinden, Policy Director, Campaign to Protect Rural England dated 17 October 2005

The Department does not generally endorse or subscribe to campaign documents published by voluntary organisations, and we do not think it would be appropriate to make a joint statement in this case.

Nevertheless DfT does, of course, support the principle of avoiding unnecessary roadside clutter, and minimising the environmental impact of traffic signs as far as practicable, and has recently published or contributed to advice on the subject. This includes updated Chapters 4 and 7 of the Traffic Signs Manual (on the design and use of warning signs and sign design principles in general), which all traffic authorities and signing practitioners should be following, guidance in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges on directional signs for tourist destinations (TA 93/04 and TA 94/04, to which there is a link on the DfT website: at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/roads/signs>), and ODPM's "Cleaner Safer Greener Communities" guidance on improving residential areas: http://www.cleanersafergreener.gov.uk/flash/section5/5b_guide2.html#36 – this specifically encourages local authorities to carry out audits of signs and other street furniture and remove those items that are no longer needed.

Tony McNulty's foreword to the English Heritage regional Streets for All manuals, published earlier this year, also emphasized the importance of returning quality and distinctiveness to our streets, public places and countryside.

There is in fact considerable flexibility over sign design and use in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, and it seems a pity that your proposed statement as currently drafted claims that national regulations are inflexible rather than encouraging local authorities to use the flexibilities and guidance available.