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Traffic signs in Britain - biggest review in 40 years launched today

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The review will ensure that traffic signs keep pace with the latest technology, help to cut congestion and emissions and keep traffic moving safely and efficiently without cluttering our streets.

The review's aims include:

- * To consider new powers to reduce street clutter - and ensure out of date signs are removed;
- * Look at using new traffic sign technologies that can provide new ways of managing traffic flow;
- * Provide better road information - such as up-to-date travel news - to give motorists informed choices about their journeys;
- * Demonstrate how effective signing can provide safer roads and reduce accidents;
- * Improve road users' understanding of traffic signs and signals.

Rosie Winterton said:

"Road conditions have changed dramatically over the years - and road signs need to keep pace with that change to provide the best information possible to road users.

"It is vital we help motorists, cyclists and pedestrians understand how to use our roads - improving road safety and helping reduce congestion and CO2 - with cluttering our streets with unnecessary signs."

Road users, highway authorities and organisations interested in streetscape will play a key role in the steering group leading the review.

AA President Edmund King said:

"Clear, concise, relevant road signs help reduce congestion, CO2, frustration and accidents. Confusing signs do the opposite so we welcome a root and branch review of the UK's traffic signing system and will seek the views of AA members to help the Department for Transport come up with signs fit for the 21st Century

Notes to Editors

1. The first meeting of the traffic signs policy review steering group is expected to take place next month. The steering group is expected to deliver an action plan for the review itself, by the middle of next year. DfT will then work directly with specialist working groups to develop policy proposals for consultation.
2. The Vienna Convention sets out rules for traffic signs across the UN, such as the use of triangle shaped signs for warnings and circles for regulatory signs.
3. This will be the most significant traffic sign policy review in Britain since the 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals.
4. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (2002) prescribe the traffic signs for use in Great Britain. If local authorities want to use a sign that is prescribed in the regulations they must apply to DfT for special authorisation.
5. The Department provides detailed guidance on the correct design and use of traffic signs through the Traffic Signs Manual.
6. The Department's Manual for Streets and LTN 1/08 - Traffic Management and Streetscape - provide guidance on how the careful design and siting of traffic signs can complement the local environment.

Public Enquiries: 020 7944 8300
Department for Transport Website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk>

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PRESS CONTACTS

NDS Enquiries
ndsenquiries@coi.gsi.gov.uk