On-site recreation interpretation/information panel design guidance

Forestry Commission Scotland's visual brand must be consistently applied across all media and adhere to the principles of the particular category they fit into (these are Corporate, Recreation and Forestry Support). This guidance covers on-site panels that fit within the recreation category.

Within recreation we have defined three broad groupings of panels and have developed or are developing brand guidance for each, these are:

1. Standard type

The definition of standard would mainly be squared-off panels (i.e. with right angled corners), so would cover rectangular and square shapes. The consistent application of the Forestry Commission Scotland brand and broad design principles to these and the inclusion of standard corporate content requirements is relatively straightforward and is detailed on further on.

2. Non-standard type

The definition of non-standard would be non-rectangular shaped panel which would not offer an unbroken horizontal top edge that meets a vertical edge at right angles. These could be for example, circular, organic non-linear, or triangular shapes that make the application of a linear solution difficult, although not necessarily impossible.

These are potentially more likely to be interpretative panels (although not exclusively) that are delivering a site-specific/subject message and therefore the content and design style of the panels are more about creating a visual relationship between the visitor, the subject and the site.

Guidance for this type should as a first principle follow the standard type brand application model where possible. In most cases however we would expect to discuss this as part of the brief/design process.

3. Site specific type

The definition of site specific would be almost exclusively interpretative on-site media that have been developed for a specific location and subject, are an integral part of the experience or indeed are the experience. These could include for example; stone with sandblasting; a bench or bridge carrying interpretation; a tree stump routed with interpretation; a sculptural piece of media; a custom one-off solution, all of which make the application of a strict branding solution impossible.

As with non-standard the first principle should be to follow the standard type brand application model where possible, but this will in the majority of situations not be possible. In these cases Design and Interpretative Services will look to find an appropriate solution.

Guidance for 1. Standard type

Most of our orientation and interpretative panels will fit into this category. These will either be single stand alone panels, or groups of 2 or 3 panels, mounted into one of our standard structure solutions (e.g. lectern or roundwood system).

Single stand alone panels must all conform to the brand guidance. In the case of groups of panels designed to be seen and work together on one structure it may not be necessary to apply the full brand to each panel. In these cases further guidance from Design and Interpretative Services should be sought.

Basic principles

To create visual unity between the branding visitors see across our marketing, recreation literature and on-site recreation media the FC 'lid top' device and marketing area descriptor are applied as the main unifying element.

Examples of a range of media showing the Forestry Commission lid top branding device in use.
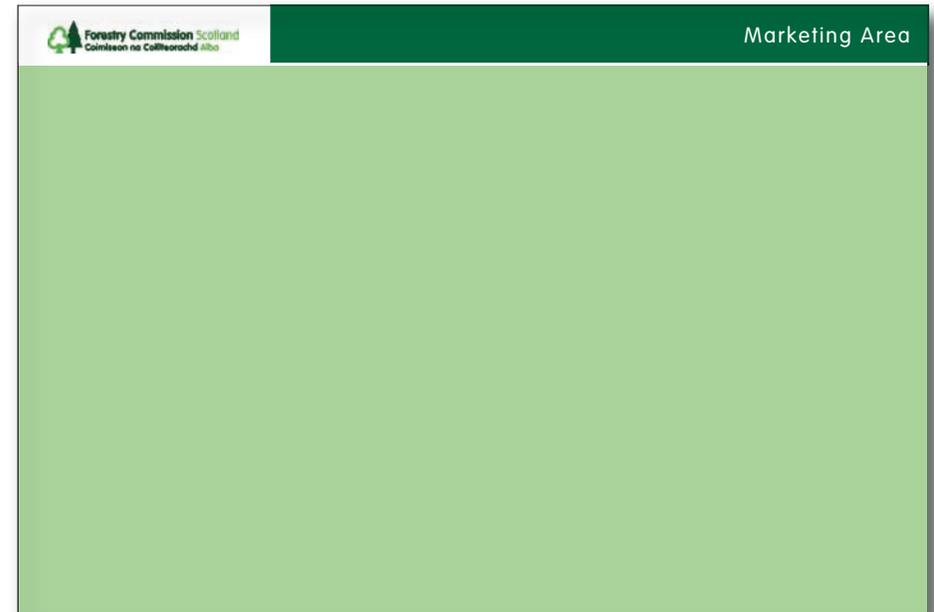
Lid top branding device

The core of the Forestry Commission Scotland brand identity on panels comprises of the lid top device and should be applied to all single stand alone panels and to at least one panel on a structure with a 2 or 3 panels on it (the green lid top band may be continued across panels if appropriate as part of the design).

The lid top consists of:

1. Top left, Forestry Commission Scotland full colour linear logo in a white bounding box

2. Pantone 349 solid green band running along full length of top of panel

3. Marketing area descriptor using VAG light as the font

4. **Example A** - on a panel with enough colour or image contrast between the PMS 349 band and the content area a white rule below 'lid top' to make separation between Forestry Commission Scotland brand and site specific content area.

   Example B - on a panel with not enough colour or image contrast between the PMS 349 band and the content area a green rule should run, in a continuation from the green band, along the bottom of the logo bounding box to make separation between Forestry Commission Scotland brand lid top and site specific content area.

Templates of the 'lid top' sized to fit a variety of standard panel sizes can be supplied on request. These can then be scaled to fit the required size. For unusual sizes (e.g. long and narrow either vertically or horizontally) you should contact Design and Interpretative Services for advice - see contact details box further on.

Marketing Area

Example A

Marketing Area
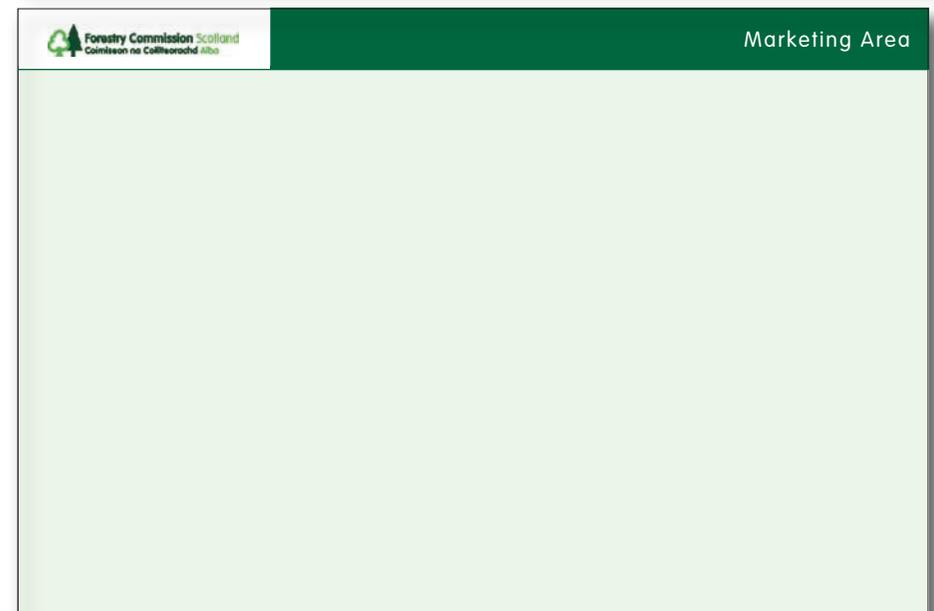
Example B

Standard corporate content

In addition to the lid top branding device there are a number of standard elements that are mandatory on panels. The elements required vary dependant on the content or purpose of the panel.

All panels

Elements that are mandatory on all single panels and on at least one panel in a panel group are:

1. Scottish Outdoor Access Code

English or Gaelic Set texts 1A or 1B - These can either be supplied by D&IS or downloaded direct from www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/help-and-information/marketing-and-resources

2. Contact details for local Forestry Commission Scotland office and website

Details need only include telephone and email details and follow the format:

For more information please contact:
Forestry Commission Scotland
Tel: 0123 456789
Email: forestfd@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

The default web address to include is:
www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland

Some sites have an individual web address which should be used instead:
www.forestry.gov.uk/glenaffric

3. Imprint

This can run vertically up one of the outer edges of the panel in 11pt VAG light and should follow the format:

Designed by: xxx for Design and Interpretative Services, Forestry Commission Scotland - JAN2010

SOAC set text 1A

SOAC set text 1B

1. **SOAC set texts 1A or 1B:** Either format can be used to suit the panel layout and any colour, as long as it has high enough contrast levels, to fit with the panel design. For bi-lingual panels there is also a Gaelic, available in the 1B version only.

For more information please contact:
Forestry Commission Scotland
Tel: 0123 456789
Email: forestfd@forestry.gsi.gov.uk
www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland

2. **Contact details:** can be boxed but do not have to be. The layout & style should complement the panel design, use VAG typeface and be clear and simple.

Standard corporate content

Panels with trail content included

If the panel includes information on trails (e.g. trail map with routes and/or details of trails at a site), then in addition to the standard elements, there are further mandatory elements to be included, these are:

1. **Forestry Commission Scotland trail grading key**

   Lists the trail grades and what the symbols mean, to help visitors decide which route is suitable for them. Completed key must always be shown. Even if there is only one easy graded trail at a site the key enables this to be seen within the context of the other grades.

2. **Trail information panel**

   Each waymarked trail referred to on the panel must have details included in the trail information section. These details are; name of trail, colour of trail waymarking shown as coloured circles (normally the way trails are marked on our maps), length of trail (in imperial and metric), time to allow and grading symbols (if it's an easy-access trail the less-able symbol should also be used). In addition there would normally be a short description of the trail.

   Informal (non-waymarked) trails can also be included and with the exception of trail grades and coloured circles showing waymarking colour, the same information can be provided. Non-waymarked trails can be indicated on maps and information panels with a solid line (often white is used) and with the addition of 'not waymarked on the ground' included beside the trail information.

3. **Cycling information**

   For panels that deal with mountain biking or cycling either fully or as part of the overall site offering there is further specific mandatory guidance. Please contact Design and Interpretation Services if this is the case.

Trail Grades

Forestry Commission Scotland trails are graded according to the degree of difficulty and type of conditions visitors can expect

| | Easy Sensible Footwear | | Moderate Waterproof Footwear | | Strenuous Hillwalking Boots |
| | Easy Muscle Loosener | | Moderate Muscle Stretcher | | Strenuous Muscle Builder |

1. **Trail Grades key:** To include all six trail grading symbols and their relevant definitions. The layout & style should complement the panel design, use VAG typeface and be clear and simple.

Trail information

Woodland trail ● ● ●
1 mile / 1.6 km - Allow 40 mins

Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here.

Riverside trail ● ● ●
1.5 miles / 2.4 km - Allow 1 hour

Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here.

Pinewood trail ● ● ●
2 miles / 3.2 km - Allow 1 hour 20 mins

Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here. Some trail description about the trail would go in here.

2. **Trail information panel:** This would normally accompany a map showing the routes at a site. The layout & style should complement the panel design, use VAG typeface and be clear and simple.

Further guidance

Design, accessibility and other considerations

The main content area below the lid top does not have to conform to any prescriptive corporate design styling and is more open to develop a creative response to the site, subject and brief. However some points to consider are:

1. **Typeface**
   Consider using the Forestry Commission typeface VAG family for headings, boxed and/or main text. This is not mandatory and may not be appropriate to the creative direction, but it should be considered as a main or supporting element in the panel design. It is a typeface that can be used, altered or added to creatively.

2. **Design style link across an area**
   In instances where a group of panels across several sites are being designed (or if they are the first group with others following in subsequent financial years - part of the delivery of an interpretive plan for example) then consideration should be give to developing a 'family' style to be used for all the panels.

3. **Accessibility**
   Forestry Commission Scotland is fully committed to making all its communication media as accessible as possible, whilst at the same time producing engaging and effective design. Therefore it is important that panels are legible to our visitors. Text sizes & style, the contrast between text and background, language & design are crucial factors for a panel to be effective.

   The minimum text size for body copy on panels is 20 point, but because point sizes vary across fonts (i.e. 20 point Helvetica will be different to 20 point VAG) designers may prefer to work from an x-height size, which is 4 mm. More accessibility guidance is available and will be supplied with this document.

VAG Thin
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890

VAG Light
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890

VAG Bold
**abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ 1234567890**

1. Typeface: Forestry Commission Scotland corporate typeface VAG.
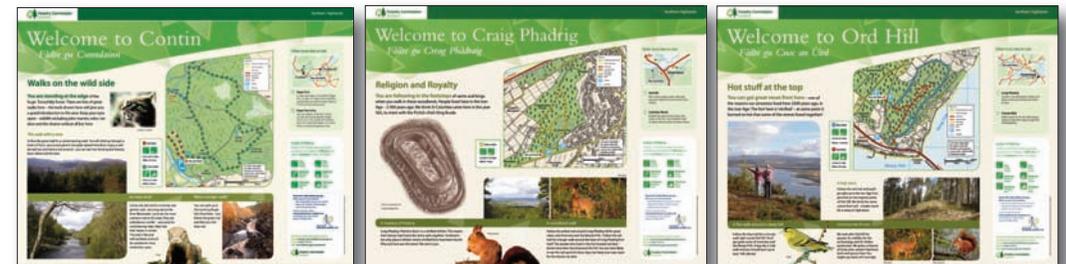
2. Design style across an area: Part of a series of panels for sites in Inverness area.

This is an example of minimum size body copy text, 4 mm x-height VAG Thin text, equivalent to 21 point.

3. Accessibility: Example of minimum body copy text size.

Further guidance

Design, accessibility and other considerations

4. The lid top

Although the lid top is a standard element it does impose a fairly rigid horizontal stripe along the top of the panel that may prove difficult to integrate into the design. It is acceptable to break into the lid top with graphic elements (images, headings, cutouts, shapes, etc) if required to help soften it's impact on the design.

4. The lid top: Examples of graphics breaking into the lid top.

For further guidance contact:

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