

Strategic benefits



Work to improve town centre signing for Middlesbrough has proved so successful it has been extended to the whole borough.



In 2001 Middlesbrough Council decided it needed to overhaul all directional signing within the town centre. Local businesses had expressed concern that signing was inadequate and people were struggling to find destinations. Some proposed attractions like the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art were soon to be in need of signs, and even longer established venues like Teesside University and the Law Courts were difficult to find.



Diamond standard

Following a study carried out alongside WSP, it was decided to split the town into east and west destinations, and to introduce new signs that featured junction names as well as routes. Approximately 120 signs were installed or replaced, and all were made using 3M's Diamond Grade™ reflective materials. It was an easy choice for the Council to go with Diamond Grade sheetings. Middlesbrough was one of the first places in the UK to see it in action when the Highways Agency sanctioned its use on unlit signs over the A19 and A174 in the late 1990s.

Making light work of energy savings

In the town centre re-signing, removing external illumination has proved to be a major benefit of using 3M™ Diamond Grade™ DG³ Reflective Sheeting. It was also a major factor in ensuring that DG³ was specified when it was decided to extend the scheme to cover the borough's entire major road network.

"The Council has to meet targets for reducing carbon emissions and we know we can trust DG³ to do an excellent job,"

says Steve Rigg, Principal Engineer in the Road Safety and Traffic Management Section.

As well as the obvious energy savings of unlit signs in-situ, the manufacturing process used to make DG³ also uses 77% less energy and creates 46% less waste and 97% less VOCs (volatile organic compounds) than techniques used for producing glass beaded materials.



Much improved

"The new signs do look fantastic," says Steve, "and we already know that the town centre scheme has helped people find their way more easily. That includes visitors to the Council Offices, because even we used to have problems directing people to find us. Having the junction names on signs makes it so much easier to give directions. 3M's material has really proved its worth in performance and energy savings, and we're looking forward to seeing DG³ on roughly 300 additional signs on all of our major roads in the very near future."

