



Brown Tourist Signs Policy & Application

Last Updated: March 2022



Introduction

The following document outlines Norfolk County Council's Brown Tourist Sign policy. This policy takes into account national guidance and regulations but also recognises how such signage can support the local tourism economy.

The main purpose of brown tourist signs is to direct traffic safely and effectively to tourist destinations in the latter stages of their journey working alongside existing road signing on the highway network. Visitors to a venue should plan their route accordingly. Brown signs can also highlight facilities that a tourist would not reasonably expect to find in that location and can help tourism and local economies.

A tourist attraction is defined as a permanently established destination that attracts, or is used by, visitors to an area. It is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours. Tourist destinations are generally signed from the nearest main distributor road.

This guidance will help you understand the Brown tourist sign eligibility criteria, the application process, assessment process, outline costs, delivery process and timescales. NCC do not deal with Trunk Road signing on the A11 and A47, this is a matter for Highways England.

Contents

1. Criteria/Eligibility
2. Applying for Brown Signs
3. Assessment
4. Costs for Design and Installation
5. Application & Financial Conditions



1.

Criteria/Eligibility

1.1. A tourist destination is defined in the Traffic Signs and General Directions 2016 as:

- a. Tourist Information Centre or Point;
 - i. permanently established attraction or facility (other than a leisure facility) which:
 - ii. attracts or is used by visitors to an area;
 - iii. is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours; and
- b. is recognised as a tourist attraction or facility by the appropriate national promoter of tourism;
- c. a village, town or city that is of particular interest to tourists;
- d. a route that is of particular interest to tourists.

An attraction is a place people visit for pleasure and interest, for example:

- a. Theme park
- b. Historic building
- c. Museum
- d. Zoo

A facility is a tourist amenity, for example:

- e. Camping ground
- f. Picnic site

It's not possible for every tourist destination to be signed due to the number and variety of tourist destinations. Occasionally Norfolk County Council cannot agree to provide tourist signs, even where the destination is eligible.

1.2. Requirements of eligible tourist attractions/facilities

As part of this policy there are further requirements for eligible tourist destinations to ensure we maintain a good quality standard for brown tourism signs. These are listed below.

Tourist attractions (Theme park, historical property, museum, zoos or leisure complex)

- a. Adequate facilities such as toilets, refreshments, litter control etc., are available at or within the immediate vicinity of the attraction
- b. A quality attraction mark through national or regional tourist boards.



Norfolk County Council

- c. Publicising the attraction and informing visitors of the appropriate route
- d. Adequate on-site parking available. Off-site parking should be within 300 metres of the facility.
- e. Property and sites in the ownership and care of English Heritage or the National Trust are acknowledged as tourist attractions

Tourist facilities (Sports / leisure venue, concert venue, serviced accommodation, cinema and theatres, sports facility, picnic site.)

- f. Adequate facilities such as toilets, refreshments, litter control etc., are available at or within the immediate vicinity of the attraction
- g. Publicise the facility and inform visitors of its location
- h. Adequate on-site parking should be available. Off-site parking should be within 300m of the facility.
- i. Where possible supporting evidence that the facility attracts a significant number of visitors

In addition, camping and caravan parks should;

- j. Be licenced under the Caravan Sites Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act 1936
- k. Have a minimum of 15 pitches available for casual overnight use.
- l. Visit Britain quality grading scheme

1.3. Ineligible venues

As per National guidance brown tourism signs will not be considered for the following venues:

- a. Retail outlets
- b. Shops or shopping centres
- c. Garden centres
- d. Exhibition centres or conferencing facilities

(NB: Retail destinations who feel they qualify as a tourist destination should provide evidence as outlined in the requirements in 1.2 of this document.)

Norfolk County Council will consider retail destinations for signing where there is a clear traffic management or road safety concern. Officers will consult recorded accident data and other information to make this assessment. In such cases standard directional signing (black letters, white background) shall be used in accordance with traffic sign regulations.

The main purpose of providing signs to retail destinations is to guide drivers to their intended destination along the most appropriate route during the



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latter stage of their journey, particularly where the destination or entrance may be difficult to find or challenging in terms of highway safety.

We can advise applicants accordingly as to whether their business can be signed in this way and the associated costs.

It is recognised that traffic signs to retail destinations are perceived to be effective marketing tools by businesses, this is not the purpose of such signs. There are other avenues available to advertise and promote businesses. Signing should be used where this will benefit road users (i.e. as an aid to navigation and for safety traffic management reasons)

2.

Applying for Brown Tourism Signs

- 2.1. Applicants that feel they meet the criteria outlined in this document should complete the application form and pay the assessment fee. Details of the current fee can be found on the [Highways Services fees and charges webpage](#). Applications should be sent to Norfolk County Council Highways, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

We appreciate that applicants want signs in place for the summer season, with this in mind applications received during the autumn, winter months are best.

If further assistance is required applicants can contact our Customer Service Centre at highways@norfolk.gov.uk. More detailed questions may be forwarded to a local Highways Engineer.

3.

Assessment

- 3.1. When assessing applications, we will consider if:
 - a. There is a clear and identifiable traffic or pedestrian need for signs.
 - b. The venue is recognised as a tourist destination as outlined in section 1 of this document.
- 3.2. We will also take the following into account when assessing applications
 - a. The signing is required over and above that to the nearest local parish or village or town with existing sign provision, or the venue is within a Parish or Town destination.



Norfolk County Council

- b. Tourist destinations are generally signed from the nearest main distributor road. (Generally A or B class roads).
- c. Measures should already be in place to assist in finding the establishment.
- d. The environmental impact of new signs within AONB and Conservation Areas needs more careful consideration, smaller scale signs or pedestrian signs may be appropriate.
- e. The amount of signing is proportionate to the road network and volume of traffic likely to visit the venue and takes account of its environmental impact.
- f. Brown Tourist Signs may indicate facilities that a tourist would not reasonably expect to find in that location.
- g. Any advertising benefit should be regarded as a secondary effect.
- h. Norfolk County Council operate a policy to reduce sign clutter on the highway, all requests will be assessed against this policy.
- i. Existing sign face legends/arrangements/content and whether additional information can be added without over burdening the number of destinations.
- j. Whether the destination qualifies for retail destination signing

3.3. On approval we provide an initial outline of the following;

- a. Sign design, (including symbols if appropriate) with the locations of signs.
- b. Agree whether new signs or amendments to existing signs are required.
- c. Cost estimate / timescales for the work.

Decisions on the provision of signing to individual destinations should be considered on their merits and will depend on local circumstances. Priority for signing will be given to destinations which attract larger volumes of traffic and which cannot be reached by following existing route hierarchy signs to a parish, town or city which appears in the address. Retail destinations that can be identified in this way will not normally be signed on the main A/B network unless specific route guidance is necessary.

Norfolk is predominantly a rural County and environmentally sensitive so sign clutter is something we want to avoid. As such we will always aim to minimise the size and number of signs we add to our highway network.

We understand our proposals may not always accord with applicants needs and can discuss further whether amendments are feasible.



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On occasion we may not be able to support an application. We will provide an explanation of our reasons for the decision.

3.4. Timescales

We will guide applicants through the process and understand the need to provide a transparent, timely and cost effective service.

- a. Pre submission advice can be sought by calling our Customer Service Centre
- b. Once we have received your application, in most cases, we will aim to give you a decision and a draft outline of signing proposals within 2- 4 weeks.
- c. Simple signing schemes packages can be prepared and delivered within 6-8 weeks on receipt of payment.
- d. More complex schemes may take around 8-12 weeks on receipt of payment.

4.

Costs for Design and Installation

- 4.1. Applicants need to cover the cost of any agreed tourist signs. A simple signing scheme sign may cost from £800-£3,000 to design and install, depending on the size and number of signs. More complex schemes can cost over £10,000. Many design options are available; Norfolk County Council have provided these costs to give you an indication of your possible outlay.



Brown tourist signs – application form

Please read the enclosed notes before completing the application. Decide, from Note 1, the category of tourist destination. Answer the questions relating to that category, providing as much relevant information as possible.

Tourist Destination:

Address:

.....

..... Postcode:

Telephone: Mobile:

Email: Fax:

Category of Tourist Destination (see notes):

Tourist Attractions

Is the attraction recognised by the English/Regional Tourist Board (enjoy England)? (please supply evidence):

.....

.....

Do you hold any quality in tourism marks (i.e. rose, crown awards)? (please supply evidence):

.....

.....

Tourist Facilities

If a refreshment facility, how many seats available?

If serviced accommodation, who has inspected the facility and what is their rating? (please supply evidence):

.....

.....

Please supply evidence that the establishment is a quality tourist destination



Camping and Caravan Parks

How many casual overnight pitches are available?

Please supply evidence that the site is licensed.

.....
.....

All Categories

What facilities are available? (please continue overleaf if necessary)

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1. | 2. |
| 3..... | 4. |
| 5..... | 6. |

What car parking facilities are available and how close are they to the tourist destination?

.....
.....

What steps have been taken to publicise the tourist attraction and how are visitors informed of the location? (please supply evidence):

.....
.....

Approximately how many visitors per year?

What are the opening times? Include seasonal opening times:

.....
.....

Is the tourist destination open to members of the public without pre-booking?

.....
.....



I certify that the above information is correct and I have read and agree with Norfolk County Council's brown tourist sign conditions. I also agree to abide by the decision of Norfolk County Council.

Signed :- Dated:-

Print Name:- Position:-

Please attach the following:-

1. Information in support of this application as requested above.
2. Payment of the assessment fee for a brown tourist sign (see the [Highways Services fees and charges webpage](#) for details of the current fee). Please make cheques payable to Norfolk County Council. Application to be sent to Norfolk County Council Highways, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

Financial conditions

The County Council shall seek to minimise any costs incurred in the provision and administration of signing of specific commercial tourist attractions.

The supply and erection of signs may be carried out by the County Council and all costs will be recovered from the applicant.

Applicants will be required to submit an initial payment with their application to cover the assessment by the County Council. This will be non-refundable and may be subject to annual review. See the [Highways Services fees and charges webpage](#) for details of the current fee.

Successful applicants will be requested to sign an agreement to pay the full cost of works undertaken on their behalf by the County Council.

Initially, the Applicant will be provided with a budget estimate of the scheme along with any relevant comments regarding the application and proposals.

Subsequently, this information will be updated to provide the Applicant with full details of the proposals and a more representative costing of the scheme.

The total cost sum will include the design, provision, and erection of the signs. The total cost figure will also include a 15% on cost for further programmed maintenance and a 10% administration charge.



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If the applicant chooses not to proceed, either during the scheme development process or having received the final estimate and will be liable for all costs involved in the preparation of the design of the scheme by the County Council. This liability will form part of the agreement referred to above.

If the application is successful and the applicant chooses to proceed a further fee will be required to take forward detailed design and 100% of the budget estimate will be required before commencement of the works. Any balance of payment or refund of over-estimate to be finalised on completion of the works.

Where more than one destination is included on a sign(s) the cost of the assembly is shared between the applicants. Should an applicant choose not to proceed the cost will be reapportioned between the remaining applicants.

The cost of replacing any signs due to damage or theft except where the County Council can make claims against a known third-party insurance, will be met by the applicant(s).

The cost of amending existing signing to add new destinations will be met by the applicant for the new destination.

The applicant(s) will be expected to meet the cost of replacement signs when the original signs reach the end of their useful life. (For guidance only this is likely to be in the region of 10 years.)

In all cases all tourism signs will remain the property of the County Council and be maintained by the Council. Signs may be removed if the criteria for signing ceases to be met, or relocated/supplemented if changes in signing are required as a result of new bypasses or road improvements, for road safety, or traffic management reasons. In these circumstances the County Council would bear the cost of the modifications on County Roads.