



**Brown Tourism Signs  
Guidance notes**

**Application guidance for  
brown tourism signs  
Who's eligible, what's required  
and how much does it cost?**

**TRAFFIC AND SAFETY TEAM**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Leicestershire County Council's Tourism signing procedure reflects the requirements of The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) that distinguish Tourist Destinations and Leisure Facilities.

**'Tourist Destination'** is defined in TSRGD and means:

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

**'Leisure Facility'** is defined in TSRGD and means:

- (a) the facilities listed as '(Leisure facility)' in Parts 14, 15, 16 and 18 of Schedule 12 of TSRGD; and
- (b) a tourist hostel.

1.2 The purpose of tourist and leisure signs is to guide visitors to their intended Tourist Destination or Leisure Facility along the most appropriate route during the latter stage of their journey. This is predominately for traffic management reasons e.g. where safety or capacity considerations mean that the highway authority wishes to direct traffic along particular routes in order to minimise any negative effects on the network and/or on nearby residents, or where satellite navigation systems and/or online mapping suggest inappropriate routes.

There is a need to ensure that only facilities that are genuinely used by tourists are signed. Excessive signing is detrimental to the environment. A balance must be struck between the needs of individual tourism businesses, the environment and road safety.

As there is only a limited quantity of information that can be safely read by road users, priority for tourist and leisure signing on the local authorities road network is given to Tourist Destinations and Leisure Facilities with the greatest traffic management and/or safety needs.

We will not modify existing signs by adding the name of an attraction and in all cases a completely new sign will be provided incorporating the attraction name. The cost to the attraction operator will be based on the size of the new sign.

1.3 There is a cost involved – applicants pay a £180.50 non refundable application fee and then if approved are responsible for the cost of design and construction of the signs.

Sign design fees: first 4 signs - £106 per sign, £79.50 per sign thereafter

You must also pay for construction costs to install the signs. A scheme with 4 signs can cost anything upwards of £1000. As requirements vary depending on each site, construction costs can vary considerably and are paid in advance of the signs being installed.

Although the signs remain the property of Leicestershire County Council, the cost of any maintenance or replacement for the signs after erection will also be the responsibility of the applicant.

## **2.0 General principles**

2.1 Eligibility for signs does not imply a right to signs. It may be necessary to turn down a request for a sign at a given location because of siting difficulties or where the number of destinations signed at a junction would be excessive. The maximum number of destinations that a driver can read and understand on a sign whilst driving is six. If long names are used or the road carries fast-moving traffic – generally ‘A’ class roads – this number will be lower.

2.2 Long names on signs are difficult for motorists to read. The attraction name which appears on the sign should not be more than three or four words long. Only one tourist symbol will be allowed for each attraction.

2.3 In conservation areas and areas of special landscape significance, the impact of signs on the environment will be an important factor. In urban areas, there will often be insufficient space to erect additional signs or add tourist destinations to existing signs.

2.4 The County Council reserves the right to alter, reposition or remove a sign:

- to accommodate another sign;
- because the establishment no longer qualifies for signs;
- if it becomes known that details included in the application were falsely claimed.

2.5 The design of signs is the responsibility of the County Council in its capacity as highway authority.

2.6 Signing to an establishment may start from:

- either the nearest main road, usually an ‘A’ or ‘B’ road, though in some cases the nearest ‘C’ class road may be more appropriate;
- or the point where the route to an establishment differs from the signed route into the nearest town or village.

2.7 Establishments which are located directly on ‘A’ or ‘B’ roads may not always need signs, especially if the entrance is visible and identifiable from a distance. Consideration may be given to signing an attraction from the nearest ‘A’ road junction if it would otherwise be difficult for drivers to find the establishment and the facility is of significant value to the local tourist market. In a few exceptional cases it may be necessary to sign an attraction more extensively, either because it is very important or for traffic management reasons.

2.8 Public houses, hotels, cafes and restaurants situated on ‘A’ roads will not normally be signed. Exceptions will only be considered when the establishment is located within one mile of a junction with another ‘A’ road and there are benefits to the road user in the establishment being signed.

2.9 In the case of small attractions in rural areas, signing will only be provided either within the village in which it is located or from the nearest village.

### **3.0 Applications for tourism signs in Leicestershire**

3.1 Application must be made via the online application form located on the County Councils Website at

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/apply-for-a-brown-tourist-road-sign>

3.2 The applicant must show that:

- a significant number of visitors to the establishment are from outside the area
- there is a need for signs to enable visitors to find the establishment
- the establishment is of significant value to the local tourist market

If it is uncertain whether these conditions are met, the owner of the establishment should carry out a survey of users to determine what proportion of visitors are coming from outside the area and what problems are encountered in finding the site.

3.3 There must be sufficient on-site parking space to accommodate the number of visitors anticipated.

3.4 The establishment must be open to people making impulse visits within normal opening hours. Tourist signs will not be provided where admittance is by prior arrangement only. In the case of sports facilities, there must be minimal restrictions on visitor and non-member use.

3.5 Customer facilities must be adequate for the size, location and type of operation. A public toilet must be available.

3.6 The establishment must be open on at least 150 days a year for at least four hours each day.

3.7 The business must have planning permission and be licensed where appropriate.

3.8 The establishment must comply with prevailing Tourist Board standards such as the National Code of Practice for Visitor Attractions.

3.9 Signs will not be agreed where an establishment already has off-site advertisement signs (with or without planning permission) other than at the entrance to the establishment. You must also agree not to erect any such signs whilst tourist signs are in place. If this happens the County Council reserves the right to remove the tourist signs without compensation to the attraction operator.

3.10 Hotels must be classified by Visit England. Hotels located in service areas will not qualify for tourist signs if the bed symbol already appears on a 'Services' sign.

3.11 Self-catering accommodation, such as cottages/holiday flats, must have a minimum of 10 units on the site.

3.12 Camping/caravan sites:

- must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 or the Public Health Act 1936 or any updated relevant Regulations, Guidance or local requirements in operation at the time of application.
- have a minimum of 20 pitches available for casual overnight use.

### 3.13 Public houses:

- which do not serve meals will not be eligible for tourist signs
- which do serve meals must:

i. be registered with the local Borough or District Council under the Food Safety Act 1990

ii. serve meals at lunchtimes and in the evenings without the need to pre-book

iii. allow families with children to use the facilities

iv. fulfil the criteria in Section 3 above.

### 3.14 Restaurants and cafes must:

- be registered with the local Borough or District Council under the Food Safety Act 1990
- be open to diners without the need to pre-book
- fulfil the criteria in Section 3 above.

Mobile snack bars will not be signed.

Premises attached to petrol filling stations do not qualify for tourist signs but may be eligible, together with the petrol filling station, for 'Services' signs. In such cases, motorists must be allowed to use public toilets without the need to purchase anything.

## **4.0 Signing in towns**

4.1 Hotels, restaurants, public houses, cafes and retail establishments located in towns will only be signed in very exceptional circumstances as there will be too many such establishments to be signed individually. Direction signs will usually guide visitors to the 'Town Centre' which implies the presence of these facilities.

4.2 Out-of-town shopping centres do not qualify for tourist signs, although they may be signed with standard direction signs. Individual premises within shopping centres will not be signed separately on the public highway.

## **5.0 Motorways and trunk roads in Leicestershire**

5.1 The County Council is not the highway authority for motorways or trunk roads in Leicestershire and is not responsible for providing signs on these roads. For tourist signs on motorways and trunk roads in the County, an approach must be made to National Highways.

## **6.0 Facilities outside Leicestershire**

6.1 If an application for tourism signs requires signing on routes in a neighbouring county, a separate application must be submitted to that local authority. That application will be assessed independently by that body according to its own policy for tourism signs, and applicants will be responsible for any costs incurred.

## **7.0 Timescales**

7.1 Typically it takes around 6 months from application approval to signs being installed, however larger schemes can take up to 12 months to be implemented

Please bear the above period in mind when you make your application. If you are seeking a specific date to have the signs installed by, then some advanced planning will be required on the applicants part.