

Essex brown and white **tourism signs policy** and guidance notes



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1. Introduction

These guidance notes and policy define the procedure that is used to determine which applications qualify for tourism signposting, summarises the application process and highlights the financial implications to applicants.

Brown and white tourism signposting in Essex is administered by Essex County Council (ECC) the highway authority for Essex. This booklet is intended to help explain how to apply for signs and we hope that you will find it useful. Please see the following pages for a summary of the application process.

Although it may seem a simple matter to have a sign put up near your business, please remember there are road safety, quality and 'sign pollution' issues to assess before applications can be approved, as well as an assessment of the facilities offered. There is an application process, and your application will be judged against a range of eligibility criteria (see Appendix 1), as well as against road safety and traffic management factors (see Appendix 2).

Not all tourism establishments will meet the criteria.

Definitions of tourist establishments:

A tourist establishment is broadly defined for signing purposes as a permanently established attraction or facility that attracts or is used by visitors in an area, and which is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.

For assessment purposes, the various types of destinations or facilities which may qualify for brown and white tourist signs have been defined as follows:

Tourist attractions:

This group incorporates places of interest, which are open to the public, offering recreation, or education, or which are of historical interest. It includes for example, theme parks, historic houses, museums,

gardens, zoos, leisure complexes and golf courses which have overnight inspected serviced accommodation.

Tourist facilities:

This group contains establishments which provide services to visitors within an area. It includes for example, hotels, B&Bs, pubs, restaurants, cafés, shops, cinemas, theatres, some retail outlets and sport/leisure facilities and golf courses which have no overnight inspected serviced accommodation.

Brown and white tourism signposting is NOT for advertising, but to help visitors from outside the local area find establishments easily and safely. Tourism signs should supplement rather than duplicate information already provided on existing directional signs. The types of signs we can agree are defined by the Department for Transport (DfT) in traffic sign regulations and general directions 2002 (TSRGD).

Provision of signs is funded by the applicant. Applicants pay a £150 application fee (currently non VATable). If approved, applicants are responsible for the cost of design and construction of the signs. The applicant is responsible for the cost of any replacement tourism signs after erection, although the signs remain the property of Essex County Council.

Too many signposts spoil the look and feel of an area, and can make it confusing and distracting for the driver. It is important that the impact of new and additional signposting is taken into consideration when each application is assessed. Essex is a rural county of great charm and there is a risk that a proliferation of signs will destroy part of that appeal, as well as creating a distraction for road users. To protect against this, ECC reserve the right to refuse even eligible applications for the wider benefit of the local population and visitors. **Therefore, not all eligible applications will be approved, particularly in areas where there is already a proliferation of signs. In some cases applicants will be encouraged to take up shared tourism signposting with other local establishments on the same route.**

2. The application process

Seek informal advice about eligibility

Contact Essex Tourism Tel: 01245 430239 or email elli.constantatou@essex.gov.uk for an informal discussion about whether your application would be eligible and to order an application pack.

Contact the appropriate area engineer for informal advice about the appropriateness of your application from a visual impact, road safety and traffic management point of view. Advice gained at this stage will save time and effort at a later stage, and could avoid submitting a costly and inappropriate application.

Submit application

Fully complete the application form, using the guidance notes, and return it to: Essex County Council, Essex Tourism, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LX.

You must also enclose:

- application fee of £150 (cheques payable to Essex County Council)
- supporting information and evidence of eligibility as requested in the guidance notes Appendix 1
- map indicating location of establishment, required tourism signs and existing advertising signs

Stage 1 approval

ECC Essex Tourism will assess the application against the eligibility criteria. If further information is required they will contact you.

If your application meets the eligibility criteria ECC Essex Tourism will pass the application onto the appropriate area engineer for the next stage of assessment.

If your application is rejected because it does not meet the eligibility criteria ECC Essex Tourism will contact you in writing.

Stage 2 approval

The area engineer will then assess the application against visual impact, road safety and traffic management issues.

If your application is rejected because it is not deemed appropriate or eligible the area engineer will contact you in writing.

Putting the signs in place.

The area engineer will design the signs and determine the locations. You will be kept in contact and advised at this stage as to the cost for this work. The area engineer will then consult with the local parish council as to the design and location of the signs. The parish council at their discretion have final veto and can reject the application at this stage but they must supply reasonable justification. Once agreed the area engineer will pass over to our contractor for construction.

In the case of necessary maintenance or repairs.

The applicant is responsible for the cost of any replacement tourism signs after erection. The area engineer will consult with the establishment over any impending works on the signs. Only ECC contractors can carry out any work.

Ongoing monitoring of establishments.

On an annual basis, ECC will monitor the continued eligibility of establishments that have received tourism signs. If necessary, ECC will remove the tourism signs, and all costs incurred will be met by the establishments.

Indicative timescale

Stage 1: Approval, 3-4 weeks

Stage 2: Approval and putting signs in place, 20-24 weeks

This timescale has been set by ECC assuming that there will be no complications causing a delay. The speed of response from other parties and the number of applications being dealt with at any one time will have a significant effect on this timescale.

3. Who is eligible?

An eligible tourism establishment is defined, for this purpose, as:

“a permanently established attraction or facility of recognised quality and/or importance that attracts or is used by visitors to an area, and which is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.”

Applicants will be judged against the eligibility criteria listed in Appendix 1, and evidence must be provided to support each application. If the tourism establishment is located on a trunk road or motorway (a list of trunk roads in Essex can be found on page 8), or requires signs from them, your application will also have to meet additional Highways Agency criteria, detailed in Appendix 1.

Eligibility does not automatically guarantee entitlement to tourism signs. All applications will be judged on considerations of visual impact, road safety and traffic management needs, in addition to the appropriateness and quality of the establishment.

Facilities located on a principal route (such as ‘A’ or ‘B’ class roads) are generally not eligible for tourism signposting. This is at the discretion of the area engineer, who will consider if the entrance is visible and identifiable from a safe distance as well as the visual and road safety impact of additional signage on the principal route.

4. How many signs can I have? What can they say and where can I put them?

Signs will be considered from the most appropriate road and for rural establishments will not occur further than 2 miles away unless there are exceptional circumstances. There must be continuity of signing from the first sign to the destination.

Although you will probably have your own ideas, let the area engineer work with you to advise you on the number of signs you can have and where those signs should be. They will help determine the number and size of signs allowed, if and when your application is approved. There are national standards regulating the wording, symbols, size, structure and location of tourism signs, and the area engineer will bear these in mind when advising you. The area engineer's decision will be final, and will relate to:

- visual impact, traffic management and road safety issues;
- the number of other attractions qualifying for signs in the area;
- the location of the establishment.

There is a range of standard symbols available, which represent the most common types of tourist attraction (see Appendix 4). Symbols are not obligatory, but when an establishment requires more than one tourism sign one standard symbol must be used on all its signs to ensure continuity.

Long names on a tourism sign can be difficult to read. To avoid confusing drivers, the exact wording will be discussed with you. ECC's decision on wording is final.

Establishments will be signed individually where appropriate. However, to avoid proliferation of signs, subject to visual impact and traffic management considerations, generic or shared signing (ie high street hotels) will be used if there are a number of establishments along a particular route, or in one area.

5. How much do tourism signs cost?

There are four main areas of cost to consider when applying for tourism signs:

- Application fee.
- Design and construction of signs.
- Removal of existing off-site advertising signs.
- Maintenance of tourism signs.

5a. To establish whether your application is eligible for tourism signs it is necessary for us to carry out an initial assessment. The application fee is £150 (payable to Essex County Council).

The application fee is non-refundable if the application is unsuccessful. Therefore we encourage you to seek informal advice from Essex Tourism and the area engineer before you submit your application. We offer this assistance and advice to help you determine whether your application will be eligible before it is submitted. We require you to submit with your application the requested additional information and evidence to demonstrate your eligibility. This should reduce the likelihood of your application being turned down.



5b. The cost of the actual signs should also be taken into account.

The cost of design and construction of the signs is different in every case. The number and size of signs required is often dictated by the regulations; for example, according to the size of the road and speed of the traffic. If you are aware of other attractions or facilities which may also wish to be signed on approaches to your premises, it is probably worth contacting them, as there could be advantages of cost sharing and coordination of signing.

If the new tourism sign involves alteration to an existing sign the applicant is responsible for the cost of alteration. If the new tourism sign means that the maximum number of signs allowed on a junction is exceeded, that applicant is also responsible for the cost of the replacement generic signs.

We hope the following examples will help give you some idea of the likely costs of signs (design costs will be charged in addition to the figures shown below, £50 per sign).

Pedestrian sign

Approximate size 20cm x 75cm on standard 76mm post (including installation)
Likely construction cost £120 + VAT

Standard road sign

Approximate size 30cm x 120 cm on standard 76mm post (including installation)
Likely construction cost £180 + VAT

Prices do not include any Traffic Management which maybe needed as part of the installation work.

5c. The applicant will be responsible for the cost of removing any existing off-site advertising signs at or near the location of the proposed tourism signs.

This is to avoid proliferation of signs. Persistent use of advertising signs at, or near, the location of the tourism signs once in place will result in the removal of the brown and white tourism signs.

5d. The applicant will be responsible for the cost of any replacement tourism signs after erection.

See further details in section 10, 'Aftercare of tourism signs' on page 9.

6. How long does it take?

Tourism signs cannot be put up immediately. The process includes approval, agreement on the location and number of signs, design, manufacture and installation. You should therefore allow six months for signing from start to finish.

See 'The application process' details on pages 4 and 5.



7. What if my establishment or signs are located outside the Essex County boundary?

If an applicant for tourism signs requires signing on routes in a neighbouring county a separate application must be submitted to that county/borough council. This application will then be assessed independently by that council according to its own policy for tourism signs, and applicants will be responsible for any costs incurred.

For more information please contact the appropriate council:

Cambridgeshire County Council
Tel: **0845 0455212**

Hertfordshire County Council
Tel: **01923 471320**

Suffolk County Council
Tel: **01473 264920**

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
Tel: **01702 215399**

Thurrock Borough Council
Tel: **01375 413854**

8. What if I want tourism signs on a motorway or trunk road?

If your establishment lies on a trunk road, or requires signs from a motorway or trunk road, it will be necessary to involve the Highways Agency. You will be advised if this is the case after your application is received by ECC. These applications should then be submitted to the agents for the Highways Agency.

Trunk roads within Essex include the following: A12 and A120

Motorways within Essex include the following: M25 and M11

In large urban areas consideration will be given to the form of transport most suited to the attraction. In some cases pedestrian signing from public transport facilities will be more appropriate than vehicle signing.

The Highways Agency has special eligibility criteria, in addition to those for the category of establishment. See Appendix 1 for detailed criteria for all categories and the additional criteria for signs on motorways and trunk roads.

9. If my application is approved, what happens next?

Once your application is approved:

- the area engineer will design the signs and will keep in contact with you regarding the location and costs of signs.
- the engineer will then contact the relevant parish councils for their approval of signs. The parish council have the right to object to the signs but must provide a justifiable reason.
- the engineer will then arrange with our contractor the manufacture and installation of signs.

A condition of approval of brown and white signposting is that all existing advertising signs at, or near, the location of the new tourism signs **MUST be removed when the tourism signs are put in place.** This includes A-frame signs, blackboards, menu boards, 'open' or special offers signs, professionally sign-written signs, and so on.

If advertising signs are not removed, or are persistently replaced when removed by ECC, the brown and white tourism signs will be removed.

Once your application is approved:

- the area engineer will design the signs and will keep in contact with you regarding the location and costs of signs.
- the engineer will then contact the relevant parish councils for their approval of signs. The parish council have the right to object to the signs but must provide a justifiable reason.
- the engineer will then arrange with our contractor the manufacture and installation of signs.

A condition of approval of brown and white signposting is that all existing advertising signs at, or near, the location of the new tourism signs **MUST be removed when the tourism signs are put in place.** This includes A-frame signs, blackboards, menu boards, 'open' or special offers signs, professionally sign-written signs, and so on.

If advertising signs are not removed, or are persistently replaced when removed by ECC, the brown and white tourism signs will be removed.

10. Aftercare of the tourism signs

The signs will remain in the ownership of the county council or Highways Agency as appropriate.

Essex County Council will maintain your sign and this cost will be added to your final scheme design. The cost is a one-off payment of £100. This work should only be undertaken by ECC contractors organised via the area engineer. **You will be responsible for the replacement of any signs.** A new application will be required from the applicant if the tourism signs need to be replaced because they have reached the end of their serviceable life (usually 10 years from new), or because of alterations to routes.

ECC will monitor the eligibility of

establishments that have been granted tourism signs on a yearly basis. This annual compliance ensures that quality standards are still maintained and criteria are still adhered to. **All successful applicants must complete the annual compliance form** and if an establishment is subsequently found not to comply with any requirements or fails to complete the annual compliance form, ECC retains the right to remove the tourism signs for that establishment. The establishment will meet all costs incurred in this process.

11. Removal of tourism signs

All costs incurred due to the removal of tourism signs will normally be met by the establishment.

Signs will be removed by ECC, following a period of written notice, in the following circumstances:

- the establishment fails to comply with the eligibility criteria detailed in Appendix 1;
- complaints are received about the quality of the establishment;
- the annual compliance form is not completed;
- persistent use of advertising signs at, or near, the location of the tourism signs;
- closure of the tourist establishment - it is the responsibility of the establishment to notify ECC of closure;
- a lapse of planning approval or essential licences for the use of the tourist establishment;
- to accommodate generic or shared signing. If this situation does arise the cost of converting your sign will be met by the applicant requesting the new and additional signs at that particular location;
- to accommodate the introduction of a traffic order that imposes a relevant restriction on the use of roads leading to the establishment.

12. Terms and conditions

This section contains important information that does not fit easily under other categories.

The Department for Transport's Traffic Signs (Amendment) Regulations and General Directions 2002 requires each traffic authority to apply brown and white tourism signs policy in the light of local circumstances, within the boundaries of the regulations.

The Essex brown and white tourism signs policy has been prepared by Essex Tourism and Highways & Transportation, Network Management of Essex County Council (ECC). It sets out to establish an improved network of brown and white tourism signs which will help visitors, whilst taking into account the needs of the tourism industry, local communities and the county's natural and built environment.

ECC's decision of eligibility of applications against the various eligibility criteria is final. ECC retains the right to consult with other organisations on all applications where appropriate.

ECC retains the right to review the Essex tourism signing policy and to change the eligibility criteria involved in this.

ECC will endeavour to give a decision as to whether an establishment is eligible for signs within four weeks from receipt of application. This is not always possible, particularly where extended investigations are required.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence that the establishment meets the necessary eligibility criteria. If all of the correct documentation is not provided the application will be passed back to the applicant until the required information is supplied.

Applicants will be advised of the result of their application at the earliest opportunity.

If an application for tourism signing is rejected, in full or in part, the applicant will be given an explanation of the decision.

ECC retains the right to review the amount and content of signing at an individual junction at any time in the light of environmental or safety considerations. A strict approach will be taken if tourism signing is deemed to be a potential environmental or traffic management problem. Particular care will need to be taken in conservation areas where signage could be restricted to a minimum.

The type of signing developed in a certain area must be consistent with existing local signing in terms of size and style.

In situations where decisions must be taken about which attractions to sign, if more attractions are requesting signing than can safely be accommodated, the basis for the decision should be guided by the needs of the traffic management. Therefore, in general, attractions with higher visitor numbers will take priority to be signed. Proximity to a trunk road will also need to be considered.

There should be no expectation of signing specifically from each possible direction of access, although where possible and appropriate in traffic management terms, alternative routes may be signed.

Where brown and white tourism signs are in place in line with earlier versions of the Department for Transport guidelines and county policy, they may be retained for the duration of their useful life (usually 10 years from new). When being replaced a new application must be submitted to ensure the establishment meets the latest policy criteria.

Appendix 1 -

1. All applicants

This appendix lists the eligibility criteria and necessary supporting information required. For further information about these please see Appendix 3 'Filling in the application form'.

Note: there is a presumption in favour of pedestrian tourism signing unless there is overriding evidence of a need for highway tourism signs.

Eligibility criteria

- Adequate on-site parking must normally be available. Where off-site parking is provided this must be within a reasonable distance of the establishment.
- No advertising signs are to be placed at/near the location of the proposed brown and white tourism signs. Any existing signs must be removed (the applicant will be responsible for the cost of removing any advertising signs).
- Establishments must be adequately advertised, including location, opening times, facilities, etc.
- Location of establishments with clear directions, and where appropriate public transport access, must be adequately advertised.
- Must have necessary planning permission.
- Front of house staff must have undertaken adequate customer care training (either through a recognised training provider, or adequate in-house training programme).

Additional supporting evidence required:

- Written confirmation from the owner of the car park is required if the car park is not owned by the applicant.
- Details of target markets, evidence of publicity and details of distribution. For example, copies of leaflets, adverts, website promotion, etc.
- Evidence on above promotional materials.
- Proof of planning permission (only required if establishment has been operating for less than 10 years).

- Evidence that customer care training has been undertaken, e.g. training certificates, details of courses undertaken, programme of in-house training, etc.

2. Visitor attractions

Category

Including historic houses, museums, gardens and arboreta, craft and wildlife centres, etc.

Note: English Heritage and National Trust properties are already eligible for tourism signs and are therefore exempt from the need for recognition as a bona fide tourist attraction.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Must attract a minimum of 5,000 visitors per year, unless the need can be clearly demonstrated on road safety and traffic management grounds.
- Must be able to demonstrate that a substantial proportion of visitors are attracted from outside the local area.
- Must be open for a minimum period of 50 days (100 days if tourism attraction) per year and 4 hours per day. The majority of the opening period must be during the normal tourism season, i.e. March to October.
- Must participate in VisitBritain's National Code of Practice or must be accredited by the 'Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service' (VAQAS). More details are available from VisitBritain ([see question 19, page 19](#)).

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Evidence of annual visitor numbers.
- Evidence of the source of visitors. In the absence of visitor research, or even a visitor's book, it can be difficult to demonstrate this. In these circumstances ECC will take a view on this, bearing in mind the information supplied in the rest of the application.
- Details of annual opening times.
- Evidence that the attraction has signed up to the National Code of Practice or VAQAS through VisitBritain.

3. Serviced accommodation

Category

Note: Serviced accommodation catering for long-term residents, which are therefore in effect hostel type houses in multiple occupation, are not eligible.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Must participate in an accredited National Quality Assurance Standard from VisitBritain or AA.
- Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Written evidence of an up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading.
- Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of District/ Borough Council Department of Health Inspection.

4. Rural facilities

A facility will not normally be signed if it has direct access onto an A or B class road. Hotels located on B roads may be signed on each approach if the establishment is not clearly visible from the approaches. A facility will not normally be signed on a route which requires the location of tourist signs at major junctions where additional signs would cause an unacceptable proliferation of signs.

If signs are required for similar facilities located less than half a mile apart, generic signing should be considered. Signing will not normally extend further than 2 miles from a facility.

Category

4a. Rural public houses

Note: Public houses not offering either food or/and serviced accommodation are not eligible.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Must be of either recognised historical importance or culinary significance.
- A selection of hot meals must be served both at lunchtimes and in the evening to both pre-booked and casual visitors.
- Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990 - District/ Borough Council Department of Health certificate.
- If offering overnight accommodation you must meet eligibility criteria listed under serviced accommodation.
- Must be willing to accommodate children indoors, and have appropriate facilities.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Evidence that it is of recognised historical importance, or culinary significance, such as an up-to-date culinary award (e.g. Michelin Star) or special recommendation (e.g. entry in Good Pub Guide).
- Details of opening times, times food is served and sample menus.
- Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of District Council Department of Health Inspection.
- If offering accommodation, written evidence of an up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading.

4b. Rural restaurants and cafés

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Opening hours should be at least 6 hours a day, 6 days a week, for 6 months a year.
- Should be open to both pre-booked and casual visitors.
- Must comply with the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations and Food Safety Act 1990 - District/ Borough Council Department of Health certificate.
- Evidence that it is of either recognised historical importance or culinary significance.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Details of opening times and sample menus.
- Up-to-date evidence that meets Food Safety Regulations i.e. confirmation of District Council Department of Health Inspection.
- An up-to-date culinary award (e.g. Michelin Star) or special recommendation (e.g. entry in Good Pub Guide).

4c. Retail establishments

Note: The following retail establishments are not eligible for tourism signing: retail parks, shopping centres, garden centres, and out of town supermarkets and superstores.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Must be of particular interest to the tourism market and have facilities and features that are specifically aimed at tourists/visitors.
- Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate.
- Should offer at least one of the following:
 - Tours of facilities or demonstrations
 - Interpretative displays for tourists/visitors.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Evidence of the facilities' special interest to tourists and publicity aimed at visitors from outside of the local area. Note: the final decision as to whether the establishments are of particular interest to the tourism market will be made by ECC.
- Evidence of tours/ demonstrations if appropriate.

4d. Rural recreational establishments

Note: Exhibition centres are not eligible for tourism signing.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Should be open for at least 100 days per

year and for at least 400 hours during that period.

- Should be open to non members within normal opening hours and, where necessary, equipment should be available for hire.
- Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Details of opening times.

4e. Rural sport centres

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Should be the venue for at least 10 major events each year, and should be able to prove that each event attracts substantial numbers of visitors from outside the local area.
- Should be open for at least 100 days per year for at least 400 hours during that period.
- Should be open to non members within normal opening hours and where necessary equipment should be available for hire.
- The need to pre-book a particular time period to carry out a specific sporting activity will be acceptable in some cases e.g. golf courses. Driving ranges will not be signed.
- Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments where appropriate.
- Sport/leisure facilities operated by local authorities may be considered for black on white directional signs if they do not meet criteria.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Details of opening times.

4f. Rural cinemas/theatres

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Should be open to non members during normal opening hours.
- Should have adequate toilet facilities and be able to offer light refreshments.

5. Urban facilities

For the purpose of this policy ‘urban’ relates to the settlements of Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping, Harlow and Maldon. The criteria for facilities in urban areas are the same as for those in rural areas detailed in Points 1 to 4 of the eligibility criteria.

The vast number of establishments that are eligible for tourism signs lead to a danger of proliferation, clutter and confusion. In order to prevent potential problems individual highway signs will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Generic or shared signing is preferred, subject to environmental and traffic management considerations. These generic signs will incorporate any reasonable term requested by the applicants, for example ‘High Street Hotels’.

In urban areas, generic pedestrian signs may be considered in order to direct visitors from car parks and public transport facilities to accommodation. Generic signs can incorporate any reasonable collective term requested by the applicants. To complement existing pedestrian signs in urban areas, this type of tourism signing should be consistent with existing design.

6. Camping and caravan sites

These signs are provided for the benefit of touring caravan users and campers from outside the local area, who wish to make casual overnight or short stays.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition must:

- Either participate in a nationally approved Quality Assurance Scheme, i.e. VisitBritain.
- Or be under the membership of the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club.
- Should have at least 20 pitches for casual overnight use by touring caravans.
- Must be open to non members without the need to pre-book.
- Must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act 1936.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Evidence of up-to-date Quality Assurance Scheme grading or membership of the Caravan Club/ Camping and Caravanning Club.
- Details of facilities offered on-site, including number of pitches.
- Evidence of up to date licensing.

7. Youth Hostels

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Must be open without the need for prior booking during normal opening hours.
- Hostels managed by the Youth Hostel Association may be granted tourism signs with the YHA symbol. Other hostels may be signed, but not with the YHA symbol.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Evidence that it is managed by the YHA, if appropriate.

8. Tourist/Visitor Information Centres and Points

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Must be recognised by the Regional Tourist Board in order to be signed with the recognised symbol. Note: Tourism signs for recognised strategic Tourist Information Points and Centres will normally be provided by the local authorities.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Up-to-date evidence of recognition by Regional Tourist Board.

9. Bypassed communities – local services

These signs are provided for the benefit of drivers on all-purpose roads to highlight the availability of services, during working hours, in a bypassed community.

Eligibility criteria

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- The community must usually be a small town or village with a population of less than 10,000.
- The community must offer a variety of services to visitors from outside the local area. These might include adequate parking and public toilets (both must be clearly signed within the community), public telephones, shops and/or refreshments.
- The community must be within 3 miles of the road from which the services are to be signed, and be the first community reached after leaving that road.
- Adequate confirmatory and return signing must be provided.

Note: Bypassed community tourism signs will not be eligible if the destination is already signed as a primary destination using

standard directional signing.

Additional supporting evidence required:

As for ALL applicants. In addition:

- Up to date evidence of the population of the community.
- Details of the services offered within the community.
- Map detailing location of the community in relation to the road from which the services are to be signed.
- Details of existing or proposed confirmatory and return signing.

Additional guidance for tourism signs for bypassed communities.

- There must be no detriment to road safety, good traffic management or the environment as a result of traffic looking for services.
- Encouragement of this traffic must be acceptable to the local community as a whole and should be determined by the appropriate district/parish council.
- If a community has establishments which qualify for tourism signs these may be included on the local services sign in the form of a small standard symbol. Individual qualifying attractions may also be eligible for other tourism signs within the bypassed community.



- A descriptive phrase which refers to the history of the community, the attractions present, or important environmental features may be included, for example ‘Historic Market Town’. The phrase will not exceed three words.

10. Rural community signing schemes

These signs are provided where there may be several tourism establishments in one rural community. All rural settlements in the county are eligible for this type of sign and will be developed in consultation with parish/town/district councils who may also wish to consult business interests. Coggeshall is an example of a successful community signing scheme.

The local town or parish council will be responsible for deciding the detail and content of individual rural community signing schemes.

Such schemes might incorporate:

- A local information board, with the words ‘Local Information’ in addition to the standard sign (if appropriate).
- Supplementary plates attached to the village name plates which could be erected at the village entry points.
- Signing within the settlement. This should aim to direct the traffic to adequate car parking facilities where possible. Individual attractions should be signed with pedestrian signs from the parking facilities. It may also be possible for the local information points to be provided at car parks to highlight the location of the major facilities.
- The entry sign for rural communities should incorporate a standard symbol for a village shop.
- If highway signs already exist in a rural settlement, ECC retains the right to remove these signs in conjunction with the introduction of a rural community signs scheme under this policy.
- The urban settlements detailed in Section 5 of this Appendix are not eligible for this type of sign.

11. Environmental considerations

In addition to road safety considerations, the likely impact on the visual environment will also be a deciding factor as to whether signs will be permitted.

• **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Dedham Vale**

In order to balance environmental considerations with the needs of the local tourist industry, a co-ordinated approach is necessary. Vehicular traffic signs will not be permitted. The car park in Dedham village will remain signed with normal direction signs. Information boards displaying the attractions to visit, where to eat, and other facilities such as toilets, will be provided within the car park with pedestrian signing from the car park to the various facilities.

• **Conservation areas**

Consideration may be given to the signing of tourist attractions within conservation areas. The signing of individual establishments will not be permitted. A sign located on the boundary of the town/village showing the appropriate symbols for the relevant facilities within the conservation area may be considered. The cost of boundary signs will be shared between the operators of those establishments.

12. Country tours and tourist routes

Where roads linking places of interest have been designated as a circular country tour, this can be signed using white on brown signs. These signs should be repeated as necessary along the country tour until the original departure point is returned to (e.g. a permanently established tourist information facility with good access and toilets). Such signs are not prescribed for motorways and are not normally recommended for high-speed dual carriageways where the speed limit is 50mph or more. Signs incorporating the “cycle” symbol may be used to indicate a tour specifically for cyclists.

Where a linear route has been designated as a tourist route, this can be signed using white on brown signs. A route would normally be designated as a tourist route if it is an alternative route to the quickest or most direct route to the named destination. These signs are repeated until the destination is reached. The legends such as “tourist route” or “scenic route” may be used. Such signs are not prescribed for motorways and are not normally recommended for high-speed dual carriageways where the speed limit is 50mph or more.

13. Tourism signing on motorways and/or trunk roads

There are additional rules to those detailed in each category for tourism signs on motorways and trunk roads. It is necessary to involve the Highways Agency in this type of application.

The additional rules are listed below.

Criteria for all-purpose single carriageways and dual carriageways with speed limits of 50mph or less:

- There must also be tourism signs on the adjacent local road network, approved by ECC.
- The route that traffic is being directed onto must be the most suitable link between the destination and the trunk road.
- Signs could be refused if there are siting difficulties or where the number of destinations signed at a single junction would be excessive.
- Tourist attractions with direct access to an all-purpose trunk road may not need signs if the entrance is visible and identifiable from a safe distance.

Criteria for all-purpose dual carriageways with speed limits of 50mph or above:

As for speed limits of 50mph and less, and in addition:

- The attraction should normally be within 20 miles of the junction from which it is being signed.

- Taking account of the high speeds of traffic, the number of tourist attractions signed should not exceed four, so that signs will be legible and of a manageable size.

Criteria for motorway and fully graded separated all-purpose dual carriageways: As above for single and dual carriageways with speed limits of 50mph or above, and in addition:

- The attraction should have at least 150,000 visitors per year;
- Some new sign layouts highlighted in the Traffic Signs Regulations may not be erected on motorways. The divisional manager will advise you on this;
- On all-purpose trunk roads nearby groups of attractions and facilities can be signed collectively, if collectively they meet the visitor number criteria. It might not be possible to show the name of each individual attraction in full, and in such cases symbols rather than legends would be used to indicate the type of attraction.



Appendix 2 - Road safety and traffic management issues

Road safety and traffic management considerations

The routes visitors use to reach your attraction or facility will be assessed on the assumption that more vehicles (and these might include touring coaches and lorries servicing the premises), pedestrians and cyclists will be generated through the presence of brown and white tourism signs. The county council maintains records of all injury accidents reported to the police and these records will be used during the evaluation, together with the following considerations:

- The ability of the junctions along the approaches to accommodate further signs.
- The adequacy of a route to carry the expected traffic.
- The suitability of the direct access to the premises from the public road.
- The parking arrangements and the safety of pedestrian routes to the premises.

It will not be possible to support an application where on-street parking already causes, or is expected to cause, inconvenience to residents or to general traffic.

Appendix 3 - Help and advice for filling in the application form

Filling in the application form

Section 1

Please ensure that you fully answer each question in this section.

Question 2: Address of the establishment to be signed

To apply for tourism signs you will need to provide an Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:50,000 or below) indicating the exact location of the facility applying for tourism signs.

This information can be shown on the same map requested in questions 6 and 8 of the application form. Please label the map clearly with the name and address of the facilities to avoid confusion.

Question 5: Tourism signs category

Please indicate which brown and white tourism signs category you feel your establishment falls under. If uncertain, please give a full description of the nature of activity so that we can try to place your establishment within one of the listed categories.

Question 6: Location of new tourism signs

Please provide an Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:50,000 or below) indicating the exact position of where you would like the tourism signs to be. This information can be shown on the same map requested in questions 2 and 8 of the application form. Please label the map clearly with the name and address of the facilities to avoid confusion.

Question 7: Symbol and wording required on tourism signs

Please indicate the wording and symbol you would like to use. Bear in mind the area engineer will advise you on this, if and when your application is approved, taking into consideration the national standards regulating the wording and size of signs. A symbol is not obligatory, but if required, the list of standard symbols can be found in Appendix 4 of these guidance notes.

Question 8: Existing advertising signs

Please provide an Ordnance Survey map (scale 1:50,000 or below) indicating the exact location of existing off-site advertising signs that relate to the facility making the application. This information can be shown on the same map requested in questions 2

and 6 of the application form. Please label the map clearly with the name and address of the facilities to avoid confusion.

Question 9: On trunk road or principal route

If the establishment is located on a trunk road or principal route it may not be eligible for tourism signs. See page 8 of these guidance notes for further information, or seek advice from the area engineer if you are not certain of the classification of the road the establishment is located on.

Question 10: Other tourism establishments in the area

Information provided here could lead to the sharing of costs of the tourism signs, and so it will be to your benefit to complete this question fully. It would be helpful if you could indicate the location of nearby attractions and the type of tourism facilities. This should include all of the types of facilities identified in question 5 of the application form.

Question 12: Length of time establishment has been operating

All establishments requiring tourism signs must submit proof of planning permission if they have been established in their current form for less than 10 years.

Questions 13 and 14: Promotion and clear directions

The applicant must provide evidence that appropriate steps are being taken to promote the establishment to visitors from outside the local area, including the location and clear directions on how to find the establishment.

Please give details of your target markets, and submit with your application samples of any advertising and promotional literature, along with details of where this is distributed e.g. leaflets, fliers, adverts, newsletters, and so on. Please also indicate if you have a website and how this is promoted.

Question 15: Car parking facilities

Adequate on-site parking must normally be available. Please indicate the number of vehicles that can be accommodated.

If off-site parking is provided it must be within reasonable distance. Please give details. If the car parking facilities are not in your ownership please provide written confirmation from the owner that this is acceptable.

Question 18: Customer care training

Please provide evidence that front of house staff have undertaken appropriate recognised customer care training. 'Front of house' staff are those who deal directly with the customer, e.g. hotel reception staff, a guide at an attraction, waitress etc.

Acceptable evidence includes a copy of a current appropriate customer care training certificate, details of courses undertaken indicating course content, details of your in-house training program, etc.

For details of tourism customer care training courses, such as the 'Welcome Host' series of certificates, please contact East of England Tourism, Tel: 01284 727470

Email: info@eet.org.uk

Section 2

Please answer the questions relevant to the type of establishment applying for brown and white tourism signs, and then move on to complete Section 3.

Question 19: Visitor attractions only

To qualify for tourism signs applicants must provide evidence that they participate in VisitBritain's National Code of Practice. Larger attractions are expected to subscribe to the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Service (VAQAS).

VAQAS, established by VisitBritain, is a consumer focused quality assessment service for visitor attractions. Further details and registration is available through VisitBritain, Tel: 0208 563 3373
Email: vaqas@visitbritain.org

Please provide annual visitor numbers for the attraction over the last 3 years, with details of how these figures are collected. Please also submit details of where visitors travel from, and in what proportions, to demonstrate that the majority of visitors are attracted from outside of the local area.

Question 20: Serviced accommodation only

To qualify for tourism signs applicants must provide up-to-date written confirmation of the quality grading achieved through a nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme.

For more information about the nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme, which is run by VisitBritain (through Quality in Tourism) and the AA, please contact:

Quality in Tourism:

Farncombe House, Broadway,
Worcestershire, WR12 7LJ

Tel: 0845 3006996

Email: qualityintourism@gslglobal.com

AA:

AA Hotel Services, 14th Floor Fanum House,
Basingstoke, RG21 4EA

Tel: 01256 844455

Email: hotelservicescustomersupport@theaa.com

Question 21: Camping and caravan sites only

To be eligible for tourism signs, camping and caravan site applicants must provide the following evidence:

- A copy of the latest site licence issued by your local district council environmental health department (Caravan Club and Camping and Caravanning Club sites are exempt from this requirement).
- Written evidence of either an up-to-date VisitBritain award, AA Quality Assurance inspection, or up-to-date evidence from the Caravan Club or Camping and Caravanning Club of membership, and endorsement that the facilities are open to non-members.

For information on becoming licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 or the Public Health Act 1936 please contact your local district/ borough council:

Basildon District Council:

Tel: 01268 294280

Braintree District Council:

Tel: 01376 557790

Brentwood Borough Council:

Tel: 01277 312504

Castle Point Borough Council:

Tel: 01268 882315

Chelmsford Borough Council:

Tel: 01245 606800

Colchester Borough Council:

Tel: 01206 507889

Epping District Council:

Tel: 01992 564034

Harlow District Council:

Tel: 01279 446111

Maldon District Council:

(managed by Chelmsford Borough Council

Tel: 01245 606800)

Rochford District Council:

Tel: 01702 546366

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council:

Tel: 01702 215331

Thurrock Council:

Tel: 01375 652482

Tendring District Council:

Tel: 01255 686767

Uttlesford District Council:

Tel: 01799 510370

Question 24: Public houses only

Please provide supporting information to demonstrate that you offer a selection of hot meals both at lunchtime and in the evening without the need for pre-booking.

Please also provide sample advertising literature and menus.

If serviced accommodation is also offered at the pub, applicants must provide up-to-date written confirmation of the quality grading achieved through a nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme.

For more information about the nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme please see question 20.

Question 25: Public houses, restaurants and cafés

Please provide evidence that the public house, restaurant or café is of recognised historical importance or culinary significance, such as an up-to-date culinary award (for example, Michelin Star) or special recommendation (for example, entry in the Good Pub Guide).

Question 26: Serviced accommodation, public houses and restaurants/cafés

It is necessary to be inspected by the environmental health department of your district council to ensure that the premises meet the food and safety (General Food Hygiene) regulations 1995 and the Food Safety Act 1990.

For information on food and safety regulations and inspections please contact your local district/borough council's environmental health department listed on page 20.



Question 27: Retail establishments only

Retail facilities must be able to demonstrate that they are of particular interest to the tourism market. The final decision will be made by Essex County Council. Please detail any tours/demonstrations or interpretation displays that are available about the facilities on-site, for example information panels, models and displays about the history of the site, or explanation of any work processes that are carried out.



Question 28: Toilet and refreshment facilities offered on-site

Toilet and refreshment facilities should be offered at retail establishments, recreational facilities, sports centres and cinemas/theatres where appropriate. By appropriate we mean with reference to the average length of visit and availability of toilet and refreshment facilities nearby.

Question 29: Recreational facilities and sports centres only

To demonstrate that the facilities and equipment are readily available for hire to non-members during normal opening hours, it would be useful if you could provide copies of publicity material or any other appropriate information to support your application.



Section 3

This section is to be completed by ALL applicants.

Appendix 4 -

The symbols

The Department for Transport has provided the standard symbols shown below, which represent the most common types of tourist attraction and facility.

When an applicant requires more than one tourism sign in order to ensure continuity on the route, one standard symbol may be used on all signs relating to it.

Symbols are not obligatory on signs and the omission of symbols can be of benefit in simplifying the sign content, particularly where a number of facilities are being signed.



T1
Tourist
Information
Point



T2
Castle of historic or
architectural interest



T3
House of historic or
architectural interest



T4
Picnic Area



T5
Youth Hostel



T6
Caravan Site



T7
Camping Site
or Park



T8
Woodland
Recreation Centre



T9
View Point



T10
Refreshment
Facilities



T11
Refreshment
Facilities



T12
Serviced
Accommodation



T101
National Trust
property



T102
Flower garden



T103
Preserved or tourist
railway or railway
museum



T104
Water sport activities



T109

Church of historic or architectural interest



T110

Cathedral of historic or architectural interest



T111

Wildlife Park



T112

Windmill of historic or architectural interest



T113

Zoo



T114

Agricultural museum



T115

Equestrian centre



T116

Country park



T117

Bird Garden



T118

Pleasure or theme park



T119

Nature reserve



T120

Historic dockyard or attraction of maritime interest



T121

Air museum



T122

Beach



T123

Farm park



T124

Pottery or craft centre



T121

Prehistoric site or monument



T122

Butterfly farm



T123

Canal-side attraction



T124

Industrial heritage museum or attraction



T125

Watermill of historic or architectural importance



T126

Aquarium or oceanarium



T127

Site with Roman remains



T128

Shire horse centre



T129
Motor museum



T130
Craft centre or forge



T131
Spa, spring or fountain



T132
Farm trail



T133
Vineyard



T134
Golf course



T135
Race course



T136
Motor sport



T137
Cricket ground



T138
Football ground



T139
Canoeing



T140
Fishing



T141
Boat hire



T142
Cycle hire



T143
Woodland walk in coniferous forest



T144
Woodland walk in deciduous or mixed forest



T145
Outdoor pursuit centre



T146
Roller skating



T147
Skating



T148
Dry ski slope



T149
Ten pin bowling



T150
Birds of prey centre



T151
RSPB centre



T152
Centre recognised by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust



T153
Safari Park



T154
Battlefield site



T155
Brass rubbing centre



T156
Tower or folly of historic or architectural interest



T157
Historic buildings



T158
Lighthouse open to the public



T159
Pier



T160
Swimming pool or under water sports centre



T161
Tram museum



T162
Bus museum



T163
Cinema



T164
Theatre or concert hall



T165
Tourist attraction recognised by the Regional Tourist Board



T166
Property in the care of English Heritage



T167
Museum or art gallery



T168
Sports centre



T169
National Nature Reserve Designated by English Nature

