



Derry City & Strabane
District Council

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DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032



PLAN STRATEGY

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) –Outdoor Advertisements
DRAFT- June 2025

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/subsites/ldp>



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Supplementary Planning Guidance

(SPG)

Outdoor Advertisements

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Any reference within this document to legislation, policy or associated guidance should be read as referring to the current publications



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APPENDIX 1

Signs in Conservation Areas or that would affect a Listed Building or other areas of high amenity value

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The main purpose of this guidance is to provide a consistent basis against which to consider the display of different categories of advertisements. In drawing up the guidance it is acknowledged that amenity and public safety are the only criteria that can be taken into account in assessing proposals for advertisements.
- 1.2 The guidance is not intended to be overly prescriptive, but is intended to advise applicants and commercial companies involved in promoting outdoor advertising how it can be appropriately designed and sited and even contribute towards a quality environment.

2. **Policy Context**

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

- 2.1 The RDS provides regional guidance under the three sustainable development themes of economy, society and environment. It seeks to promote employment and support economic development of the region while sustaining a high quality environment. While the role of advertisements is not specifically referred to in the RDS, by its very nature advertising contributes to the creation of a vibrant and competitive economy and as such care must be exercised given the potential significant impact that outdoor advertising can have on the environment.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland (2015)

- 2.2 The SPPS identifies core principles to assist with plan-making and decision taking. It recognises the need to support good design and positive placemaking, that good design contributes to the creation of places to live that are safe and attractive and is a key element in achieving sustainable development.
- 2.3 Under 'Improving Health and Wellbeing', the SPPS recognises that there are several environmental and amenity considerations arising from development that may have potential health and well-being implications, including impacts relating to visual intrusion, general nuisance, loss of light and overshadowing.

The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

- 2.4 Section 130 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 sets out the legislative requirements for the control of advertisements. Section 130 (1) states that provision must be made by regulations to restrict or regulate the display of advertisements. The subsequent regulations are The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. Article 4 of these regulations state that no advertisements can be displayed unless consent for its display has been granted by application (for advertisement consent) or adverts that are permitted within the parameters of deemed consent as set in Article 5 of the regulations.

- 2.5 Section 175 (2) of The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states that any person who displays an advertisement in contravention of the Regulations is guilty of an offence and on summary conviction is liable to a fine with the potential for further daily fines in the case of a continuing offence. Furthermore, Section 175 (3) (a) and (b) provide that a person shall be deemed to display an advertisement where it is displayed on land of which he is the owner or occupier, or it gives publicity to his goods, trade, business or other concerns.
- 2.6 In effect, this means that the council may in such cases seek to prosecute:
- (a) the person, business or company responsible for the advertisement.
 - (b) the landowner or the occupier of the land.
 - (c) the person, business or company being advertised; or
 - (d) any combination of these.
- 2.7 The Planning Act also makes it clear that in the case of (b) or (c) above, a person shall not be guilty of an offence if he can prove that the unauthorised advertisement was displayed without his knowledge or consent. The council will normally pursue court action for unauthorised advertisements which it considers unacceptable.

Local Planning policy

Plan Strategy

- 2.8 The LDP 2032 Plan Strategy (PS) provides the strategic policy framework for the district across a range of topics. It sets out the vision for the area as well as the objectives and strategic policies required to deliver that vision. It includes a suite of topic-based operational policies, including those relating to Advertising. This guidance supplements policies AD 1 Signage & Outdoor Advertisements and AD 2 Advertisements and Heritage Assets.

3. Poster Panel Displays

- 3.1 Poster panel displays do not generally relate directly to the land or premises on which they are located. They comprise the more traditional paper posters on panels or hoardings, either freestanding or attached to buildings, also modern displays, including moving prismatic panels, and internally illuminated PVC faced panels.
- 3.2 Poster panel displays are a common feature of urban advertising and rely on size and siting for their impact. As a result they have the potential to be over-dominant and obtrusive in the street scene. There is a need therefore to ensure that such displays respect the scale of their surroundings. Equally there is a need to prevent clutter and the undue dominance of such advertisements over other uses of land.

The Countryside

- 3.3 Poster panel displays would be out of place in the countryside and will generally be unacceptable. An exception may be made where the display advertises a particular event, such as a local agricultural show or fair, and is restricted to a specified time period.

Villages and Small Settlements

- 3.4 Large scale poster panel displays would be generally out of place in villages and small settlements because of their potential to detrimentally impact on the visual amenity of these locations. Smaller poster panels may be acceptable depending on their size and on the scale and character of the village. The position and siting of such signage should respect the size, scale and character of surrounding buildings and features.

Residential Areas

- 3.5 Poster panel displays would be generally out of place in any predominantly residential locality. The priority in residential areas is to maintain local character and environmental quality and to protect the amenity of residents. The size, scale and intrusive nature of poster panel displays therefore make them generally unacceptable. An exception may be made for the display of a poster panel on bus shelters in residential areas where there will be no significant impact on the amenity of adjacent residents.

Predominantly Commercial Areas

- 3.6 In commercial areas the scale of buildings may be sufficiently large to accommodate poster panel displays without adverse effect on visual amenity. The scale of commercial and industrial surroundings in our cities and towns can however vary greatly, often within short distances. It will be expected therefore that the scale of advertisement displays should respect the scale of adjacent buildings and the wider area.
- 3.7 Where an area is in mixed use, with shops and offices interspersed with residential properties, poster panel displays may on occasion be acceptable. They should be carefully related to the size and scale of surrounding buildings and designed in a manner that will not damage visual amenity or prejudice public safety.

Freestanding Advertisement Displays

- 3.8 Large freestanding panels (generally 48 sheet displays or greater) are commonly used to screen derelict and untidy land. These sites can be a potential eyesore and often a carefully designed scheme for screening that integrates advertisement panels can prevent fly tipping, vandalism and help ensure security. Such schemes need to be well maintained and will generally only be acceptable on a temporary basis.
- 3.9 Freestanding displays are also often found at airports, ports and other gateway locations where they generally provide information on the locality, local events and services.

Design Guidelines:

- the number, scale, proportions and design of freestanding advertisement panels should respect the site and its surrounding area. In particular where these are situated at the back edge of the pavement, or in other prominent locations, care will be needed to ensure that their effect on pedestrians is not overwhelming;
- panel displays should be integrated into a well-designed scheme of good quality screening which allows for visual breaks between each panel. Areas to the sides of and around the hoardings should be considered with as much care as the display itself;
- wherever possible, good quality hard and soft landscaping should form part of the proposal and should be of sufficient scale to assist integration of the panel by reducing the visual impact of the overall display; and
- where the rear of the advertising panel is visible from surrounding roads or properties it should be appropriately treated.

Gable Mounted Advertisement Displays

- 3.10 Large scale poster panels (generally 48 sheet displays) located on gables are a common feature in the predominantly commercial parts of our towns and cities and may offer benefits, such as screening an untidy gable. Care however needs to be taken with such proposals to ensure they are not over dominant, and relate well to the building on which they are proposed to be positioned.

Design Guidelines:

- the form, design, size, proportions and siting of a wall mounted poster panel should be sympathetic to the building to which it is to be attached;
- the panel should generally be above ground floor level on the gable and be symmetrical with the wall on which it is to be positioned;
- interesting features, for example architectural details, should not be obscured or destroyed; and
- windows should not be covered and the normal functioning of the building should not be adversely affected.

- 3.11 Tiers of advertisement poster panels affecting the gable or flank wall of a building should be avoided as they can have a significant detrimental impact over long distance views, whilst more local views can appear cluttered.
- 3.12 The guidance above also applies to large electronic screen displays and to freestanding panels in front of a gable or flank wall of a building.

4. Shroud Advertisement Displays

- 4.1 Shroud advertisement displays are a relatively new form of advertising. They are known by a variety of names such as meshes, wraparounds or blow-up signs. They range in size, but are generally large-scale and can cover the whole of an elevation of a building. They can even be used to present an image of what a building will look like when alterations, renovations or building works have been completed.
- 4.2 In view of their scale and size, shroud advertisements have the potential to seriously conflict with the visual amenity of the buildings upon which the display is situated and the area in which buildings are sited. Accordingly, proposals for this type of advertisement are only likely to be acceptable in commercial areas, where they are to be attached to scaffolding surrounding a building or development site and where a contract has been drawn up for the building or renovation works.
- 4.3 To prevent clutter, account will be taken of the number of similar proposals located within the vicinity of the site and others that have the benefit of advertisement consent.

5. Signs on Commercial Premises

- 5.1 Signs and advertisements on commercial premises are important in announcing the presence of a business in the street and in directing customers to that location, and can assist the vibrancy of our city and town centres and other commercial areas. When sympathetically sited and designed they can contribute positively to the distinctive visual amenity of an area by giving a sense of quality and permanence.
- 5.2 The most common signs on commercial premises are fascia signs and projecting signs, either box or hanging. Their design should always complement the design of the shopfront and building and respect the wider locality. An excessive number of signs or those which are too large can dramatically affect the premises on which they are sited and have an adverse impact on the general character of the area.

Fascia Signs

Design Guidelines:

- fascia signs should be of an appropriate size, and sited and designed to harmonise with the shop front, the façade of the building and any detailing thereon;
- where there is an original fascia, the sign should make use of this with generally no advertising at sub-fascia level or on pilasters or columns;
- where a new commercial building is proposed, the location of fascia signage should be integrated into the overall design.
- on older and more traditionally styled buildings, painted signs or non-illuminated letters are preferable to panels or other types of display. Refer to the relevant conservation design guide if located within a conservation area. These are available of the below links;

[Conservation Area Guides - Derry / Londonderry | Department for Infrastructure](#)

[Conservation Area Guide - Newtownstewart | Department for Infrastructure](#)

[Conservation Area Guide - Sion Mills | Department for Infrastructure](#)

- Particular care should be taken when erecting sign that would affect listed buildings and their settings.
- internal illumination should preferably be in the form of individually backlit letters; and
- where external illumination is proposed, trough lighting is preferred. The trough should extend over the whole fascia and be painted to integrate it into the whole display.

Projecting Signs

Design Guidelines:

- projecting signs should be sympathetic to the design of the building where they are to be displayed and respect fascia signage;
- box signs should be located at fascia level and are generally best situated at the end of the fascia;
- hanging signs may be acceptable at first floor level and are generally best situated in a central position between windows;

- **to reduce visual clutter a projecting sign will generally only be acceptable where there is no other projecting advertisement such as a canopy, awning, flag or horizontal banner;**
- **internal illumination should preferably be in the form of individually backlit letters;**
- **where external illumination is proposed trough lighting is preferred with the trough painted out;**
- **projecting signs should generally project no more than 1 metre including fixings, with a maximum end width of no more than 0.1m in the case of a box sign;**
- **projecting signs should be a minimum of 2.25m above ground level in the interests of public safety; and**
- **illuminated projecting signs are generally unacceptable immediately adjacent to a neighbouring residential property.**

Blinds and Awnings

- 5.3 Originally the function of blinds was to protect perishable goods from deterioration due to strong sunlight. Today however blinds, awnings and canopies are increasingly used as a means to provide additional advertising.
- 5.4 Blinds that are well designed can improve the attractiveness of a building or street. Poorly designed or prominently located blinds or canopies displaying advertising can however detract from the appearance of buildings, the surrounding neighbourhood, and can result in clutter. They are particularly obtrusive when located above windows on upper floors and should be avoided.

Design Guidelines:

- **blinds and awnings should be retractable, made from nonreflective material and be designed to integrate with the appearance and construction of the shopfront as a whole; and**
- **such blinds should be a minimum of 2.25m above ground level in the interests of public safety.**

Advertisements on Upper Floors

- 5.5 Where commercial premises occupy the upper floors of buildings the need to advertise their whereabouts can be important to their viability. Great care needs

to be taken in considering how this can be achieved without the exterior of the building appearing cluttered.

- 5.6 Fascia signs, panel style signs, canopies, flags and banners are generally out of place on upper floors.

Design Guidelines:

- **advertising on upper floors should be printed or etched onto the glass or on to internal window blinds. As an alternative, individual letters rather than an advertisement panel may be suspended behind the glass.**
- 5.7 These guidelines also apply to commercial premises on ground floors wishing to advertise on upper floors.

High Level Signs

- 5.8 High level signs generally relate to those vertical or horizontal signs on the walls of tall, single use buildings such as hotels. If not treated with great sensitivity they have the potential to give the appearance of clutter within the local street scene and be obtrusive and dominant over long distances particularly when located on roofs.

Design Guidelines:

- **high level signs will generally only be appropriate where they relate to the scale and primary use of the host building;**
- **they should be designed to be read as part of the building and should not detract from any architectural feature;**
- **they should not project above the eaves or parapet of the host building; and**
- **they should have only the lettering illuminated.**

Offices in Former Residential Properties

- 5.9 In predominantly residential areas, where offices occupy part or all of a former residential property, it is essential that advertising remains unobtrusive in order that the residential amenity and character of the area is not prejudiced. Even in situations where offices occupy a row of former residential properties it will generally still be important to retain the overall residential appearance of the

area. A more flexible approach will however be considered in those areas where, through ongoing change, surroundings have become mainly commercial.

Design Guidelines

- **the advertisement of offices in former residential properties should be by means of nameplates made of metal or other suitable materials and should be fixed to the doorway pilaster, or if there is no pilaster, they may be fixed to the masonry beside the front door; and**
- **painted or etched lettering on a front window will also generally be acceptable.**

6. Signs at Retail and Business Parks

- 6.1 In retail parks and business parks the uncoordinated display of advance advertisements or ad hoc directional signs to individual businesses, which bears no direct relationship to the building, land or structure upon which it is displayed is often confusing, untidy and detrimental to the appearance of an area.
- 6.2 There is great potential for all advertising associated with retail or business parks to be undertaken in a planned and co-ordinated manner. Ideally the fascia signs for individual premises should form an integral part of the building, while a single carefully designed directory board located at the entrance to the park or in other acceptable locations can avoid a proliferation of advance signs.

Design Guidelines:

- **all new buildings in a retail or business park should incorporate a signing zone as part of the design;**
- **fascia and projecting signs should be in scale with the host building and surrounding buildings and be consistent across the whole unit; and**
- **advance signage should be provided in the form of a combined directory board within a proposed or existing landscaped area designed and integrated as one scheme.**

7. Signs at Filling Stations and on Forecourts

- 7.1 Signage at filling stations usually comprises a combination of a canopy, a pole /pylon, and shop fascia signage together with several smaller forecourt signs. In view of the range of signs involved there is often potential for their cumulative effect to result in clutter. To help prevent this a co-ordinated approach should be

taken when bringing forward proposals, particularly where existing signage is being replaced.

- 7.2 Particular care is needed in assessing proposals for illuminated advertisements at filling stations located adjacent to or near residential properties.

Design Guidelines:

- **all signs should be in scale with their surroundings and not detract from the amenity of the surrounding area;**
- **illumination should generally be restricted to the sign lettering and logo; and**
- **freestanding signs should be located so as not to interfere with or obstruct sightlines.**

8. Pylon and Pole Mounted Signs

- 8.1 Pylon and pole mounted signs are a common feature at petrol filling stations. Increasingly they are found in association with drive-through restaurants, supermarkets, retail warehousing, retail parks and car showrooms.
- 8.2 The height, size and levels of illumination of these signs may result in visual intrusion within the locality where they are situated. They can be extremely dominant over long distances and detract not only from the character and appearance of the area in which they are sited but also that of the area from which they are viewed. In addition where they are proposed close to residential properties they can be detrimental to amenities enjoyed by local residents.

Design Guidelines:

- **pylon and pole mounted signs should be in scale with their surroundings and they should not significantly exceed surrounding building heights;**
- **they should not detract from the visual amenity or character of the surrounding area;**
- **they should not be sited adjacent to, and wherever possible should not directly face residential properties; and**
- **illumination should generally be restricted to the sign lettering and logo**

9. **Illuminated signs, including LEDs**

- 9.1 Illuminated signs, including LEDs, where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road and could result in glare or dazzle, or otherwise distract road users especially in wet or misty weather. Permission will be granted when the level of illumination proposed is appropriate to the location. Where external lighting is proposed, 'trough' lighting is preferred; the trough should extend over the fascia advertisement and be painted to integrate into the built form. Illumination of external signage will be restricted to the sign lettering and logo.
- 9.2 Digital advertising screens should only display static images and should not contain moving images. The rate of change between successive displays should not be instantaneous and should not include the sequencing of images over more than one advert or a message sequence, where a message is spread across more than one screen image. The minimum message display duration should ensure that most approaching drivers do not see more than two messages. The minimum message display duration of each image shall be calculated by dividing the maximum sight distance to the digital advertisement (metres) by the speed limit (metres/second) of the road (30mph = 13.4m/s, 40mph = 17.9m/s, 50mph = 22.4m/s, 60mph = 26.8m/s, 70mph = 31.3m/s).
- 9.3 The luminance of the screen should be controlled by light sensors which automatically adjust screen brightness for ambient light levels, in order to avoid glare at night and facilitate legibility during daytime. The proposed advertising screen should generally comply with the Institute of Lighting Professionals' guidance PLG05, 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements'. Maximum nighttime luminance of the digital screen must not exceed the appropriate value from Table 4 of PLG05, which must be considered in conjunction with the environmental zones as defined in Table 3 of PLG 05. Proposed luminance levels and control arrangements are to be agreed by the Department for Infrastructure Roads. Advertisements shall not resemble traffic signs or provide directional advice. Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order 1997 makes it an offence to display any sign which resembles a traffic sign on or near a public road. Telephone numbers and website addresses should not be displayed. These and other detailed technical specifications will be as approved by DfI Roads.

APPENDIX 1

Signs in Conservation Areas or that would affect a Listed Building or other areas of high amenity value

We have 5 Conservation Areas within the Council area, which are areas of special architectural or historic interest.

- Sion Mills designated in 1977
- Newtownstewart 1993
- Historic City 1977/extended in 2006
- Clarendon Street 1978/ extended 2006
- Magee 2006

Advertising proposals affecting listed buildings, Conservation Areas, Areas of Townscape Character (ATC), Scheduled Monument or other areas of high amenity value require special consideration and sensitivity. The following represents general good practice in relation to signage either on, or impacting the setting of, heritage assets:

- **Historic signage** – hand painted signage, gable painted signage which contributes to the character and appearance of the building and the area should be protected and retained.
- **Style** -signage should complement the age and architectural style of the building.
- **Materials** – handwritten timber board or brass plate providing the most acceptable form of advertisement.
- **Projecting signs** – should be limited as they can contribute to visual clutter and adversely affect listed buildings.
- **Illumination** – can have significant adverse impact on character and appearance of listed buildings. Presumption against illumination and lighting projecting forward. Halo lighting of individual letters may for some buildings be considered acceptable and should have warm white lighting

Scheduled Monument Consent may be required for applications on or adjacent to the Derry Walls and other scheduled monuments under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

Those seeking to display advertisements on or adjacent to the Scheduled Derry Walls are advised to familiarise themselves with the Derry Walls Management Plan (2018) and the Derry Walls Conservation Plan (2015) prior to making any application.

An application for advertisement consent on a Listed Building will also require Listed Building Consent.