

**East Dunbartonshire Council**

**Advertisement Consent Planning Guidance**

**Draft November 2021**

## Introduction

This Planning Guidance is intended to support implementation of the East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP). The relationship between the LDP, Supplementary Guidance and Planning Guidance is established in Scottish Government Circular 6/2013, and summarised in the table below.

| Document                 | Purpose and Scope   |
|--------------------------|---|
| LDP                      | <p>Sets out the Council's policies for the development and use of land, including community strategies which identify opportunities for development, for the period up to ten years from adoption.</p> <p>This guidance supports LDP 2017 and LDP2. This guidance refers to policies in LDP2 as the Council's up to date policy position.</p>   |
| Supplementary Guidance:  | <p>Supplementary Guidance is statutory as it forms part of the development plan, and has that status for decision making. It is limited to the provision of further information or detail in respect of policies or proposals set out in the LDP. Supplementary Guidance will be adopted with the LDP and lasts for the period of the Plan.</p>   |
| <b>Planning Guidance</b> | <p>Non-statutory planning guidance may be used to provide detail on a range of subject areas. This form of guidance should not be termed Supplementary Guidance and will not form part of the development plan. However, adoption of this guidance by the Council gives it formal status, meaning that it may be a material consideration in decision making. Planning guidance can be updated as required and without the need for scrutiny by Scottish Ministers. Such updates are normally required where a specific issue arises during the period of the Plan.</p> |

## Context

Advertisements can play an important role in our lives; they provide information and an awareness of services and products. However, if there were no planning controls the placing of advertisements can adversely impact upon road safety and the visual character of our communities. This can particularly become an issue where there is a proliferation of advertisements competing for attention.

In order to strike a balance between the conflicting interests of a competitive economy and the desire to regulate the impact of advertisements on the appearance of surrounding areas, the government has provided regulations specifying which advertisements need consent (see The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984). Note that signage within the boundary of public roads, including brown tourism sign-posting, is governed by the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 and Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and is the responsibility of the Roads Authority.

Where advertisement consent is required applications will be assessed against the provisions of the adopted East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (LDP) and the guidance contained within this note. Policy 10 of LDP2 'Design and Placemaking' puts high quality design at the heart of the decision-making process and is applicable to all applications received by the Planning Service, including advertisements. Policy 10 states that development should not dominate the surrounding area by way of size, scale, proportions or design and should be designed to ensure a positive impact on the character, function and amenity of the surrounding area. This guidance note provides practical detail to support the aims of Policy 10 with specific regard to advertisements. The guidance is a material consideration that shall be afforded significant weight in the decision making process.

Where relevant to the location or type of advertisement proposed this Guidance Note should also be read in conjunction Policy 11 of LDP2 'Transport', Policy 19 'Historic Environment' and/ or the Shop Fronts section of the Design and Placemaking Supplementary Planning Guidance.

# Policy Guidance on the Control of Advertisements

In determining applications for consent to display advertisements on buildings, the Council will pay particular attention to design, dimensions, illumination and position of the advertisement, together with its impact on the building. The Council will not permit advertisements which would have a detrimental effect on the amenity and character of the street or on road safety. In the interests of amenity, and in order to avoid clutter, the number of advertisements should be restricted to a minimum. In a town centre, illumination can where appropriate be attractive at night and thus contributing towards the vitality of the area. In areas where there are a mix of different uses present, careful consideration is required to ensure appropriateness of the advertisement and in particular negative impacts upon residential amenity should be avoided. Digital signs with moving images and lettering should generally be avoided in the interests of maintaining road safety.

Specific guidance for different types and locations of advertisements is set out as follows:

## **A - Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Townscape Protection Areas**

**Location** – All advertisements must be carefully and sympathetically located to ensure that there is no negative impact upon the character or setting of the Listed Buildings, Conservation Area or Townscape Protection Area.

**Scale and Design** – New advertisements must be properly related to the architectural design of the buildings on which they are displayed. Particular attention will be paid to the size of lettering and only more subtle styles should be employed.

**Illumination** – Any illumination should be restricted to lettering only and should be externally up-lit or down-lit. Internal letter illumination will generally be inappropriate.

**Digital Signs** – Digital adverts will be unacceptable in historic settings in almost all circumstances.

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## **B - Advance Warning Signs for Individual Premises**

Advanced signs (not at the site of the business to which the advertisement relates) will generally be opposed, except for the purposes of road safety to give information to the public.

**Location** – Where the principle of an individual sign is accepted, the display should normally comprise one double-sided sign at the public/private road junction leading directly to the premises advertised. A series of repetitive signs will not be acceptable. In cases where two or more businesses require advance signs at one road junction, the use of a composite sign will be encouraged. All

signs must be erected outwith the road boundary. Sites with a visual backdrop of existing trees, bushes and walls will be preferred.

**Scale and Design** – The overall size of individual advance signs shall not normally exceed 1200mm x 600mm or be more than two metres in height from ground level. The signs should contain only explanatory information (e.g. directions) rather than general advertising. The maximum size of letter will depend on traffic speed.

**Illumination** – Illumination will be considered where it would be demonstrably difficult to see the sign at night and providing it can be done without prejudice to road safety. External illumination (e.g. downlighting) is preferred. Where downlighting is to be used, preference will be given to downlighting units of the same colour as the fascia.

**Digital Signs** – Digital advanced warning signs would generally be inappropriate due to the potential impact upon road safety.

### **C - Shops and Offices**

**Location** – In general terms, advertisements on commercial premises should be restricted to the fascia area of those premises having fascia displays. Only one projecting sign per commercial frontage will generally be allowed. The lower edge of such a sign must be at least 2450mm above pavement level and must be set back at least 500mm from the kerb.

**Scale and Design** – The size of any advertisement should be related to the scale and form of the building on which it is displayed. Applicants will be strongly advised to give full consideration to the Shop Fronts section of the Design and Placemaking Supplementary Planning Guidance prior to any application that includes fascia advertisement being submitted. The depth of any fascia should either be made to fit the space designed for it or, where no such space exists, its depth should not exceed 700mm or one half of the vertical distance between the top of the shopfront and the sill of the first floor window, whichever is the smaller.

The size of lettering on a fascia should generally be restricted to 300mm in height unless on large scale building in which case it should be proportionate to its depth, and considered on its own merits. Signs consisting of painted letters or individually fixed letters on a plain background are generally preferable to using shiny acrylic panels, as this allows scope for variety, individuality and character.

The display of large projecting signs and advertisements on walls, forecourt walls and fences is discouraged. Projecting box and hanging signs should be in scale and character with the shopfront and streetscene as a whole and should generally not exceed the depth of the fascia.

**Illumination** – Preference will be given to signs with individual illuminated letters and fascias illuminated by down lighters or trough lighting as will projecting signs with down lighters. Illuminated advertisements should not normally be located above first floor level except where it can be demonstrated that the position proposed is essential in relation to the function of the building.

Illuminated signs must not obscure or resemble official road signs or traffic lights. Care must be taken to ensure that illuminated advertisements do not cause confusion with such official signs such as to create a danger for road users. Illuminated shop signs near residential properties should not cause detriment to residential amenity.

**Digital Signs** – Digital signs may be appropriate particularly in out of centre locations where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impact upon road safety or the character of the surrounding area.

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### **D - Hotels, Public Houses and Restaurants**

**Location** – Generally, a greater flexibility is appropriate due to dependence on passing trade, although strict control will be applied in relation to listed buildings or buildings located in Conservation Areas. One projecting sign on each frontage is the preferred arrangement, with any further signs being wall mounted. Where the building is set back, consideration will be given to a free standing sign and directional signs. In general, the use of standard signs for specific products (e.g. brewers signs) should be avoided.

**Scale and Design** – Scale should be carefully related to that of the building and should not mask architectural features. Encouragement will be given to the use of individual designed signs in preference to standard ‘company’ signs.

**Illumination** – Illumination of signs is acceptable for these types of uses. External illumination of fascia, projecting or free standing pole mounted signs are preferable to internally illuminated box signs. In some instances floodlighting may be appropriate where this can be achieved without negative impacts upon the amenity or character of the surroundings.

**Digital Signs** – Digital signs may be appropriate dependent on the nature of the premise/ building and where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impact upon road safety or the character of the surrounding area.

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### **E - Garages and Petrol Filling Stations**

**Location** – The appropriate levels of display would normally comprise of a pole mounted sign or identity sign, either on the fascia of the building or on the canopy. It has become usual to allow a further sign affixed to the pole mounted sign to display price or special offers.

**Scale and Design** – There has been considerable rationalising of advertisement by the large petrol companies, and this has been a generally

satisfactory trend. However, proliferation of associated uses, such as car washes and general shops, could lead to pressure for a greater amount of advertising. This will only be allowed where the collective level of advertising is not excessive.

**Illumination** – It is appropriate for the pole mounted sign, and the company name and logo, to be illuminated. Additional illumination, of the entire canopy fascia in particular, is considered excessive and will not be allowed.

**Digital Signs** – Digital signs may be appropriate where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impact upon road safety.

### **F - Industrial Buildings**

**Location** – Advertisements identifying businesses or their products should generally be confined to the walls of the building, although free standing signs may be acceptable where there are large yards or forecourts.

**Scale and Design** – Generally, the scale of signs and lettering should not be excessive in relation to the size of the building.

**Illumination** – Illumination of advertisements may be appropriate for the identification of individual properties within an industrial area, but not be of a level which would cause nuisance to neighbouring residential areas.

**Digital Signs** – Digital signs may be appropriate where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impact upon road safety.

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### **G - Free Standing and Functional Signs (Hoardings and Display Panels)**

**Location** – These signs may be acceptable in small gap sites in urban areas, where it is proposed that a new building is to be erected, to have a positive effect on amenity and where the scale and character of the surroundings is considered appropriate. In all cases they will be considered on their own merits in the interests of amenity and public safety. New hoardings are unlikely to be acceptable in rural areas, Conservation Areas, Townscape Protection Areas, predominantly residential areas, open areas within the urban area and on or beside Listed Buildings.

**Scale and Design** – The scale and design of a hoarding should be related to the size and layout of the site. Where a gap site is involved, a generous landscaping treatment should be incorporated. If free standing, it should be integrated into the framework of a wall, fence or purpose designed structure.

**Illumination** – Discreet illumination may be permitted in already well lit areas, where this does not harm amenity (including residential amenity) or public safety.

**Digital Signs** – Digital signs may be appropriate where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impact upon road safety or the character of the surrounding area.

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## **Enforcement**

Unauthorised advertising can have a serious effect on the appearance of our towns and villages and on road safety. The Council will therefore take a robust and consistent approach over these matters.

It is an offence under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 to place obstructions including unauthorised signs within the road boundary. Advertising signs and banners erected on a public road (including pavements and verges) without the Roads Authority's consent are considered unauthorised and may be removed without notice. Advertisements on street furniture will also be removed without notice.

In the case of unauthorised signs in other locations, including parked vehicles/ trailers, the Planning Authority will use its standard enforcement procedure and will secure the removal of unacceptable signs through the powers contained in the Planning Regulations.

The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 Part II gives Planning Authorities power to remove flyposting (including banners, posters and placards) where these cause a nuisance or harm the amenity of an area. The Planning Authority will exercise its powers to remove flyposters where appropriate.