

Advertising – Protecting and enhancing our borough

Our purpose is to make Ards and North Down the best place to live, work, visit and invest. Our vision is that our borough will be a place to be proud of, however, on occasion that vision can be impacted by signage in inappropriate locations.

Outdoor advertising plays an increasingly important role in our culture and can often be used to add vibrancy and colour to our streets and, when done correctly, can even help contribute to the creation of a vibrant and competitive economy.



The Council recognises the potential benefits of outdoor advertising, but we are also aware of the negative impact signage can have. Inappropriately sited and inferior quality advertisements can be particularly intrusive and detract from the appearance of an area. They can result in obstacles for pedestrians, visual clutter when there is the proliferation of signage and, in some instances, even become a hazard as a distraction to road users.

Planning plays a key role in ensuring that those advertisements that require consent do not prejudice amenity or public safety and, where possible, enhance the character and appearance of the borough. Planning is also instrumental in enforcing against those illegal advertisements that do not benefit from consent and therefore it is important that individuals and organisations alike recognise the importance of ensuring compliance with overarching legislation when considering displaying an advertisement.

Under Planning Legislation some advertisements are exempt from control by the Council provided certain conditions are met. Examples of these would be most traffic signs and most non-illuminated advertisements displayed within shops.

Within these Regulations there are also certain categories of advertisement that are able to benefit from “deemed consent” and therefore do not require to be regularised by a planning application. These advertisements need to ensure compliance with the limitations set out within the category and could include small plaques or election posters.

Under Planning Legislation it is an offence to display an advertisement in contravention of the Advertisement Regulations and could result in prosecution. The Council’s Planning Enforcement Team will investigate any advertisement breach in line with the Council’s Planning Enforcement Strategy.

If you are unclear about whether an advertisement requires planning consent it is advisable that you seek guidance on this matter from the Council’s Planning Department before you would erect it. In addition to planning consent, you may also require the permission of the landowner.

The Council wishes to ensure that the urban and rural areas of the borough are attractive and safe places to live in and visit and the appropriate control of outdoor advertisements is instrumental in achieving this.