

COMMITTEE REPORT

APPLICATIONS DETAILS

APPLICATION NO'S:	DM/14/01377/AD AND DM/14/02115/AD
FULL APPLICATION DESCRIPTIONS:	Display of advertisements on roundabouts
NAME OF APPLICANT:	Durham County Council
ADDRESSES:	Various roundabout sites located in the former City of Durham Area and the former District of Easington Area.
ELECTORAL DIVISIONS:	Various across the two areas
CASE OFFICER:	Laura Martin Laura.martin@durham.gov.uk 03000 261960

DESCRIPTION OF THE SITES AND PROPOSALS

The Sites

1. The application sites relate to 26 roundabouts in the former Easington District and 29 roundabouts in the former City of Durham area. A number of the sites are located within designated Conservation Areas.

The Proposals

2. The proposal seeks to erect around 200 separate sponsorship signs across fifty five roundabouts in the former Easington and Durham Areas. The signs would be a maximum of 1200mm x 500mm on larger roundabouts and 1100mm x 450mm on smaller roundabouts.
3. The signs will be mounted on no more than two posts, of which neither post shall exceed 88.9mm diameter and 3.2mm wall thickness. The sign face material will be stiffed with aluminium channel across the full width of the sign plate and will not be retro-reflective.
4. The applications are brought before members of the planning committee at the request of Cllr Holland due to concerns relating to the retrospective nature of the applications and highway safety grounds.

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant to the application.

PLANNING POLICY

NATIONAL POLICY:

6. The Government has consolidated all planning policy statements, guidance notes and many circulars into a single policy statement, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), although the majority of supporting Annexes to the planning policy statements are retained. The overriding message is that new development that is sustainable should go ahead without delay. It defines the role of planning in achieving sustainable development under three topic headings – economic, social and environmental, each mutually dependant.
7. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF requires local planning authorities to approach development management decisions positively, utilising twelve 'core planning principles'
8. The following elements are considered relevant to this proposal:-
9. Part 1 - The Government is committed to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and to meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.
10. Paragraphs 67-68- Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant. The full text can be accessed at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements>

LOCAL PLAN POLICY:

City of Durham Local Plan.

11. Policy Q16 (Adverts) seeks to ensure that advertisements are suitably designed and do not have an adverse impact on visual amenity or highway safety. Particular attention will be paid to the impact they may have upon the character and setting of listed buildings and the character and appearance of conservation areas.

Easington Local plan

12. Policy 40 - The location and design of adverts should be appropriate to the character of the buildings on which they are sited and to the surrounding area and should not conflict with traffic signs or signals.

EMERGING POLICY:

13. The emerging County Durham Plan was Submitted in April 2014 ahead of Examination in Public. In accordance with paragraph 216 of the NPPF, decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to: the stage of the emerging plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and, the degree of consistency of the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF. Further, the Planning Practice Guidance explains that in limited circumstances permission can be justifiably refused on prematurity grounds: when considering substantial developments that may prejudice the plan-making process and when the plan is at an advanced stage of preparation (i.e. it has been

Submitted). To this end, the following policies contained in the Submission Draft are considered relevant to the determination of the application:

14. Policy 16- Sustainable development in the build environment- ensure adverts are appropriate and sympathetic to their local setting in terms of scale, design, lighting and materials.

The above represents a summary of those policies considered most relevant in the Development Plan the full text, criteria, and justifications of each may be accessed at <http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/cityofdurham.pdf> <http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/easington.pdf>

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY RESPONSES

STATUTORY RESPONSES:

15. Parish Council- no comments

INTERNAL CONSULTEE RESPONSES:

16. Highways Section- The display of advertisement signs on roundabouts within the public highway in County Durham was the subject of a report prepared by officers from the Neighbourhoods Section, which was submitted to and subsequently approved by the Corporate Management Team on 9 May 2012. As this is a recognised Council Policy no highways objections to raise against this planning application.
17. Design and Conservation Section- the signs in the various locations identified are considered to be acceptable in terms of their siting, scale and design. Concerns are raised in respect of DUR185- Seaham due to existing signage in the area.

PUBLIC RESPONSES:

18. The applications were advertised by means of a site notices adjacent to the various sites. No letters of representation have been received in respect of the above developments.

APPLICANTS STATEMENT:

19. Sponsorship of Roundabouts is a nationally recognised method for generating much needed revenue income which is to be used solely for the improvement of highways within that area. The signs themselves are small, unobtrusive and carry a simple message which is strictly regulated and consequently there has been no objections raised from highways personnel regarding their use.
20. Schemes like the one we are proposing have been adopted by many authorities nationally and some have been in place for a considerable time, all without any adverse effects. This particular scheme was approved by Cabinet in September 2011.
21. Durham County is currently split into three distinct areas for planning purposes and consent has already been received for the North area and the South & West area through delegated powers with the only area outstanding being the Central and East area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

22. As identified in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the key consideration in the determination of a planning application is the development plan. Applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
23. The main considerations in regard to this application are impact upon amenity and highway safety.
24. The NPPF stipulates that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In addition the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires Local Planning Authorities to determine applications for advertisement consent in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan where material, and any other relevant factors.
25. Additionally a number of the roundabouts are located within Conservation Areas; DUR01, 03, 04, 29 & 30 included within the Durham (City Centre) Conservation Area, DUR 31 included within the Burn Hall Conservation Area. No.3 are considered to be within the setting of the Durham World Heritage Site (WHS) DUR 01, 04 & 29, and No.1 is within the setting of a number of listed buildings DUR 01. DUR185 is within the Seaham Conservation Area and close to a Grade II listed building.

Impact upon Heritage Assets

26. Local Authorities have the duty to preserve or enhance Conservation Areas as required by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires Local Planning Authorities in the exercise of their planning functions with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
27. In respect of impact upon designated Heritage Assets, the sites which are located within sensitive locations have been highlighted below and have been assessed in detail.
28. DUR01; Four signs are to be located on the roundabout at north end of North Road, Durham City, in close proximity to the Viaduct (Grade II listed), North Road Methodist Church (Grade II listed), and where it can be seen in views towards Durham Cathedral and the World Heritage Site. The roundabout is large and already has substantial planting, trees and vegetation which provide a dark backdrop to the signs and reduces their visual impact. The signs here are considered to be acceptable in terms of their siting, scale, and design and would not be overly prominent. They are therefore considered to have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area as they would not adversely affect the significance of this part of the conservation area, the setting of the nearby listed buildings, or be distracting in views towards the WHS.
29. DUR03; Three signs would be located on the roundabout situated between Leazes Road and New Elvet Bridge. This is the main route into the city centre from the east where the roundabout forms a prominent and attractive feature. Although more open and located away from development the signs here are not be too dominant and

would not interrupt any notable views, with the existing vegetation again reducing the visibility of the signs to some extent. On balance, the proposed signs in this location are not considered to be harmful to visual amenity or the significance of this part of the designated Durham City Conservation area.

30. DUR04; Three signs would be located on the large roundabout within the eastern part of the city centre between Upper and Lower Gilesgate, and visible in views towards the WHS. The extensive planting softens the appearance of the roundabout, which contributes to the abundance of greenery within this area, and which forms one of the main routes into the City Centre. The vegetation reduces the clutter of multiple signs being visible and provides a dark backdrop reducing their visual prominence, therefore the proposed signs in this location would be recessive features, and are not considered to impact upon the amenity or aesthetic quality of the surroundings in a negative way. In wider terms they would not interrupt or be visually distracting elements with regards to the notable views towards the WHS which can be gained from within this area.
31. DUR29; Three signs would be located in the southern part of the Durham City Conservation area on the prominent roundabout between Quarryheads Lane and Potters Banks where there is a notable view northwards towards Durham Cathedral. This smaller roundabout is fairly open containing a small group of trees within its centre and although the signs would be more visible here than elsewhere they would not adversely impact the semirural nature of this part of the conservation area, and due to their size and scale and by being low lying, would not interrupt or be visually distracting in views towards Durham Cathedral and World Heritage Site.
32. DUR30; Three signs would be located on the roundabout between the A177, Whinney Hill and Hallgarth Street. The substantial planting and vegetation on this large roundabout reduces the clutter of the multiple signs being visible, again providing a dark background which successfully reduces their visual appearance and impact. On this basis, they are not too dominant and do not adversely affect the visual amenity of the surroundings, thereby preserving this part of the Durham City Conservation area.
33. DUR31; Three signs would be located on the roundabout within the northern edge of Burn Hall Conservation Area adjacent to Farwell Hall West Farm. This is a very open grassed roundabout and although the signs would form visible features at varying orientations given the roundabouts position at the very northern edge of the designated conservation area with no views worthy of note, signs here would not be considered contentious with regards to their visual impact on the heritage asset.
34. DUR185; Three signs would be located on the roundabout adjacent to North Terrace, Seaham. Concerns were expressed by the Design and Conservation Team advising that they considered that there was already a large amount of signage in the area and that the proposed signage would impact upon views through the Conservation Area. The roundabout has substantial planting which provides a dark backdrop to the signs and reduces their visual impact. The signs here are considered to be acceptable in terms of their siting, scale, and design and would not be overly prominent. They are therefore considered to have an acceptable impact on the visual amenity of the area as they would not adversely affect the significance of this part of the Seaham Conservation area or the setting of the nearby listed building (The Former Police Station). In addition this is a commercial area and signs of this nature would be anticipated within such a location.

Highway Safety

35. In relation to Highway safety, the Highways Authority has been consulted as part of the application and raises no objections. The signs are positioned in order to attract the attention of motorists. However the signs are not considered to be of an adverse effect as they are satisfactorily positioned on the roundabouts so that they are not considered to cause a distraction to motorists.

Amenity

36. The signs follow a standard design in terms of size and material. As such, the proposed advertisements would be in keeping with those located on roundabouts in other Local Authority areas, and are not considered to look out of place or be unduly prominent within their respective settings. Therefore, the cumulative effect of the advertisements upon the character and appearance of each roundabout is considered acceptable.

Other Considerations

37. In respect of the retrospective nature of the application, whilst the retrospective nature of the applications is regrettable the proposals have been assessed on their merits, and are considered to be acceptable. The retrospective nature of the application is not deemed to be a consideration to which any weight should be afforded in the determination of the application.

CONCLUSION

38. Overall, the signs in the various locations identified are considered to be acceptable in terms of their siting, scale and design. They would not be unduly prominent and are therefore considered to have an acceptable impact on visual amenity and would not adversely affect the significance of the designated heritage assets affected. The signs will help promote the County Council's support of local businesses and potentially help reduce the amount of unauthorised signing in given areas.
39. The proposed advertisements are acceptable in terms of amenity and public safety and the cumulative impacts of the signage on the roundabouts will not lead to an unacceptable level of clutter on the respective roundabouts.
40. Taking all relevant planning matters into account it is considered that the proposal is acceptable given that it accords with both national and local policy. It is not considered that the policies contained within the emerging County Durham Plan would conflict with the intentions of the existing local plans or the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DM/14/01377/AD

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions;

1. This consent to display the advertisement(s) is for a period of five years from the date of this permission.
Reason: To comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, and saved policy Q16 of the City of Durham Local Plan.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans. Plan References; Large scale Location plan for former City of Durham Area, Signage Specification and 29 no. location plans.

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with saved policy Q16 of the City of Durham Local Plan.

3. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
4. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to —
 - (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
 - (c) hinder the operation of any device for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.
5. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair visual amenity.
6. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.
7. Where any advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, its removal shall be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason for conditions 3 – 7: To comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, Part 7 of the NPPF and saved Policy Q16 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004

RECOMMENDATION FOR DM/14/02115/AD

That the application be **APPROVED** subject to the following conditions;

1. This consent to display the advertisement(s) is for a period of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 and saved policy 40 of the Easington Local Plan.
2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the following approved plans. Plan References; Large scale Location plan for former City of Durham Area, Signage Specification and 29 no. location plans.

Reason: To define the consent and ensure that a satisfactory form of development is obtained in accordance with saved policy 40 of the Easington Local Plan.
3. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.
4. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to —
 - (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

- (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
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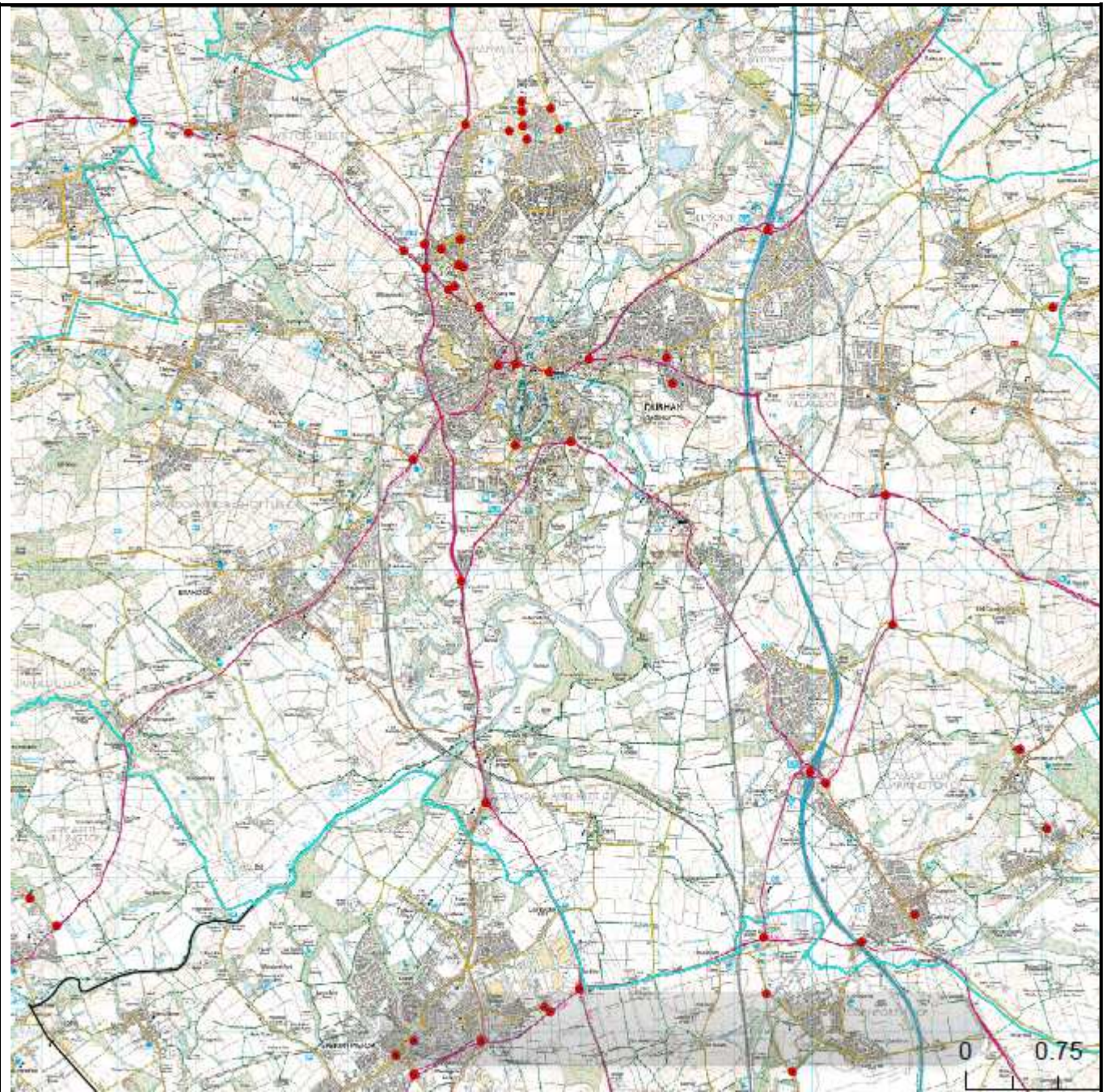
Reason for conditions 3 – 7: To comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, Part 7 of the NPPF and saved Policy Q16 of the City of Durham Local Plan 2004.

STATEMENT OF PROACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

In dealing with the application, the Local Planning Authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising during the application process. The decision has been made within the 8 week target provided to the applicant on submission and in compliance with the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to promote the delivery of sustainable development.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Submitted Application Forms and Plans.
- Design and Access Statement
- City of Durham Local Plan 2006 and Easington Local Plan 2001
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Consultation Responses



Planning Services

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**Display of advertisement on roundabouts
 @ 29 Sites Within Former Durham City
 District ref DM/14/01377/AD**

Comments

Date. 9 September 14.

