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Democratic Services Section
Chief Executive's Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS



Belfast
City Council

20th July, 2016

MEETING OF PLANNING COMMITTEE – REPORT TO FOLLOW

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

The above-named Committee will meet in the Banqueting Hall - City Hall on Tuesday, 26th July, 2016 at 5.00 pm, which will include the 'Report to follow' noted below.

You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

SUZANNE WYLIE

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

- (b) Update on Removal of Deemed Consent of Estate Agent Signage in Student Areas (Pages 1 - 2)

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Subject:	Strategic project to obtain removal of deemed consent of estate agent signage in student areas.
Date:	26 th July 2016
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Contact Officer:	Lisa Walshe (ext 2290)

<p>Is this report restricted?</p> <p><i>Please see Note 1 in Part 3</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</p> <p><i>If 'No' please see Note 2 in Part 3</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	To update members on the current status of the project for the removal of deemed consent for estate agent signage in the Stranmillis, Queens and Holylands areas all of which contain either a Conservation Area or an Area of Townscape Character.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the current position. Endorse the next steps including the proposed engagement events with residents, landlords and estate agents.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>The proliferation of estate agent signage in the areas of Stranmillis, Queens and the Holylands is so excessive that is considered to have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the areas and the wellbeing of the resident communities.</p> <p>Previous attempts to tackle this issue have confirmed that fundamentally, the problem is so widespread that neither normal planning enforcement controls nor advertisement</p>

	<p>legislation are adequate to deal with it and special measures are required.</p>
3.2	<p>Section 6 of The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 permits the removal of deemed consent by the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) where it is “satisfied upon a proposal made to it by a council”.</p> <p>Members were updated at the 18th June 2015 Committee Meeting of the intention to apply to Dfi to remove the deemed consent for estate agent signs in these areas. Estate agents would instead utilise other methods of advertising such as small advertisements behind windows or online advertising. They could if they wished apply for planning consent to display, however this would be discouraged.</p>
3.3	<p>Planning Service has undertaken a number of steps in the pursuit of this project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A desk study to assess the methods undertaken in other jurisdictions to achieve the removal of deemed consent and to establish the geographical extent of the study areas. 2. A mail shot to all known estate agents operating in the greater Belfast area to ensure they are aware of the relevant regulations. 3. Surveying and monitoring across the academic year in December 2015, April 2016 and July 2016. Other planning authorities who have successfully obtained the removal of deemed consent have supported their case with data spanning years rather than months and so further data points are being obtained from 2014 and 2015 using Google Street images. 4. Contact has been made with Dfi to establish expectations on the form and procedure of the submission
3.3	<p>Successful applications in other jurisdictions have included stakeholder engagement. The three main stakeholders would be residents, landlords and estate agents. In order to ensure that Belfast City Council presents a strong and robust proposal to Dfi, Planning Service proposes to invite stakeholder groups to engagement events which will allow us to present them with the empirical evidence and listen to and represent their views.</p> <p>Committee endorsement is sought to allow these events.</p>
4.0	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u> There are no additional resource implications arising from this report.</p>
5.0	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u> None.</p>