

Belfast



To let boards

Finding a better solution



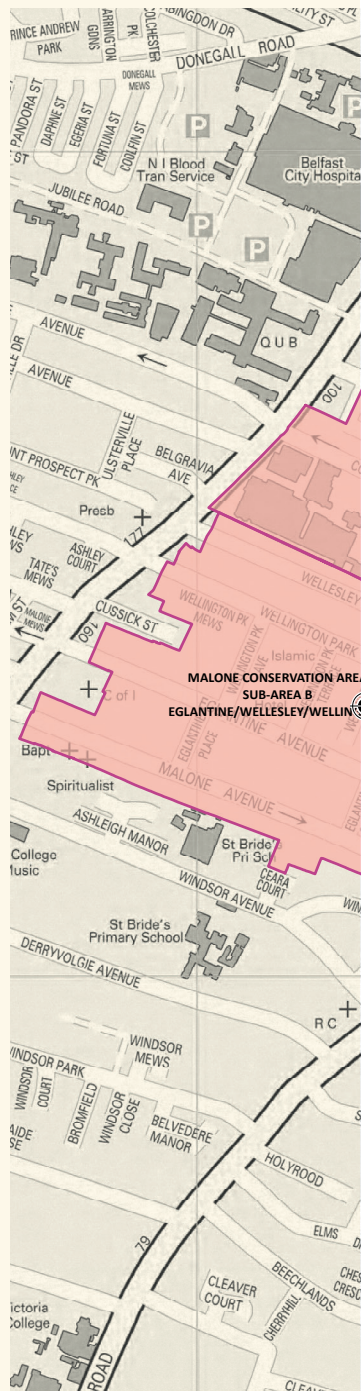
Belfast City Council

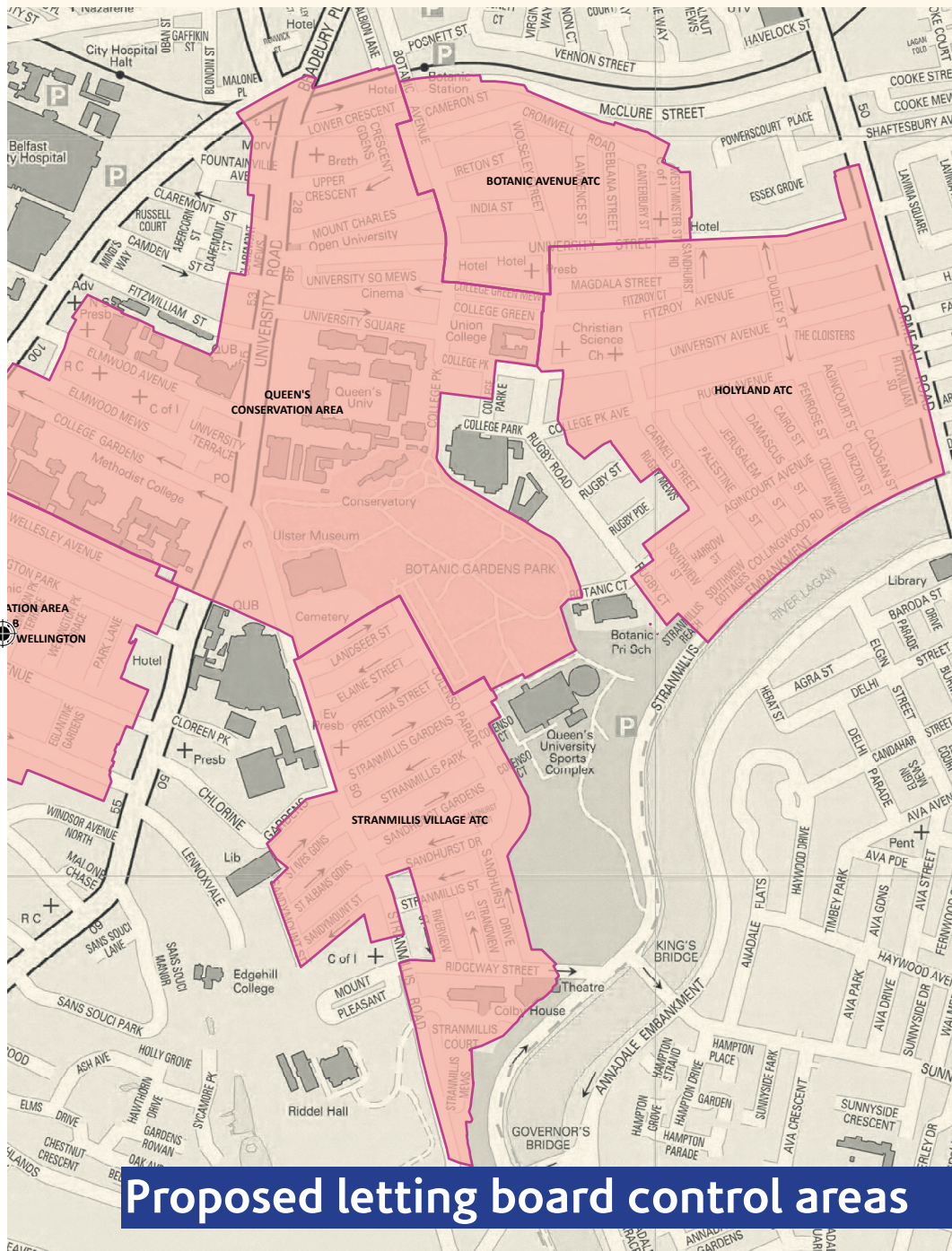
Introduction

We've been contacted by residents in the Queens, Stranmillis and Holyland areas who feel that the high number of estate agent signs, and the length of time they are displayed negatively impacts on the neighbourhoods. We are committed to supporting all sectors of the housing market and we understand that property for rent must be advertised. However, we are concerned about the adverse effect the large number of To Let boards are having and we are exploring more effective ways of controlling them.

The current situation

To Let signs are controlled by the Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 2015 which contain a number of classes of "deemed consent". Deemed consent allows estate agent signage as long as it meets certain rules such as dimensions, location, timing, and so on. Despite attempts by our Planning Service to engage with agents and landlords to reduce the large quantities of these signs we now feel special measures are needed to deal with them. We are now considering applying to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) to remove the deemed consent in certain areas near to Queens University. This means we would have more control over how letting boards are displayed and the appearance of the areas would improve.





Proposed letting board control areas

Moving forward

There are two options which we could propose to DfI:

1) Restricting the letting boards in favour of smaller boards with black and white text, set flush or flat to the building for restricted timeframes. This will reduce the adverse visual effects but may result in extra costs for estate agents and will need continuing enforcement which can be difficult.

2) A complete ban of all boards. This would give an immediate visual improvement, but may mean letting agents need to rely solely on alternative advertising.

We need your views!

We want to hear your views on our proposals. Our consultation on letting board control areas opens on Monday 7 November.

Your views and comments will help us to make a decision on which option is preferred and whether we should make an application to DfI. Your views will form part of our research.

You can give us your views by:

- responding to our online survey which will be available at www.belfastcity.gov.uk/consultations from Monday 7 November to Friday 9 December, or
- attending our engagement event on Tuesday 29 November at 5pm in Belfast City Hall.

If you have any queries, or want to reserve a place at our engagement event please call us on 028 9050 2081 or email planning@belfastcity.gov.uk

