



Subject:	Strategic project to obtain removal of deemed consent of estate agent signage in student areas.
Date:	15 th November 2016
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Contact Officer:	Lisa Walshe (ext. 2290)

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

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 Queens, Stranmillis, Botanic, Holylands and Malone areas, all of which contain either a Conservation Area or an Area of Townscape Character.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are asked to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• current position;• stakeholder events to be held in City Hall on 29 November 2016.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Key Issues</u> The proliferation of estate agent signage in the Queens, Stranmillis, Botanic, Holylands and Malone areas 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. Previous attempts to tackle this issue have confirmed that special measures are required

	<p>as the problem is so widespread that neither normal planning enforcement controls nor advertisement legislation are adequate to deal with it.</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>
3.3	<p>Members will recall the update given at the 26th July 2016 Committee Meeting regarding the ongoing work in order to apply to Dfi to remove the deemed consent for estate agent signs in these areas as well as the format of the intended public consultation.</p>
3.4	<p>At the last update, the planning service had 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. 4. Contact made with Dfi to establish expectations on the form and procedure of the submission.
3.5	<p>Following committee endorsement for public consultation on this matter, a number of further steps have taken place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Meeting with Department for Infrastructure</u>: A meeting was held where a presentation was made to Dfi and followed up by a request by the planning service for Dfi to make contact before the end of the consultation period to establish any issues they may foresee. 2. <u>Stakeholder Events</u>: In order to ensure that Belfast City Council presents a strong and robust proposal to Dfi, the planning service has invited stakeholder groups to attend engagement events scheduled on 29th November in City Hall which will allow us to present them with the empirical evidence and listen to and represent their views. The three main stakeholders are residents, landlords and estate agents. The Chair will attend and open the stakeholder events and all members are welcome to attend. 3. <u>Online survey</u>: Surveys have been developed using the council’s Citizen Space consultation hub to allow a further method of data collection and expressions of opinions via our website. Separate questionnaires are available for estate agents, residents and landlords. 4. <u>Publicity</u>: The council has promoted the online survey and consultation events through social media, a press release, the council’s website – www.belfastcity.gov.uk/planning, e-zines and stakeholder forums. 6000 leaflets are being hand delivered to residents in the relevant areas by members of the planning service.

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>