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Please reply to:
Mr Ross Wise - Planning Officer
Spatial Planning
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My Ref: DE/2019/0009

Your Ref:

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E-mail: ross.wise @torbay.gov.uk

Date: 23rd May 2019

Dear Julie,

PRE APPLICATION ADVICE – LED ADVERTISING – DE/2019/0009

Thank you for your enquiry, which was received on 23rd April 2019 and concerns the installation of freestanding digital format advertising screens in various locations within Torbay. The submitted details comprise planning statements and site location plans for each location.

This advice is given in response to your request for pre-application advice for the above development proposal, and is based on the information submitted. Whilst Council officers endeavour to give the best advice, it should be recognised that all planning applications are subject to formal consultation procedures to enable third parties and statutory consultees to make representations. This process may introduce new material considerations. Moreover, the policies and guidance against which planning applications are assessed may change over time. I therefore reserve the right to alter the opinion given should new material issues come to light in future. Moreover, the advice given in this letter is that of the named officer and does not bind the Council in determining any subsequent planning application that may be submitted.

Policy DE6 of the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 states that advertisements will not be supported where:

- They would harm visual or aural amenity.
- They would undermine public safety.

This is the key policy to which all potential locations for the proposed digital advertising must adhere to. However, as a range of sites are proposed which are located across the Bay, each specific location has its own set of constraints and must be considered on its own merit.

Highways safety considerations

- Sites or lengths of roads with history of accidents causing injury are likely to be unsuitable.
- Advertising displays within the public highway will generally not be acceptable on roads where the driver would find it difficult to assimilate all of the wide array of information presented.

Amenity:

- **Acceptable brightness levels:** most planning authorities will use a measure of brightness based on illuminated sign lightboxes as a standard this might be a figure of 200/500 Nit or candela per square metre. They may have an equivalent figure in Lumens. However, there should be automatic brightness sensor will turn the display down to 2-4% of its maximum brightness and almost any image, and particularly text, will only be illuminating about 60% of the LEDs. Factors to consider include day/night use
- **Variable message signs and frequency of message rotation: Movement/Distractio
n issues.**

Variable message sign can be used commonly in different modes:

- Fixed page, whereby the display shows fixed data, but is variable (like motorway signs). So a message might change, but would only change let's say once every 6 – 8 seconds, or every few minutes, or a few times a day.
- Scrolling text, or fixed page changing every few seconds, perhaps with fancy effects. Here there is more distraction potential and authorities can range in response

All site locations have addressed potential concerns in terms of public safety and amenity by:

- Restricting the intensity of the illumination of the proposed signs between dusk and dawn.
- Not displaying moving images, or contact telephone numbers to distract drivers.
- Restricting sequential advertisements, so they will not change more than once every 10 seconds.
- Restricting the sequential change between advertisements, so that change will take place over a period no greater than one second.

Consultee Response.

Highways.

No objections to the proposals in general but stated that the drawings would need approval from highways to ensure that the locations of the LED screens would not obstruct or hold up the public highway.

Each proposed site will need to be considered in turn, having regard to the requirements of Policy DE6.

A) Digital advertising – Fleet Street – Torquay.

The application site is located within the Torquay Harbour Conservation Area.

Amenity.

- Advertising already present within the vicinity of the proposed location in the form of advertising boards and displays on telephone boxes.
- Visually the sign is of a suitable size for the proposed location and the existing land use is predominantly retail so the proposal would be an appropriate addition to the street-scene.

- The siting of the proposed advertisement in this location and its functionality enable it to display multiple adverts, reducing the need for further advertising in this location in the future.
- There would be no harm caused to the aural amenity of neighbouring occupiers as the display would not produce any sound.

Public safety.

- Subject to the drawings being approved by highways there is no apparent harm to public safety.
- A single sided display would have minimal impact to road users as this is predominantly a pedestrian and public transport highway.
- Size of proposed advertising board to be confirmed.
- Exact location TBC

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle subject to details about size, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with Highways.

B) Digital Advertising - Market Street/Union Street – Torquay.

The application site is located within the Torquay Primary Shopping Area, a potential development site for consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan- employment and investment, a Community Investment Area and within the Torquay Town Centre – as designated within the Local Plan.

Amenity.

- Central location with high footfall and vehicular movement. Advertising in close proximity to the application site so would not look out of place. Illuminated signs already exist in close proximity to the proposed site so the sign would need to be appropriately illuminated as to not compound any potential issues with regards to illumination levels.

Public safety.

- Proximity to traffic lights and possible distraction to drivers. Advertising could possibly be displayed for longer durations in this location to minimise distraction. 1 reported “slight” safety incident in 2017.

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle subject to details about size, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with highways.

C) Digital advertising – Middle Street – Brixham

The application site is located within the Brixham Town Conservation Area, Brixham Town Centre

– as designated by the Torbay Local Plan.

Amenity.

- Proximity to identified deliverable development site H1.18 Brixham Town centre.
- Impacts on visual amenity in response to Conservation Area and listed buildings in the area.
- No current digital advertising currently in the location
- Positioning the display closer or within the realm of the bus station may be more appropriate as pedestrians are likely to spend more time in this area.

Public safety.

- 1 reported incident in 2014 involving two vehicles causing slight injury.
- Two-way street, narrow in places with high footfall.
- Pavement on opposite side often partially obstructed due to advertising boards resulting in pedestrian flow directly passed the application site. The location on the display would need to ensure that it would not obstruct pedestrian movement.

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle subject to details about size, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with Highways.

D) Digital Advertising – Tweenaway Junction - Paignton

The application site is located adjacent to an area allocated for Strategic Transport Improvements SS6.2 and along a Major Road Network TA2 - as designated within the Local plan.

Amenity.

- Visual amenity in relation to residential properties in close proximity.
- Recommend restricted hours of operation similar to that of street lights in the area to reduce harm to residential amenity.
- The proposal could help prevent further advertising in this location.

Public safety.

- Pedestrian and vehicular safety at the crossroads. Large number of reported incidents in and around the crossroads.
- Traffic improvements at the junction and the impacts of the advertising displays on driver and pedestrian concentration at the junction.

Conclusions.

- Based on Highways recommendations, acceptable in principle subject to details about size, illumination, orientation, screen change, precise location and agreement with Highways.

E) Digital advertising – Union Street – Torquay.

The site is located within the Torquay Town Centre Community Investment Area; Upton Conservation Area; alongside a District Distributor Road and within a Potential development site for consideration in Neighbourhood Plan.

Amenity.

- High footfall in this location so would have maximum engagement.
- Crime and drug use in the area – may require regular maintenance if vandalised.
- Minimal impact on listed buildings and their setting – Town Hall, Electric House

Public Safety.

- 4 reported traffic incidents around this location.
- Would need to be located as to not distract driver's attention and protect pedestrian safety.
- Size of large display could obstruct driver's view of crossing pedestrians.

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle depending on details eg. size, orientation, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with Highways.

F) Digital Advertising - Victoria Street – Paignton.

The application site is located within the Old Paignton Conservation Area; the Paignton Town Centre Community Investment Area; the Paignton Primary Shopping Area; the Paignton Town Centre – as designated by the Torbay Local Plan.

Amenity.

- No harm to visual amenity as the area is predominantly a retail area with signs distributed in all directions.
- The size of the advertising board would need to be suitably scaled within the street-scene.
- No apparent harm to the conservation area.

Public Safety.

- As the area has pedestrian priority, with a slow vehicle speed there would be minimal impact to public safety provided the siting of the board within the public realm was appropriate to not cause an obvious obstruction/distraction.

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle subject to details about size, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with Highways.
- Highways recommended that signage should be set back 450mm from edge of kerb.

G) Digital Advertising - Torre

The application site is located within the Torre conservation Area

Amenity.

- No similar signs existing in the location proposed.
- The size of the proposed advertising board is large with regards to the context in the locality and may cause harm to visual amenity.
- Premises of industrial nature, LED advertising is more suited to retail.
- No apparent harm to the conservation area.

Public safety.

- Accidents at junction – 1 serious 1 slight.
- Distraction to drivers at crossing. High footfall at rush hours for commuters using the train, walking or cycling.
- Distraction to pedestrians when crossing the road.

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle depending on details eg. size, orientation, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with highways.
- Screen should be orientated north facing to mitigate initial Highways concerns

H) Digital Advertising – Wren Retail Park

The application site is located adjacent to a District Distributor Road Network in The Willows District Centre TC2.2.1 and lies between two Urban Landscape Protection Areas Riviera Corridor and Scotts Bridge/Barton (C5.5 and C5.6 respectively).

Amenity.

- To protect residential amenity the hours of operation could be restricted to that of the street lights – turned off between 11pm and 6am.
- LED signage should face away from dwellings.
- Suitable location with regard to retail context.

Public safety.

- 1 reported slight incident at junction.
- Existing large signage already in place at this location.

Conclusions.

- Acceptable in principle depending on details eg. size, orientation, illumination, screen change, precise location and agreement with Highways.

I attach consultation responses for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Ross Wise.