

To be Retained by BSGA



Consultation Period: 16/5/22 **To:** 4/7/22
Development Plan: City Plan 2016-2031 - Post Local Inquiry Main Modifications
District: Gloucester CC
Relevant Policies: Policy F7 (formerly D4)
Or Narrative (refs): Paragraphs 3.4.20-3.4.21

Background: This City Plan (combined with the adopted Core Strategy) will supersede the old 1983 local plan and finally complete Gloucester's planning policies. As submitted for examination, re-numbered Policy F7 "Shopfronts, shutters and signs" stated that proposals for advertisements "will be supported" where the signage is sympathetic to its surroundings, not visually dominant or create clutter; is halo illuminated; is a hanging sign (timber on metal bracket); and is of a colour which is "sympathetic" to the character of an area or building – "very bright" and garish colours should be avoided.

All proposals should "accord with" the guidance in the "Shopfronts, Shutters and Signage Design Guidelines" SPD and any subsequent amendments.

We objected to the pointlessness of picking out just two types of sign as being "supported" (what about all the other signs which are seen in shopping areas and are most likely "supportable"?); to the reference to "very bright" colours (too subjective); and to the reference to the Shopfronts SPD. The Shopfronts SPD was subject to a separate consultation in November 2016 and we objected to much (most) of it. But our representations were effectively ignored. The SPD was adopted (without even informing us) in November 2017. This document is wholly unacceptable. It is beyond reality as any short visit to Gloucester will confirm. See forms and representations in separate documents relating to the SPD

The Council formally submitted the plan, in November 2020, for independent examination. The Inspector has proposed some changes. He divides the policy in two. The first half applies to all areas and states that the Council will permit signs which are sympathetic to the scale and architectural style of the building and its surroundings, are not dominant and do not create clutter. The second part applies to historic settings. It adds that non-illuminated or halo illuminated signs and timber fascia and hanging signs "will be supported". Colours should be "sympathetic to the character of a building or area". The reference to the SPD has been reduced to a note that it provides advice.

Comment: Rarely have I seen such a mess of a policy. Much of it is now total drivel.

Signage should be sympathetic is about all it says. It says that the Council will also "support" other things in historic areas – but it does not say what they won't support! At least, the requirement to "accord with" the totally unacceptable SPD has been removed.

I wonder if the Inspector can explain how a colour might be sympathetic to an area? Perhaps red in Redbridge and green in Greenford? But liver in Liverpool ? Dark blue in Oxford and light in Cambridge? Perhaps gold and black in Wolverhampton?

I see no point in making further representations. Let the Council stew in their own mess. As long as the signage proposed is “sympathetic”, it should be acceptable. All is arguable.

Date sent to Council: Only a total re-write would make any sense and the Inspector will not do that. So no comment will leave this policy in its presently proposed mess (and we can live with it as the reference to the SPD has been removed)

Development Plan Monitoring