

OUTDOOR ADVERTISING POLICY

February 2005

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to serve as a material consideration in determining outdoor advertising planning applications in Milton Keynes. It is intended that once adopted it will be the main policy document in relation to outdoor advertising replacing the Outdoor Advertising Policy adopted by MKBC in 1994.

The relevant policy statements and guidance, which have been taken into account in the preparation of this document, are:

Town & Country Planning Control of Advertisement Regulations 1991
DOE Circular 5/92
Policies DC30 and DC31 in the Adopted Local Plan 1995
PPG 19 Outdoor Advertisement Control
Milton Keynes Local Plan Second Deposit Version 2002

The objective is to produce policy which provides a framework for both clear guidance on the type of advertisement which can make a positive contribution to the interest and vibrancy of various urban settings, as well as a description of the constraints which will allow clear control and discontinuance of inappropriate advertisements.

It is aimed at providing positive advice to prospective advertisers on the likely acceptability of their proposals and provides a basis for rational and consistent decisions on advertisement applications. The design guidance at the end of the document allows flexibility without being excessively prescriptive and detailed.

However, it is also intended to ensure an early revision for those elements relating to Central Milton Keynes (CMK) and to co-ordinate with the final approved CMK Handbook with the aim of ensuring there is a co-ordinated approach to works affecting streets and other parts of the public realm and that the approach to outdoor advertising is not out of step with other policy areas.

1.0 Powers to Control Advertisements

1.1 The main purpose of the advertisement control system is to help everyone involved in the display of outdoor advertising to contribute positively to the appearance of an attractive and cared for environment in cities, towns and the countryside. Virtually all outdoor advertisements come within the scope of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1991.

This enables local planning authorities to control advertisements, when it is justified. Some types of advertisement are exempted from detail control; and other specified categories of advertisement qualify for what is called “deemed consent”.

1.2 The booklet entitled “Outdoor Advertisements and Signs – a Guide for Advertisers” published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is obtainable free from the Planning Department.

1.3 The general approach to dealing with advertisement applications is very similar to that for dealing with planning applications, but there are two important differences. Firstly, the display of outdoor advertisements can only be controlled in the interest of “amenity” and “public safety”. Secondly, with only minor exceptions, the applicant does not have to prove that they need the advertisement. As with the main development control system, control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. The control system is not intended to delay the display of acceptable advertisements. It is an enabling system, intended to ensure that only those advertisements, which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings, are subject to the Council’s detailed assessment.

1.4 The importance placed on the quality of advertising and the need to co-ordinate outdoor advertising with other elements of the public realm for the overall benefit of the city centre environment is embedded in a commitment to joint working between the Council and Milton Keynes Partnership in striving for ‘quality control’ through the CMK Board.

2.0 Amenity and Public Safety

2.1 Amenity is usually defined in terms of the appearance of the advertisement itself, and the characteristics of the area where it is to be displayed. The Council will consider the impact the advertisement has, including cumulative effect, on the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, including scenic, historic, architectural and cultural features.

2.2 Amenity does not extend to the content or subject of the advertisement, which is not controlled through the advertisement regulations, although it may sometimes be regulated by other means.

2.3 Public safety means considerations which are relevant to the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land (including the safety of pedestrians), over water or in the air. So for this purpose, the Planning Authority must assess the likely effects of the advertisement in relation to such matters as the behaviour of drivers, possible confusion with other traffic signs or signals, possible interference with navigational lights or aerial beacons.

2.4 All advertisements are designed to attract attention, but this does not preclude them on public safety grounds. The issue will be whether the

advertisement, or the place where it is located, will be so distracting or confusing that it creates a hazard for the general public.

2.5 In some cases it is necessary for the planning authority to consult with the highway authority, or aviation authority, in order to assess the level of hazard. Where an advertisement is to be placed on highway land, it is also necessary for the applicant to obtain the consent of the highway authority.

3.0 Advertising in Milton Keynes

3.1 Two-thirds of Milton Keynes Borough is open countryside, and as such it is protected as an Area of Special Control of Advertisements. The remaining third comprises the New City of Milton Keynes. Although there were some existing towns in the area prior to the development of the City, much of Milton Keynes City is a new planned environment. Throughout the development of the City, there has been a great emphasis on achieving a high environmental quality. Much of this quality is attributable to the high level of landscaping which characterises the City. In comparison with traditional cities, in the first years of the city's growth there has been very little outdoor advertising.

3.2 Sponsorship In Milton Keynes has become a well-established feature of the public realm. The operations of the Sponsorship Team at Milton Keynes Council is seen as 'cutting edge' and draws interest from other local authorities around England. The various sponsorship media – roundabout signs, lamp-post banners, and other signs describing sponsors' support are not unique to Milton Keynes and have become an established part of the urban environment in many towns and cities in UK.

3.3 The sponsorship of highway facilities in Milton Keynes over the past 10 years, principally roundabouts but more recently lamp-post banners has resulted in the adoption of a common size and format for the sponsors' signs being used. These are used throughout the city area and the rest of the Borough and contribute to destination-finding and public information. They have been assessed in terms of amenity and safety through advertisement consent applications.

3.4 This policy document recognises the distinction between commercial advertisements and the visual acknowledgement of a sponsor working with the Council to support a public service. Sponsors' signs will continue to require advertisement consent and will normally be permitted adjoining commercial and employment areas (see para.11.10) within the following framework : each sponsor's sign should

- conform to a standardised approach for roundabout signs and lamp-post banners and other media in terms of size, non-illumination, and the content
- be in locations carefully assessed to avoid conflict with existing road signs
- carry a specific link to MKC - the council logo and / or the wording 'Working with Milton Keynes Council'

- not carry directional words or arrows which might be confused with traffic direction signs
- be restricted to a single sponsor's signs in any one stretch of highway
- not be acceptable in Areas of Attractive Landscape, open countryside, linear parks, Conservation Areas and areas affecting the setting of a Listed Building, Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Historic parks and gardens, and wholly residential areas.

3.5 [Plan 1](#) indicates areas where sponsors' signs would be considered in accordance with this policy.

4.0 Policies for Advertisement Control

4.1 Government guidance on the control of advertisements is set out in "Planning Policy Guidance Note No. 19: Outdoor Advertisement Control", and DoE circular 5/92. The Milton Keynes Local Plan Second Deposit Version 2002 has no specific policies relating to outdoor advertising. The Adopted Local Plan 1995 for the Borough sets out two policies for the control of advertisements: DC30 and DC31.

4.2 Policy DC30 states that:-

"The Borough Council will in its administration of the Advertisement Regulations pay special regard to :-

1. The size, colour, design and materials and mode of illumination (if applicable) of the advertisement.
2. The number and type of existing advertisements on or adjacent to the property.
3. The location of the advertisement, particularly those affecting a building of special architectural or historic interest, a Conservation Area, a Linear Park or an Area of Attractive Landscape.
4. Highway and safety considerations.
5. The desirability of serving discontinuance notices, particularly in respect of large advertisement hoardings unrelated to and out of scale with their surroundings."

4.3 Each of the issues - **size, colour, design, materials, illumination, number and type, location, highway and safety**, and **discontinuance notices**, which the planning authority will consider when applying this policy are set out in the following pages in more detail.

5.0 Size

5.1 Size is relative. As a general rule, a large building can accept a larger advertisement, but the size of the advertisement should not be such that it dominates the appearance of the building, or conflicts with the design of the building's elevations. In sensitive areas, or in relation to listed buildings, it may be necessary to restrict the size of advertisement in order to minimise its impact on the building or the amenity of the surrounding area.

5.2 The same rule on size would apply to free standing advertisements, which are seen in relation to building elevations. Where the advertisement is not seen in relation to any building, it should not be so large that it dominates its environment.

5.3 In certain limited situations, it may be appropriate to grant consent for an advertisement which hides an unsightly site or building.

6.0 Colour

6.1 Strong colours enhance in small quantities; too much and the effect is overpowering. To achieve impact a sign or advertisement should contrast with its background but it should not overwhelm it. Vibrant colours can be appropriate in commercial areas to add excitement, but should not be used in more sensitive areas such as the open countryside, Conservation Areas or close to Listed Buildings.

7.0 Design

7.1 A sign or advertisement should be well designed in itself. Where it is on a building, it should be well positioned in relation to the overall design of the building. Ideally, provision for signing should be designed into the elevations of all commercial buildings. Signs should not appear to be after thoughts.

7.2 When applying new signs to existing buildings, the same principles apply; the sign should look like part of the elevation. A sign should not obscure the windows, doors or other features of the building. It should line up with the other architectural features, and leave sufficient room around the sign so that it sits well within the elevation.

7.3 It may be necessary in some instances for designers to compromise on matters of "corporate design" where it is unsuitable in a particularly sensitive area.

7.4 Whilst the content or subject matter of an advertisement is not a planning consideration, the planning authority will try to discourage signs which are purely promotional rather than informative. For example, a sign bearing the wording, "save up to 60%" would be discouraged in favour of a sign bearing the name of the company or organisation owning the premises. This is not

because of the subject matter of the sign, but in order to discourage a proliferation of promotional advertising, which ultimately would lead to a cluttered appearance.

7.5 The design principles set out above, also apply to advertisements. Further guidance on advertisements is set out in paragraphs 25 - 32.

8.0 Materials

8.1 A sign should look as if it is part of the building. As a general rule, this is most easily achieved by using materials which reflect the style and character of the building; traditional materials on period buildings, contemporary materials on new buildings. Specific guidance on the use of materials in Conservation Areas is given in paragraphs 16.2 to 16.34.

9.0 Illumination

9.1 An illuminated sign can enhance a building, but only if the sign itself is well designed. The effect of the illuminated sign during the daylight is also important and care should be given to the positioning and design of the sign and any spot or floodlights, so that they do not detract from the building itself.

9.2 Internally illuminated box signs are not generally acceptable in sensitive locations, such as on Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas. In these circumstances external illumination is preferable.

9.3 On some buildings, particularly historic ones, floodlighting the whole building can be more effective than individually illuminated signs. Illuminated signs have a greater impact on their surrounding areas at night than they do during the daytime. Special care is therefore required to protect sensitive locations such as residential areas, open countryside or Conservation Areas.

9.4 In considering the level of illumination appropriate to the advertisement, the Council has regard to the Institute of Lighting Engineers Technical Report No. 5 (Second Edition) which is available from the Institute of Lighting Engineers, Lennox House, 9 Lawford Road, Rugby, CV21 2DZ. A copy of this report is available for reference within the Planning Department.

10.0 Number and Type

10.1 The number and type of signs in the vicinity is an important consideration. The erection of the first advertisement in areas where there are no advertisements, has a greater impact on amenity, than where advertisements are already established. If signs are allowed to proliferate indiscriminately, not only does a cluttered appearance ensue, but the commercial impact of each individual sign is reduced.

10.2 Much of the new city area of the Borough does not have the level of advertising associated with older, more established towns and cities. Much of

the environmental quality of the city is attributable to the carefully designed landscaping, which is associated with many of the major routes through the city. The landscaping either side of these grid roads has grown to the extent that the built areas beyond are at times lost from view. In contrast the recent planned growth of the City Centre and other employment and 'commercial' areas of the city have moved away from this concept. Latest plans for the city propose development closer to the edge of the grid roads and in some areas abandoning the grid concept completely. Businesses within commercial areas will need to announce their presence to customers and suppliers and commercial signage on buildings will be considered recognising this need but balanced against the visual aspects of maintaining an attractive environment and highway safety. Signs within the Sponsorship range (see para. 3.4) will normally be allowed in and around commercial and employment areas including on grid road margins and main roads subject to highway safety issues in para 3.4. Areas within the City Centre and other major commercial / employment areas where appropriate sponsorship signage will be considered are described in para.s 17 to 23 recognising that well-designed signage can add to the vibrancy and visual appeal of modern urban settings.

10.3 The proposed growth of the city centre including re-development of some existing areas has precipitated a review of signage. A public realm and way-finding strategy is being drafted. It is intended that this new strategy will be compatible with the Council's policy in this document once adopted.

10.4 There has been a deliberate policy of creating a visually attractive environment throughout Milton Keynes, which is one of the major features which continues to attract new companies to the area. This will remain a pre-dominant aspect when considering applications for signage but will need to reflect the growing variety of urban settings in Milton Keynes. The Council wishes to ensure that this environment remains uncluttered by excessive, poorly designed and / or inappropriate advertising hoardings and signs.

11.0 Location and Amenity

11.1 In assessing applications for advertisement consents, the local planning authority must consider what impact the advertisement, including its cumulative effect, will have on its surroundings. Relevant considerations for this purpose are the local characteristics of the neighbourhood, including scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features which contribute to the distinctive character of the locality.

11.2 The Borough has considerable variation in the character of its area; ranging from the rural open countryside to the urban character of the city centre. To provide guidance on the effect of location on advertisement control, the Council has identified those areas whose amenity could be seriously damaged by an intrusion of advertising.

11.3 Such areas would include the following sensitive locations:

- Areas of special control of advertisements (See Local Plan Policy DC31 and para 15 of this policy)
- Areas of Attractive Landscape
- Open countryside
- Linear Parks
- Conservation Areas
- Areas affecting the setting of a Listed Building.
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Historic parks and gardens
- Wholly residential areas.

11.4 In many cases the Council will have a statutory duty to preserve or enhance these areas.

11.5 Within such areas poster advertising would not normally be allowed. Those advertisements that were permitted would be small in scale, and a higher quality of design would be expected, than in other areas. Further details on the design of advertisements within Conservation Areas is contained in para.s 16.2 – 16.34.

11.6 Considerable investment has been made in Milton Keynes in landscaping the transport corridors throughout the new city. Generally the Council feels that free standing advertisements within these areas would be detrimental to the amenity of the City as a whole, in addition to any public safety considerations that such advertising might produce.

11.7 Signs, including advance signs advertising sites and uses not visible from the highway, will not be permitted within or adjacent to grid road margins. All grid squares are well signed and advertisements on commercial buildings within grid squares should be primarily designed to advertise and identify companies from within the commercial area, not from the nearest grid road.

11.8 Similarly, investment has been made within the City in developing the visual environment associated with the Grand Union Canal, and the rivers which flow through the City. Free standing advertising along these movement corridors would not generally be permitted.

11.9 Subject to issues of public safety, the same restrictions would not apply to advertising along the rail corridors through the City, provided that such advertising did not have an adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent areas.

11.10 Although some areas of the Borough require considerable constraint in advertising, there are other areas where well designed advertisements could be encouraged and contribute to the area's amenity. Such areas are:-

Central Milton Keynes

District Centres
Industrial & employment areas
Commercial Leisure Areas
Retail Warehouse Parks
Transport Interchanges

11.11 Further details on the design of advertisements within these areas are contained in para.s 17 - 23.

12.0 Safety Considerations

12.1 The impact of an advertisement on public safety will depend on the nature of the advertisement and its location. To be a hazard, an advertisement must be so distracting or confusing that it endangers people who are taking reasonable care for their own and others safety. Such people will include drivers/pilots, cyclists/motor cyclists, and pedestrians close to a highway or railway line.

12.2 A sign would be considered a hazard if:-

It obstructs visibility;

its content or appearance might distract the attention for a period of sufficient duration to endanger the viewer;

it might create glare and dazzle the viewer;

it obstructs, overshadows or distracts the attention away from highway, railway or navigational signs, signals or beacons.

12.3 Advertising in the following locations would be likely to constitute a hazard:

visible to drivers using a classified road or motorway;
in the vicinity of a railway line, station or goods yard;

12.4 Advertising at railway stations, bus stations, bus stops, and transport facilities, would not be considered hazardous if these are directed towards passengers, rather than drivers.

12.5 Care must be taken to ensure that illuminated advertisements do not obscure or conflict with navigational beacons.

12.6 The Council will also bear in mind that some advertisements can positively benefit public safety by helping drivers to find their destinations. In their assessment of the public safety implications of an advertisement display, the Council will assume that the primary purpose of an advertisement is to attract people's attention and will therefore not automatically presume that an advertisement will distract the attention of passers-by, whether they are

drivers, cyclists or pedestrians. The vital consideration, in assessing an advertisement's impact, is whether the advertisement itself, or the exact location proposed for its display, is likely to be so distracting, or so confusing, that it creates a hazard to, or endangers, people in the vicinity who are taking reasonable care for their own and others' safety. Further advice on assessing the public safety implications of the display of an advertisement is given in DOE Circular 5/92 (WO 14/92).

13.0 Serving Discontinuance Notices

13.1 The planning authority may take discontinuance action against any advertisement, or the use of any advertisement site, if the authority considers it expedient to do so in the interests of amenity or public safety. Such action would only be taken to remedy a substantial injury to the amenity of the locality, or a danger to members of the public.

13.2 If the planning authority decides to take discontinuance action, notice will be served on the advertiser and the owner and occupier of the site on which the advertisement is displayed.

13.3 The notice will state:-

The advertisement or advertisement site whose display or use is to cease.

The reasons why the planning authority consider that the display or use should cease.

The effective date of the notice.

13.4 There is a right of appeal against a discontinuance notice and those wishing to appeal will be advised of their right to do so and the procedures, by the local planning authority.

13.5 The planning authority may also remove or obliterate any unauthorised placards or posters under Section 225 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If the placard or poster does not identify the name of the person who displays it, it can be removed without notice. This provision exists to assist local authorities to control "fly posting".

14.0 Policy DC31

14.1 The second policy in the Local Plan which refers to advertisements states that:-

14.2 "Within areas of special control of advertisements the Borough Council will seek to:

1. Restrict the number, size and illumination of new advertisements.
2. Reduce the amount of outdoor advertising where replacement signing is proposed”.

15.0 Areas of Special Control

15.1 An area of special control of advertisements is an area specifically defined by the planning authority because they consider that its scenic, historical, architectural or cultural features are so significant that a stricter degree of advertisement control is justified in order to conserve visual amenity in that area.

15.2 Such areas must be:-

rural areas or
other areas which appear to the appropriate Secretary of State to require special protection on grounds of amenity.

15.3 Most of the rural areas of the Borough and the designated Conservation Areas within the Borough, are such areas of special control. A number of new city grid squares on the eastern and western flanks which have been predominantly rural in nature for many years are also within the Areas of Special Control. Plans showing the current extent of the area of special control can be inspected in the Planning Department. It is likely that the extent of the Areas of Special Control will need to be reviewed in future.

15.4 Four categories of outdoor advertising are permitted within an area of special control of advertisements. These are:

Public Notices
Advertisements within a building
Advertisements for which there is deemed consent
Temporary advertisements for travelling circuses and fairs.

15.5 The planning authority may give their specific consent within an area of special control to the following advertisements:

Notices about local events or activities
Advance signs or direction signs which are reasonably required in order to direct people to the place identified on the sign.
An advertisement required for public safety reasons
An advertisement in any of the seven “deemed consent” classes, if it is considered reasonable for the normal size, height or illumination limits on that class to be exceeded.

15.6 An advertisement with “deemed consent” does not require an application to the planning authority, provided it complies with certain rules. Advertisements which fall within the seven “deemed consent” classes are

described in the booklet “Outdoor advertisements and Signs – A Guide for Advertisers”, referred to earlier.

15.7 Within an area of special control of advertisements, a planning authority will place stricter limits on the permitted height and size of advertisements than elsewhere.

16.0 Further Design Guidance

16.1 In addition to the general guidance set out in this document further information on specific aspects is set out as follows:

Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas para.s 16.2 – 16.34.

Advertisements in major commercial areas para.s 17.0 – 23.1

Guidance on specific types of advertisements para.s 25 – 32

SHOPFRONTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

16.2 Conservation Areas are defined as areas or groups of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Often a Conservation Area includes the commercial centre of an historic town or village and this can give rise to a conflict of interests between the desire to be commercially conspicuous and the need to preserve the character of the area. By describing the general principles involved, this Council seeks to encourage a high standard of sympathetic design for shop-fronts and advertisements. The officers of the Council will be pleased to advise upon particular situations and to discuss the merits of specific proposals.

16.3 The successful design of shop-fronts and advertisements, in Conservation Areas, relies upon the sympathetic handling of scale, materials and detail design. These notes identify the most important implications of these three factors.

Shopfront Design

16.4 Aspects of poor design

Fascias that fill the space between shop window and first floor windows usually appear to be too big for the building. They tend to detract from the traditional balance between wall and window space. Advertisements above ground level have a similar effect and should be avoided

16.5 Blind boxes and fixing brackets are often unduly obtrusive. This unsightliness is often made worse by sagging, torn and faded blinds.

16.6 Fascias should not normally appear to divorce the shop-front from the upper floors of the building, as this destroys the entity of the original design. Large uninterrupted areas of plate glass are seldom appropriate in Conservation Areas.

16.7 When two or more different users occupy the ground floor of a single building there is often no relationship between the shop-fronts. This can destroy any character that the building as a whole might possess.

16.8 Doors no longer in use have a tendency to become neglected and unsightly.

16.9 Fascias and other advertisement panels should not obscure the architectural features of a building or the modelling on an older style shop-front

16.10 An excessive amount of advertising material merely creates a cluttered appearance and is both counter productive and unsightly.

16.11 Strident or harsh colours are also inappropriate.

Possibilities for Enhancement

16.12 Where a single user occupies the ground floors of two different buildings it is important to preserve the individuality of the buildings. The common occupancy can be displayed by consistency of detail design, colour, lettering, etc.

16.13 Blind boxes could be carefully integrated with the design to be as unobtrusive as possible.

16.14 Extensive window areas can be incorporated without resorting to sweeping expanses of plate glass.

16.15 By carrying the main wall material down to the ground, even if only at the corners, the building can be given apparent stability.

16.16 Where two users occupy the ground floor of a single building the shop-fronts should relate to each other, and to the building as a whole. This does not necessarily demand perfect symmetry or a loss of individual identity.

16.17 Older style shop-fronts often have considerable character that should be preserved and enhanced by good maintenance. Painting and decorating should highlight rather than conflict with the architectural features of the design.

16.18 Colour washing of walls sometimes using a bold colour can make a positive contribution to the street scene. The features of the whole building rather than just the shop-front, should be used to advantage.

16.19 In some cases, a fascia may be eliminated and lettering applied directly to the wall.

16.20 Details

The detailed modelling and decorations of older shop-fronts in Conservation Areas can be an important feature of the street scene. These should be preserved and enhanced by good maintenance, rather than replaced for the sake of modernity. Where the existing shop-front lacks visual merit an alternative modern design may be acceptable.

16.21 Scale

For a shop-front to be in scale it must be of an appropriate size, both in relation to the façade of the individual building and to the street as a whole.

16.22 Materials

Much of the character of a Conservation Area is derived from the mellowed appearance of traditional materials such as brick, stone, tile, slate and timber, and this must be respected in the design of shop-fronts. Consideration should be given to the use of suitable second-hand materials and architectural features, both for new buildings and alteration work. The range of materials in use in a Conservation Area should not be increased indiscriminately. Modern materials such as plastics, aluminium and stainless steel should only be used with discretion.

16.23 Consideration should be given to the high level of maintenance that some materials require. Designs are seldom successful when they incorporate a great variety of materials and heavily textured surfaces.

16.24 Fascias and Advertisements

The character of a Conservation Area must not be prejudiced by insistent and competitive advertising. Restraint and good manners must be exercised to achieve a satisfactory balance between commercial and environmental considerations.

16.25 The design of a fascia should achieve a visual harmony, both within itself and in relation to the façade of the building. Traditional shop-fronts frequently have a fascia or name board surrounded by a frieze and cornice, which combine to form a significant element in the total shop-front. It is important to preserve all such details. Modern fascias tend to be of a more simple design: nevertheless an edge moulding to a fascia normally gives a more pleasing appearance than a simple flat board.

16.26 A simple layout using clear lettering is most likely to compliment the buildings in a Conservation Area. Careful attention must be given to the size and distribution of letters and motifs in relation to the overall dimensions of the fascia.

16.27 **Projecting signs**, especially of the traditional hanging type, can be attractive features of the street scene. A plethora of such signs, however, gives rise to a cluttered appearance. They are most appropriate on large buildings such as public houses and hotels.

16.28 **The illumination of advertisements** is a particularly sensitive problem in a Conservation Area. Internally illuminated signs are not normally considered appropriate in a Conservation Area, particularly when they project as a box, forward of a main face of the building. Whilst indirect lighting can create a pleasant effect at night great care is required to avoid lamps and brackets appearing unsightly in daylight.

16.29 **Burglar and Fire Alarms** etc. where required should be incorporated in a relatively unobtrusive position. Such installations should be free from unsightly, surface-mounted cable runs. Extractor fan outlets should be discreetly located.

16.30 **Maintenance** is a key factor in the preservation of character in a Conservation Area. Good maintenance is necessary to preserve both the structural fabric and the visual quality of an area. Faults such as decaying woodwork, cracked brickwork or render, faulty rainwater pipes and missing tiles, can soon lead to costly repairs if not attended to promptly. Neglected paintwork, missing lettering and torn blinds are equally injurious to the visual amenity of an area.

16.31 **Implementation**

The attainment of high standards of visual quality in Conservation Areas requires skill and imagination. It is strongly advised that architects and designers with experience in this field are retained for this work.

16.32 The law relating to advertisements is contained in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Chapter III and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992; additional controls apply to Listed Buildings. The officers of the Council will be pleased to advise upon the extent of controls applicable to individual situations.

16.33 In determining applications for new buildings or alterations in Conservation Areas, the Planning Department will require: -

- a) Fully detailed plans and relevant elevations of the property, and sections where appropriate, together with outline drawings of adjoining buildings. Applications relating solely to advertisements should show the proposal in relation to the whole of the relevant elevation.
- b) Full details of materials, both existing and proposed, together with notes on the materials of adjoining buildings.
- c) A location plan to an appropriate scale.

16.34 The Planning Authority will expect proposals to compliment and enhance the street scene. The officers of the Council will be pleased to discuss proposals informally prior to the submission of an application for planning permission.

17.0 ADVERTISEMENTS IN MAJOR COMMERCIAL AREAS

17.1 The Council's general policies on advertisement control are set out in the main document. These paragraphs provide additional advice on advertising in the following areas:-

Central Milton Keynes
District Centres
Commercial Leisure Areas
Retail Parks
Transport Interchanges

18.0 Central Milton Keynes

18.1 Central Milton Keynes (CMK) occupies the area from the railway in the west to the canal in the east , and between City Grid Roads, Portway (H5) and Childs Way (H6).

18.2 CMK is intended to be the main business, commercial, social and administrative focus of the City. It also contains a substantial residential population. It serves as a district centre for the population of the residential areas within and immediately adjoining CMK. In addition it has become a shopping and leisure centre of regional importance.

18.3 Advertising in CMK therefore requires sensitivity and balance, in order to contribute to the vibrant appearance of a major commercial centre, allow businesses to advertise their presence and to protect the amenity and environment of those who live in the City Centre. Advertising will fit comfortably and contribute positively to the appearance of the public realm environment. Advertising and sponsorship will be carefully controlled in terms of securing the appropriate advertising mediums, their quantity and scale across CMK.

18.4 The following principles from the (draft) CMK Public Realm Handbook are recognised as appropriate to the consideration of signage proposals in Central Milton Keynes

- For all advertising to meet the required design standards and to fit coherently with public realm elements
- to create an integrated and coherent approach towards advertising and sponsorship in CMK

- to prevent advertising mediums that will have an adverse impact on visual amenity, the quality of the environment and public safety
- to create legible pedestrian routes, assist pedestrian movement and ensure that advertising does not infringe on a 3m clear zone for pedestrian movement along pavements or contribute to unnecessarily to a 'cluttering' of the streetscape
- to ensure advertising mediums do not dominate the environment and that a quality streetscape is maintained, using existing street structures where possible, or specially designed structures which complement the palette of street furniture elements, in all cases
- to concentrate high quality and innovative advertising in appropriate locations
- to ensure that all advertising mediums are designed and maintained to the highest standard and of the highest design quality
- to ensure advertising on streets or elsewhere in the public realm is appropriate to its context and fits with the character of CMK street furniture, and where mounted on or adjacent to street furniture, does not detract from its character or primary use

18.5 For the purposes of advertisement control, CMK has been divided into 3 areas as shown on [plan 2](#). Opportunities for quality advertising and sponsorship will be encouraged across CMK and will assist in creating an interesting and active public realm. However, the opportunities for advertising will vary according to the predominant activity, uses and sensitivities of particular areas within the city centre and must be carefully designed.

18.6 The recent and planned developments in Central Milton Keynes have introduced a variety of building styles. Advertisement and sign proposals will be assessed against the criteria in this policy and in the CMK Handbook.

19.0 Area 1 – The Central Area – *the retail and leisure areas and key 'gateway' points*

19.1 The greatest opportunity for quality and innovative advertising is within Area 1. This is subject to meeting the general requirements for amenity and public safety as set out in the main document. In the Central Area

Station Square,
Midsummer Boulevard spine,
Central shopping and leisure area,
Key gateway points,
Saxon Gate

well designed and innovative signs can make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the City Centre. On these streets, advertising should focus on the principal elevations and entrances to buildings, or strategic locations such as corners and meeting points where advertising can assist with orientation and wayfinding. In all cases advertising must be of the highest design quality and be appropriate to surrounding uses and context.

Advertising coming forward in Area 1 must be the most innovative and original.

19.2 The following forms of advertisement will generally be permitted within Area 1:-

 Illuminated and non-illuminated signs and fascias

 Illuminated and non-illuminated advertising panels and hoardings

 Flag advertisements, lamp-post and pole signs and canopy signs

 Captive balloon advertisements

19.3 The opportunity of advertising should focus on Midsummer Boulevard, with more subdued advertising fronting Silbury and Avebury Boulevards, and Marlborough Street. This is in order to protect the amenity of the adjacent areas.

20.0 Area 2 – *The mixed business and sport areas*

20.1 Within this area, there is a higher level of opportunity for advertising than that which exists elsewhere throughout the city centre, although it is not of the same level as that in Area 1.

20.2 As with Area 1, the main focus of advertising should be Midsummer Boulevard but includes

 The central business district

 The retail sport and leisure area north of Station Square

 The Campbell Park entrance adjoining area 1

 The Campbell Park marina

20.3 Within Area 2, advertising should normally focus to highlight commercial premises and normally be confined to the ground floor level of principal elevations and at entrances to buildings. Advertising should assist with orientation and wayfinding..

21.0 Area 3 – *Campbell Park and predominantly residential areas*

21.1 This area contains the most sensitive areas in CMK with regard to advertising: the main City Park, and also the residential buildings within CMK. For this reason, the level of advertising would not generally exceed that which is acceptable within the City as a whole. There may, however, be opportunities for higher levels of advertising intensity associated with specific commercial buildings within this zone, provided that its impact is contained and does not adversely affect the amenity of the immediately adjacent areas. This low intensity zone includes

Church Square
Law Courts, Police Station and Civic Offices
Campbell Park
Canalside

22.0 District Centres, Commercial Leisure Areas and Retail Parks

22.1 A higher level of advertising will be permitted in district centres, (except Conservation Areas), commercial leisure areas, and retail parks, than elsewhere in the Borough. The Council's general provisions regarding amenity and public safety will continue to apply. Local centres are not included within this category, because of the impact that higher levels of advertising are likely to have on the amenity of adjoining residential areas.

22.2 Within district centres, commercial leisure areas and retail parks, the following forms of advertisement will generally be permitted:-

- Illuminated and non-illuminated signs and fascias
- Illuminated and non-illuminated advertising panels and hoardings
- Flag advertisements, pole signs and canopy signs
- Captive balloon advertisements

22.3 The impact of signs and advertisement in these areas must not, however, have an adverse impact on adjacent areas.

22.4 Within these commercial areas, the scale of buildings may be sufficiently large to accommodate larger advertisements without any adverse impact upon visual amenity. But the scale of commercial buildings can vary greatly, even within short distances in the same area, and for this reason, the Council will seek to match the scale of advertising to the scale of the adjacent buildings. The general guidance set out in the main report on size, colour, design, materials and illumination, will apply in such areas.

22.5 The Council will also try to ensure that advertisements in such areas do not present a cluttered appearance, and do not proliferate across an area. For this reason, the use of free standing composite advertising structures will be encouraged.

23.0 Transport Interchanges

23.1 This term covers both railway and bus stations. Within such areas, a higher level of advertising will be permitted than in the Borough in general. The same standards that apply to district centres, commercial leisure areas, and retailing parks, will be applied, but with one important proviso. Additional care will be exercised with regard to public safety considerations, because of the presence of moving vehicles, and high concentrations of pedestrians.

24.0 GUIDANCE ON SPECIFIC TYPES OF ADVERTISEMENT

24.1 This section provides more detailed guidance on specific types of advertisement. The general guidance in the main body of the report continues to apply, and this section should not be used in isolation.

25.0 Advertising Hoardings/Poster Sites

25.1 Advertising hoardings and poster sites will not generally be permitted in the following areas:-

- Areas of special control of advertisements
- Areas of Attractive Landscape
- Open countryside
- Conservations Areas
- Areas affecting the setting of a Listed Building.
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- Historic Parks and Gardens
- Residential Areas
- Linear Parks
- Highway verges

25.2 A limited number of advertisement hoardings and poster sites would generally be acceptable in:-

- Central Milton Keynes
- District Centres
- Commercial Leisure Areas
- Retail Warehouse Parks
- Transport Interchanges

25.3 Permission may be granted for advertising hoardings and poster sites for a limited period during the course of construction work, where the appearance of the hoarding may be preferable to the appearance of the building site. Where such consent is granted, the hoardings must be kept in good order and must be removed on expiration of the consent.

26.0 Construction Hoardings

26.1 Construction hoardings benefit from “deemed consent” under the Town and Country Planning Regulations. Any proposals which go beyond the scope of the deemed consent would be assessed as advertising hoardings, in line with the policies set out under section 25.

27.0 Flag Advertisements

27.1 The advertisement regulations permit an advertisement to be displayed as a flag, on one flagstaff fixed upright on the roof of a building. The flag itself may only have on it the name, emblem, device or trademark of the company,

or person occupying the building. Flags are not permitted to advertise products, unless they have the planning authority's specific consent.

27.2 Flag advertisements will normally only be acceptable in the following areas:-

- Central Milton Keynes
- District Centres
- Commercial Leisure Areas
- Retail Warehouse Parks
- Transport Interchanges

27.3 Subject to the general provisions on amenity and public safety, flag advertisements may also be acceptable outside the areas listed above, where the advertisement is directly associated with a specific commercial activity, for example, a filling station, car showroom, show home sales office etc, and where its impact is restricted to the locality.

28.0 Filling Stations and Car Showrooms

28.1 Filling stations often display a variety of advertising media, including illuminated canopies, pole signs, gantry signs and flag advertisement. The Council will apply its general advertisement considerations to each of the individual advertisements. In addition, the Council will seek to reduce the amount of advertising clutter that can sometimes arise in these situations.

28.2 The level of advertising that would be permitted in a filling station, will be determined by the location of the filling station and its relationship to the surrounding area.

29.0 Balloon and Tower Advertising

29.1 Such advertisements would only be acceptable within the following areas:-

- Central Milton Keynes
- District Centres
- Commercial Leisure Areas
- Retail Warehouse Parks
- Transport Interchanges

29.2 In considering individual applications, the planning authority will consider the impact of the proposed advertisement on the surrounding area in accordance with its general advertising policies.

30.0 Corporate Images

30.1 Many commercial organisations have corporate advertising, used throughout the UK. This can sometimes be in conflict with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Where this occurs, the Borough Council will seek to find a form of advertisement which reflects the corporate aspirations of the company, whilst reducing its impact on the amenity of the surrounding area. In particularly sensitive locations, such as on listed buildings, or within conservation areas, it may not be possible to accommodate the applicant's requirements, even by compromise, and a refusal will be necessary.

31.0 Commercial Letting or Sale Boards

31.1 The advertisement regulations permit the display of Sale and To Let Boards up to a maximum of 2 sq metres for a single board, or 2.3 sq metres where two boards are joined together to form a single advertisement.

31.2 The Borough Council will give consent for sale and to let boards where this is required, subject to the general provisions relating to amenity and safety set out in the main report. In such circumstances, it will be normal for the consent to be limited to a period not exceeding 2 years.

32.0 Other Forms of Advertisement

32.1 Any other form of advertisement not listed above, will be assessed on its merits in terms of the general policies set out in the main report.