

PE2090/D: Update the legislation granting permission for Digital Display Boards

Paul Sweeney MSP written submission, 6 May 2025

I have had various correspondence with constituents expressing concern about the lack of community consultation when traditional paper-based display advertising boards switch to digital display boards.

My understanding is that, at present, advertising companies make the information related to the change to digital advertising available on council planning portals. This is not something that people check on a regular basis, and therefore, information will be easily missed.

With that in mind, it appears reasonable to me for advertising companies to be required to proactively communicate with those in the immediate area beside the advertising board who the change in lighting will impact.

Digital advertising boards bring with them a changed level of light pollution. Especially at night, these boards can disturb sleep. This certainly warrants proactive communication so that residents can reasonably object to a change in the advertising board.

Looking at global best practice, Melbourne City Council is considering a curfew for digital advertising boards to address light pollution and the environmental impacts of large digital advertising boards. This would allow digital advertising to continue without disturbing the sleep of residents.

I would encourage the committee to keep this petition open and call relevant parties to give evidence –including planning and licencing officials from COSLA and relevant local authorities such as Glasgow City Council. Perhaps by looking at proactive communication with residents within a certain perimeter and sightline on applications for digital advertising boards, a requirement for flexible adjustments in brightness for such installations and a curfew for illumination of large digital advertising boards in residential areas, we can address the concerns of residents while allowing businesses to continue advertising in this way.