



### **New project to bring end to Oban street clutter**

Argyll and Bute Council and BID4Oban Ltd (Oban Business Improvement District) are working to find a solution to cut down on pavement signage in the town, while improving information to residents and visitors.

This is a partnership solution to remove unauthorised signage that will benefit both pedestrians and retailers.

Proposals are in place to replace all the existing town centre notice boards and install additional boards across the town.

New notice boards with maps will be installed to allow businesses in some of the side streets of Oban to highlight they are there, rather than resort to a clutter of pavement A-Frames. Advertising on some of the notice boards will be cost neutral for the businesses on a not for profit basis.

The notice boards to, be managed by BID4Oban, will be to the same specification as the street furniture installed during the Oban town centre improvements some years ago.

Andrew Spence, Chief Executive, BID4Oban, said: "We are pleased that we have managed to make progress on this important issue by working with Argyll and Bute Planning. It is essential that we have a clean and tidy well-maintained town centre and provide information to any visitors to the town.

"There will be advertising on notice boards and those that are in the side streets or off the main town centre streets will have priority to advertise on these. It is essential that once the process starts that businesses apply for permissions for any A-Frames or additional signage. There is a clear policy that is available on both BID4Oban and Argyll and Bute websites."

Councillor David Kinniburgh, Policy Lead for Planning and Regulatory Services, said: "We understand that businesses feel they need additional advertising in these difficult times. However, we have to strike a balance between supporting local retailers and making our town centres accessible for pedestrians, and attractive to visitors.

"Too much street clutter makes it almost impossible for people with mobility issues, or families with young children, to use the footway safely. And, to be honest, when there is too much signage, it can be confusing."

Jim Tolmie, of Oban and District Access Panel, said: "We support the proposals to actively enforce a clear and understandable policy on individual business advertising throughout the Oban area. It is important for all pedestrians, particularly those with mobility and visual issues, to be able to use the public footways which are free from unnecessary illegal obstructions."

In the meantime, enforcement action, approved by the council's Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee, will be taken to ensure that the signage currently being used by businesses complies with regulations issued by the council.

The timetable for action on the signage will be:

- Mid July – letters will be sent to those businesses affected advising of the need to apply for permissions under S59 of the Roads (Scotland) Act and Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement)(Scotland) Regulations.
- Mid August – Reminders issued.
- Late August/Early Sept – any signage that has not received the appropriate permissions, from the council or Transport Scotland, will be removed
- Sept – Advertisement Enforcement Notices will be issued on remaining unauthorised signage where owners have not engaged with the Council/Transport Scotland to seek relevant permissions.

The policy for street signage can be found on the council website: [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/board-signs](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/board-signs) or at the BID4Oban website: <http://www.bid4oban.co.uk/>

A new webpage guiding applicants through the process will soon be available, and BID4Oban will, in the future, provide additional support for local businesses.