

Trader A-Board rules now being enforced

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Clear new guidelines to better control the increase in A-Boards and improve safety on public footways for people with a visual impairment, problems with mobility, and child buggy users are now being enforced by Bath & North East Somerset Council.

The step follows a massive engagement exercise by the Council with local businesses across the district. Over the past few months, Council staff have visited 1,170 business premises to offer advice and deliver information so that they can make changes to ensure that their A-Boards comply.

Councillor David Dixon (Lib-Dem, Oldfield) Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, said, “We would like to thank the local businesses that have taken on board the new common sense rules developed by Bath & North East Somerset Council.

“The streets are already looking much more accessible as we strike the right balance between public safety and the need for traders to attract customers. The Council is now enforcing the guidelines and will investigate any complaints submitted to us. This will not be a toothless policy.”

Measures in the guidelines include a requirement for traders to leave a minimum of 1.5 metres width of footway for pedestrians and a size requirement of A-Boards being no more than 660mm wide and 1250mm high. Enforcement action starts with a verbal notice. If this is not complied with a business may have the offending board removed and be charged a fee of £50 to collect it. The rules secured the support of both the Bath Business Improvement District (BID) and People First Bath and North East Somerset / Equality B&NES which speaks for disabled people in the area.

Will Bee, development worker at People First Bath and North East Somerset / Equality B&NES, said, “We welcome the Council’s new policy and believe it is a balanced attempt to resolve the day-to-day problems experienced by disabled people and particularly blind people.”

Andrew Cooper, Bath BID Manager, added, “Having clear, fair guidance rather than going down a route of licensing and charging for A-boards is generally welcomed by businesses.”

Report a concern

Any concerns about A-Boards causing an obstruction can be reported to Council Connect via www.bathnes.gov.uk/reportit or councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk or 01225 39 40 41. People are encouraged to read the A-Board guidelines first before contacting the Council. They can be found at www.bathnes.gov.uk/a-boards or in the Spring 2012 edition of Connect Magazine.