



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Purple Frog
189 Dawlish Road
Birmingham
B29 7AW

Al Carns MP
House of Commons
Westminster, London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Purple Frog,

Re: Voluntary Removal of Letting Boards in Selly Oak.

We hope this letter finds you well.

We are writing to address ongoing concerns regarding the excessive display of letting boards in the Selly Oak area, which are in breach of Town and Country Planning Regulations and having a detrimental impact on the community and safety of the area. This letter is being shared with all letting agents operating in the Selly Oak area and with landlords through their relevant license teams, so everybody is aware of what the regulations are.

As you may be aware, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 set clear guidelines regarding the display of letting boards which apply to student rentals. These regulations ensure that boards are displayed in a way that does not negatively affect the visual amenity of the area.

The rules are as follows:

1. **14-Day Rule:** Letting boards must be removed within 14 days of a property being let or once an offer has been accepted. Unfortunately, many boards remain in place well beyond this period, breaching the 14-day rule. This timeframe includes boards displaying "let by", "too late" and "let". Boards without wording relating to a letting or sale do not qualify for any display period at all.
2. **Only Two Boards Permitted:** A maximum of two boards back-to-back is permitted per property. Additionally, each board must not exceed **0.5 square metres in area**, with a maximum height of **1.5 metres** from ground level. Some properties have been observed displaying more than the permitted number of boards or boards that exceed these size restrictions.

Beyond the legal considerations, we would like to draw your attention to the safety implications posed by the excessive display of letting boards in this area. Selly Oak experiences high rates of burglaries which puts significant strain on the resources of our

local police; properties in this area house students who typically own valuable electronic items such as laptops, tablets, and other devices.

The visible advertising of student properties through letting boards inadvertently draws attention to these homes, which may encourage criminals to target them, knowing that valuable possessions are likely to be inside. Given the increasing crime rate, and the vulnerability of student tenants, we must be mindful of the risks posed by advertising these properties so prominently. Where letting boards have been removed in other areas a difference has been noticed by the local police force and student tenants alike.

We would also like to highlight that many residents in Selly Oak have raised concerns about the visual impact of these boards on the streets. The excessive number of boards in the area has been described as unsightly, creating a cluttered and unattractive environment that detracts from the overall appearance of the neighbourhood.

We are aware that once properties are let, some agents claim to be advertising for the next academic cycle in order to keep letting boards up. However, letting properties this far in advance is unrealistic and unnecessary.

The use of letting boards are no longer a necessary or effective tool for finding rental properties. In the past, boards may have been a primary way for potential tenants to locate available properties, but with the advent of online property search platforms and websites, the need for such visible advertising has significantly diminished. To confirm this, residents have spoken to local students, and when asked, **every single one reported using online platforms to search for rental properties**, rather than relying on letting boards. The high volume of these boards now serves little practical purpose and only contributes to visual clutter. Many of these boards are left up long after they are needed, adding to the unsightly appearance of the area and original use of these boards. Furthermore, the student letting cycle in Selly Oak typically begins in **October** for the following academic year, with many students committing to **two-year tenancies**. Given this, advertising properties with letting boards is largely unnecessary for much of the year. Many tenants have already signed agreements well in advance, rendering the continued display of boards redundant.

Birmingham City Council have been taking steps to address this issue. They have sent formal letters to letting agents, including hand-delivered notices, reminding them of their obligations as per the planning regulations. In cases of non-compliance, the Council has carried out enforcement action against a number of letting agents. One particular agent was required to reimburse the costs incurred by the Council for the removal of unauthorised boards. This demonstrates the seriousness with which the Council is taking this issue, and we would urge you to take immediate action to ensure compliance and to avoid further enforcement action.

We are therefore requesting that letting boards be voluntarily removed along the following roads, where the issue has become particularly pronounced:

Heeley Road
Fairgreen Way
Hubert Road
Tiverton Road
Dawlish Road
Teignmouth Road
Bournbrook Road
Dartmouth Road

Exeter Road
Raddlebarn Road
Luton Road
Croydon Road
Arley Road
North Road
George Road
Dale Road

Coronation Road
Selly Hill Road
Rookery Road
St Edwards Road
Alton Road
Harrow Road
Katie Road
Lottie Road

Winnie Road
Gleave Road
Oak Tree Lane
Warwards Lane
Milner Road
Westminster Road
St Stephen's Road
Umberslade Road

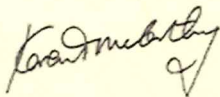
This voluntary removal of boards has been successfully implemented in various other cities across the country, in similar areas to Selly Oak, and has led to positive outcomes in terms of both visual amenity and community safety.

However, should this request not be adhered to, we will look to issue a Community Protection Warning under the Anti-Social Behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014 to all managing agents. Non-compliance with this warning will lead to the serving of a Community Protection Notice (CPN) on offending letting agents. Non-compliance with the notice will lead to a fine determined by the courts.

Yours Sincerely,



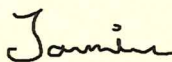
Al Carns DSO OBE MC MP
MP for Birmingham Selly Oak
Minister for Veterans & People



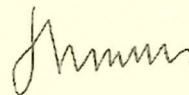
Councillor Karen McCarthy
Bournbrook & Selly Park Ward
Cabinet Member for Finance



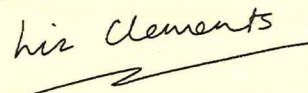
Sergeant Gareth Sankey
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Police



Councillor Jamie Scott
Bournbrook & Selly Park Ward



Councillor Jayne Francis
Harborne Ward
Cabinet Member for Housing



Councillor Liz Clements
Bournville & Cotteridge Ward



Councillor Fred Grindrod
Bournville & Cotteridge Ward



Hope Aquilina
Welfare & Community Officer
Guild of Students