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25 JAN 1988
DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT (N.I.)

Minister

To See Re.

W. Sandy
26.1.88

cc Secretary
Mr Ford
Mr Davidson
Mr McIldoon

To: Minister
From: G Loughran

POLITICAL PROTEST ACTION: DISPLAY OF "SAYS NO" BANNERS BY DISTRICT COUNCILS

1. The purpose of this submission is to bring you up to date, and advise you that some Councils may shortly be in Court.
2. There were originally 15 Councils involved in the display of "Says No" banners. All eventually applied for consent which was granted for a period of three months. These consents expired some time ago and a number of Councils re-applied, but were refused consent. Four Councils (Antrim, Belfast, Craigavon and Newtownabbey) appealed to the Planning Appeals Commission against refusals, and to date, the PAC has upheld the Department's decision in each case (the Department currently awaits the determination of the appeal by the Craigavon Borough Council).
3. In all cases, we have followed the Department's normal procedures with regard to unauthorised advertisements. Each Council was written to on a number of occasions in an effort to secure its co-operation in removing the banners. Some progress has been made.
4. At an early stage two Councils, Coleraine and Ards, removed their banners, although Ards Borough Council has recently re-erected a banner on a different building.
5. By November 1987, 13 Councils had banners on display. Craigavon and Newtownabbey Councils had appeals pending and Lisburn Council's banner was still subject to an undetermined application. The Department therefore wrote to the remaining 10 Councils, giving them a specific timescale within which to remove their banners. The position as at 22 January 1988 is as follows:-

Antrim	-	banner removed, but re-erected at a different location.
Ballymena	-	banner removed.
Banbridge	-	banner removed but re-erected at a different location.
Belfast	-	banner removed, but re-erected within the grounds of the City Hall. Following a further request from the Department the banner was removed a second time

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and re-erected in the courtyard where it is outside planning control. New banner put on display below the dome of the building.

Carrick	-	banner removed.
Castlereagh	-	banner removed from the facade of the building and put on display within the building, although visible from outside - such display is not subject to planning control.
Cookstown	-	banner still on display, further application made for consent to display.
Larne	-	banner still on display.
Limavady	-	banner removed from the facade of the building and put on display inside - such display is not subject to planning control.
North Down	-	banner still on display. Renewal application for consent recently refused.

Because they removed their banners and re-erected them at different locations, it was necessary to send further warning letters to the Antrim, Banbridge and Belfast Councils.

6. In the case of Belfast City Hall dome banner, legal advice is being sought on whether or not the current location of the banner is subject to planning control. It is not particularly conspicuous.
7. The next step is to issue summonses to those Councils which are still displaying unauthorised banner advertisements. The first of these summonses will be issued to the Banbridge District Council.

8. Conclusion

The Minister is asked to note the position regarding the display of "Says No" banners by District Councils and the fact that several Councils which are still displaying these unauthorised banners will shortly be subject to action in the Courts.

G LOUGHRAN

22 January 1988

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