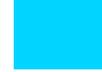




# Surrey's Greener Future

## Sponsorship policy



# Motion from Councillor Jonathan Essex



## **This Council resolves to call upon the Cabinet:**

- I. To amend its Advertising and Sponsorship Policy to ban advertisements specifically for fossil fuel companies, flights, petrol and diesel vehicles, and wording the amendment to ban other as yet unidentified high carbon products.
- II. To implement this revised Advertising and Sponsorship Policy internally and wherever possible promote its adoption by other partners committed to Surrey's Climate Change Strategy. This should include restricting advertising of high carbon products on bus stops, billboards and advertising spaces, plus all publications by Surrey County Council.

# Advertising

- The motion is directed at advertising for the whole County
- Highways are providing information for the motion, as the service is the most advanced in progressing advertising opportunities
- Any recommendations from the Group would apply to all of the County Council functions and not be restricted to just Highways
- Some advertising is managed by others and whilst in maybe on the public highway it is beyond the County Council's direct control. Examples include some Bus shelter contracts (managed by Districts & Boroughs) and telecommunication hubs with advertising, permitted through their rights as a utility operator



# History of Highway Advertising

- Approximately 5 years ago, we identified advertising as a possible revenue stream which had so far not been investigated.
- In 2019, the advertising and sponsorship policy was taken to Cabinet with the recommendations being:
  - The proposed advertising and sponsorship policy is agreed
  - A number of trial advertising projects are progressed across the county on Surrey County Council (SCC) infrastructure to assess the potential future opportunities
  - Future changes to the policy are delegated to the Head of Highways & Transport in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways
- In June 2022, we went out to tender for 5 large scale digital advertising sites in Guildford with 3 sites won by 3 separate bidders (worth £52,100pa- total £365k over 7 year term of contract).
- We are currently out to tender for a County-wide small format package with award hopefully taking place in March 2024 (worth approximately £500k pa- total £5 million over the 10 year term of contract)

# Considerations

- If the content restrictions imposed by the Council effectively remove too great a proportion of potential advertisers, then either costs will need to be lowered (via a reduction of income to the Council) or in some cases the project abandoned altogether.
- If restrictions are imposed mid-term this will have legal consequences as they will effectively undermine commercial terms and the assessments that informed them.
- If the restrictions render a site unviable, unless central government were to legislate against the advertising category in question (as they did in the case of tobacco) a media owner will simply fulfil its needs via the development of an alternative site.
- Not only will the Council have lost both a potential income and control of the site (which would be greater as landlord than that afforded by the statutory process) but the content will simply be displayed elsewhere, so rendering the exercise largely ineffective.



# Considerations

- Most car companies still producing diesel/petrol cars have their own Carbon targets which will be mirrored in the adverts they produce
- The energy and media industry are self-regulating and acutely aware of sensitivity around the promotion of fossil fuel products. Often organisations that engage in fossil fuel extraction and supply of associated products, choose only to promote their other forms of green and renewable energy products to encourage the market/behaviour shift that is required to make these sustainable”.
- The advertising policy already stipulates that all advertising must comply with the following:
  - Guidelines laid out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)
  - The rules laid out in the [UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising](#)
  - Follow the [Code of recommended practice on Local Authority publicity](#)

# Considerations

- There are many examples of fossil fuel based products with a high environmental impact such as some plastics.
- Consideration must also be given to the huge carbon impact of importing certain foods (additional information sent with slides gives examples of this) foods.
- There is a risk that a too strict and prescriptive approach to content will result in a greatly diluted commercial offer or media owners not bidding at all.
- The Council needs to take a pragmatic approach and balance the financial advantages with being mindful of advertising content. If we deviate from national policy as detailed by the ASA, media companies will likely choose not to bid and the project will fail.



# Recommendations

- The Council recommends that the policy remains in its current form. The policy states that all advertising has to comply with Guidelines laid out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the rules laid out in the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and follow the Code of recommended practice on Local Authority publicity
- Any further products that are added (such as vapes in recent times) to the list of prohibited products to advertise would subsequently also be banned by the media owners.
- There is the option of utilising the income gained by advertising to progress and implement projects that improve or expediate the attainment of our Greener Futures objectives