

CABINET – 26 MARCH 2024**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions:****Question (1) Catherine Baart**

Consultants from the advertising industry have told officers there is a significant 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. Please share what Surrey County Council has established with regards to the actual experience of councils which have already banned high carbon products in their advertising policy? Using this evidence, what is the likely impact on future advertising fee income for Surrey County Council with the restrictions proposed in the motion, compared to what is currently in the budget?

Reply:

We are unaware of any authority that has an established ban focusing on high carbon products which has been in operation long enough to provide any credible data. It is understood that Sheffield City Council have very recently agreed to prevent advertising of a range of products, from hybrid cars to alcohol. Their ban is due to come into effect in the coming months and Officers will seek to gain an understanding as to the impact of that decision and data from any other authorities who are in the early stages of having made similar changes.

A vast amount of products have a significant carbon footprint these days (including fruit and vegetables flown in from overseas) and it would require considerable work to establish a logical set of rules to legislate for what could and could not be displayed. It is reasonable to presume that the range of prohibited content could be significant and even if we were to be selective on what we would allow to be advertised, it would send a concerning message to the industry, as they would perceive that the list could very easily be expanded in the future impacting on their ability to be confident in income streams.

It is therefore not possible to give a precise figure on the impact of such a ban currently, but professional advice sought from the industry continues to indicate that it would be substantial and may undermine the business case for proceeding with advertising on the highway.

Matt Furniss**Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth****26 March 2024****Question (2) Catherine Baart**

What is the county council's view of the opportunities to positively promote Surrey's green economy on the new advertising spaces due to be created?

Reply:

Community advertising has been considered as part of contract specification for the small and large format advertising. Details from the contract are in italics below;

The Licensee shall be required to make space available on the digital screens in times of emergency for such public messaging as required in order to maintain public safety. Unsold display space will be made available to the Council for public messaging and non-commercial promotional use, subject to availability and mutually appropriate notification/access procedure.

While no contract has yet been awarded for the small format advertising, all tenders have also committed, as part of their social value, to “offer free advertising space to support social, environmental and wellbeing messaging”. Officers will work with the successful advertising tender to ensure this is fully utilised. The contract could generate a substantial income source that can be used to help support providing valuable services to our residents, including the wider greener futures agenda.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

26 March 2024

Question (3) Catherine Baart

What stage has been reached for the commercial contracts being negotiated for Countywide small format advertising and for large format digital advertising scheme for Guildford?

Reply:

For the small format advertising, the market tender closed at the end of January 2024 and evaluation and moderation took place in February. Once the necessary procurement process has been completed, we will be in a position to announce the successful bidder by May 2024.

For the large format advertising, I can advise that three separate companies were successful in bidding for three different sites in Guildford. We have been addressing the necessary legal requirements and engaging with Land and Property for leases/licenses and should soon be in a position to proceed.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

26 March 2024