



Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

Cabinet – 09/03/2021

Appendix C – Engagement with Scrutiny



Summary

The draft Advertising and Sponsorship Policy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on [03 November 2020](#).

The item attracted three [Public Forum statements](#) which called for a more restrictive approach.

Following the meeting:

- Restrictions were added relating to alcoholic drinks and to broaden restrictions on advertising high fat, salt or sugar food and drink to become city-wide (on council-owned or controlled sites). A Policy Guidance Note was produced in support of introducing these restrictions.
- Wording around decision making was amended and clarified. If the Policy is approved, this will be supplemented with clear internal communications and guidance accompanying its launch.
- Representations and comments relating to planning policy and property strategy, including the impact of advertising screens on light pollution, have been passed to the relevant Directors and Cabinet Member for attention.
- The Policy was amended to clarify whether it applies in partnerships and for council owned companies.
- Consideration was given to additional advertising restrictions in support of the Council's environmental aims. In the absence of any suitable national standards or local authority precedents, the Council would need to identify and restrict particular industries, goods or services. Because it would be the first authority to do so, formal public consultation would be necessary. Any such consultation would not be possible until after local elections due to national restrictions during pre-election period. The consequence of doing this would be to delay implementing any policy until much later in 2021, by which time the Council would have missed the opportunity to put the policy in to action on at least one of its larger advertising concession contracts, with no further practical chance to do so for several years.

MINUTES FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD 18TH JANUARY 2018

The Director for Strategy, Policy and Partnerships presented the draft Advertising and Sponsorship Policy and responded to questions from Members. The discussion was as follows;

- Officers were seeking early comments from Members in order to help to shape the final draft policy.
- The criteria set out in the policy would apply to the Council's own advertising spaces, as well as some of those managed by a third party.
- Advertising platforms owned or used by Bristol City Council included around 180 LCD-TFT bus shelter screens; 17 billboard sites; screens across BCC facilities; and social media



channels. Income through advertising stood at around £1million per year, and it was acknowledged that a change to policy could impact on this.

- The comments raised through Public Forum were noted, particularly the suggestion of greater restrictions around promotion of junk food and high polluting vehicles etc. It was noted that creating definitions for these items would require some consideration. The draft policy was based around legislative rather than discretionary compliance.
- It was confirmed gambling was specified as one of the areas that would not be promoted through advertising.
- The definition for regulatory purposes of 'High Fat, Salt and Sugar' (HFSS) foods was provided for reference.
- The policy referred to 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. Under advice from colleagues at Stonewall the policy would cover gender identity and expression, as well as gender reassignment.
- It was clarified that the scope of the policy was around advertising on Bristol City Council owned platforms as the Council holds limited control over the wider environment.
- The wording that 'some adverts themselves would need planning permission' was agreed to be clarified and it was confirmed that this referred to physical infrastructure. Ongoing conversations with Planning colleagues in the development of the policy were planned.
- The Advertising Standards Agency is the regulating body for advertising and has a defined role; the aim of this policy was not to duplicate this work, but to comply with all necessary requirements.

In response to the presentation, Members commented as follows;

- The introduction of the policy was welcomed but it would benefit from being more challenging and having greater specificity around the categories that would be unacceptable.
- The comments raised through Public Forum were apt and useful.
- Any loss of income could potentially be offset by health and social benefits.
- Greater focus on how decisions would be made around individual advertising applications should be provided. It was agreed that the draft language would be looked at, with options for escalation of concerns included.
- Officers were asked to review the impact of advertising screens on light pollution. This was noted and agreed to be raised through the Planning process.



- The implementation of this policy with partnerships and partly owned companies was identified as an issue which was being considered.
- Some clarification of 'political influence' was requested.

Members were invited to send any additional comments to the Director of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships.

The Director of Strategy, Policy and Partnerships stated that while it had been hoped to finalise the policy by the end of 2020, the second Covid-19 lockdown anticipated from 5th November 2020 and the ongoing management of pandemic response impacted the priorities and timescales for this. The policy was hoped to be finalised before the end of the financial year.

It was requested that OSMB be informed if and where the comments from Public Forum were to be incorporated.

RESOLVED; That Officers note the comments from Members and those made during the Public Forum submissions to help inform a future draft of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy.

Tim Borrett
Director of Policy, Strategy and Partnerships
25/01/2021

