

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Whitley Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0180 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: Land off junction of Brook Drive and Longwater Avenue, Longwater Avenue, Reading, RG2 6GP

Proposal: Replacement illuminated media screen

Applicant: Green Park Reading

Received date: 04/02/2025

Target Decision date: 01/04/2025

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises an existing illuminated media screen area at the northern entrance of Green Park, located in the green space adjacent to the junction of Longwater Avenue and Brook Drive. Foundry Brook is to the west of the proposed site.



Fig 1: View of the existing media screen (27/02/25)

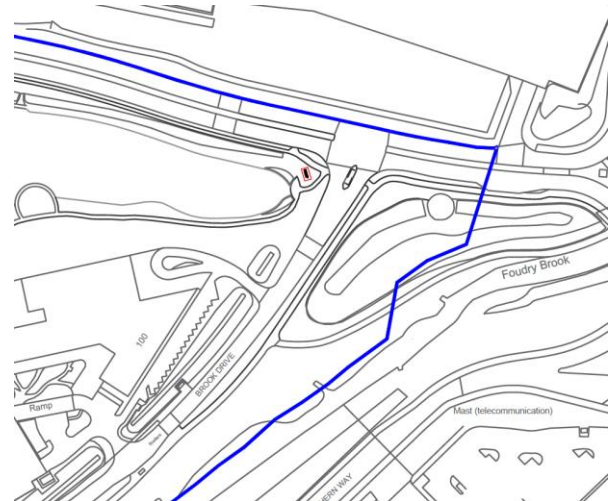


Fig 2: Extract of the site location plan submitted

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The advertisement consent application seeks approval for the replacement illuminated media screen, which would have a height of approximately 2.96 m, a length of 3.17 m, and a width of 0.2 m. The proposed illuminated screen would feature twenty-four 500 x 500 (AW2.5) Absen LED panels and a front display panel with the Green Park logo illuminated in white at the bottom. A lightbox would be fitted behind the front panel. The screen frame would also be made from stainless steel and powder-coated black with a RAL texture. There would be three rear access doors for the LED panels, lighting, PC, and 4G router, all secured with security bolts.

As stated in the covering letter submitted by the agent, the screen would also be equipped with an ambient light sensor that controls the level of brightness. Therefore, the brightness level would vary depending on the changing imagery and the different sizes of images/letters. Meanwhile, the proposed screen would have a maximum brightness of 5,000 candelas per square metre (cd/m²).

Plans submitted:

- Covering Letter
- Signage types (Existing Elevation Drawing)
- Drawing no. TFT-XX-00-DR-A-0001 Rev. LP01 – Site Location Plan

- The maximum luminance of advertisements displayed should not exceed 600 cd/m² above ambient light levels.

- Controls shall be in place to ensure the uninterrupted transition of images. Transitions shall be no more than 1.8 seconds
- No static or motion advertisement shall be displayed for a duration of less than 10 seconds.
- The media screen hereby permitted shall not display advertisements which resemble road signs
- In the event that the media screen breaks down or malfunctions, the screen shall default to either a black screen or freeze in one position, no error messages displayed on the screen shall flash.

REASON: In the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC7, CC8 AND OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

A site notice was displayed on 13th February 2025 in front of the application site. The 21-day consultation period ended on 6th March 2025. No letters of representation have been received.



Fig 3: Site Notice Photo

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.

Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them

the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
OU4: ADVERTISEMENTS

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’.

5. APPRAISAL

The main issues for consideration are:

- a) Amenity; and
- b) Safety

a) Amenity

The proposed replacement illuminated media screen would be similar in size to the existing one, being 20 cm higher and 10 cm longer. The 'Green Park Logo' at the bottom of the screen would be illuminated in white, while the frame of the screen would be made from stainless steel and powder-coated black. Therefore, the proposal is considered appropriate in terms of scale, material, and colour for the screen itself. Additionally, it is also considered that the scale, material, and colour would not be harmful to the wider area and would not have a significant detrimental effect on visual amenity, given its setback position and dark frame colour.

The Transport consultee response confirms that there are no transport objections to this application subject to a condition on maximum illumination levels based on the ILP Brightness of Illuminated Advertisement (PLG 05/23). This is sought and required for both amenity and public safety reasons. **As per the supporting text to Policy OU4 at paragraph 4.7.29 of the Local Plan, the illumination levels in this instance will be set at 600 cd/m2, as secured via condition.** It is acknowledged that the application submission has specified that the proposal is seeking consent for illumination levels of 5,000 cd/m2, which is significantly beyond the levels permitted by policy. It is also noted that the previous consent from 2014

(see relevant history section above) included a condition limiting the signage at that time to 800 cd/m². In the circumstances of the current policy and the proposals being considered to be acceptable in all other respects, instead of resisting the proposals on the basis of the unacceptably high illumination levels proposed, a condition of the advertisement consent will instead secure the maximum illumination level at the maximum permitted by policy. **The applicant has various future options (e.g. a separate advertisement consent application with justification for the level of illumination proposed – noting that the supporting statement was silent on this matter aside from stating the proposed cd/m² level, or appealing against the imposition of the condition as secured as part of this consent) if it wishes to explore higher illumination levels than those permitted by this consent.**

4.7.29 In considering illumination levels, the levels of illumination set out by the Institute of Lighting Professionals will be applied as maxima for public safety reasons. Lower levels may be sought on

4. GENERAL POLICIES—OTHER USES

a case-by-case basis to protect visual amenity. The most recent report (2015) sets the following levels (applicable to measurements at night):

Illuminated Area (m ²)	Zone E1 (candelas/m ²)	Zone E2 (candelas/m ²)	Zone E3 (candelas/m ²)	Zone E4 (candelas/m ²)
Up to 10.00	100	400	600	600
Over 10.00	N/A	200	300	300

(Source: Professional Lighting Guide 05: The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements, Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2015).

4.7.30 The zones are described as:

- Zone E1: Intrinsically dark areas.
- Zone E2: Low district brightness areas (e.g. rural-urban fringe).
- Zone E3: Medium district brightness areas (e.g. district and local centres and urban areas).
- Zone E4: High district brightness areas (e.g. the core of the centre).

In some circumstances, particularly where listed buildings and conservation areas are concerned, illumination levels may need to be reduced, although this will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Please see the comments in paragraph 4.7.26 about illumination.

Subject to the condition as recommended by officers, the proposal is in compliance with Policies CC7, CC8, TR3, and OU4 of Reading Borough Local Plan.

b) Safety

The NPPG (in particular in this instance Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 & Paragraph: 078 Reference ID: 18b-078-20140306) provides guidance as to the considerations affecting public safety.

The replacement media screen will be sited in the same location and of a similar dimension as the existing, while the existing illuminated screen was granted planning permission in November 2014, as part of an application for the installation of 61 illuminated and non-illuminated signs across Green Park (ref. PL/14/1509). The Transport consultee response confirms that there are no transport objections to this

application subject to a condition on maximum illumination levels based on the ILP Brightness of Illuminated Advertisement (PLG 05/23), as discussed in the amenity section above (also separately relevant from a safety perspective too). Therefore, it is concluded that there would be no detrimental effect with regard to highway safety and the screen is therefore, considered to accord with Adopted Reading Borough Local Plan Policies TR3 and OU4.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approved with conditions

Recommended Conditions:

The standard conditions

Approved Plans

Advert Luminance (and related matters, as per RBC Transport response)