

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0696 Consent to display an advertisement

Address: 182-184 Henley Road, Reading, RG4 5DL

Proposal: Replacement of two existing advertisement signs with two illuminated digital advertisement displays

Applicant: Ms Jade Varney

Received date: 26/05/2026

Extended Target Decision date: 04/08/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a 'BP' petrol filling station (PFS) on the north side of the A4155 Henley Road, near its busy junction with Lower Henley Road and nearby pedestrian crossing. The character of the area is predominantly residential on either side of the Henley Road although there is a pub, The Travellers Rest on the West side of the 'BP' filling station. The public highway consisting of 2 way pedestrian footpath and cycle route and is owned and maintained by Reading Borough Council. The adjacent area is primarily residential, with a public house located next to the petrol filling station.

It is located in an AQMA and is not within a Conservation area.

Site visit photos



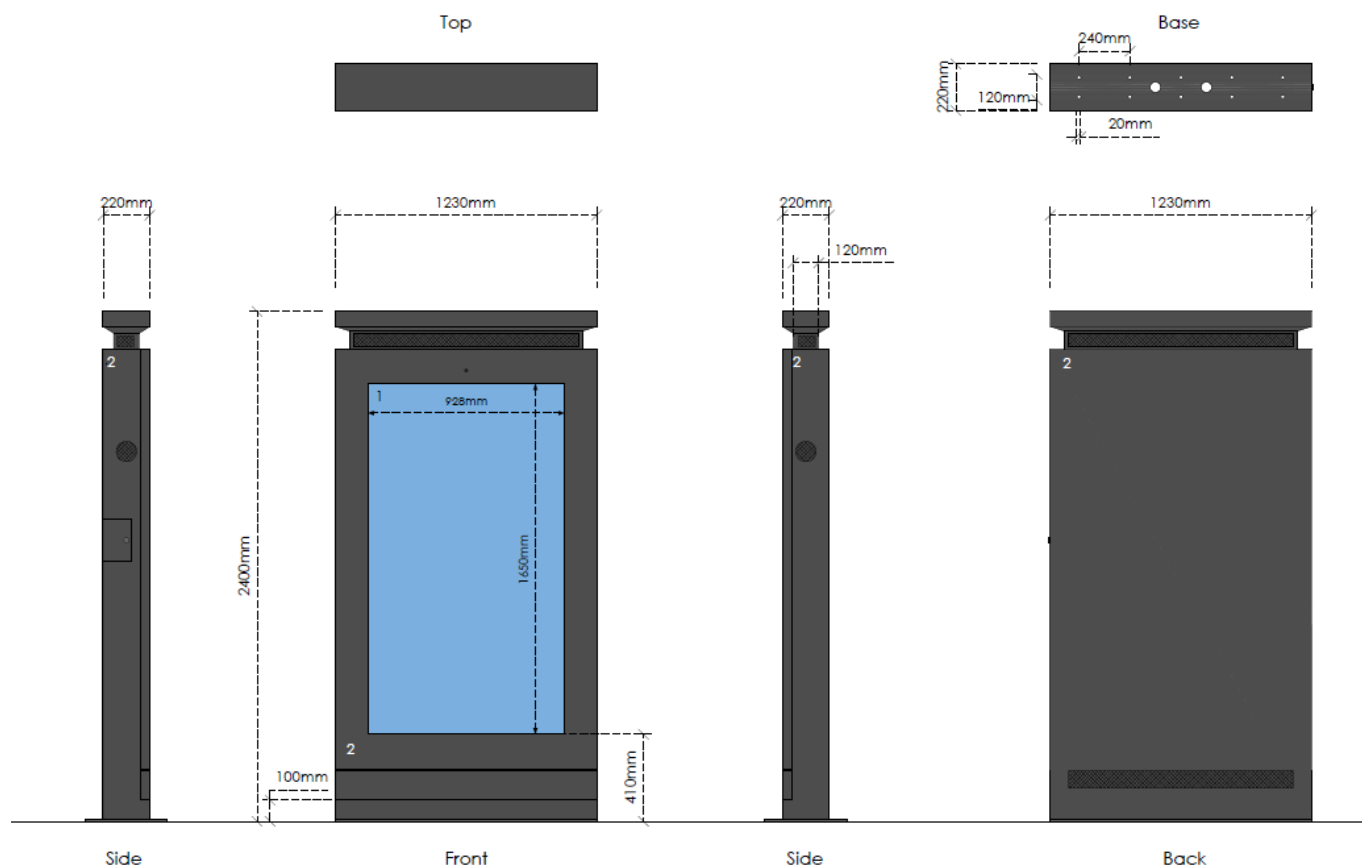
2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for the replacement of two existing 6-sheet displays located on the left hand side of the site, together with an existing advertising banner, and to replace them with two illuminated LED digital advertisement one-sided displays at the petrol filling station. One display would be positioned on east and west sides of the site entrance and exit. The proposed digital panels will have the same dimensions as a standard D6 small format advertisement display, measuring 1.23m in width x 2.4m in height x 0.22m in depth and will be positioned freestanding on the ground. The proposed display will be capable of displaying 6 advertising campaigns at a time, sequencing every ten seconds. The design is a black zinc powder and fine grain powder coated galvanised steel display with a single sided display facing into the petrol station. The maximum nighttime illuminance is proposed to be set at 300 cd/m². The display boards are for the display of adverts only and do not make a sound.



- Key**
- 1. Boundary of Petrol Filling Station
 - 2. Proposed Digital Display
 - 3. Elevation Line

27299/PA/03 Proposed site plan



27299/PA/08 Specification

The following plans and documents were submitted with the application:

FS204 Covering letter, Carter Jonas, 19 May 2026

FS204-OS-PLANNING-FINAL-PDF Site drawings:

27299 PA 1 Site Location Plan

27299 PA 2 Existing Site Plan

27299 PA 3 Proposed Site Plan

27299 PA 4 Proposed Site Plan Panel 1

27299 PA 5 Proposed Site Plan Panel 2

27299 PA 6 Existing and Proposed Elevations Panel 1

27299 PA 7 Existing and Proposed Elevations Panel 2

27299 PA 8 Specification

27299 PA 9 CGI Panel 1

27299 PA 10 CGI Panel 2

As received 26 May 2026

Relevant site history

83/TP/829 Granted the original planning permission with operating hours of 7am to 10pm.

91/0570/ADV Pole sign, canopy edge 'Elf' logo, pump island 'Totem' signs Permitted 18/04/1991

01/0207/ADV 2 x single sided freestanding advertisement display units Approved 5 February 2002

171151/VAR Granted a variation of opening hours following grant of permission (83/TP/829) to allow 24 hour use for a temporary period of one year. Decision issued 27/09/2017 *First temporary period of one year*

181928/VAR Granted a variation of opening hours following grant of planning permission (83/TP/829), to allow 24 hour use for a temporary period of six months from 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019. Decision issued 13/03/2019 *Second temporary period of six months*

22/0836 Demolition of existing building and erection of a new filling station complete with forecourt canopy and new tanks. Conversion of the site to post-payment self-service operation without complying with condition 8 (hours of operation of petrol filling station) of planning permission (83/TP/829) to allow unrestricted opening hours. Withdrawn

23/0023 Demolition of existing building and erection of a new filling station complete with forecourt canopy and new tanks. Conversion of the site to post-payment self-service operation without complying with condition 8 (hours of operation of petrol filling station) of planning permission (83/TP/829) to allow unrestricted opening hours for a temporary 6 month period Permitted 11 August 2023

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- Thames valley Police/CCTV Consultations - No objections were raised. General concerns were provided regarding resultant glare on screens throughout Reading and the difficulty when cameras refocus in areas with glare between daylight and nighttime lighting settings.
- RBC Ecology Consultations - The site comprises a petrol garage located next to a busy junction on the Lower Henley Road. The site is located adjacent to a designated Green Link as per policy EN12. It is proposed to replace the two existing advertisement signs with two illuminated digital advertising displays. The proposed displays would introduce additional lighting adjacent to a 40 metre length of hedge which may act as a commuting and foraging corridor for bats, invertebrates and other nocturnal wildlife. RBC ecology has no objections subject to further evidence that light will not spill into the hedge and tree line to the rear.
- RBC Transport Development Control - In assessing these types of advertising displays, the Highway Authority has considered whether the location is appropriate and undemanding for drivers, together with whether the proposed illumination levels and sequencing of advertisement changes are adequately controlled to minimise driver distraction. Having reviewed the proposal, the Highway Authority is satisfied that the location is acceptable in highway safety terms. Consequently, it is not considered that the development would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and no objection is raised on these grounds subject to the conditions for daytime and night time lighting. The proposed advertisement screen would replace/exist in a location currently occupied by a non-illuminated advertisement display of similar dimensions. Given the established presence of advertising signage at this location, it is the Highway Authority's opinion that the proposal would not introduce a new source of driver distraction nor materially alter driver expectations within the local street scene. Furthermore, the advertisements would be displayed as static images (changing even 10 seconds), but with no scrolling, moving or flashing content proposed. Taking account of the existing advertisement display at the site, the scale of the proposed screen, and its location, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to a detrimental impact on highway safety.
- RBC Environment Protection – Additional information is required regarding noise emitted from the LED screens from cooling fans within the base. This could cause an impact to amenity in terms of noise disturbance particularly during hot weather.

A site notice was displayed at the site on 10 June 2026, for the required 21 day consultation period. No letters of representation have been received.

EQUALITY ACT

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.

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2024;
National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;
NPPG: Advertisements;

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
OU4: Advertisements
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-related matters
TR4: Cycle routes and facilities

5. APPRAISAL

The Reading Borough Local Plan advertisements policy (OU4) states that all adverts need to comply with the following criteria in order to be approved:

Advertisements will not obstruct windows, any other sign already located on the building, or cut across significant architectural features such as historic fascias, windows, pilasters, cornices or scrolls.	Complies
Where a shop or business occupies more than one adjacent unit, the advertisement will not run between the shopfronts.	Complies
Advertisements on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest.	N/A – Proposal site is not Listed or within a Conservation Area.
Advertisements will not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway.	The advertisements are considered to result in a distraction for users of the Cycle lane and to detrimentally impact visibility when for users of the highway or accessing onto the highway.
Illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway.	Does not Comply– Policy TR4 states that ‘<i>development will not detrimentally affect an identified cycle route.</i>’ The LED displays are in close proximity to a 2 way pedestrian walkway and cycle route. West sign

	There are highway safety concerns in relation to the west sign and its impact on westbound traffic. Access into the petrol filling station required vehicles to cross oncoming traffic and enter a hatched area due to the absence of a dedicated right turn filter lane. The location is at a point where the road splits and there is a pelican crossing. It will result in manoeuvres at a complex section of the highway. Notwithstanding the comments from the RBC Highways team, the additional visual distraction in close proximity to a busy junction is considered to pose a safety hazard to users of the highway. East sign There are concerns that although the east LED sign is set back from the highway, it will create a distraction for drivers exiting the petrol filling station where pedestrians and cycles could be passing westbound along the adjacent cycle route. Furthermore insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that illumination and glare from the LED display would not spill onto the nearby trees and hedges on the east side, resulting in harm to local wildlife due to the proximity of the site to a green link. Policy OU5 seeks to ensure illumination of adverts does not detract from the amenity of the area in which it is located. The proposal is to set the brightness to 300cd/m2. The LED screens are considered to detract from the amenity of the area due to resultant glare and additional light spill in a residential area. The East sign is sited on the boundary of a neighbouring property by virtue of its height and bulk will be visually prominent above the boundary wall. It is not considered that these concerns can fully overcome by restrictions to daytime and evening illuminance or hours of use. The revised position of the LED display screens are considered to result in additional visual clutter at the site. No information has been provided regarding any noise emitted from the cooling fans within the LED screen that may result in a detrimental noise and impact the amenity of the neighbouring property.
Advertisements should not obscure the sight lines of cameras installed for public safety.	Complies, the proposed locations and small nature of the signs would not be likely to obscure sight lines of any cameras and subject to conditions on luminance and hours of use any glare should be minimised.

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. These are detailed below (in *italics*), together with officer responses in relation to the proposal (in **bold**):

The main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are:

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|--|--|
| (a) <i>those which obstruct or impair sight-lines at corners, bends or at a junction, or at any point of access to a highway</i> | Does not comply . The LED screens are considered to cause a distraction and impair sight lines into and out of the access points to the highway, due to their close proximity to the public footpath and cycle lanes. |
| (b) <i>those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature</i> | Complies |
| (c) <i>those which effectively leave insufficient clearance above any part of a highway, or insufficient lateral clearance for vehicles on the carriageway (due allowance being made for the camber of the road-surface)</i> | Complies |
| (d) <i>those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology</i> | |
| i) <i>where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road</i> | Complies |
| ii) <i>which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights or any other authorised signals</i> | Complies |
| iii) <i>which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather</i> | Complies, conditions recommended for illumination and hours of use |

	iv) which are subject to frequent changes of the display	Complies, with conditions to be a static display
e)	<i>those which incorporate moving or apparently moving elements in their display, or successive individual advertisements which do not display the whole message</i>	Complies
f)	<i>those requiring close study (such as Public Information Panels), which are situated so that people looking at them would be insufficiently protected from passing vehicles; or those advertisements sited on narrow footpaths where they may interfere with safe passage by causing pedestrians to step into the road</i>	N/A
g)	<i>those which resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and may therefore be subject to removal by the traffic authority under section 69 of that Act, for example</i>	
	i) <i>those embodying red circles, crosses or triangles, or any traffic sign symbol; or those in combinations of colours which might otherwise be mistaken for traffic signs; or</i>	Complies
	ii) <i>those incorporating large arrows or chevrons with only the arrow or chevron made of retroreflective material or illuminated, causing confusion with similar signs in use at, or approaching roundabouts</i>	Complies
h)	<i>those which embody directional or other traffic elements and which need special scrutiny because of possible resemblance to, or confusion with, traffic signs, for example, advertisements which</i>	
	i) <i>contain a large arrow or chevron (or have a pointed</i>	Complies

	<i>end and have only a few words of message)</i>	
ii)	<i>invite drivers to turn right on a main road, or where there is fast moving traffic</i>	Complies
iii)	<i>invite drivers to turn, but are sited so close to the turning that there is not enough time to signal and turn safely</i>	Complies
iv)	<i>are so close to similar advertisements, or official traffic signs, that road-users might be confused in the vicinity of a road junction or other traffic hazard</i>	Complies
	<i>The prevention of crime is a public safety consideration and local planning authorities should consider whether granting express consent could block the view of CCTV cameras, or whether illumination from an advertisement would cause glare on such cameras.</i>	Complies conditions recommended for illumination and hours of use

Public safety

The Planning Practice Guidance emphasises that all advertisements are intended to attract attention but advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety.

The siting and illuminated D6 small format illuminated advertising display which will exhibit static advertisements on rotation adjacent to a busy classified A road near to a signalised intersection with regular in and out movements, would distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic and, pedestrian and cycle movements. This could result in sudden and unpredictable vehicle movements, increasing the risk of collisions with other vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians. This is of particular concern for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the entrance and egress to the site whilst vehicles are approaching, entering and exiting the petrol filling station. Each of the proposed LED displays has the potential to distract drivers at this location, thereby increasing the risk of conflict between vehicles and vulnerable road users, contrary to TR3 and TR4.

The proposal conflict with Policy TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and Policies TR1 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and OU4 (Advertisements) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Paragraphs 67 68, and 117 of the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (2014).

Residential and visual amenity

The screen will be located next to 186 Henley Road directly behind the brick boundary wall in an area of the forecourt with other existing signage. Due to the size of the unit proposed it is considered to result in a significantly detrimental impact to external amenity and outlook due to the unneighbourly and visually prominent display board against the boundary wall. The cumulative visual impact to the neighbour of clutter and dominance from the petrol filling station is increased. The top of the black rear backing of the display screen will be visible. It has not been placed behind the taller boundary fencing at the side of the adjacent

house which would have less impact to the neighbours' amenity. The applicant has failed to demonstrate the level of noise that the LED screen would make from its cooling fans in hot weather would not be harmful to the amenity of neighbouring residents. The harmful impact of the screen cannot be overcome by conditions regarding the hours of use and luminance of the screen to limit any resultant glare to neighbouring properties. This is contrary to OU4 (Advertisements), CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) and CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

The screen on the boundary with The Travellers Rest will replace 2 existing non illuminated signs and is sited sideways away from the highway, towards the entrance of the petrol station forecourt which is also illuminated. No works are proposed to the hedge adjoining the site around the boundary of The Travellers rest public house however the hedgeline may currently form a commuting or foraging corridor for bats. The proposal fails to demonstrate that illumination and glare from the LED display would not spill onto the nearby trees and hedges on the east side, resulting in harm to local wildlife due to the proximity of the site which an adopted Green Link. This is contrary to Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) of the Reading Local Plan 2019. Conditions to restrict the hours of use and illuminance not considered sufficiently adequate to protect local wildlife due to the proximity of the site to a green link due to a lack of information regarding light spill and glare.

6. CONCLUSION

Having considered the proposals, and taking all of the information from consultees, officers consider that the proposed siting of each of the LED digital advertising screens could distract drivers in a location where there is conflicting vehicle movement and high flows of traffic is considered harmful in terms of Highway safety for all users from motor vehicles to cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, the proposals would result in harm to visual amenity and local wildlife.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal at this site would be harmful to public safety and road users.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

1. The proposed LED advertisement display screens at the east and west of the petrol filling station would be sited in close proximity to a busy Classified Road, adjacent to a two-way pedestrian footpath/cycle route. Westbound traffic accessing the petrol filling station would require vehicles to enter a hatched area to cross oncoming traffic, due to the absence of a dedicated right turn filter lane and this location is at a point where the road splits and there is a Pelican crossing. This would result in manoeuvres at a complex section of the highway where there are conflicting vehicle movements. The additional visual distraction of both the east and west LED displays are considered to pose a safety hazard to users of the highway and detrimental to the safety of vulnerable road users. For these reasons, the positioning, size, orientation and illuminated nature of these signs would result in harm to public safety and therefore conflict with policies TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters), TR4 (Cycle Routes and Facilities) and OU4 (Advertisements) of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 117 of the NPPF (2024, as amended February 2025).
2. The proposed east LED advertisement display screen by reason of its excessive height and bulk and prominent siting on the boundary of the neighbouring property at 186 Henley Road would be visually prominent above the boundary wall, which would appear as a significantly overbearing structure on the boundary and harmful to the outlook of that residential property. Furthermore, it would appear as an unattractive and obtrusive feature which would have a visual dominance in the street scene, harmful to the visual amenity of the area and would exacerbate an undesirable proliferation of signage clutter at this location. For the above reasons, the proposal is considered contrary to policies OU4 (Advertisements), CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) and CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF (2024, as amended February 2025).
3. The hedgeline may currently form a commuting or foraging corridor for bats. The proposal fails to demonstrate that illumination and glare from the LED display would not spill onto the

nearby trees and hedges on the east side, resulting in harm to local wildlife due to the proximity of the site which an adopted Green Link. This is contrary to Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) of the Reading Local Plan 2019 and paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2024, as amended February 2025).