

Out of Home Media

Angola
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Belgium
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Costa Rica
Croatia
Czech Repub
Denmark
Ecuador
El Salvador
Estonia
Eswatini
Finland
France
Gabon
Germany
Guatemala
Hungary
Honduras
India
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Ivory Coast
Japan
Kazakhstan
Korea
Latvia
Lesotho
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mexico

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

24th August 2026

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Proposal: The Installation of 2No. Community Information Panels (CIP's)

Sites: 1. Pavement o/s 58-60 Oxford Road, Reading RG1 7LT
2. Pavement o/s 41 Oxford Road, Reading RG1 7QE

This letter is submitted in support of two applications for Advertisement Consent under Regulation 9 of the Advertisement Regulations, as part of a program to modernise Reading Borough Council's digital advertisement estate, pursuant to a tender award to JCDecaux in 2026.

This set of applications includes two sites within Reading's city centre. Applications are made for each of the locations and include a site plan as **APPENDIX A** respectively, which illustrate the resultant street plans.

This project marks a new chapter in the relationship and presents an exciting opportunity to modernise the existing estate, transforming the Council's estate with the latest digital screen technology that will benefit those who live, work and visit Reading. JCDecaux has pioneered the use of modern technologies to bring greater sustainable practices across the outdoor media industry. This principle is applied to the delivery of this project, with the aim of redefining the quality and functionality of the Borough's estate.

The proposal for Reading will see the installation of a total of 4 double-sided LCD displays whereby the images are automatically updated electronically, and of a uniform design to create a consistent appearance across the entire estate. Two of these are virgin locations and are currently subject to a live pre-application advice request with the council (LPA Ref: PL/26/1124).

JCDecaux UK Limited

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The “Forum” CIP is a product unique to JCDecaux and represents the latest innovation in out of home screen technology capable of showing commercial and community messages on both sides of the slimline unit. Further detail on the dimensions, operating system and design of the Forum CIP unit is contained within **APPENDIX B** of the application documentation, together with information on the additional capabilities and the method of display. **APPENDIX A** contains the OS extracts and images relating to each of the individual application sites.

An initial onsite meeting was held on the 4th of August 2026 following the contract award attended by the applicant and Council Officers. The purpose of the meeting was to plan the mobilisation the project which started with the agreement of the contract terms. This stage is now complete, and we move to the more detailed assessment of the proposals with the submission of applications for advertisement consent.

Application Background

The contract awarded to JCDecaux is to manage and maintain the Council’s roadside advertising estate for a minimum of ten years from 2025. The proposed aspiration for the roadside estate as presented and supported at Tender stage is now contained within these applications, which demonstrate the Company’s commitment and investment in improving the quality, form and function of street furniture across Reading. JCDecaux is at the leading edge of development in the advertising medium, with extensive experience of creating some of the most innovative and striking advertised street furniture in the roadside, rail, retail and airport environments. The Company’s objective is simple based on a qualitative rather than a quantitative objective, with the aim of developing the best locations and to set the highest standards in sustainability, build quality, design and innovation.

Sustainability Aims

The promotion of economic growth whilst respecting people and the environment has long been the Company’s aim. Sustainable development and energy efficiency drive the development of innovative new services that are ecological, aesthetically pleasing and highly functional. JCDecaux’s Research and Development team has undertaken studies on the adaptation of existing systems for energy reduction and the use of green energy. Significant progress has been made in the selection of energy efficient electronic components and adaptation of software layers, which are now imbedded in the Forum unit design. In 2020 the Company joined RE100, a global leadership initiative for companies committed to 100% renewable electricity as detailed in **APPENDIX C**.

The Company source 100% of its electricity needs from renewable energy and we are committed to reducing carbon emissions across the entire product development and manufacturing process. Energy efficiencies are maximized in the Forum display unit, which allows for automatic adjustment of the screen resolution, according to the location and the ambient light levels, to reduce the amount of energy required to operate the screen. Other sustainable measures applied to the unit design include;

- Use of a powder coating without any volatile organic compounds (VOC).
- Electrical and electronic equipment recycled according to WEEE regulations.
- Unit manufactured from sustainable and recyclable materials.

Energy efficiency measures in the design and use of furniture, and the offset of carbon emissions are key components of the Company's strategy. Furthermore, as well as being powered by renewable energy, the digital advertising estate in Reading will be maintained by JCDecaux Technicians driving electric vehicles, demonstrating the Company's focus on limiting carbon output across all elements of this partnership.

The Forum CIP Design

With new digital products being continuously developed across all environments, the Company plays an active role in shaping the city of tomorrow and making the urban environment more functional and relevant for those who live, work and visit the Borough. Product design is guided by eco-design principles in addition to quality, unit aesthetics, functionality and environmental performance.

The Forum CIP unit is designed by the architectural practice Fosters and Partners, with whom JCDecaux has collaborated over many years to create a unique suite of furniture designs. The Forum is a contemporary designed freestanding unit which is slender in profile, with integral best in class LCD screens. The materials used in the unit are of the highest quality and robust enough to withstand the elements yet continue to look good for many years. The design is simple and understated and finished in a black powder coated exterior. This furniture is an innovative display platform that is future proofed with upgradeable technology within a structure that embodies the principles of sustainable development. The unit is entirely recyclable and devoid of hazardous materials. The unit has undergone rigorous testing in extreme conditions and boasts 13.5mm thick anti-vandal toughened safety laminated glass on all glazed surfaces. The other external surfaces have been treated with a nanotech treatment to enable easy removal of stickers and/or sprayed paint damage.

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The unit has a protection rating against impact of >IK10. All electrical circuitry is inaccessible to the public and the unit fixings are hidden and require specialist tools to enable access. The existing estate is illuminated indirectly, whereas the proposed screen is a high-definition lead crystal display. Control over the level of luminance, that is the light output of the screens, is adjusted by an inbuilt light sensor that makes continual automatic adjustments and is limited to a maximum of 300Cdm² at nighttime¹ and switched off between 12:00am and 06:00am.

The Screen

The use of LCD screens represents a more sustainable form of roadside technology that is greener and cleaner than traditional fluorescent and incandescent lighting alternatives. The SmartScreen product incorporates Power Factor Correction (PFC) technology to maximize the efficiency of all power connections. The units are Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) approved and completely devoid of hazardous materials making it easier to recycle at end of life in accordance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling (WEEE) directive (Europe) on the recycling of electrical and electronic waste. The LCD screens used in the Forum unit is the result of more than 15 years of research to source the best available product that meets exacting environmental standards. Each unit incorporates two LCD screens which provide an advertising area of just under 2m². This size of advertisement has long been considered an appropriate scale for the pedestrian environment and is the size of the Council's existing advertised estate and common within urban areas as freestanding roadside units or affixed to street furniture.

The current method of display on the existing estate is limited to showing a single printed image, which needs to be manually replaced every two weeks with a different static creative². This process is costly both in time and energy, which is eliminated using LCD screen technology. The LCD display enables an image to be automatically changed via a secure ISDN line, without the bi-monthly visit to each site or the reprinting and recycling of spent paper copy. An additional benefit of this technology lies in the ability to tailor a message to seasonal variations and for time sensitive messaging. The screens are fully programmable, which means they can be controlled remotely not just in terms of content, which can include commercial, Council and community messaging, but also the hours of operation and screen brightness.

¹ The maximum nighttime limit for advertisements under 10m² in City Centres as recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals

The CIP units will automatically change every ten seconds in sequence and consistent with the standard for other similar displays. The ability for the technology to be responsive is also a benefit in emergency situations whereby such public messaging can be displayed all the screens; within a discrete area; or across the entire Borough in the event of security incidents. This function is managed through a strict protocol and agreement with the Council and emergency services.

Legislative and Policy Framework

The Advertisement Regulations

The proposals relate to the display of advertisements and therefore fall under the controlling mechanism of the 2007 Advertisement Regulations. The Regulations exist pursuant to s220 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and create a separate self-contained code that is apart from mainstream planning controls. The Regulations state that all advertisements, other than certain exempted classes, require consent before they can be lawfully displayed³. Consent may be granted expressly by a Local Planning Authority or the Secretary of State on appeal; or granted “deemed consent” by virtue of Regulation 6. The nature of the considerations that are relevant to advertising developments are set out in the Regulations and confined to matters of amenity and public safety.

Regulation 3 states that;

- ‘1. A local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interest 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
2. Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1) (b)-
 - a) Factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest.
 - b) Factors relevant to public safety include-
the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military); whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air’

³ Regulation 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)00009-7-908906907909-76(England) Regulations 2007/783

Visual amenity is assessed in light of the character of an area, which includes the scale, nature and type of surrounding land uses and the existing built form within the particular locality where the proposed advertisement is to be displayed. It is the impact upon local character and any particular feature of interest that the proposed advertisement is appraised. Public safety interests are primarily concerned with the effect an advertisement display would have on drivers and pedestrians seeing the advertisement within the context of its surroundings.

It is recognised that advertising is a visual media and intended to be seen, however it does not automatically follow that they are likely to be a distraction or present a danger to the public. The particular circumstances in any one case need to be considered in the assessment of public safety impact. Advertising is a common feature of urban and commercial areas and along busy routes where drivers and pedestrians have a high expectation of seeing commercial imagery. The existing sites are predominantly positioned alongside busy streets and areas of commercial activity where the presence of advertising would not appear out of place.

National Policy Guidance

Advertisement Control

The National Planning Policy Framework 2025 (**NPPF**) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The framework reaffirms the role of the planning system in supporting sustainable forms of development. Advertising plays an important role in a diverse and vibrant market economy by encouraging consumer confidence and spending, which contributes to sustainable economic growth. Advertising is also an essential support for business through the promotion of products and services. The use of land for advertising purposes is therefore consistent with sustainability aims and support of a viable market economy. In respect of advertising the NPPF states that.

“The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.”⁴

Part 6 of the NPPF emphasises the role of the planning system in encouraging businesses to invest, innovate and adapt to changing market needs

⁴ Para 141

Part 12 covers the importance of design in managing and improving spaces and the quality of place. The design of all built form, including street furniture, must be sustainable and functional but also attractive and include innovation in the design evolution. Paragraph 131 says:

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

Overall, it is considered that the proposal is supported by the policy aims of the NPPF.

Specific guidance relating to advertising developments and the interpretation of the Regulations is contained within Planning Practice Guidance (**PPG**). **Section 8** of the PPG on advertisements explains in greater detail the criteria for considering amenity issues in advertising proposals. More specifically, on the matter of scale the guidance suggests that advertisements should respect the scale of the surroundings.

“...for example, if the locality where the advertisement is to be displayed has important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features, the local planning authority would consider whether it is in scale and in keeping with these features.”

It further advises that.

“This might mean that a large poster-hoarding would be refused where it would dominate a group of listed buildings but would be permitted in an industrial or commercial area of a major city (where there are large buildings and main highways) where the advertisement would not adversely affect the visual amenity of the neighbourhood of the site.”

On matters of Public Safety, the PPG states that:

“All advertisements are intended to attract attention but proposed advertisements at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. For example, at junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, on the approach to a low bridge or level crossing or other places where local conditions present traffic hazards. There are less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial or industrial locality, if it is a shop fascia sign, name-board, trade or business sign, or a normal poster panel, and if the advertisement is not on the skyline.”

Other Considerations

Improving the quality of the environment is also one of the fundamental principles of the NPPF. The physical elements of the proposal are arguably indivisible from the use, particularly in light of the provisions of s222 of the Act⁵. It is therefore material for the consideration of planning merit, to include an assessment of the quality and appearance of the proposed structure, which is a fundamental part of the whole scheme. The NPPF states as follows

“Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

Section 16 of the NPPF relates to the historic environment and sets out the importance of being able to assess the impact of a development on the significance of heritage assets. Significance is defined in Annex 2 as the value of an asset because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic and can extend to its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. A designated heritage asset is recognised to be a World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

The NPPF recognises that a balance needs to be struck between the preservation of the significance of a heritage asset and delivering public benefit. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be on its conservation however distinction is drawn between those assets of highest significance and those of a lesser significance. Paragraph 201 states that consent should be refused where the proposal would lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, unless the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefit that outweighs that harm. In cases where less than substantial harm is anticipated it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The NPPF also recognises the importance of communication infrastructures, which is relevant to the development of the Smart City Forum units, which are designed to support wider connectivity and improve the service offered to the public. The NPPF states that

⁵ S222 of the TCP Act 1990 grants deemed planning permission for operation works associated and required through the grant of express advertisement consent under the Advertisement Regulations

“Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections.”

More generally, relevant core planning principles of the NPPF include the aim of securing high quality and reliable digital infrastructure and encouraging vitality in urban areas. The principle aims of the NPPF, and general policy are met in the application proposals for Reading.

Planning Considerations

The proposal pertains to the introduction of new advertisement furniture across selected sites within Reading. The key issues revolve around the potential impact on visual amenity, local character, and public safety. The key issues revolve around the potential impact on visual amenity, local character, and public safety in settings where no prior consents for advertisement display have been granted.

As this proposal introduces new locations for advertisement, careful consideration has been taken regarding the size, positioning, and orientation of the structures in relation to the character of the surrounding area. While these locations have not previously been used for advertisement purposes, the proposal aims to ensure that the new displays are designed to complement the local environment, being sited within the main urban and commercial areas of Reading. The proposed application sites have undergone a detailed assessment to ensure that the scale and design of the advertisements will not detract from the visual amenity or compromise public safety.

The proposed advertisement units will feature modern technology, including illuminated displays. Consideration has been given to how this technology impacts the character of the area, particularly in terms of visual appearance and any potential alterations to the urban landscape. The assessment will also evaluate the effect of the introduction of advertisement structures on public safety, including factors such as visibility and road-user distraction.

Amenity

Amenity considerations concern the effect of development on the character of a local area, which is often experienced through the mix and type of land uses and buildings that form the townscape. In the case of the current application sites the character is comparable, as each is located within the same or very similar context of an urban town centre setting. Reading is a vibrant city centre with high levels of

pedestrians and vehicular traffic throughout the day and nighttime. Many of the streets where the application sites are located include active commercial frontages to large scale commercial premises that range in age and architecture, and which collectively contribute to local character. Policy guidance requires proposals to have regard to the general characteristics of an area in advertising proposals and is generally supportive of advertising within retail and commercial areas where it can positively contribute to vitality and a sense of place.

JCDecaux has built its reputation on delivering innovative, attractive concepts by calling upon a wide range of experts. JCDecaux has worked with over 50 world-famous architects and designers on projects in cities across the world including Lord Norman Foster in the UK. The Company therefore embraces the belief that street furniture can contribute to improving the quality of the streets and make them safer, cared for and attractive places. The streets within the urban centres of Reading are busy, mixed-use thoroughfares with a pronounced commercial presence, with many large-scale commercial premises lining the streets, together with other forms of commercial advertising. All developments need to be sited with sensitivity and respect their surroundings particularly when the setting has historic significance.

The application sites are confined to the busiest and most vibrant urban centres where this form of furniture would not appear out of place or context. The locations are mainly sited away from high value heritage buildings to areas where the immediate local context is not sensitive and can accept this type of modern unit without harming important views or historic settings.

Each of the proposed application sites is located within robust active commercial settings. The visual amenity assessment focuses on the introduction of new advertisement structures and how their form and presentation integrate into the urban environment. The principle of installing modern advertising furniture in these new locations is central to the evaluation, ensuring that they are suitable for the character and context of each site.

The proposed advertising units are modern and purposefully designed to be simple and understated, preventing them from dominating the space or detracting from the surrounding views. The sleek black sheen powder-coated finish allows the structures to blend harmoniously with the streetscape, minimising any potential impact on the area's character and appearance. The advertisements will conform to the standard 6-sheet display format, which is a familiar sight in city environments and complements the commercial nature of the area by promoting products and supporting local businesses.

While these units will be new installations, they are designed to be proportionate to the surrounding environment, ensuring that they do not overwhelm or alter the urban landscapes of Reading. The illumination levels will be carefully controlled to match ambient lighting conditions during the day and will adhere to ILP maximum standards at night. Additionally, the units are equipped with smart technology to automatically adjust brightness and switch off between 12:00 am and 6:00 am, ensuring minimal disturbance to the local community. Any malfunctions will trigger automatic alerts to the Digital team, ensuring prompt maintenance.

The introduction of this uniform, modern design across the area will establish a cohesive aesthetic, helping to identify each unit as part of a coordinated network of advertising furniture. Importantly, the proposal does not seek to overpopulate the area with excessive advertisement structures but aims to introduce functional and visually appropriate units into the commercial area of the borough. Given the controlled scale, positioning, and illumination of the advertisements, there is no reason to suggest that the installation of these units will result in visual clutter.

The advertisements are intended to be visible, however they serve as complementing features of the urban street without appearing intrusive or out of place. Overall, the proposals would accord with policy guidance and will not harm local visual amenity.

Public Safety

Public safety issues are concerned with the effect an advertisement would have on drivers and pedestrians and whether the position of the advertisement or the manner of its display is likely to be so distracting or confusing as to endanger the public. It is clear that outdoor advertising is designed to be seen and is typically found within commercial settings amongst other forms of prominent advertisements or retail operations. Within commercial contexts and alongside busy streets, there is a heightened awareness and expectation of seeing commercial images without them appearing unusual, out of place or distracting.

The advertising displays on the Forum CIP unit are elevated above the pavement and intended to be visible principally to pedestrians, although some displays outside of the pedestrianized areas may be visible, albeit obliquely, to passing vehicular traffic. As mentioned earlier, the character and setting for of the application sites is overwhelmingly commercial, with brightly lit shop fronts and other premises forming the immediate backdrop. The prominence of the sites will provide ample opportunity for people to see the simple messages on display. The same is true for those advertisements that are visible to drivers, who will see the displays alongside busy active street frontages and so are less likely to be

distracted when viewed in this context. Furthermore, those sites that adjoin a road are on roads where the traffic speed is low and the characteristics of the road doesn't place a burden on a driver's concentration.

The application sites are within established retail focused advertised locations, where illuminated advertisements have been a feature for several decades, without incident or accident as a result. The upgrade in the units to the modern Forum CIP unit with LCD screens in place of backlit printed images will not significantly change the effect of the display in safety terms. The displays will continue to show illuminated images with the benefit of automatic change but will not change how drivers and pedestrians experience them within the street. The site locations remain suitable locations and are sufficiently distanced from road edges so as not to present a danger to drivers. In terms of the impact of the proposed CIP's on pedestrian movement and safety, this too has been reflected in the unit positioning.

It is considered that the proposed display structure and method of display will not be against the interests of public safety. The proposed development would be consistent with both national and local policies regarding advertisement control, including the Reading Local Plan. The investment in modern, cleaner and greener technology is a progressive approach that creates a positive impression of the Borough and embraces sustainable development through exciting and new media formats.

Other Matters

The Company is fully committed to ensuring the quality of all our installations are exemplary. We currently operate the Transport for London advertising concession and have worked closely with all Highway Authorities in London to maintain a high standard of workmanship. Attached at **APPENDIX D** of the application documents are examples of recent reinstatement works following the installation of a unit foundation. These images illustrate the commitment to ensuring all reinstatement work is undertaken to the highest standards in workmanship and materials.

Summary

The importance of improving the design and purpose of essential items of street furniture is recognised as helping to transform the quality of our public spaces for the benefit of people living, investing, visiting and working in Reading. The proposed Forum CIP design embodies simple clean lines and understated form to respect the more sensitive locations within the Borough. Overall, it is considered that these proposals will make a positive contribution to Reading by introducing high quality, visually attractive and functional smart furniture that support the aim of being a connected Borough.

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I trust that the above and enclosed documents clearly explain the nature of the proposals but please call me if there are any further matters on which you need clarification.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Herraghty MRTPI

Senior Town Planner

JCDecaux UK

Application Documents

- **Covering Letter / Planning Statement**
- **Appendix A Application Site Map and Visuals**
- **Appendix B Forum CIP Specification Sheet**
- **Appendix C Sustainability Aims**
- **Appendix D Pavement Reinstatement**