

For the attention of Kevin Tomkinson, Deputy Head of Democratic Services Leeds City Council

Draft Deputation to Full City Council Meeting

Tuesday 21st of May 2024

By

AdBlock Leeds

Deputation Attendees

Loup Suja-Thauvin

Sarah Autumn

Diana Ivanova

Deputation Title: Reducing outdoors advertising in Leeds for a healthier, happier and more equal city

DEPUTATION TEXT:-

Thank you, Lord Mayor and Members of Council,

We bring our Deputation before you today to share our concerns about the ever-increasing amount of outdoors advertising we, Leeds residents, are exposed to every day, as well as their content.

The negative impacts of outdoors advertisement are well established: on road safety, on amenity, on well-being, on the local economy (because large billboards cost in the 1000s of pounds/week to rent, which no local business can afford). And just last month, a report from the Adfree Cities network was published, showing that the most deprived areas of Leeds are disproportionately affected by outdoors advertising.

For the sake of having a constructive discussion, we will mention that the Leeds City Council does get much needed funding from advertising contracts (about half-a-million pounds per year). But to put that number into perspective, the cost of car pollution and alcohol (two very prominently advertised product in the UK) to the wider society is estimated to be half-a-billion pounds per year, just for the city of Leeds.

We are talking here today to suggest that more restrictive policies towards outdoors advertising are put in place in Leeds. A Healthier and Low Carbon Advertising policy has precedence: Bristol City Council have implemented an Advertising and Sponsorship Policy that restricts harmful advertising, including for unhealthy foods, gambling, alcohol and payday loans. A ban on 'junk' food advertising across the TfL network has successfully lowered consumption of unhealthy foods and associated illness. And the list goes on with the Cambridgeshire County Council, the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Coventry City Council, the Somerset Council just to name a few. It is important to note that none of these policies concern the products themselves, only the ads.

Some options that the council has to implement relevant policies are

- adopting a specific planning policy on digital outdoor advertising to acknowledge the harm it causes and indicate that current planning legislation and process is not fit for purpose
- making applications for new digital screens visible to local residents, for example by announcements on social media, and/or by a requirement to advertisers that they must notify in writing all nearest neighbours to inform them of the proposed development
- adopt a moratorium on all new advertising screens. This would be a temporary prohibition on

granting new applications until outdated national planning policy is reformed in respect of the specific impacts of digital billboards on local communities.

As we have mentioned, several similar policies have been put in place by different Councils across the country. This means that there are very clear, step-by-step examples of how to implement this in Leeds.

I'll finish by saying that we at AdBlock Leeds are very eager to participate in the process and work with the Council, with the help and experience of the Adfree Cities Network. This type of policies are gaining momentum all across the UK, and it is absolutely within this Council's reach to make Leeds a healthier, happier and more equal city.

Thank you