



**REGULATORY  
SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

**REPORT**

15 March 2012

**Subject Heading:**

**A0065.11 – Lamp-posts on London Road between junction with St Edward's Way/Waterloo Road and Jutsums Lane, Romford - Display of 18 non-illuminated PVC lamp post banner signs (application received 02/11/2011).**

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

**Local development Framework**

**Financial summary:**

**None**

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Clean, safe and green borough	[X]
Excellence in education and learning	[ ]
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	[X]
Value and enhance the life of every individual	[ ]
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	[ ]

**SUMMARY**

This report concerns an application for advertisement consent for the installation of 18 non-illuminated PVC banner signs. This proposal is put forward before the Committee due to the application site being on Highway Land. It is considered that

the proposal would be acceptable in terms of advertisement and urban design policies. Express Advertisement Consent is therefore recommended to be granted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That express advertisement consent is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. This consent is granted for a period of five years commencing on the date of this notice.

Reason:-

To comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007.

2. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of any road traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air, or so as otherwise to render hazardous the use of any highway, railway, waterway, (including any coastal waters) or aerodrome (civil or military).

Reason:-

To comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007.

3. Any advertisements displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:-

To comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007.

4. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a safe condition.

Reason:-

To comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007.

5. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the removal shall be carried out to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:-

To comply with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulations 2007.

6. The display of advertisement hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

Reason:-

The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

## **INFORMATIVE**

1. Reason for Approval

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the aims, objectives and provisions of Policies DC32, DC61, DC65 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

Note: Following a change in government legislation a fee is now required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions, in order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations, which came into force from 06.04.2008. A fee of £85 per request (or £25 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse) is needed.

2. The applicant is advised that planning approval does not constitute approval for affixing anything to lamp columns for which a separate licence is required from the Council as Highway authority under the Highways act 1980 as amended by the New Road and Streetworks act 1991.
3. The applicant is advised that planning approval does not discharge the requirements under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, the Traffic Management Act 2004 and Section 115 of the Highways Act 1980 under which licence may be required.
4. Formal notifications and approval will be needed for any works to the Highway Authority Lamp Columns. This shall extend to traffic management, times of working, qualifications of operatives and insurances to work on the public highway.

5. Should a lamp column be damaged or knocked over, the Highway Authority has no mechanism in place to alert an advertising company and it would be for the applicant to monitor the condition of its property.
6. The applicant is advised that a method of fixing to the lamp columns will need to be approved before any works take place.
7. Prior to the commencement of any development, the applicant shall submit in detail for the approval of the Highway Authority a regime for structural testing for the lamp posts and foundations for suitability of banner advertisements of a maximum area of 1.6 square meters. The regime shall seek to give an indication of the residual life of individual columns and the impact of affixing banner advertisements in terms of reducing residual life.
8. Prior to the commencement of any development the applicant shall submit in detail for the approval of the Highway Authority a regime of ongoing structural testing for the lamp posts and foundations where banners are to be fixed.
9. Prior to the commencement of any development the applicant shall submit in detail for the approval of the Highway Authority a regime for ongoing maintenance inspections for the banner advertisements and their fixings. the testing programme should arrange for inspections to take place at agreed intervals from the date the banners are installed.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **1. Site Description**

- 1.1 The site comprises 18 lamp-posts on London Road (A118) from the junction with the A125 (Waterloo Road)/(St Edward's Way) in the east to its junction with Jutsums Lane to the west. London Road consists of 1- 2-, 3- and 4-storey buildings. The majority of this part of London Road is commercial in nature, including a high proportion of car sales buildings. There is an increasing number of residential flatted blocks which adds to the existing stock of mainly two-storey housing. There are also community uses including schools and churches as well as car parks (in part relating to the Romford Greyhound Stadium) and a large park, Cotton's Park which is located to the eastern end of the application site. At the western end of this section of highway is an area of Green Belt.

### **2. Description of proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks express advertisement consent to display 18 non-illuminated banner signs on lamp-posts on a 520m stretch of London Road between the Brewery Roundabout and the junction with Jutsums Lane. The

banners are to be attached to the lamp-posts and would measure 2.2m high and 0.6m wide with the lowest part of the sign being 3m above ground level.

2.2 The signs would be available to let to local businesses and other companies wishing to advertise for set periods of time.

### **3. Relevant History**

3.1 None in relation to this site.

3.2 On London Road between Coomberwood Drive and Jutsums Lane:  
A0064.11 – 7 non-illuminated banner signs – under consideration.

### **4. Consultations/Representations**

4.1 A total of 362 neighbouring properties were notified in respect of the application. 2 letters have been received raising questions about the signage and raising the following objections:

- Overdevelopment of advertisement signs
- Out of character in the mainly residential area

### **5. Relevant Policies**

5.1 Policies DC61 (Urban Design) and DC65 (Advertisements) of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are considered to be relevant. As are Policies 7.4 (local character) and 7.5 (public realm) of The London Plan (2010) and PPG19 on Outdoor Advertising.

### **6. Staff Comments**

#### **Background**

The banners proposed to London Road are the same as those approved within Upminster Town Centre and in South Street, Romford to promote both national and local businesses and have been used throughout the country as a way of promotion and advertising. The banners have also been used in 20 other London Boroughs and 200 other local authorities across the UK.

6.1 This proposal is put forward before the Committee due to the application site being on highway maintained by the Council as Highway Authority. The issues in relation to the application are the principle of banner signs in this location and their impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene, impact on residential amenity and highways impacts.

## Principle of Development

- 6.2 The lamp posts within the identified site area are situated along London Road which within the 520m length of highway is a mixture of mainly commercial and residential development. In line with Policy DC65, there is no objection in principle to additional signage. The use of the signage would depend on the duration of any contract and the conditions attached to any express consent.
- 6.3 Within the representations received queries were raised as to how the advertisements will be rented and allocated out. The signs would be available on a first come, first served basis. Adverts, before they are allotted, will be displayed on the lamp posts with the contact details of the agency, so that local business can directly make contact to rent advertising space.

## Design/Impact on Street scene

- 6.4 London Road is a road which links Romford Town Centre to the west. It contains two Minor Local Centres at 53-56 and 30-60 London Road and at 257-277 London Road. London Road is however unusual in that there are also other commercial premises including retail, an MOT Service centre and large Vehicle Sales Buildings. It also has three large car parking areas to the main road frontage which are or have been associated with the Romford Greyhound Track which is located to the south of London Road.
- 6.5 While there are only two identified Minor Local centres, there is a relatively high proportion of commercial development along this part of London Road. As a result, there is a high level of shop-front signage (fascia and hanging signs) and, in particular to the car sales buildings, other signage such as sales details in displayed vehicles, banners and bunting. There is also a significant amount of street furniture including bus stops, bus shelters, pelican and other pedestrian crossings and signage relating to on-street parking restrictions (double-yellow lines and bus route) and some street trees. There is a large variety of signage present, including illuminated and non illuminated signs.
- 6.6 The proposed 18 banner signs themselves would measure 2.2m in height and 0.6m across and are non-illuminated. They would be positioned 3m above ground level. Policy DC61 and DC65 requires advertisements to complement the scale, form and architectural composition of individual buildings and wider character of the area. Given the distance above ground and the minimal width of the signs in the context of this highly commercial road, Staff consider that they would not be overly intrusive within the street scene nor alter the character of this street.
- 6.7 There would be 18 banner signs with one to each lamp post along a 520m stretch of highway, on average one per 30m. While some lamp-posts are located closer together, the lamp posts are grouped mainly adjacent to the commercial uses. Staff therefore consider that they would not appear

cramped within the street scene, and will allow for open views along London Road within each curved section.

#### Impact on Amenity

- 6.8 The banner signs are not illuminated. Signs would mainly be located (because of the positioning of the lamp-posts themselves) outside commercial development, however there would be a few located adjacent to residential properties along London Road.
- 6.9 Staff consider that the signs would not result in a loss of light, nor would they alter the outlook from properties, in all, it is considered that the signs would not result in any material harm to neighbouring occupiers' residential amenity.

#### Highway/Parking

- 6.10 The signs are located on the edge of the highway on the lamp posts, where they would be visible to passing vehicles and pedestrians. Policy DC65 states that permission for advertisements will not be granted where they unduly compromise public safety or pose a hazard to traffic. It is therefore considered that the adverts, which are non-illuminated, would not pose a hazard to passing traffic. The banners would also be independent from the pedestrian crossing lights which are located on their own posts or integral with the traffic lights. The banners would be set away from these lights, and therefore not unduly compromise public safety.
- 6.11 StreetCare advise that the proposal, by its very nature, offers potential for driver distraction. It is difficult to quantify at what point this could become a potential reason for refusal however because there is little research in the UK and few technical studies available. Inevitably there is a judgement to be struck. Members should be aware that it is considered that drivers generally under-report distraction when involved in collisions and therefore the true position in reported casualty terms may also be under-reported.
- 6.12 At one end of the range, banners displayed within an environment which is mainly pedestrianised and/or involving slow vehicle speeds is clearly different from for example a dual carriageway situation with higher vehicle speeds and greater risk of accidents occurring as a consequence of driver distraction.
- 6.13 In this case the banners are proposed on a road where a 30 mile an hour speed limit applies and there is a high proportion of commercial properties with a high degree of existing signage. Having regard to vehicle speeds locally and the existing character of the street, Staff do not consider distraction to drivers would be such a significant risk as to justify refusal. However it is acknowledged that Members may wish take a view on the impact of several banners in succession and the potential for distraction, compared to a single stand-alone installation.

- 6.14 StreetCare are concerned about the potential for driver distraction and the consequence on highway safety, however, Staff consider overall that there is insufficient material evidence to substantiate a refusal based on highway safety grounds but recognise that this is an issue on which members may wish to exercise judgement.
- 6.15 While the advertisements will need to be erected, maintained and changed periodically, there are parking restrictions in place with parking only in available locations (on-street with limited stop time), generally outside the commercial properties. It is not considered that there are parking implications arising.

#### Other issues

- 6.16 Matters relating to wind loading/ structural safety of the Lamp-posts themselves are controllable through powers separately available to the Council. Staff's recommendation includes an informative to draw this to the applicant's attention.

#### Conclusions

- 6.17 It is considered that the proposed banner signs are of an appropriate scale and form in relation to the surrounding context and the wider street scene. They would enhance the commercial nature of this part of London Road and would be an indicator to drivers and pedestrians that they are approaching Romford Town Centre. Additionally, the signs are not considered to unduly compromise public safety or pose a hazard to traffic, as they are situated considerable distances apart. Members are however, invited to apply their judgement to this aspect of the scheme.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

#### **Financial implications and risks:**

None

#### **Legal implications and risks:**

This application is considered on its own merits and highway issues are relevant to the consideration of the application

#### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

None

#### **Equalities implications and risks:**

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity.



## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. The planning application as submitted or subsequently revised including all forms and plans.
2. The case sheet and examination sheet.
3. Ordnance survey extract showing site and surroundings.
4. Standard Planning Conditions and Standard Green Belt reason for refusal.
5. Relevant details of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Article 4 Directions.
6. Copy of all consultations/representations received and correspondence, including other Council Directorates and Statutory Consultees.
7. The relevant planning history.