

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 22nd JUNE 2022

Ward: Abbey

App Nos.: 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV; 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV; 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV; 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV; 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV; 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV; 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV

Street Hub (SH) Addresses:

SH 1 - 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV - Outside 99 Broad Street
SH 2 - 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV - Outside 6 Broad Street
SH 3 - 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV - Outside 108-113 Broad Street
SH 4 - 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV - Outside 47-48 Broad Street
SH 5 - 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV - Outside 26 West Street
SH 6 - 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV - Outside 4-5 St Mary's Butts
SH 7 - 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV - Outside 164 Friar Street

Proposals:

Full planning permission for the proposed installation of 1no. new Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, plus the removal of associated BT kiosk(s); and

Advertisement consent for proposed 2no. digital 75" LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit.

Description: Proposed development as a whole seeks the installation of 7no. new Street Hub, incorporating 2no. digital 75" LCD advert screens, plus the removal of associated BT kiosks.

Applicant: BT Telecommunications Plc

Date validated: 31st August 2021

Minor applications: 8 week target decision date: 26th October 2021

Extension of time: 22nd July 2022

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT full planning permission consent for the following applications:

Conditions for Street Hubs 1-7

1. Time Limit
2. In accordance with approved plans
3. Existing ST6 Kiosks to be removed
4. Pavement surrounding Street Hubs to be made good to same condition

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Positive and Proactive

3. Works to the highway

GRANT advertisement consent for the following applications:

Conditions for Street Hubs 1-7

1. In accordance with approved plans
2. Standard Advertisement Conditions
3. Luminance not to exceed 250 cd/m² between 17:00 to 06:00 hours
4. Luminance not to exceed 600 cd/m² between 06:01-16:59 hours
5. No works shall commence on site until details and a sample of the micro-louvre film have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details will include the results of the micro-louvre product testing, a data sheet and a sample of the micro-louvre film. The approved micro-louvre film shall be installed in accordance with the approved details and shall thereafter be maintained so that it operates to the same standard.
REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the surrounding properties and the area generally, in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.No moving or flashing images
*Final wording to be provided in an update report.
6. No advert displayed for less than 10 seconds
7. Adverts shall not resemble road signs
8. Transitions between adverts to be controlled and no more than 0.1 seconds
9. Black screen or screen freezes if breaks down. No error messages.

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Positive and Proactive
3. Works to the highway

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Full planning permission and advertisement consent is sought for the replacement of seven existing ST6 kiosks (public payphones with an illuminated advertising board on the reverse) with seven 'Street Hubs'. The majority of the proposed Street Hubs are located on Broad Street, with replacements also proposed at West Street, Friar Street and St Mary's Butts.
- 1.2 Appendix A contains a map of the proposed Street Hub locations, along with renders of the proposed Street Hubs.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Planning permission for the removal of existing ST6 kiosks and replacement with Street Hubs is sought as part of BT's Street Hub Strategy which seeks to identify locations with wide pavements, taking into account existing street furniture, so as to avoid undue proliferation where possible. The BT strategy

in their rollout of Street Hubs is to build a network of sites that meet the needs of the public, through a multi-media offer (payphone, localised free wi-fi and advertisements).

- 2.2 The maximum height of a current ST6 kiosk is 2.75m, with a width of 1.35m, and a depth of 0.22m, with an overhang above the payphone of 0.6m. On one side of a ST6 Kiosk is a payphone, with an approx. 80” (2m on the diagonal) illuminated advertisement on the other side.
- 2.3 Street Hubs are equipped with environmental sensors to, for example, measure air quality, noise and traffic. Street Hubs also provide Wi-Fi, 4G and 5G mobile connectivity within 150m of each unit.
- 2.4 The replacement Street Hubs are freestanding structures and are of a broadly similar size and scale to that of the existing ST6 Kiosks to be removed. The maximum height of the Street Hub is 2.94m, with a width of 1.22m, and a depth of 0.22m. The most notable changes in appearance from the existing ST6 kiosks to the Street Hubs are the removal of the overhang and payphone on one side of the structure, which has been relocated to the side of the thin side of the structure. Both sides of the Street Hub structures consist of 75” LCD screens on both sides, for advertisements, which will change every ten seconds or so.
- 2.5 The applicant’s Planning Design and Access Statement states that when comparing the existing ST6 kiosks in terms of size, scale and footprint with the existing Street Hubs, pavement space would be freed up. It is important to point out, however, that one of the replacement Street Hubs is not in an identical location to the related ST6 Kiosk to be removed. This is in reference to the proposed Street Hub located on Friar Street (SH7).
- 2.6 The applications were called in to Planning Applications Committee by Councillor Page.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Advertisement consent was originally granted for all existing ST6 units. The application details of which are as follows:

Application ref.	Summary description	Location	Decision
111142/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 99 Broad Street	Consent 14/06/2011
141087/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 6 Broad Street	Consent 06/02/2015
080792/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 108-113 Broad Street	Consent 15/08/2008

111389/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 47-48 Broad Street	Consent 14/06/2011
080014/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 26 West Street	Consent 15/08/2008
080841/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 4-5 St Marys Butts	Consent 15/08/2008
111051/ADV	Payphone Kiosk with combined internally illuminated advertising.	Outside 175 Friar Street	Consent 04/05/2011

3.2 Advertisement consent was also granted for various freestanding advertisement units along Broad Street and in the surrounding area by JC Decaux in 2019. Some of these were freestanding, some were part of bus shelters. The most recent of which were granted consent in 2019, although ones in Queen Victoria Street were refused:

Application ref.	Summary description	Location	Decision
181954/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside Thames Tower, 37-45 Station Road	Consent 05/06/19
181955/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside Brunel House, 17-27 Station Road	Consent 05/06/19
181956/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 3-5 Station Road	Consent 05/06/19
181957/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 24-25 Broad Street (Lloyd's Bank)	Consent 10/06/19
181958/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 26-28 Broad Street (HSBC Bank)	Consent 10/06/19
181959/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 123 Broad Street	Refused 05/06/2019
181960/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 12 Broad Street	Withdrawn 20/02/2019
181961/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 23 Broad Street	Withdrawn 02/02/2019
181962/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 108-113 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019

181963/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 39 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019
181964/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 52 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019
181965/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 61-64 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019
181966/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 31 Queen Victoria Street	Refused 05/06/2019
181967/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 2 Queen Victoria Street	Refused 05/06/2019
181968/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 116-117 Broad Street	Refused 05/06/2019
190361/ADV	Freestanding Structure, featuring 2 x Digital 86" screen positioned back to back.	Outside 11 Broad Street	Consent 05/06/2019

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Thames Valley Police (TVP)/CCTV - Consulted on Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 28/09/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - o *Existing illuminated freestanding advertisements have been causing surveillance issues due to the glare on CCTV cameras.*
 - o *At the moment we can just about work around what is there, but it is not easy. The glare of existing JC Decaux and Global structures on CCTV cameras has led to inaccurate descriptions mid incident, lost offenders, and not been able to provide high quality evidence on occasion. Adding more ad units, bus shelters, high output shop fronts or BT hubs may further decrease image quality.*
 - o *Any turn down of brightness to the proposed illuminated adverts would be appreciated. Any turn off during peak NTE weekend hours/special nights would also help.*
 - Final comments to be provided in an update report.
- 4.2 Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) Thames Valley Police - Consulted on Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 12/10/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - o *Object to the Street Hubs on the grounds of public safety, with significant concerns with the proposals particularly relating to the illuminated advertising screens during hours of darkness. Broad Street, West Street and Friar Street are crowded places because of the number of people occupying the streets day and night, which due*

to the risk posed require additional protection for the public in the form of formal police live-monitored CCTV. Illuminated advertising boards at all of these locations have a significant detrimental impact on our ability to monitor and detect crime utilising our CCTV network.

- *The glare caused by these screens creates problems for CCTV cameras, in that the brightness of the screen creates colour contrasting, darkening and softening of the images, reducing visibility and our ability to identify and monitor individuals. In addition, depending on the advert being displayed, colour casting also affects the ability to identify and describe individuals being monitored.*
 - Response received on 22/12/2021 following discussions between CPDA and the applicant.
 - No objections to Street Hubs 1 to 7 subject to condition ensuring that the units do not negatively impact image capture or operations use of formal surveillance. Should a compromise be identified, the unit must be taken out of service until rectified.
 - Final comments to be provided in an update report.
- 4.3 RBC Transport - Consulted on applications Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 29/09/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - *No Transport objections raised on these applications subject to conditions controlling adverts.*
- 4.4 RBC Environmental Protection - Consulted on applications Street Hubs 1 to 7
- Response received on 29/09/2021 applying to all above applications.
 - *The light from the screens has the potential to cause loss of amenity to nearby residents. The fact that the screens face down and up the street rather than facing the façade is helpful in reducing the potential for this. From the information submitted, the screens appear compliant with the guidance of the Institute of Lighting Professionals in terms of maximum illuminance and speed of change of the image. It would be preferable if there is the option to further reduce the illumination at a future point should justified complaints be made.*
 - *There is a possibility of the hub causing noise disturbance to residents due to people congregating there at night time or making phone calls at night time. For the hubs closest to residential properties, it may be preferable for them to be turned off after a certain time e.g. 2 am.*
- 4.5 RBC Conservation & Urban Design Officer - Consulted on Street Hubs 2, 3 and 7
- Responses received on 09/06/2022 applying to Street Hub 2 and 3
 - *The proposed works are considered in relation to previous approvals. Although the works are considered to be of “less than substantial*

Harm” to their setting and context to a number of listed buildings and adjacent conservation area, on balance, when assessed in relation the community benefits, under P. 202 under the NPPF, the proposed application is considered acceptable in relation to heritage issues.

- Response received on 09/06/2022 applying to Street Hub 7
 - *The installation of commercial signs and facilities were approved here over 10 years ago. The proposed works are therefore an upgrade of existing services however, it is proposed to relocate the signage post to the west. The planning agent states the HUB location is not in a conservation area. Well technically true, but it is literally only a metre outside however, it will have an impact on the character and setting of the following:*
 - *St Lawrence Church, (Grade I listed building);*
 - *Queen Victoria Statue (listed Grade II); and*
 - *Market Place/London Street conservation area.*
 - *The new signage works proposed are located near the boundary of the Market Place Conservation Area and in front of two 19th century listed buildings. The proposed signage is considered to be of “less than substantial Harm” in NPPF terms.*
 - *However, there a number of considerations in relation to this application:*
 - *What is proposed would fit into the category of like for like replacement or upgrade of existing signage, approved c. 10 years ago in 2010 & 2011;*
 - *When the community benefits are considered under P. 202, of the NPPF, on balance the proposed works are considered acceptable. Further, the current proposal is merely an upgrade of existing advertising that was previously approved;*
 - *The relocation of the signage to the west, is considered an enhance to the conservation area and is further away from the Grade I, St Lawrence Church;*
 - *In regard to the Queen Victoria Statue, the new signage is perpendicular to the existing street facades. When looking at the Statue, from the front, a slim side view will have less impact on the setting, than is currently the case;*
 - *On balance, taking on board the facts, there are no planning objections in regard to heritage.*
 - *The proposed works are considered in relation to previous approvals. Although the works are considered to be of “less than substantial Harm” to their setting and context to a number of listed buildings and adjacent conservation area, on balance, when assessed in relation the community benefits, under P. 202 under the NPPF, the proposed application is considered acceptable in relation to heritage issues.*

- 4.6 Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) - Consulted on Street Hubs 2, 3 and 7
- No response received.
- 4.7 RBC Valuations Team - Consulted on Street Hubs 5 and 7
- No response received.
- 4.8 Public Consultation:
- 4.9 Site notices were displayed at the approximate locations of the proposed screens on 08/09/2021 and 10/09/2021. The consultation period ended on 29/09/2021 and 01/10/2021. Press notices were published from 23/09/2021, expiring on 14/09/2021 for applications 211443/FUL, 211444/ADV, 211445/FUL, 211446/ADV, 211453/FUL and 211454/ADV as these sites are located within or next to Conservation Areas.

No responses have been received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 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) (2021) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
Part 10: Supporting High Quality Communications
Part 12: Achieving well designed places
Part 16: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- 5.4 National Planning Practice Guidance
Advertisements

5.5 Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted 2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

OU3: Telecommunications Development

OU4: Advertisements

CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading

5.6 Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

6. APPRAISAL

- a) Policy Context
- b) Design and Access
- c) Safeguarding Amenity

a) Policy Context

6.1 The principle of the replacement of Street Hubs is generally accepted by virtue of the existence of the ST6 kiosks that they would be replacing. The proposed Street Hubs will be assessed; however, it is necessary to determine whether or not any additional impacts would materially and adversely harm the character and appearance of the public realm or compromise public safety. Some of the Street Hubs are also located within or close to the Market Place Conservation Area or may have the ability to affect the setting of Listed Buildings or Buildings of Townscape Merit. Accordingly, these structures will be assessed against policies CC7, CC8, EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

6.2 The proposed Street Hubs have Wi-Fi, 4G/5G mobile network connectivity capabilities. Therefore, the proposed development is considered against Policy OU3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed Street Hubs can largely be considered as 'swap-outs' of the existing ST6 Kiosks, in accordance with Policy OU3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

6.3 Regarding public safety and radiowave emissions, the applicant has provided an International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) certificate to support these planning applications. This certifies that the proposed development would be in full compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines. The ICNIRP guidelines are the most up-to-date and relevant tool to ascertain the acceptability of telecommunications development within the planning process. Paragraph 118 of the NPPF (2021) goes on to state that Local

Planning Authorities should not set health safeguards different from the International Commission guidelines for public exposure.

- 6.4 As 75” LCD advertisement screens are proposed to both faces of the Street Hubs, the proposed structures will be assessed against Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. It is acknowledged that the ST6 structures to be replaced have an illuminated advertisement screen on one side.

b) Design and Access

- 6.5 In the case for Street Hubs 1 to 6, these are all to replace existing ST6 kiosks in an identical location. Therefore, use of the proposal site as a payphone with advertisement has already been established. The proposed Street Hubs will face the same direction as the existing ST6 kiosks that they are replacing. The size and scale of the proposed Street Hub structure is very similar to that of the existing ST6 kiosks.

- 6.6 Two 75” LCD advertisement screens are proposed on both sides of the Street Hub structure as opposed to the one illuminated advertising screen to the existing ST6 kiosks. The additional advertisement screen in this instance is not considered to worsen the existing situation within the locations proposed for Street Hubs 1 to 6 as the presence of advertisement screens has already been established. In this instance, it is considered that an existing largely blank façade (payphone side of the ST6 Kiosk) would be replaced with an LCD advertisement screen. The additional screen would not disrupt views or movement due to the presence of the existing ST6 Kiosk it is replacing, as existing advertisement screens are already in place within all proposed locations for the Street Hubs.

Street Hubs 1 (Outside 99 Broad Street) and 4 (Outside 47-48 Broad Street)

- 6.7 Street Hubs 1 and 4 are both located along Broad Street, are located within a pedestrianised part of the town centre. The slightly reduced width of the Street Hubs compared to the existing ST6 kiosks will free up space along a busy high street for pedestrian movement. It is noted that the side-mounted ‘tablet’-style interface, which serves as the payphone and charge station associated with the Street Hub, would not unduly disrupt pedestrian movement in all cases.

- 6.8 In accordance with Policy CC7, the proposed Street Hubs are not considered to harm the character and appearance of the public realm. The presence of these structures has already been established; therefore, the proposed replacement Street Hubs are not an intrusive addition to the street scene by virtue of their size, scale and appearance.

Street Hubs 5 (Outside 26 West Street) and 6 (Outside 4-5 St Mary’s Butts)

- 6.9 Street Hubs 5 and 4 are both located close to the junction of Broad Street, Oxford Road, West Street and St Marys Butts are located close to busy town centre roads with frequent vehicle traffic. The positions of these two Street Hub units will not affect public safety, interrupt any visibility splays, or impede pedestrian flow given that Street Hubs are to replace existing SK6 units.
- 6.10 In accordance with Policy CC7, the proposed Street Hubs are not considered to harm the character and appearance of the public realm. The presence of these structures has already been established; therefore, the proposed replacement Street Hubs are not an intrusive addition to the street scene by virtue of their size, scale and appearance.

Street Hub 2 - Outside 6 Broad Street

- 6.11 With regard to the Street Hub proposed outside of 6 Broad Street, within the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area, the proposed Street Hub is not considered to harm the setting of the Conservation Area or nearby Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit. The presence of an advertisement screen and payphone structure in this locality has already been established due to the presence of the previously approved SK6 unit. The additional advertisement screen to the locality is not considered harmful to the significantly worsen the existing arrangement at the site.
- 6.12 As discussed with the Council's Conservation & Urban Design Officer, the presence of a structure the size, scale and appearance of that proposed has already been established by the existing ST6 kiosk. It is noted that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the visual harm of the Street Hub in this instance and is considered an upgrade of an existing structure. With the additional advertisements screen consider to be of "less than substantial harm". Therefore, the proposed Street Hub (SH 2) is considered in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Street Hub 3 - Outside 108-113 Broad Street

- 6.13 Listed Buildings are located directly north of the Street Hub proposed outside of 108-113 Broad Street (John Lewis and EE), these include 26-28 Broad Street (HSBC) and 24 Broad Street (Lloyds Bank). The presence of an advertisement screen and payphone structure in this locality has already been established due to the presence of the previously approved SK6 unit. The proposed Street Hub is not considered to harm the setting of the nearby Listed Buildings. The additional advertisement screen to the locality is not considered harmful to the significantly worsen the existing arrangement at the site.
- 6.14 As discussed with the Council's Conservation & Urban Design Officer, the presence of a structure the size, scale and appearance of that proposed has

already been established by the existing ST6 kiosk. It is noted that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the visual harm of the Street Hub in this instance and is considered an upgrade of an existing structure. With the additional advertisements screen considered to be of “less than substantial harm”. Therefore, the proposed Street Hub (SH 2) is considered in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Street Hub 7 - Outside 164 Friar Street

- 6.15 Due to the replacement Street Hub outside of the Marks & Spencer Food Hall along Friar Street not being in the same location as the existing ST6 kiosk to be removed, it is considered appropriate to assess whether the Street Hub is proposed in an appropriate location.
- 6.16 The proposed Street Hub is located between Bristol and West Arcade and Marks & Spencer (Friar Street entrance), approximately 25m east of the existing ST6 kiosk. The justification for this provided by the applicant is that this location would be more in keeping with the immediate street scene and improve pedestrian manoeuvrability along a part-pedestrianised area.
- 6.17 Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed Street Hub would be located away from St. Lawrence’s Church, which is a Grade I Listed church, the proposed Street Hub would be closer to the Grade II Listed Queen Victoria Jubilee Statue. In both instances, the existing ST6 kiosk and the proposed Street Hub are on the edge of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- 6.18 As discussed with the Council’s Conservation & Urban Design Officer, the proposed Street Hub when viewed from Blagrove Street would be side on, presenting the 0.22m wide side elevation of the proposed structure. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed Street Hub would not significantly harm the setting of the Grade II listed statue, or views into and within of the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area.
- 6.19 The presence of a structure the size of the Street Hub within this section of Friar Street has been established by virtue of the existing ST6 Kiosk. It is considered that the proposed Street Hub, against the backdrop of the Marks & Spencer Food Hall, would appear no more out of place than the existing ST6 Kiosk and other street furniture within this area, such as the nearby cycle hire station. With regards to access and pedestrian movement implications; Transport Development Control have confirmed that the Street Hub would not affect public safety or interrupt visibility splays or impede pedestrian flow.
- 6.20 It is considered that there would not be a net increase in street clutter as the development proposes the removal of the existing ST6 Kiosk and installation of the similarly sized Street Hub. Therefore, the proposed Street Hub (SH 7)

is considered in accordance with Policies EN1, EN3 and EN4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

- 6.21 It is considered appropriate to condition the removal of the existing ST6 Kiosks SH 7. In all other cases, these are direct 1:1 swap-outs of existing freestanding kiosks.

c) Safeguarding Amenity

- 6.22 Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires adverts within Conservation Areas to respect or enhance the area and respect the key features of the special historic interest. Advertisements will also not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway. Illuminated adverts will also not detract from the amenity of the area or present a safety hazard to highway users.

- 6.23 Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan also states that; *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of (among other criteria):*

- (...)
- *Noise and disturbance*
- *Artificial Lighting*
- (...)
- *Crime and Safety”*

Crime and Safety

- 6.24 As set out under the advertisement regulations, factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the adverts would block the view of CCTV cameras, or whether illumination from advertisement would cause glare on such cameras.

- 6.25 Concerns have been raised by the Thames Valley Police CCTV Team and the Crime Prevention Design Advisor regarding brightness of the illuminated adverts and the impact this has on surveillance cameras, more specifically during hours of darkness. The issue of glare from freestanding advertisement structures on the high street arose from the installation of digital advertisement screens in 2019 (see planning history).

- 6.26 The brightness of existing freestanding advertisement screens within the town centre has led to detrimental impacts on the image capture quality of the existing CCTV cameras. This is of a particular concern in an area of Reading that has seen large scale public disorder incidents, and as stated in the initial response from the CPDA; “Broad Street, West Street and Friar Street are areas within Reading town centre that create significant demand

on policing in terms of incidents, particularly during The Night Time Economy”.

- 6.27 Rather than dealing with any potential issues after the freestanding advertisement screens have been installed, it is considered necessary to have appropriate measures in place to address the surveillance concerns with the proposed Street Hubs prior to any approval in accordance with Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.
- 6.28 All the proposed Street Hubs are of particular concern based on the existing arrangement with the ST6 Units aside from SH4, which is considered unlikely to cause glaring issues to CCTV cameras.
- 6.29 Broad Street, West Street and Friar Street are areas within the town centre of Reading with heavy footfall during daylight hours and hours of darkness. Due to the high level of occupancy within these streets, additional protection is in place in the form of police monitored live CCTV cameras. It has been identified by Thames Valley Police that over the last few years, illuminated advertisements combined with brightly lit shopfronts have been diminishing the quality of footage captured on CCTV cameras during hours of darkness.
- 6.30 The Thames Valley Police CCTV Team provided still images of CCTV camera footage demonstrating the effect that the glare from illuminated adverts is having on the picture quality of CCTV footage. The glare from the illuminated adverts contrasts the colours, darkens and softens the image. For instance, in instances where TVP are tracking a situation, cameras have had to automatically adjust to the change in light levels, moving from dark area to a very brightly lit area. This has led to instances where inaccurate descriptions of suspects and offenders.
- 6.31 The Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) therefore initially objected to the proposed Street Hubs, which consist of two 75” LCD screens. The Thames Valley Police CCTV Team have stated that any turn down of the brightness from the proposed 75” LCD screens would be appreciated.
- 6.32 Discussions subsequently took place between the CPDA, Reading CCTV, the agent, and the LPA to address the concerns regarding the impact of the glare from the illuminated screens on the picture quality of CCTV cameras. Possible solutions included the use of micro-louvre film to obscure the glare from the Street Hubs to the CCTV cameras, or the attachment of physical shrouds to the Street Hubs.
- 6.33 Following these discussions, the agent investigated the used of micro-louvre film to obscure the glare from CCTV cameras and has provided a demonstration of how this solution could work in practice. The purpose of the micro-louvre film is to restrict the viewing angle of the screen, whereby when moving left, right, up or down past a certain angle, the image becomes

almost completely obscured. The micro-louvre film would be installed at the point of manufacture and would have a no noticeable impact on the appearance of the Street Hubs.



Fig 1. Straight on view of the anti-glare film.

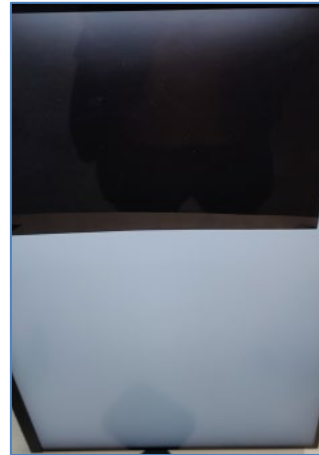


Fig 2. View looking down at the anti-glare film.



Fig 3. View from a side angle of the anti-glare film.

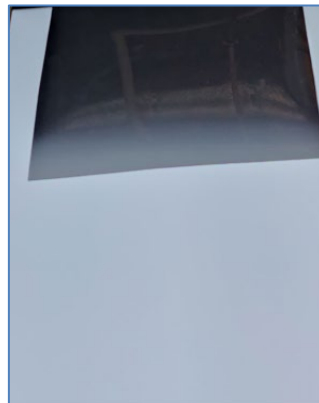


Fig 4. View looking up at the anti-glare film.

- 6.34 The micro-louvre film and its application to the Street Hubs is still, however, in the testing phase. The applicant is engaging with a variety of solutions to develop a bespoke solution due to the screen size and the specific viewing angles that need to be restricted in relation to the position of the CCTV cameras.
- 6.35 The applicant has agreed to a condition requiring the details of the micro-louvre film to be submitted and approved by the LPA via a pre-commencement condition. This is to confirm the details of the proposed mitigation in consultation with the CPDA and the CCTV Team. It is anticipated that the final wording of the pre-commencement condition will be provided in an update report.
- 6.36 The applicant's Product Team also considered the option of a physical shroud; however, the micro-louvre film solution was considered a more appropriate

solution as the product is tried and tested on other products. The absence of a physical should also means that less weight and bulk is added to the proposed Street Hubs.

Artificial Lighting, Noise and Disturbance

- 6.37 As per the comments from Environmental Protection; concerns have been raised regarding the impact of the brightness from the advertisement screens on nearby residents, and noise generated from people congregating at the Street Hubs or making phone calls at night.
- 6.38 With regards to artificial lighting; the illuminated advertisement screens to all of the existing ST6 Kiosks were approved subject to condition that the maximum luminance of the signs should not exceed 450 cd/m². Due to the issues caused by the illuminated advertisements on the ST6 Kiosks, it is considered appropriate to further restrict the luminance of the advertisement screens proposed to the Street Hubs. The nearby JC Decaux structures, which were approved in 2019 (see section 3 of this report), were approved subject to condition that the maximum luminance of the signs should not exceed 250 cd/m² during hours of darkness between 17:00 and 06:00 hours. It is considered appropriate to restrict the luminance of the Street Hub advertisement screens to be on parity with the JC Decaux advertisement screens approved in 2019.
- 6.39 It is acknowledged that the proposed Street Hubs have illuminated adverts on both sides, as opposed to the ST6 Kiosks. As a result, an additional light source is proposed. The illuminated advert proposed to each structure of a Street Hub is not considered to significantly worsen the existing arrangement within their respective locations given the existing presence of an illuminated advert within these and the fact that the luminance levels will be further restricted during hours of darkness, via condition.
- 6.40 In forming a decision for these applications, weight is given to the presence previously approved ST6 Kiosk structures which consist of illuminated adverts on one side, a payphone on the other, and the presence of existing illuminated adverts to shopfronts along Broad Street, West Street, Friar Street and St. Mary's Butts. The proposed Street Hubs are not considered to worsen the existing arrangement in terms of artificial light and noise.

7 Equality

- 7.1 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age and disability. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities

protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development. The proposal is specifically to address the needs of a disabled person.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Six of the seven Street Hubs proposed are located in the same location as the existing ST6 Kiosks and are of a similar size and scale of the existing kiosks. The proposed Street Hubs represent a zero increase in street clutter due to the removal of the existing ST6 Kiosks.
- 8.2 In the instance where the proposed Street Hub (SH 7) is located in a different location to that of the ST6 Kiosk its replacing, the proposed location is considered appropriate and not harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 8.3 The concerns from the Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor and Reading CCTV regarding the luminance levels of the proposed Street Hubs is considered to have been suitably addressed by way of condition. The luminance levels during hours of darkness for each Street Hub will be secured via condition, restricting each screen on the Street Hubs to 250 cd/m² between 17:00 and 06:00. This is a further reduction from the approved luminance levels of the advertisement screens to the existing ST6 Kiosks, where were restricted at 450 cd/m². This is also consistent with the conditions applied to the nearby JC Decaux advertisement screens, which were approved in 2019.

Case Officer: David Brett

Documents considered:

Received for all applications for full planning permission and advertisement consent:

- Street Hub Anti-Social Behaviour Management Plan
- Street Hub Proposal Renders 2021
- Street Hubs Beyond Connection (Product Statement - v1.0 | February 2021
- Conformity with ICNIRP Public Exposure Guidelines (“ICNIRP”)
- Professional Lighting Guide 05 - The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements

Received on 31st August 2021

- Applicant Statement regarding the brightness of the advertisement displays to the proposed Street Hubs

Received on 21st December 2021

Application specific documents:

SH 1 - 211441/FUL & 211442/ADV - Outside 99 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ003

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 2 - 211443/FUL & 211444/ADV - Outside 6 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ001a

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 3 - 211445/FUL & 211446/ADV - Outside 108-113 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ002

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 4 - 211447/FUL & 211448/ADV - Outside 47-48 Broad Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ004a

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 5 - 211449/FUL & 211450/ADV - Outside 26 West Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ005

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 6 - 211451/FUL & 211452/ADV - Outside 4-5 St Mary's Butts

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ006

Received on 31st August 2021

SH 7 - 211453/FUL & 211454/ADV - Outside 164 Friar Street

- Site Location Maps - 001 Rev A
- Proposed Site Plan - 002 Rev A
- Existing and Proposed Elevations - 003 Rev A
- Planning, Design and Access Statement - READ007b

Received on 31st August 2021

Appendix 1 - Street Hub map, Proposals and Site Photos