
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/Z/25/3367445

Highways land outside The Vintage Store, 9 Junction Place, Haslemere, GU27 1LE

- The appeal is made under Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) against a refusal to grant express consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Sandash Punj (Trueform Engineering Limited) against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2025/00500.
 - The advertisement proposed is a double sided freestanding digital information & advertising display.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In the interest of accuracy of conciseness, the description of development in the banner heading above is based on the Council's decision notice.
3. The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 require that decisions are made only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of any material factors. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (the PPG) confirm this approach. Therefore, while I have taken account of the policies that the Council considers to be relevant, these have not been decisive in my determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed advertisement on amenity.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located on an area of pavement outside a small parade of shops near the junction of Lion Mead and Wey Hill. Although this stretch of the road features commercial uses, including a petrol station, convenience shop, charity shop, café, pharmacy and other shops, the surrounding context remains modest in scale and has the character of a small market-town approach road rather than a busy urban high street.
6. The appellant and Surrey County Council state that the proposed advertisement would form part of a county-wide digital information network intended to disseminate public messages and local advertising. They state that the location

was selected for its wide pavement and commercial frontage, arguing that the addition of a single freestanding structure would not result in visual clutter.

7. The stretch of pavement where the proposed advertisement would be sited features several large planters, a lamppost, benches and bins. The proposed structure, standing approximately 2.75m high, would introduce a large, illuminated feature. Its modern form, height and internally illuminated digital screens would draw significant visual attention, particularly in contrast with the muted materials of the existing street furniture along this stretch of pavement.
8. The appellant contends the existing elements of street furniture are widely spaced and low in number. However, the streetscene already features a range of commercial signage and visual clutter arising from the combination of shopfront fascias and the prominently sited petrol station totem opposite and associated signage. The width of the pavement contributes to a sense of spaciousness that offsets the various elements of street furniture. The introduction of a freestanding illuminated unit within this open area of pavement would erode the visual relief it affords.
9. The appellant emphasises that the unit's height would be below the adjacent lamppost and less than surrounding buildings, and that comparable digital panels are found elsewhere in Surrey. Nonetheless, its freestanding and digital nature would make it visually distinct. In this semi-suburban location, where advertising is generally confined to the façades of buildings and petrol-station infrastructure, a continuously illuminated, changing digital display would appear incongruous and overtly commercial.
10. Taken cumulatively with existing signage and street features, the proposal would tip the visual balance, giving the junction an unduly urbanised and cluttered appearance that conflicts with the muted small-town character of Haslemere. Even with controls on luminance and hours of operation, the intermittent light change inherent in digital imagery would draw attention and reinforce the display's prominence, particularly in darker months.
11. Accordingly, the proposed advertisement would have a harmful effect on the visual amenity of the area. I have also had regard to Policy DM29 of the Waverley Local Plan Part 2 (2023), which seeks to ensure that advertisements do not harm amenity or result in excessive clutter, and with Policy H6 of the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan (2021), which expects development to respect local character.

Other Matters

12. The appellant highlights the public benefits of the wider Surrey digital-display programme, including emergency messaging, promotion of active travel and local businesses, environmental commitments, and revenue for the County Council. A supporting letter from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth confirms the Council's partnership with Trueform and encourages support for the initiative.
13. These aims are acknowledged and I recognise the potential community value of improved public information. However, advertisement consent under the Advertisement Regulations (2007) can only be assessed in relation to amenity and

public safety. The broader operational or social benefits do not outweigh site-specific harm to visual amenity.

14. Moreover, each proposal within the county-wide network must be assessed on its individual merits and context. The characteristics of this part of Haslemere, its modest scale, semi-suburban character and limited presence of digital infrastructure, differ from more urban or major roadside environments where such displays may be less visually intrusive. The existence of a strategic partnership does not justify the installation of the advertisement where local conditions render it visually harmful.
15. National policy supports improved digital infrastructure, but advertisements must also be well-sited and compatible with their surroundings. In this case, the claimed benefits would not address or outweigh the tangible and enduring harm identified to the amenity of the area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, the proposed advertisement would be harmful to amenity. Therefore, the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

INSPECTOR