

To/ The Mayor and each Member of South Dublin County Council

Re; Digital Communication, Outdoor Advertising and Branding Strategy – Headed item 26

Dear Member,

In today's Digital Economy it is important that as an organisation we embrace Digital Technology in every respect in order to enhance service delivery, improve communications and create competitive advantage where possible. As part of our ongoing Digital Transformation Programme we have reviewed our Outdoor Advertising Policy in the context of digital opportunity, communication and revenue generation. In the first instance current planning policy needs to be examined.

### Planning Process and Policy Context

The current planning policy context in the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022, is a critical impediment to the development and delivery of a potential digital communications network with advertising at its core. The principle of developing outdoor digital advertising structures is not supported within the policy context of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022. The existing restrictive nature of the Development Plan policy relating to advertising structures is a significant risk to the consent process for the individual structures at a later stage.

The relevant Land Use Zoning Tables and the Signage Policy in the CDP are outlined below:

#### *a). Land Use Zoning*

Schedule 5 defines Advertisements and Advertisement Structures as

*'Any work, letter, model, balloon, inflatable structure, kite, poster, notice, device or representation employed for the purpose of advertisement, announcement, or direction, and any structure such as a hoarding, scaffold, framework, pole, standard, device or sign (whether illuminated or not) and which is used or intended for use for exhibiting advertisements, or any attachment to a building or structure used for advertising purposes.'*

The Land Use Tables in the Development Plan outline that Advertisements and Advertisement Structures are **not permitted** in the Open Space (OS), Rural (RU) and High Amenity (HA-DM, HA-LV, HA-DV) zones. It is noteworthy that a number of potentially advantageous locations adjoining the road network, Luas and at Tallaght Stadium are zoned Open Space (OS).

#### *b). Signage Policy (Section 11.2.8)*

**Table 1: Extract of Table 11.19 of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022**

<b>Type of Sign</b>	<b>Restrictions on Use</b>	<b>Design Criteria</b>
Digital Signs	Generally <b>not appropriate</b> . May be considered in town centres and/or large retail precincts and at other suitable locations throughout the County. Not permitted on major roads unless signage relates to traffic management and safety.	Should make a positive contribution to the public domain, omit no sound, have a minimum dwell period of 30 seconds (with a crossfade), not result in obtrusive light that will create unacceptable glare (adjusting to environmental conditions), have limited hours of operation (esp. at night), not contain dynamic content (i.e. video) and not constitute a traffic hazard.

Free Standing Advertisement Displays	Generally <b>not appropriate</b> . May be considered at the entrances to shopping centres/major commercial premises and service stations	A maximum of 7m in height. Freestanding signs on petrol station forecourts should not extend above the height of the canopy
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The policy as set out is understandable from the point of view of limiting advertising in the context of visual amenity and clutter. It does however present unintended limitations on this Council taking a proactive approach to leading on the development of a digital communications network which facilitates advertising, Council messaging, County branding and generates a revenue stream. What is now being suggested is the development of a Strategy that would;

1. Examine the development of a county-wide high-quality communication network; the network will provide a key communications tool to engage with citizens of the County, promote services and events and develop awareness of the SDCC brand;
2. To capitalise on the significant economic opportunity that the public realm and transport corridors provide, thereby leveraging this underutilised resource, by developing a high-quality outdoor advertising network as a significant revenue source;
3. To directly or indirectly deliver significant public realm improvement, amenities and services;
4. To provide a high-quality network to facilitate the advertising companies demand and reduce/remove the demand/extent of low quality and sporadically located advertising structures in the county.

### Tallaght Stadium

Tallaght Stadium is currently zoned open space and therefore faces the same restrictions as all other open space. As a County venue, it provides a number of opportunities beyond the normal pitch side billboard advertising understood under current arrangements. These include;

- Digital advertising within the stadium and on the exterior of the proposed northern stand;
- Digital advertising within the corporate areas;
- Stadium branding and naming rights.

The exploration of these opportunities is seen as an intrinsic element of what is now being proposed.

### Next steps

Council approval in principle is now being sought to;

- Initiate a CDP review that facilitates a digital communications and advertising strategy led by this Council;
- Initiate an expression of interest procurement process to establish commercial interest in the joint venture provision of a network of digital communication structures;
- Procure marketing, branding and naming rights advice in relation to Tallaght Stadium in order to further advise the Council on such a potential opportunity.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Daniel McLoughlin  
Chief Executive