Large Format Digital Roadside Planning Code (2021)

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The Out of Home advertising industry is undergoing a digital transformation. Over the last twenty years large format ‘paper’ billboards of 48 sheet or 96 sheet size have declined in number by around 18,000 and to date a comparatively low number of 1,500 large format Digital Out of Home (DOOH) displays have been built.

Approximately 40% of all UK adults will see large format digital display advertising in a typical week. 95+% of large format digital displays are operated by Outsmart members. As a self-regulated industry setting the highest standards, all Outsmart members sign up to the Outsmart Large Format Digital Roadside Code.

The Code

This code describes planning conditions for large format DOOH, based on The Institution of Lighting Professionals Professional Lighting Guide 05 – 2015 and in the interests of amenity and public safety. Five overarching principles are observed:

1. Advertisements are intended to be seen, the lighting of outdoor displays must therefore be sufficient to enable an advertisement to be readily legible, whatever the time of day.

2. The lighting levels for all outdoor advertisements must be consistent, in accordance with the ILP recommendations, to avoid seeing a contrast of overly bright or dull lit displays.

3. During the day to maintain legibility, displays will utilise systems to optimise lighting levels in line with surrounding ambient lighting conditions.

4. Advertisements are controlled to ensure that public safety is assured. (See 1.)

5. Outsmart members confirm that, in the event of an issue with the brightness of a digital advertisement, they will work with the relevant Local Authority to investigate and resolve the matter efficiently and promptly.

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Large Format Digital Roadside:
Illumination Levels

- Mirroring the restrictions set out in The Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) in Professional Lighting Guide 05 (PLG05) “The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements”, the advertisement will only be illuminated in a manner reasonably required for the purpose of the advertisement within the appropriate zoning.

- The advertisement will include a system to adjust lighting levels based on the changing sunset and sunrise times throughout the year.

- The maximum level of luminance of the advertisements will not exceed the thresholds below contained within the ILP PLG05. For the avoidance of doubt [in suburban and urban areas]:

- For displays with an area greater than 10 square metres, between sunset and sunrise, the display shall not be illuminated to a level greater than 300 candelas per square metre.

- For displays with an area of 10 square metres and below, between sunset and sunrise, the display shall not be illuminated to a level greater than 600 candelas per square metre.

- Between sunrise and sunset the advertisement shall be illuminated to a level reasonably required to make it clear and legible, as desired by PLG05.

Large Format Digital Roadside:

Static and Moving Images

- In accordance with the ILP PLG05, there shall be no moving images, animation, video or full motion images displayed unless consent has been granted for such displays.
- Static images shall not change more frequently than every 5 seconds, unless approved to do so by the Local Planning Authority. In practice between 8-12 seconds is considered standard.
- The transition from one advertisement to another should take no longer than 1 second.

Model Planning Conditions

The following model planning conditions are recommended to be applied to Express Advertisement Consents to formalise compliance with the Code within the planning regime in the interest of amenity and public safety.

- *“No individual advertisement displayed shall at any time contain moving images, animation, intermittent or full motion video images, audio, directional symbols, or any images that resemble road signs or traffic signals, unless otherwise authorised by this consent.”*
- *“Changes between advertisements to take place with no sequencing, fading, swiping, or merging of images.”*
- *“The minimum display time for each advertisement shall be no less than [*] seconds.”*
- *“The intensity of illumination of the advertisement permitted shall be no greater than [*] candelas per square metre between dusk and dawn.”*
- *“In accordance with the ILP Technical Note, the display shall have an inbuilt system that controls luminance and changing sunset and dawn times throughout the year.”*
- *“The advertisement display shall at all times contain a feature that will turn the display off (showing a black/blank screen) in the event of malfunction or error.”*

*Figures in square brackets are dependent on the site location.

Appendix

Out of Home advertising comprises advertising that is placed in public spaces. The Out of Home advertising industry benefits society in three key ways:

1. **Investment in Public infrastructure:** installing and maintaining passenger transport infrastructure, information kiosks, and public access Wi-Fi provision. The industry pays business rates, rent and revenue share to public landlords including TfL, Network Rail, Heathrow Airport, TfGM, other local transport operators and virtually every local authority up and down the UK, funds which are reinvested into public service provision and that subsidise transport fares.

2. **Broader economic contribution:** the industry employs approximately 2,700 people paying £110m in salaries with thousands more employed in the supply chain.

3. **Supporting communities with donated or significantly discounted media space for good causes and important public information messages,** including the emergency services and Government public information campaigns e.g., coronavirus, nutrition, exercise.

At an overall level, the Out of Home industry contributes / gives back c.£463m annually to the British economy, around 40% of its annual revenues. It is an industry that will help the economy to recover at both local and national levels given the part advertising plays in driving economic growth - every £1 of advertising spend generates £6 for the UK economy.

Unlike other forms of advertising, Out of Home advertising has an essential physical presence, it is part of the changing and diverse urban landscape that defines the City experience. In a post-Covid economy, Out of Home advertising will play an important role in reinvigorating City and town centres, both economically and by injecting visual vitality and interest.

Large Format refers to displays that are 48-sheet, 96-sheet or larger in size.

- 48-sheet displays are 3 metres high and 6 metres wide.
- 96-sheet displays are 3 metres high and 12 metres wide.

Digital Out of Home:
Environment and Sustainability

Outsmart members observe the Outsmart Environmental & Sustainability Code and the Timber & Wood Product Sourcing and Use Policy. Many members uphold their own additional environment and sustainability protocols.

Outsmart encourages and supports members to adopt sustainable practices to reduce their carbon footprint. Outsmart is a lead member of the Advertising Associations Ad-Net Zero not-for-profit initiative.

Notes

- DOOH requires no physical production or distribution of advertising. Content is controlled remotely and in real time, removing the need for frequent site visits (i.e., once every two weeks for posting), reliance on non-renewable resources and reducing vehicles emissions. Many display components are widely recyclable.
- Energy efficiency can be optimised by changing the way illumination is used, such as moderating brightness or fitting motion sensors, and these measures can improve energy efficiency by over 60%.
- Many DOOH displays are supplied by electricity from renewable energy.
- Fleet conversion to electric vehicles is ongoing, in tandem with eco-driver training monitored with the use of telematics.

Furthermore

Roadside digital displays in England will conform to the five ‘Standard Conditions’ specified in Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007; in Wales, Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992; in Scotland, Schedule 1 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (Scotland) Regulations 1984, and; in Northern Ireland, Schedule 1 of The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

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