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Out of Home Media

Angola
Australia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Bahrain
Belgium
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Costa Rica
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Ecuador
El Salvador
Estonia
Eswatini
Finland
France
Gabon
Germany
Guatemala
Hungary
Honduras
India
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Ivory Coast
Japan
Kazakhstan
Korea
Latvia
Lesotho
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius
Mexico
Mongolia
Mozambique
Myanmar
Namibia
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Norway
Oman

Eastleigh Borough Council **14 November 2024**
Planning Department
Eastleigh House
Upper Market Street
Eastleigh
SO50 9YN

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Re: The Installation of Three Advertised Communication Hub Units with Defibrillators.

Application Sites:

A. Pavement o/s 44-50 High Street, Eastleigh SO50 5LE
B. Pavement o/s 13 Leigh Rd, Eastleigh SO50 9FF
C. Pavement o/s Swan Centre Car Park, Wells Place SO50 5PB

This letter is submitted with applications for advertisement consent (AC) and planning permission (PP) for the installation of three Communication Hubs across the centre of Eastleigh. The set of applications relate to three sites, as identified on the respective maps of the Eastleigh at **Appendix A**. The Hub Unit, in addition to free calls to landlines, offers a range of additional connective functions that include free Wi-Fi, a 32-inch touch screen to enable wayfinding, direct access to local webpages, a publicly accessible defibrillator and both USB and wireless device charging capabilities. The communication apparatus includes a telephony element together with an advertised face, which is why applications are submitted for both PP and AC.

Background

By way of background on this proposal, JCDecaux purchased a telephone Company called In Focus Public Networks (IPN) in 2018 and with it a network of old-style enclosed call boxes. Over the last few years we have been systematically working in partnership with IPN to rationalise and replace the call box estate with modern multifunctional Hub units, of which there are now over 250 in the UK. What is unique about our Hub unit is the inclusion of a publicly accessible defibrillator as a standard feature in the unit design.

This letter therefore sets out the details of the proposals, which seeks approval for a limited number of units to create a central network of connected Hub units that offer a range of interactive functions that are available free of charge to the public.

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The details of the Communication Hub unit are enclosed at **Appendices B and C** and the proposed locations shown on the map in **Appendix A**.

Greater Manchester Police Crime Awareness Campaign on Piccadilly, Manchester

Hub Unit Features

Common to all communication providers is an advertised element, from which is derived the revenue to pay for the provision and maintenance of the equipment and support any services provided. Our Hub unit is the only unit that incorporates a single side of advertising rather than having it featuring on both sides of the structure. This enables us to dedicate the front of the unit solely to public use, as a purposefully designed benefit, rather than an afterthought.

The traditional role of the phone box is ill equipped for the modern digital environment. The multifunctional Hub unit has been designed to bring this public service up to date and present the next generation of communication provision that gives more to the public and can contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of city centres.

The available benefits include free calls to landlines[1] and charities, free wi-fi and device charging, wayfinding via the 32" touchscreen and instant access to the emergency services when needed.

However, one of the most important features is the inbuilt defibrillator, which is accessible 24 hours a day. Since 2019 JCDecaux has worked in partnership with

[1] Calls to Mobile Numbers prohibited under the adopted Management Plan

Community Heartbeat Trust, a registered charity that promotes greater public access to defibrillators in public spaces. Each Hub unit is equipped with a defibrillator as standard and local training is provided by the Community Heartbeat Trust, funded by JCDecaux, to ensure that the equipment can be quickly deployed in an emergency.

Communication Hub Renders

The detail in **Appendices B** and **C** covers some of the potential functions that can be provided by the Hub unit and which are currently being trialed in other Cities and Boroughs. These include air quality sensors through our collaboration with Airly[2]; pedestrian flow monitoring to enable Councils to better understand people movements and flows within their area; in built CCTV cameras to supplement local provision. Technological advances are driving the development of a range of functions that can be incorporated into street furniture to enable local authorities to better understand and plan for changes in the urban environment. All these capabilities are funded by the advertising revenue from the single display on the Hub unit, 50p in every £1 of which is reinvested in furniture to support public services.

The unit has undergone rigorous testing in extreme conditions and can boast 13.5mm thick anti-vandal toughened safety laminated glass on all glazed surfaces. The other external elements have been treated with a nanotech surface treatment to enable easy removal of stickers and/or sprayed paint to the external surfaces. The unit has a protection rating against impact of >IK10. All electrical circuitry is

[2] https://airly.org/en/

inaccessible to the public and the unit features hidden fixings that require specialist tools to enable access.

The advertisement screen will show illuminated static images that automatic change by means of a remote server. The light sensor will control lighting levels automatically during the day and be able to adjust levels to reflect a change in sunrise and sunset times from summer to winter and environmental conditions. Should the unit malfunction the screen will switch off and automatically alert JCDecaux's dedicated digital team of the fault and schedule a repair. The display screen on the reverse of the Hub unit will switch off between the hours of 11:59 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., thus reducing energy use by 43%. The touchpad screen will default to a map of the borough of Eastleigh for easy wayfinding and the screen can include shortcuts to the most often used apps and links direct to local Council services. A touchpad is positioned at 1m from the ground to provide easy access for wheelchair users and the screen is designed with high contrast colours to assist the partially sighted.

Finally, sustainability is an important element of the Company's approach to development from initial design, product and material sourcing to energy use. In 2019 the Company joined RE100, a global leadership initiative for companies committed to 100% renewable electricity. The Company's objective is to source 100% of its electricity consumption from renewable electricity this year. Although not an exhaustive set of criteria, I list below some of the important considerations in our proposals.

- **Need** – The NPPF confirms that the need for this type of communication apparatus is not a material consideration. However, evidence from installed Hub units in the UK clearly demonstrates not only the demand for phone functions, but the active use of the additional functions provided. The Hub unit is not limited to voice calls but includes access to a range of other facilities that are free for public use. The defibrillators on the Hub network have been used over 400 times in two years. The share of time of the display screens together with the dedicated local area specific content on the touchscreen provides a platform for people to engage with public bodies and promote public awareness. The document appended as **APPENDIX D** shows the uses figures for the existing 13 Hub units in the centre of Leeds for 2023, which show a healthy and active use of the interactive unit.

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The need for accessible defibrillators in public spaces is well known[3]. Cardiac arrest is a real issue in all communities with over 100,000 hospital admissions each year. A heart attack can happen to anyone and anywhere and the survival rate is just 1:10, however the early use of a defibrillator can triple the chances of someone surviving such an attack. Each Hub unit is equipped with an easy to use defibrillator provided and maintained by JCDecaux and added to the register of available devices in the Borough. How to activate and use to the device can be displayed on screen and local training can be organized through CHT funded by JCDecaux, to ensure that when needed, this equipment can be quickly deployed to save a life.

- **Design** – The Hub unit is based on the Forum design by Fosters and partners and is a familiar scale of furniture that is found in urban areas as it is comparable to the size of advertising on bus shelters, for example. The design is purposefully understated in a dark grey or black colour to match other functional furniture within Eastleigh and is of robust construction and fully accessible. The units are run on 100 renewable energy and cleaned by rainwater.

- **Unit Number and Clutter** – The proposal is limited in scope to three new locations, which is a suitable scale of network for the size of the city of Eastleigh. We have identified sites to fit the distribution and where possible sited them on footpaths that are relatively clear of other similar forms of furniture.

- **Safety** – The experience of other Operators across the UK has raised real concerns over the misuse of a free to use public service. The design and operation of the Hub unit has been formulated with the support of the Met Police Design Out Crime Unit resulting in the adoption of a Management Plan that ensures the use of the units is closely monitored and managed to prevent abuse.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/number-of-defibrillators-to-be-increased-with-new-funding

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The Proposal Sites

The proposal for Eastleigh Borough Council is for three units. There is no current proposal to grow this size of estate however we are open to discussion through the application process on the precise locations should any of the identified sites be considered unsuitable for local amenity or highway safety reasons. The site locations sit within established retail streets and share comparable backdrops of retail/commercial activity. The sites are considered suitable locations for this type of development, based on the surrounding character and building scale.

Site A – Pavement o/s 44-50 High Street, Eastleigh SO50 5LE

The first Communication Hub proposed in Eastleigh is located on a 4.2m wide section of pavement on High Street outside of the Pet Centre approaching the Swan Shopping Centre. Many buildings on Eastleigh High Street have retained original features and architectural detailing on the upper floors but have very modern ground floor, street level facades. The juxtaposition of the historic with modern shop fronts and concomitant advertising signage does not undermine the value of the locality or its historic significance, the seemingly conflicting elements combine to create a unique quality which is equally important in defining the character of the High Street.

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Although close to, it would not be directly outside the existing entrances and exits from the building it adjoins. There are litter bins and cycle racks in the vicinity as well as other street furniture, and the main unobstructed pedestrian thoroughfare is therefore generally reduced in this section of the High Street. A pedestrian will not be obstructed when walking within the area and can follow the intended desire lines, whether heading north along High Street or south towards the shopping centre.

There are no historically designated buildings nearby nor does the site lie within a Conservation Area. This area of the Eastleigh town centre is a busy location, and developments must be balanced with not being of detriment to a location in terms of historic aspect but also providing a 21st Century experience and modern, necessary provision for locals and visitors alike. Contemporary structures, and particularly infrastructure, are often introduced to the public realm including historic town centres and high streets without undermining or detracting from the historic integrity of an area. Modern elements of the street scene that are of a high standard and design can add to local character and enhance it by the quality of the equipment and what it provides the public.

This proposal seeks to improve the number of public benefits the Hub can offer while introducing an advertisement display to ensure the unit can be provided without a cost to the public purse. Overall, the proposed Hub at this location is unlikely to result in harm to the visual amenity of the centre or present an obstruction to pedestrian movements.

Site B – Pavement o/s 13 Leigh Rd, Eastleigh SO50 9FF

The second proposed Communication Hub in Eastleigh is located on the pedestrianised section of pavement on Leigh Road, approaching the Leigh Road Recreation Ground to the west. The site is positioned aligned with the clock tower and free-standing wayfinding unit 4.4m from the building edge of Excellent Cuts on the 20m+ wide section of public adopted highway. The large pavement space will be able to accommodate the introduction of a communication Hub without affecting pedestrian flow or other street activities such as market stalls further west even at busy times.

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The surrounding buildings on Leigh Road are mixed in style with the defining character being that of a smaller high street. As with the first proposed Communication Hub, the location is not within any designated Conservation Area, nor within the vicinity of any listed buildings and is well placed to provide digital and public services to those passing through this commercial focused area of Eastleigh town centre.

Site C – Pavement o/s Swan Centre Car Park, Wells Place SO50 5PB

The final proposed Communication Hub in Eastleigh is located on the 5.9m wide section of pavement outside of the Swan Centre Car Park on Wells Place. The Hub has been sited at the eastern gateway to the town centre where the provision of digital wayfinding and open access defibrillator will offer much public benefit. We have proposed the relocation of the litter bin on Wells Place as part of our planning pack, however we would be accommodating to relocate to another position at the cost of Infocus should the local authority see another location a better fit.

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Similar to the other proposed Communication Hubs in Eastleigh town centre, the application site is located on a commercial street that is not within the boundary of any Conservation Area, or within the vicinity of any listed assets. Within this context and in light of the presence of other forms of advertising material in Eastleigh, it is not considered that the limited number of Hub locations across the centre is excessive or have an over-bearing impact that would harm the appearance or character of the area.

Material Considerations

The proposal requires both Planning Permission for the physical elements and communication apparatus and Advertisement Consent for the display of advertisement on the rear of the Hub Unit. In respect of the advertisement element the Regulations dictate and limit the scope of the considerations to matters of amenity and safety, whereas the communication element is considered under Council's plan policies.

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Policy Considerations – National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023

- Part 6 Building a strong, competitive economy
- Part 10 Supporting high-quality communications
- Part 12 Achieving well-designed and beautiful places

Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG")

- **Advertisements July 2019**
  - Section 7 Public Safety Considerations
  - Section 8 Amenity Considerations
- **Healthy and Safe Communities Aug 2022**

The National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (**NPPF**) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The updated NPPF maintains the role of the planning system in supporting sustainable forms of development.

Advertising plays an important role in a diverse and vibrant market economy by encouraging consumer confidence and spending, which contributes to sustainable economic growth. Advertising is also an essential support for business through the promotion of products and services which drives consumer spending. The use of land for advertising is therefore consistent with the aim of sustainability and its support for a viable market economy. In respect of outdoor advertising the NPPF states that;

> "The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts."

Part 6 of the NPPF emphasises the role of the planning system in encouraging businesses to invest, innovate and adapt to changing market needs. Part 10 covers the essential role a high-quality communications infrastructure has on the delivery of sustained economic growth and how the planning system should act to support such development. Paragraph 118 states:

> "Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G)

> and full fibre broadband connections. Policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time; and should prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)."

Furthermore paragraph 122 confirms:

> "Local planning authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. They should not seek to prevent competition between different operators, question the need for an electronic communications system…"

Part 12 covers the importance of design in managing and improving spaces and the quality of place. The design of all built form, including street furniture, must be sustainable and functional but also attractive and include innovation in the design evolution. Paragraph 131 says:

> "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."

On design, the Framework states that:

> "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
> f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."

And that significant weight is given to:

> "outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."

The proposed Hub unit is therefore supported by the policy aims of the NPPF.

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Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036)

The council's twenty-year development strategy, adopted April 2022, envisions a competitive market for high-speed connectivity, which is crucial for mitigating social, economic, and environmental impacts caused by connectivity disparities. This proposal directly supports Eastleigh Borough's Strategic Policy DM9, Public utilities and communications' ambitions for public service efficiency, with the Communication Hubs and accessible communications being an importance element in providing integrated services without the need for additional street infrastructure. The Communication Hubs will expand community Wi-Fi networks offering free internet in public spaces, enhancing infrastructure for events and tourism in Eastleigh. These steps not only modernise the Borough's centers but also advance the council's Smart City Goals and provide a valuable public service that tackles the digital divide.

Amenity

In this proposal we have been mindful of the respective local contexts and feel that a limited network of Hub units in locations where the scale of buildings and character of the areas are appropriate and unlikely to lead to harm to the appearance or character of the street setting. The design of the Hub unit and scale of advertisement display is appropriate to the pedestrian environment without overwhelming passers-by. The proposal sites are confined to the main retail centre within Eastleigh which are vibrant and busy routes where the immediate local context could support this type of modern structure. Overall, the Proposal would accord with policy guidance and is considered not to harm local visual amenity.

Public Safety

The advertisements affixed to the Hub units will be prominently positioned on the public footpath to be readily visible. While the proposals would be visible to drivers, the main audience will be pedestrians. The proposal sites have been chosen where the width of the available footpath is sufficient to accommodate the unit without obstruction or an unacceptable narrowing of the available pavement. The units will be seen alongside busy active street frontages and so it is doubtful that anyone would view this type of advertised unit in this context as unusual or alien.

Conditions

The mechanism exists within the planning system to provide a level of control over the manner and use of roadside advertising in the interest of amenity and safety, as expressed in the Regulations. All consents for express advertisement consent are

covered by the standard conditions set out in Schedule 2 to the Regulations. It is proposed that the following special conditions should be applied to any advertisement consent:

- The intensity of the illumination of the signs shall not exceed 300Cdm^2 from dusk till dawn
- Any change in advertisement display shall be instantaneous
- The displays shall not display any moving, or apparently moving, images
- The advertisements displayed on each panel shall not change more frequently than once every 10 seconds.

The above special conditions are now used as best practice for the control of digital advertisements, having been originally proposed by Transport for London (TfL) in relation to applications adjacent to the strategic road network. Digital technology is by its nature a more sustainable and versatile method of displaying images and messages in real time and in cases of emergency. JCDecaux fully accepts that this functionality could and should be used to create safer streets and places. We are therefore committed to working with local authorities to ensure our apparatus is designed and used in a way that assists in reducing crime. The Management Plan at **APPENDIX E** has been formulated with the assistance of the Police Designing Out Crime unit and forms part of the application documentation, as does the Company's commitment to work with the Police and adaptive to changes in Borough Policing.

Summary

The UK is currently at the forefront in the development of multifunctional digital furniture and the provision of accessible communication apparatus that provides more than simply a means to make voice calls. Many cities recognise the value such development can provide, which complements and support their public service provision and delivery. The proposed Hub network has been thoughtfully considered to ensure it will successfully integrate into the urban fabric of Eastleigh town centre.

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The proposed unit is of a high quality of design and the locations are confined to commercial areas that are appropriate for this type of advertised structure. The design and functions of the Hub unit will contribute to raising the quality standard of furniture and the appearance of the public realm.

I trust that the above information and Appendices provide sufficient information on our plans and is enough for you to consider this proposal. I am happy to meet if needs be at your offices or ours to discuss the finer detail.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Stephen Herraghty AssocRTPI
Town Planner
JCDecaux UK

[redacted]