

Healthier Advertising Policy for the City of York

What is it?

In April 2024, City of York Council introduced an advertising and sponsorship policy which took a cross-risk factor approach, restricting the advertising on council-owned property of a number of products which have been shown to harm health:

- tobacco or tobacco related products
- vaping products and nicotine pouches
- alcohol
- gambling
- pornography and adult content
- unhealthy food or drinks defined as high saturate fat, salt and/or sugar (HFSS)
- cosmetic surgery
- loans and speculative financial products
- weapons, violence or anti-social behaviour of any description
- any product or service which is deemed or perceived to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability

How did it happen?

The council signed the Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight in 2019, which included a commitment to this policy. As part of signing the Declaration, the council undertook a substantial piece of community insight and engagement work.

The policy was developed across 2023 by the council's public health team conjunction with the communications team and policy leads. The national charity Sustain supported the council with expert advice.

The policy was timed to coincide with a new contract for advertising on assets such as bus shelters and other facilities in York. This contract award and mobilisation process has taken longer than expected for a variety of procurement-related reasons, and we anticipate the final council assets which display restricted content will be replaced by assets adhering to the policy by the start of 2026.

The policy decision was taken by the Council's executive in conjunction with a tender decision relating to advertising contracts.

Who was involved?

Engagement was mostly with internal City of York Council departments and with elected members. Externally to the council, Sustain were involved and the Healthy Spaces Community of Interest were very supportive of the policy.

What were the challenges and how were they overcome?

The key challenge has been the slow mobilisation of the contract which means the policy is currently not being fully adhered to. In addition, enforcement of the terms of the policy, including process for reporting and identifying breaches, is constrained by officer capacity.

Further information

City of Youk Council – [Advertising and sponsorship policy](#)