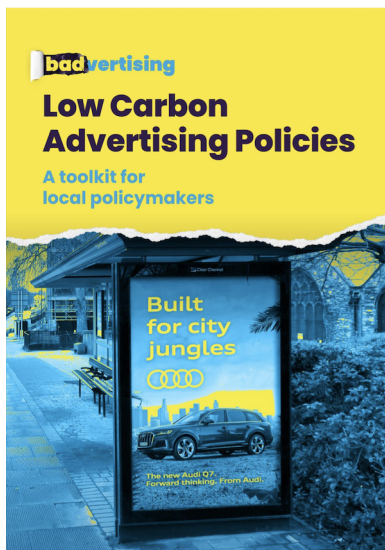


## Ethical & Low Carbon Advertising Policies: useful resources



Information about Low Carbon Advertising Policies, with background, FAQs and a Model Motion in Badvertising's [Toolkit for Local Policymakers](#).

Further resources for councils introducing healthier, ethical and low carbon advertising policies: [Resources for Councils](#).

Information on Councils' advertising remit: [Limiting harmful outdoor advertising: Briefing for councils in England & Wales](#).

### UK Council policies and motions:

Cambridgeshire County Council's updated [Advertising and Sponsorship Policy](#) includes restrictions on A&S<sup>1</sup> for fossil fuels and other companies whose products/services harm council objectives on public health, the environment and carbon accounting.

Bristol City Council's [Advertising and Sponsorship Policy](#), implemented in April 2022, restricts A&S for gambling, alcohol, pay day loans and HFSS food and drink. BCC's supporting [Policy Guidance Note on HFSS](#) ads.

Norwich City Council's [Advertising Motion](#) resolves to address the harms caused by advertising for junk food, environmentally polluting products and activities, payday lenders, gambling and alcohol.

---

<sup>1</sup> A&S = Advertising and Sponsorship throughout.

## Case study: TfL



In 2019, Transport for London introduced restrictions on advertising for food and drink High in Fat, Salt or Sugar (HFSS), after endorsement by the Mayor and campaigning by food charity Sustain. Since being introduced, TfL's Healthier Advertising Policy:

- *Has not* led to reduced advertising revenue
- *Has* reduced household purchasing of unhealthy products
- *Has* caused a reduction in preventable illnesses like obesity and Type 2 diabetes
- *Has* had the biggest impact on people from areas with more social deprivation
- Is expected to save the NHS £200 million

Sustain: [Junk food purchases drop thanks to London transport advertising policy](#)

LSHTM: [Junk food advertising restrictions prevent almost 100,000 obesity cases and is expected to save the NHS £200m](#)

**FAQs & Discussion points.** Some FAQs are summarised here. Please feel free to contact us at [hello@adfreecities.org.uk](mailto:hello@adfreecities.org.uk) or [info@newweather.org](mailto:info@newweather.org) for further support or advice.

**Financial implications: 'Substitution'.** Advertising companies bidding for local government contracts may try to claim that placing restrictions on what can be advertised on those sites (e.g. bus stops) will reduce the value of the contract. The experience of Adfree Cities working with local councils is that these claims are unevicenced. If junk food adverts are banned, for example, other types of less harmful adverts will take their place as a substitute, with no loss of revenue for councils. This was

true of Transport for London's junk food ad ban and is especially applicable to larger advertising estates such as Greater Manchester.

**Financial implications: The notion that advertising for high carbon products will “go elsewhere” if councils restrict them.** Advertisers want to put their messages where people are, and they value out of home advertising as *‘The only medium that cannot be switched off, minimised or ignored.’* The substitution point above means that high carbon advertising can go online or to print + TV, but councils will not receive a drop in revenue. Furthermore, by introducing ethical advertising policies, councils will be aligning their public health and net zero policy goals with their commercial strategies.

**Legal advice on councils' legal ability to restrict advertising for high carbon products.** Adfree Cities and Badvertising are commissioning legal advice for councils on the subject of prohibiting adverts for high carbon products. [This legal advice will be available here when ready](#) (expected late March - April 2023).

**‘Culture war’-framed opposition.** ‘Woke’ culture and nanny state arguments about Ethical and Low Carbon Advertising Policies revolve around threats to ‘free choice’. It is worth noting that the advertising surrounding us in our public spaces, on TV, in print and online does not beget freedom of choice; in fact, removing advertising removes persuasive purchasing influence from a selection of companies that can afford to pay for advertising space. Advice from councils that have passed these types of policies is to ‘stick to the facts’ and council commitments to public health and climate.

### **Evidence for the impacts of unhealthy food advertising on public health and the environment (papers shared by Prof Emma Boyland)**

Cairns (2019) A critical review of evidence on the sociocultural impacts of food marketing and policy implications. *Appetite*, 136, 193-207. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2019.02.002>

Finlay et al. (2022) A scoping review of outdoor food marketing: exposure, power and impacts on eating behaviour and health. *BMC Public Health*. 22, 1431. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13784-8> (OPEN ACCESS)

Backholer et al. (2020) Differential exposure to, and potential impact of, unhealthy advertising to children by socio-economic and ethnic groups: A systematic review of the evidence. *Obesity Reviews*. 22, e13144. <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.13144>

Chung et al. (2021) Policies to restrict unhealthy food and beverage advertising in outdoor spaces and on publicly owned assets: A scoping review of the literature. *Obesity Reviews*. 23, e13386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/obr.13386>

Seferidi et al. (2020) The neglected environmental impacts of ultra-processed foods. *The Lancet*. 4, e437-e438. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196\(20\)30177-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2542-5196(20)30177-7) (OPEN ACCESS)

**Please feel free to contact us at [Adfree Cities: hello@adfrecities.org.uk](mailto:hello@adfrecities.org.uk) or [Badvertising: info@newweather.org](mailto:info@newweather.org) for further support or advice.**

